

Impact of ISO 9001: 2008 on the Information Auditing Process in Public University Libraries in Kenya: A Case of MMUST Library

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Abstract: *Effective application of ISO and its associated programs leads to increased profitability, performance, growth, development competitiveness and survival through high level of flexibility, innovation, productivity, quality and efficiency. ISO has been fundamental in cost control, service provision, customer, stakeholder managed programs and aids in effective planning, control, decision making, organization processes and has been strong denominator for practices and effective successful operations in both the small and large organization. The objective of the research was to establish the impact of ISO 9001: 2008 programmes in the information audit process in libraries. This study adopted a descriptive survey approach to research. The target population for the study was the fifty one (51) employees working in the library department. The research findings showed majority of the staff have attained college level of education at 48.7%(19) , male staff participation rate of 54%, those with 15-19 years of experience were more responsive at 28.2% ,technical section of the library had 59% of visa vis ICT and circulation services sections at 28.8% and 12.2% respectively. Supervisory staff responded much higher than the rest at 41% of the sampled population, ISO based information audit process is appreciated by 62% whereas positive impact of ISO program was supported by over 27(69%) of the respondents. This study concludes that the adoption of ISO if well managed can bring profound positive development in the management of the library department and related services at MMUST. It can substantially increase the efficiency levels in the provision of the services; radically change the attitude and perception of the staff and the stakeholders.*

Key words: *ISO 9001:2008, Information Audit, Information Use, Information mapping*

1. Introduction The International organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member's bodies) (ISO 9001: 2008) ISO is derived from a Greek word isos meaning equal. It is applied in over 175 countries worldwide. Therefore all these countries who align their services to ISO 2001: 2008 Quality Management Systems will have their services measured at this standard during audit of her services and products to ascertain conformity or non-conformity. The application of ISO 9001: 2008 sets out criteria for a QMS the only standard in the family that an organization can be certified to has transcended all departments among organization and has been found very useful to over one million companies and organizations in planning, organizing, decision making and controls and has proven to be critical in the management of, information, physical, financial, human, and financial resources. This has made the application of ISO a prerequisite for effective organizational, departmental and individual is management of activities. In the human resources sector ISO 9001: 2008 aids in relationships building, rewards relation, training practices, individual development and behavior management, it is also significant in the determination and reduction of costs of human development, financial resources and networking. This further lends credence to the application of ISO in the control of costs, motivating the staff and users, designing of ways and means to effect appropriate relationships Ginlow, (2011)[1], observed that ISO 9001: 2008 applications ensures adequate comprehensive and properly updated quality information input in the process hence ensuring effective research, development activities, information and experience sharing processes. The application of ISO among the public libraries has not been without limitation, it has in a few cases reduced innovation and flexibility among the employees coupled with limiting the employees and user autonomy, freedom and independence needed in the services provisions to the users. On the positive side, (Mondy, 2010) [7] in an article in a journal from new jersey university school of international relations concurs that learning organization operating through the application of

ISO9001 : 2008 have been very successful in the management of costs, investments, personnel and networks, while acknowledging the profound difficulties and bottlenecks associated with the ISO 9001 : 2008 introduction implementation and control mechanism and the nature of resources expended.

The article highlights the profound benefits achieved by departments and whole organization from the adoption of ISO certification. ISO has been used as an instrument for cost control, decision-making, research and developments and undertaking investments with ease. Information centers benefit from the ISO 9001: 2008 programs in different ways.

It is a sure way of resources optimization and application, time, resources scheduling and human resources relationship management programs during the audit process. The use of standardization programs has had major impacts on the networking arrangements among key personnel in the information auditing process. Odongo, (2012)[8] through a study conducted at Rongo University on the capabilities and limitation of the application of ISO9001: 2008 programs in the information control among the public Universities in Kenya, agree that ISO has brought tremendous developments in the forms of saving of time, resources, energy expended and reduction of costs of operation among the information organizations. Additionally the system has worked to regularize the activities and has led to wider information and data acquisition from even far-flung universities. The study findings revealed that organization and departments with ISO programs have been able to outperform those that do not have in almost all areas including performance, stakeholder service provisions efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, cost control and innovative approaches to functioning.

The study nonetheless noted the huge challenges faced by libraries and other organizational units in the management of ISO programs. The demands for specific and specialized resources inputs, technology and sound cultural orientation and environments with open collaborative cooperative and team approaches may force organization to redesign their programs, budget and programs with profound difficulties. Kacmar, (2012)[3] stated that the application of ISO 9001 : 2008 and its essential requirements of extreme standardization has contributed to more benefits for organization including information centers and libraries in public universities, medium level colleges, secondary schools and private resource centers. She contends that the significance of the application of ISO has had tangible verses intangible, qualitative verses quantitative, objective and subjective denominators. She claims that standardization through ISO adherence has contributed to reduced costs of operations, reduced conflicts between the stakeholders of the libraries and improved quality, efficiency and effectiveness. ISO has regularized the decision making process, control system, organization procedures and planning practices with standardized policies and regulations in organization.

