## Vol. 5 No. 2

December 2020

# Utilisation of Library and Information Services in the Judiciary of Uganda

## Joyce Bukirwa

Department of Library and Information Science
East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda

### **Reges Nanfuka**

Records Officer

Judicial Service Commission, Uganda

#### **Abstract**

Rationale of Study – The purpose of this study was to examine the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. It was based on the premise that if library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda are well utilised, effective administration of justice in Uganda would be achieved.

Methodology – The study was guided by Saracevic-Kantor theory of use-oriented value of library and information services. Participants were drawn from two (2) selected libraries namely, the High Court (criminal division) and the Supreme Court libraries. These are the oldest and have the biggest collection compared to the rest of the judiciary libraries. Given a population of five (5) librarians (2 from Supreme court library and 3 from the High Court library), interviews were held with four (4) librarians, two from each of the libraries.

Findings – The study established that both the High Court and Supreme Court libraries provide a wide range of services including current awareness, referral, research, selective dissemination of information, Internet, photocopying and newspaper clipping services. The services were regularly utilised across the libraries. However, only 47% of the users were very satisfied with the services, followed by 31% that were satisfied. Some of the challenges affecting the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda include poor Internet connectivity, inadequate current information, insufficient funding, and limited library facilities.

Implications – This study recommends strengthening of library and information services across the Judiciary by digitising the information resources, system-wide automation, training of library users, improving Internet connectivity, increasing funding for library services, and formulation and implementation of a Judiciary of Uganda library policy.

Originality – This study is an addition to the scanty literature about judiciary library services, most especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The study ascertains the need for strengthening library and information services in judiciaries.

#### **Keywords**

Judiciary of Uganda, judiciary libraries, library services, judiciary library services, court Libraries

**Citation:** Bukirwa, J. & Nanfuka, R. (2020). Utilisation of Library and Information Services in the Judiciary of Uganda. *Regional Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 5 (2),39-64.



Published by the

Regional Institute of Information and Knowledge Management

P.O. Box 24358 – 00100 – Nairobi, Kenya

## 1 Introduction and contextual background to the study

Libraries and information are key elements in all sectors of the economy. No single institution can survive without reliable library and information services (Pareek & Gangrade, 2016). The importance of a library as a source of information and the dissemination of knowledge is a requirement acknowledged the world over (Envuluanza, 2017). Library and information services play a significant role in establishing the right contact between the right "book" and the right "reader" at the right time and in the right personal way (Dawra, 2003). Access and utilisation of library and information services are key to the success of judiciary services around the globe as it leads to unhindered access to vital legal resources. Access to legal information is considered a fundamental information access right (Hague, 2003). Effective utilisation of library and information services in the judiciary can lead to effective administration of justice because the study and practice of law is essentially library-based (Eze-Onwuzuruike & Uwaechina, 2020). For instance, a legal professional who is into litigation would need information to prepare his/her case and make his/her argument persuasive before the court. This requires detailed search through texts, indexes to law reports, case law, online law journals and old files that dealt with similar cases in the past. The quality of a lawyer's submission in the court is largely dependent on the accessibility of legal authorities, both statutory and case law, available to him/her (Uloko, 2001). This is made possible by utilising the library and information services provided. Shrivastava (2009) notes that for years, the provision of library and information services in sub Saharan Africa has been through library lending, literature searches, newspaper clippings, and information retrieval via the Internet, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, photocopying services, reference services as well as case law retrieval from CD-ROM and other databases. In addition, court libraries also provide bibliographic compilations and inter-library loan services.

In the Judiciary of Uganda, the establishment of digital libraries and adoption of Information Communication Technologies, was done to ease the utilisation of library and information services and to promote legal research through exposure to a variety of information sources and services than could not be found in a traditional law library (Judiciary of Ugandaa, 2018). But how are the library and information services provided by the Judiciary of Uganda actually utilised? This study examines the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda.

## 1.1 The Judiciary of Uganda

The Judiciary of Uganda is the third arm of the government under the doctrine of separation of powers. It derives its mandate from Article 126(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Its mandate is to oversee justice, resolving disputes between individuals, and between the State and individuals, interpret the Constitution and the laws of Uganda, promote the rule of law and contribute to maintenance of order in society. In addition, the Judiciary safeguards the Constitution and upholds democratic principles, protects human rights of individuals, promotes fairness and provision of substantive justice to all Ugandans. Its core role is to promote the rule of law, arbitrating on issues affecting citizens and contribute to maintenance of order in society (Government of Uganda, 2006).

The Judiciary of Uganda's mission of being independent, competent, trusted and accountable is attained through administering justice to all. To achieve its responsibilities, roles and mandate, the Judiciary uses library and information services to guide library users in accessing information for decision making, promoting problem solving approaches, thinking skills and developing opinions (Johnson, 2015). The need to ensure free, open and timely access to legal information and the need for the preservation of knowledge and dissemination of information, prosecuting cases diligently, led to the establishment of court libraries in the Judiciary of Uganda (Judiciary of Uganda, 2017).

#### 1.2 Libraries in the Judiciary of Uganda

Libraries in the Judiciary of Uganda are also referred to as court libraries. These are special libraries found in court premises and are primarily established to serve judges, magistrates and lawyers in the preparation of their case files and dispensation of justice (Akinyemi, 2017). They serve as unique facilities for teaching of law, research in law and its valuable contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability in the country. They are considered indispensable to the legal practitioners as well as the judges in the administration of justice (Uloko, 2001). They support the users of law materials to prosecute cases diligently since access to justice starts in the library (Dana, 2012). Therefore, it is of great significance that the library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda are effectively utilised.

The first library in the Judiciary of Uganda was established in 1973. This was in the High Court (Criminal Division), situated at the High Court in the Department of the Chief Registrar. The years that followed led to the establishment of libraries at the Supreme

Court, Court of Appeal, Commercial Court, Judicial Studies Institute and at each of the 10 High Court Circuits, and at the 90 Magisterial Courts in Uganda. There are 105 libraries in the Judiciary of Uganda. These are special and reference libraries mandated to provide library and information services to justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, judges of the High Court, registrars, deputy registrars, assistant registrars, chief magistrates, magistrates, registered advocates, Attorney General, and law students (Judiciary of Uganda, 2017).

This study focused on only two libraries: the High Court (Criminal division) and the Supreme Court libraries. These are the oldest in the sector, comprise a relatively big collection in terms of size and were pioneers in adopting ICTs in their operations (Judiciary of Uganda, 2016). Studying these would give a hint on how library and information services are utilised in the sector and would highlight key issues that need to be addressed so as to improve library and information services in the entire sector.

### 1.3 The High Court (Criminal Division) library

Established in 1973, the High Court (criminal division) library was the first Judiciary of Uganda library. It is a special and reference library under the court with a special collection of information resources on legal information. These include law journals, high court bulletins, newspapers, bills, Halsbury's Laws of England and Halsbury's Laws of Uganda, court forms, rulings, judgements, statutes, law reports, Acts, commentaries on specific laws, manuals, gazettes, academic journals, digests, legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedias, law books, monographs, government publications, and electronic resources.

The library also provides access to computers and the Internet. It serves 220 library users, including justices of the Supreme court, justices of the Court of Appeal, judges of the High court, registrars, Deputy Registrars, Assistant Registrars, Chief Magistrates, Magistrates, Registered Advocates, Attorney General, and law students. to boost legal information provision for research, and practice. Other users include Economists, Policy Analysts, Secretaries, Principle Assistant Procurement Officers and Statisticians. The library is funded by both the central government and development partners mainly through the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and is managed by a senior librarian, a librarian and a library assistant, all appointed by the Public Service Commission under the Ministry of Public Service (Judiciary of Ugandab, 2018).

## 1.4 The Supreme Court library

This is a special and reference library serving justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, Judges of the High Court, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Assistant Registrars, Chief Magistrates, Magistrates, Registered Advocates, the Attorney General, law students, Legal officers, Researchers and Legal clerks. Initially in 1973, the information was provided by the High Court (Criminal Division) library but there was need to extend library services nearer to the users. This led to the expansion of libraries in the sector, hence the establishment of the Supreme Court library, whose main role is to mediate existing and accessible information resources to users, providing materials in the form of electronic services, full texts and traditional publications (Judiciary of Ugandaa, 2018). Funded by the Government of Uganda and development partners through the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), the library is managed by one librarian and a library assistant, appointed by the Public Service Commission (Judiciary of Ugandab, 2018).

The library contains substantial legal literature to support the need of its users, including law books, monographs, government publications, legislative materials, newspapers, bills, statutes, Halsbury's Laws of England and Halsbury's Laws of Uganda, magazines, rulings, judgements, law reports, Acts, court forms, commentaries on specific laws, manuals, gazettes, academic journals, digests, legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedias, and bulletins. The library also subscribes to electronic resources through the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries. The library also provides access to computers connected to the Internet to facilitate access to e-resources in addition to Wi-fi access t (Judiciary of Ugandaa, 2018).