Information audit conducted regularly, with the support of cross-functional teams, with the aids of adequate and proper benchmark such as ISO 9001: 2008 results in the most adequate, reliable, correct and relevant information flows that aid institutional academic and non-academic programs. This is achieved through adequate information, data synthesis, reviews, analysis and appraisal that help in research, lectures, exchange programs among the universities and colleges (Kihara, 2012)[5].

This has worked towards high level of motivation. Through the ISO practices, universities around the globe have been able to form networks that have hitherto produced greater productivity, flexibility, innovative process, products and systems. Kimani, (2013) [6] through a study conducted at the technical university of Kenya on the relevance of ISO 9001: 2008 on the management of libraries among the universities in Kenya declares that the needs for high level of reliable information among the universities to aid in research academic programs and exchange programs can effectively be achieved through the application of the ISO 9001: 2008 standards. The achievements of the core objectives and strategies are not in doubt but a reality among the public universities.

Masinde Muliro University is one of the public universities in Kenya operating under the ISO programs. The university has introduced the ISO programs among all the academic and non-academic areas, including the library department this is meant to help the university realize the full potential of the ISO and QMS role in services delivery. Presently there are cases of users, stakeholder’s complaints and the inability to effect more meaningful programs in a flexible and innovative approach. This has made the department less popular and vulnerable to criticisms from the users and the other stakeholders (Khemba, 2012)[4].

The study findings contend that the use of ISO has made universities become centers of excellence, appropriate destinations for the majority of the population due to the expanding demands for education and related products. The study revealed that universities by their very nature are normally appraised and ranked in terms of their levels of performance in relation to knowledge production. The study further observes that the application of ISO has been the hallmark for effective performance indicators between both the public and private universities in Africa and around the globe.

The study concluded that the ISO standard act as benchmark for investments, cost management, international relationships, process control, and effective time management practices.

The functions among the libraries managed through ISO practices have made the universities more attractive for new entrants, competitive, highly efficient, and effective and quality bound.

Despite these positive attributes of ISO, the study noted the standardization process has made universities to operate on rigid ideas, polices principles and ideologies. However most of the organization still conduct the audit process periodically, using more formalized, rigid systems and with no known standard measurement mechanisms. An effective information audit process leads to high value for the institutions through increased attraction, retention, reputation and satisfaction among the domestic and corporate stakeholders.

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2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey approach to research. The target population for the study was the fifty one (51) employees working in the library department at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology main campus in Kakamega. The population for the study was categorized as senior librarians, senior library assistant, library assistant and support staff according to the employee census report conducted at the university in March 2014. The aggregate of fifty one (51) employees comprised of five (5) senior librarians, eleven (11) assistant librarians, nineteen (19) senior library assistant and sixteen (16) library assistants of the university library.

3. Results of the research study

A total of fifty one (51) questionnaires were generated and administrated to the sampled categories of respondents. At the end of the study, thirty nine (39) questionnaires were returned, coded and analyzed. The overall response rate was therefore 39 respondents representing 76% out of the 51 cases under study with the majority of the respondents being from the senior library assistants that attracted a response rate of $84\%=(16/19 \times 100\%)$ of the 19 sample size of Senior library assistants who were under study, while the minority was Librarians who’s response rate was $60\%=(3/5 \times 100\%)$ as recorded in table 4.1 below. The response rate was impressive among all the categories of the respondents for the study since over half of the respondents participated.

Table 1 Response Rate

Category of the population	Those sampled	Those who responded	Response rate
Librarians	5	3	60%
Assistant Librarians	11	8	73%
Senior Library Assistant	19	16	84%
Library Assistant	16	12	75%
Total	51	39	76.5%

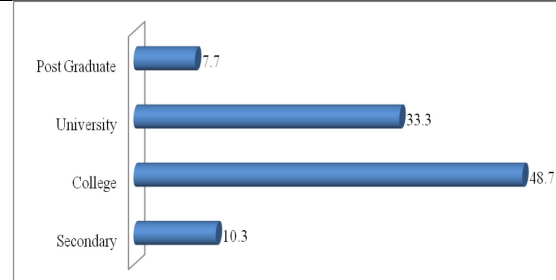


Figure1: Distribution of respondents by the level of education

From figure 1 above, a majority (89.7%) of the respondents stated to have attained the post-secondary level of education. Among this category of respondents 48.7% stated to have attained the college level of education, 33.3% had attained the college level with 7.7% of the respondents stating to have attained the post graduate level of education. Only 10.3% of the respondents stated to have attained the secondary level of education. This finding was positive due to the high level of education of the respondents who were able to take part in the study successfully.

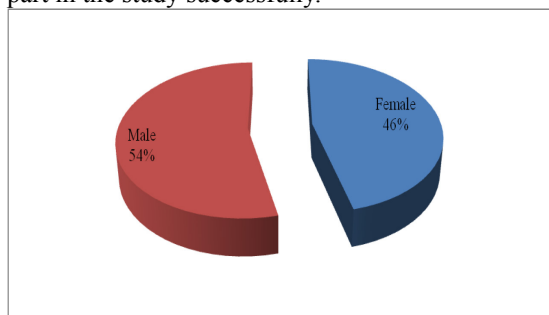


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by gender

From figure 2 above shows a majority (54%) of the respondents being male while the minority (46%) were female. Although there were more male respondents than their female counterparts, results showed a near gender parity among the respondents. This finding was positive for the study since there was neutrality and lack of bias towards a given gender in the study

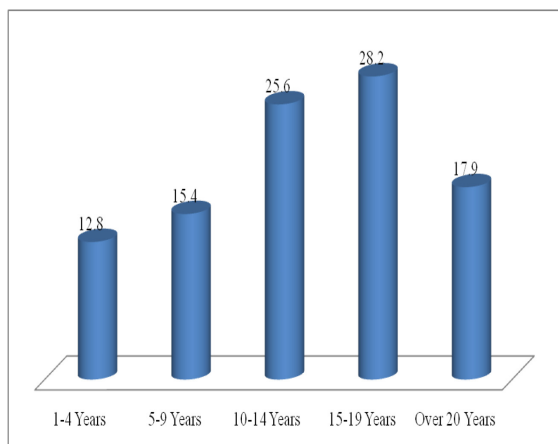


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by their years of experience

From figure 3 above a majority (71.8%) of the respondents had served the library department for more than ten years among this category of respondents, 28.2% stated to have served the department between fifteen and nineteen years; 25.6% stated to have served the department between ten and fourteen years with the rest 17.7% stating to have served the department for over twenty years. Only 28.8% of the respondents had served the library department for less than ten years. This finding was positive for the study since the respondents were more experienced and could effectively comprehend their involvement in the study.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by their library department sectional distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Technical Library Services Section	23	59
Information Communication Technology Services	11	28.2
Circulation and information literacy services	5	12.8
Total	39	100

From table 2 above majority (59%) of the respondents were from the technical library services section of the university library. This was followed by the information communication technology services that attracted a response rate of 28.2% among the respondents. The rest (12.8%) of the respondents were from the circulation and information literacy services section of the university library. The high response rate from the library technical services section was favorable to the study since the study was based on the most relevant and correct information input from the section.

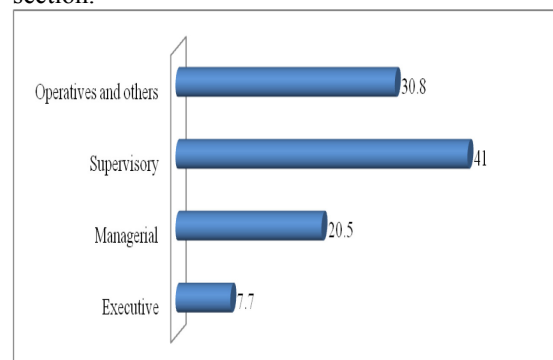


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by their level in the library hierarchy

From figure 4 above a majority (69.3%) of the respondents were from the managerial level of the library hierarchy. A category of respondents 41% was from the supervisory level of the library hierarchy; 20.5% were from the managerial level of the library and 7.7% were from the executive level of the university library staff cadre. A paltry 30.8% of the respondents were from the operative level of the university library staff hierarchy. This finding was positive and favorable for the study since it is the managerial level that determines the standards, policies and procedures commonly applicable in the library.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by their level in the age

Variable	Frequency	Percent
18-25	11	28.2
26-33	9	23.1
34-42	8	20.5
43-55	6	15.4
Over 55	5	12.8
Total	39	100

From table 3 above a majority 71.8% of the respondents are youthful and below forty two years of age, while the minority 28.2% were aged above forty two years. This finding shows that the library department at the university is manned by more agile, mobile and youthful employees, who undertake the responsibilities and duties assigned effectively.