## 2 Problem Statement

While the Judiciary of Uganda established and has maintained court libraries since 1973, no single study has been carried out to ascertain how the library and information services are actually utilised. Even the Judiciary's annual reports hardly report significant details about the library and information services in the sector. The main purpose of court libraries is to stimulate and sustain users' satisfaction in the utilisation of legal and other related information resources. This can help law researchers to access relevant materials so as to prosecute cases diligently (Envuluanza (2017). A study by Jones and Ilako (2015) reported that trust in justice institutions is lacking. This was partly attributed to poor use of library and information services. In addition, Atuhaire (2013) in her study "Judiciary in a crisis" noted that the judicial system in Uganda has been characterised by dissatisfaction

stemming from a combination of unaccomplished justice, mistrust and lack of confidence. A study by Piesta, Gramatikov, Muller, Heijstek-Ziemann, & Sallali (2016) further revealed that the majority of Ugandan lawyers seek legal information and advice from their social networks and the Local Council Courts (LCCs) and that formal sources are rarely used. Despite these previous studies, the Judiciary of Uganda still funds and maintains the court libraries. For instance, during the financial year 2017/2018, 30% of the Judiciary of Uganda's budget was allocated to libraries (Government of Uganda, 2017). Judiciary libraries should be among the formal libraries that lawyers, judges and justices use. It is thus prudent that a study is carried out to establish how library and information services are utilised in the sector; which services are used, by who, for what reason(s); and to establish the user satisfaction level. This study examined the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. It specifically sought answers to the following questions:

- 1. What library and information services are provided by the Judiciary of Uganda?
- 2. Who are the actual users of the library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda?
- 3. For what reasons are the library and information services provided by the judiciary utilised?
- 4. How are the library and information services provided by the Judiciary of Uganda utilised?
- 5. What factors influence the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda?

## 3 Theoretical background

This study on the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda was guided by Saracevic and Kantor (2009) theory of use-oriented value of library and information services. Users interact with a library and information service, that is, use or attempt to use the library and information services, for some reason(s). As a result of the interaction, users obtain responses or results, be they positive or negative, as addressed by establishing the level of satisfaction with the library and information services provided. Users evaluate the interaction and the responses in relation to their reason(s) for using the library service(s). Furthermore, the value of library and information services is evaluated by users or user substitutes based on the qualities of

interaction with the service, and the worth or benefits of the results of interaction, as related to the reasons for using the service (Saracevic & Kantor, 2009). Library users in general visit the library with a reason(s) therefore, an information service may have contributory value if the information it provides is connected to the decision by an informed person.

The theory emphasises that the value of library and information services is evaluated by users, hence, the need to find out the value users attach to library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. Therefore, this study sought to establish the factors that influence the utilisation of the library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. Equally important was to identify the hindrances to utilisation in order to propose areas of intervention for effective utilisation of library and information services, as this would in turn lead to effective administration of justice in Uganda.

#### 4 Literature review

This section presents relevant literature review structured according to the major themes of the paper.

# 4.1 Library and information services in the Judiciary

Library and information services in judicial libraries are the services that help users find required information either with or without the help of specialists such as librarians. According to Ranganadham and Babu (2012), library and information services may include table of content pages, electronic document delivery services, and reference services over the web, database access, indexing and abstracting services, referral services and bibliographic searches. They further stress how the availability of information in the electronic media has created an opportunity for global access to information. This helps users to access library and information services easily thereby making it easy for users to access and utilise legal information. Akinyemi (2017) identified the following library and information services offered in judicial libraries: indexing and abstracting, bibliographic instruction, selective dissemination of information (SDI), bibliographic services interlibrary loan, library tours, library exhibitions including display of new additions to the library, compilation of bibliographies, current awareness services (CAS), reference services, acquisition, technical services, Internet/e-mail services, circulation services, and photocopying services. He asserts that there is no doubt that judicial libraries contribute positively to the provision of relevant library and information resources and services to legal practitioners throughout the world. In addition, Eze-Onwuzuruike and Uwaechina (2020) also appraised the state of Anambra State Judicial libraries and identified the services provided. These include selection and acquisition of law resources, organisation of materials, charging and discharging, readership services, reference services, indexing services, gazette filling, law amendment, current awareness service, legal research, interlibrary loan service, provision of user education, provision of selective dissemination of information (SDI) and ICT services. This study sought to ascertain the library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda and to ascertain whether they are different from those in other jurisdictions.