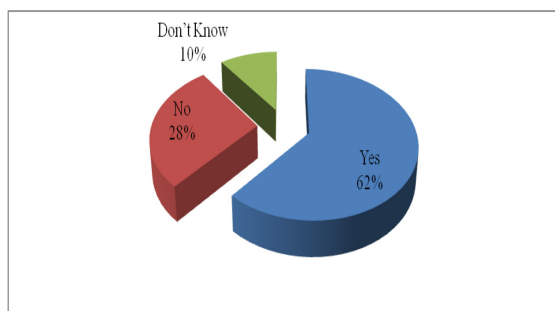


Figure 5: The Information audit process in the library department at MMUST

From figure 5 above a majority (62%) of the respondents stated to have agreed that, the library department does undertake information audit. While 10% of the respondents remained indifferent, by stating not to have known whether the department conducts information audit or not, only 28% of the respondents were of the view that the library department does not undertake information audit. This finding denotes that library department at MMUST does undertake information audit.

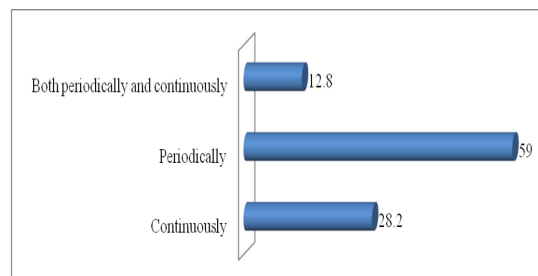


Figure 6: The approaches used in conducting information audit in the library department at MMUST

From figure 6 above shows a majority (59%) of the respondents were of the view that the information audit process in the library department at MMUST is conducted on periodic basis while 12.8% of the respondents were of the view that the information audit process in the library department at MMUST is conducted on both periodic basis and continuous basis, less than 29% of the respondents were of the view that the information audit process in the library department at MMUST is conducted on continuous basis. This finding shows that the information audit process in the library department at MMUST is mostly conducted on periodic basis but it also reveals that some staff are not able to tell when it happens. It denotes lack of understanding of information audit processes among this cluster of professionals.

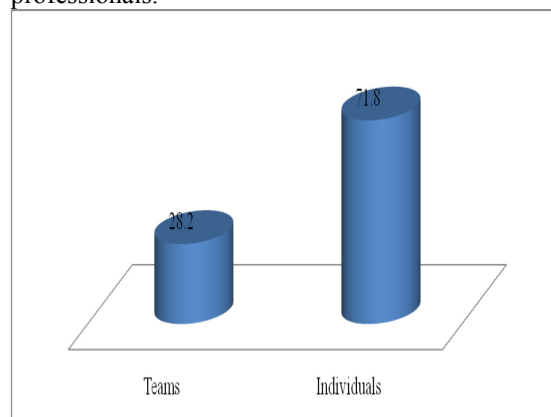


Figure 7: The process of conducting of information audit in the library department at MMUST

From figure, 7 above a majority (71.8%) of the respondents being of the view that the information audit process at the library department is more traditional and individual based and only 28.2% were of the view that the process takes a more modern approach and is conducted through teams. This finding denotes that the information audit process at the library department is more traditional and individual based.

4. Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Arising from the summary of findings as presented in the immediate sections above, this study concludes that majority of the staff have attained college level of education at 48.7%(19) of respondents, the male staff participated in this exercise at a higher rate of 54%, those with between 15-19 years of experience were more responsive to this audit exercise at 28.2% , the technical section of the library had 59% of staff participating in this exercise compared to the other two section ICT and circulation services sections at 28.8% and 12.2% respectively. That the supervisory staff responded much higher than the rest at 41% of the 39 candidates who returned feedback the adoption of ISO based information audit process is appreciated by 62% of the staff who responded positively in the management of the library department and related services at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

The audit approach preferred by the library seemed to favour the periodic and individual approach at 59% and 71.8% respectively over the other approaches. The use of such evaluation processes is deemed to enable increased efficiency levels in the provision of the services, radical change in the attitude and perception of the staff and the stakeholders. The study nonetheless concludes that prior to the introduction of the ISO audit based programs the information auditing process was not adequately addressed. The study observes that conduct of the process is undertaken periodically instead of continuously and without proper benchmarks. Apart from that, ISO has contributed to the enhancements of the operation of the various sections where it has continued to play important and significant roles in the streamlining of the services.

5. Recommendations

This study recommends that the university introduce the ISO program in other functional areas of the library to aid in the streaming of the operations.

The study also recommends for the information auditing process to be conducted on continuous basis and through teams of experts. It is further recommended that more training and development programs be put in place by the university to facilitate the effective implementation of the ISO programs. Finally the study recommends that special attention be paid to the factors affecting the application of the ISO program in the university and more specifically the factors of management style and human elements associated with the introduction of the program needing special consideration.

This study recommends that further research be conducted on the application of ISO program among the library departments in the university libraries in Kenya.

6. References

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