# 4.2 Users of library and information services in judicial libraries

The most crucial component of the 21<sup>st</sup> century library is the user. Every effort put into the establishment of a 21<sup>st</sup> century library is wasted if the library is not optimised for use (Anyira, 2011). Thus, libraries exist priamrily to satisfy the user who is described as anybody who visits the library with the purpose of exploiting its resources to satisfy an information need. In the traditional library setting, library users are easily identifiable because they appear in the library physically most of the time. In an online environment, however, users are identified by their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills through which they are classified as unskilled users (computer illiterate users), semi-skilled users (semi-computer literate users), skilled users (computer literate users) and hackers (unauthorised users) (Anyira, 2011).

Unskilled users are not able to use library and information services because they lack ICT skills. They tend to use the services through third parties that have adequate ICT skills. Semi-skilled library and information services users can use technological devices to access the library and information services with little or no support. This category of users can effectively use the basic search facilities such as the basic search engines but cannot effectively use the advanced search engine features and operators which have the capacity to retrieve only relevant information from the library collections. Skilled users can analyse an information need, how to use basic and advanced search engines effectively and how to formulate queries and keywords effectively. This category of users consists of those who have undergone ICT training and have aquired relative experience in the use of technological innovations as they relate to information retrieval. They can obtain virtually all their information needs as quickly as possible. The users classified as abusers (hackers) are crafty in gaining illegitimate access to library and information services available online. These are most times possessors of virus software with which

they carry out their illegal actions. They use library and information services illegally (Anyira, 2011).

Verma (2014) describes the 21<sup>st</sup> century library as a "library without walls". This is a library in which the collections do not exist on paper, microform, or other tangible form at a physical location, but are electroncally accessible in digital format via computer networks. The library user, therefore, requires 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies to access library collections since access is no longer restricted to the user paying a visit to the library building physically. The library user needs to take more responsibility in locating and retrieving information from the library's collections more than they have done in the traditional library enteprise.

Ramasamy and Padma (2018) opined that a court is a legal environment for the business of litigation often carried out by officers who are either judges, prosecutors or attorneys. According to him, litigation is a serious business that requires well stocked libraries and sufficient library and information services to facilitate sound and well-grounded adjudication where justice is seen to be dispensed. Users of judicial libraries depend highly on them to defend clients adequately and interpret the law intelligently to come up with informed judgement. Other court library users are registrars, accountants and clerks who are supporting staff of the court. They need to improve and update their knowledge for more efficient service in their various areas of specialisation. Some users, for example are students and scholars, use court libraries for research purposes. This study explores the users of the Judiciary of Uganda libraries.

## 4.3 Why and how library and information services are utilised in the Judiciary

Globally libraries and information services provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination in any medium and regardless of limits. It is apparent that library and information services serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture, offering essential support for independent decision-making, cultural development, research and lifelong learning by both individuals and groups. Libraries and information services contribute to the development and preservation of intellectual freedom and help to protect democratic values and universal civil rights (Dana, 2012).

Library and information services are vibrant institutions that connect people with global information resources and the ideas and the creative works they seek. They make available the richness of human expression and cultural diversity in all media, namely, the electronic media and print media (Pareek & Gangrade, 2016). This is enabled by the

global Internet that connects individuals and communities throughout the world, whether in the smallest and most remote villages or the largest cities, to have equal access to information for personal development, education, stimulation, cultural enrichment, economic activity and informed participation in democracy. Furthermore, libraries and information services acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society. In so doing, they make materials, facilities and services equally accessible to all users (Dana, 2012).

Jones and Ilako (2015) assert that access to justice starts in the library. Therefore, the law library provides access to legal information and develops the necessary skills that attorneys need to utilise in order to become a strong force for social justice. Similarly, Johnson (2015) noted that the methods through which library and information services can be used by library users include digital media, such as the library's website, e-mail lists, blogs and podcasts; print materials such as posters and handouts; events such as orientation tours and workshops; and other methods such as brochures, flyers, library publications, direct mail, Web 2.0 applications and displays.

Previously, current awareness services satisfied user's current approach to information and could be accessed through table of content services, automatic notification from tables of contents, book alerting services, and selective dissemination of information. They could also be met by alerting services available through aggregate services, e-newsletters, newspaper filtering services, monitoring through intelligent agents, web site update notification services, web pages with newsworthy content, discussion groups and electronic mailing lists, and personalised web pages. Current awareness services may also be realised through information obtained orally from colleagues; preprints, reprints; or meetings and conferences. Current awareness information may be obtained in both formal and informal means such as scanning of current issues of periodicals, a regular perusal of abstracting and indexing periodicals in one's subject fields, and, in some cases, reviews and monographs (Dawra, 2003). These would give users numerous ways of accessing current information. In addition, libraries provide essential gateways to the Internet. They provide a mechanism for overcoming the barriers created by differences in resources, technology, and training (Lamptey, 2010). Indeed, library and information services are devoted to offering their users access to relevant resources and services without constraints. It is evident from the literature that various scholars highlight the reasons for utilising library and information services but none has focused on the Judiciary of Uganda hence the need for scholarly investigation.

#### 4.4 Factors influencing utilisation of library and information services

Scholars have identified various factors affecting the utilisation of library and information services. For instance, Johnson (2015) reveals that the inability of accessing information via ICTs, which may be as a result of inadequate ICT infrastructure, hinders the utilisation of library and information services. In addition, lack of access to appropriate resources such as software, hardware and Internet access; lack of training in digital literacy; lack of training on how to use ICTs and other technologies can also limit the usage of library and information services. Additionally, Gurikar and Gurikar (2015) observed that the inaccessibility condition and inadequate library resources affect the use of library and information services. He noted that research scholars face innumerable problems which include lack of time, insufficient Internet access points, and short book loan periods. They also face problems like lack of space, power outages, and lack of library orientation among others. This study investigates whether such factors also affect the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda.

The literature reviewed above reveals hardly any information about how library and information services are utilised in the Judiciary of Uganda and thus cannot be relied upon to offer practical solutions to specific problems in the Judiciary of Uganda.

### 5 Methodology

This was a descriptive study conducted in the High Court (Criminal Division) and Supreme Court libraries in the Judiciary of Uganda. These are the oldest judiciary libraries and have a big collection compared to the rest of the judiciary libraries. The study population comprised of 285 library users. This consisted of 220 users of the High Court (Criminal Division) library and 65 from the Supreme Court. The users included justices of the High Court, judges, magistrates, lawyers, and members of the public who use the libraries with permission. In addition, all the five (5) library staff were included in the study.

Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was used to determine the sample for the library users, which was 196 (140 from High Court and 56 from the Supreme Court). Convenience sampling was used to select the library users based on their availability during the time of data collection. Data collection stopped once the required number of users for each library was reached. Data was collected from the library staff using interviews while a questionnaire was administered to the library users. These data collection methods were supplemented by review of some key documents like the strategic plan and annual

reports of the Judiciary of Uganda. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data and the results presented using quotations from the interview transcripts. In addition, Microsoft Excel was used to compute percentages and frequencies for quantitative data collected using the questionnaires. Bar charts and graphs were then used to present the findings.

## **6 Findings**

For purposes of clarity and logical explanation, library users who fully filled the questionnaire were 138 from the High Court and 52 from the Supreme Court. Similarly, 2 library staff of the High Court and 2 library staff of the Supreme Court making a total of 4 were interviewed.

Table 1: Response Rate

High Court (Criminal Division) library			
Tool used	Target response	Actual response	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire	140	138	98.5%
Interview	3	2	67%
Supreme Court Library			
Tool used	Target response	Actual response	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire	56	52	92.8%
Interview	2	2	100%

Out of the 140 targeted library users of the High Court (criminal division) library, only 138 fully filled and returned the questionnaires, while out of the 56 targeted in the Supreme Court, only 52 fully filled and returned the questionnaire. The total number of respondents was therefore 190, constituting 97% response rate.

As indicated in Table 1, out of the 3 intended interviews of the library staff of the High Court, 2 were conducted while all the 2 intended interviews of the library staff of the Supreme Court library were conducted giving a total of 4 interviews. Therefore, responses from 190 library users and 4 library staff from both libraries were considered for data analysis and presentation.

## 6.1 Library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda

The study sought to determine the library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda. Responses were received from the librarians of the two libraries

studied. Both libraries operate from Monday to Friday, 8.00-5.00pm and provide almost similar library and information services. These include current awareness services, referral services, research/literature search, Internet/e-mail services, circulation services, photocopying and newspaper clippings. These are described below.

Current Awareness Service: This involves notifying users of the current additions to the library collection. The High Court and Supreme Court libraries display the book jackets of the new additions on the libraries notice boards which are located next to the entrance of each library and are accessible to all users. The purpose of providing current awareness service in these libraries is to attract library users' attention to new library resources with the view of encouraging them to use the resources when they are finally integrated into the general library collection, thus promoting usage of the resources.

Referral Service: The two libraries studied provide referral services by directing users to where they can obtain certain resources and services that are not available in their home libraries. It was established that librarians refer users to other Judiciary of Uganda libraries, the Judicial Studies Institute, Makerere University Library and the Law Development Centre. This service is provided to save the time of the library users because they are immediately referred to where to get the required information resources. One Librarian said:

"If users come looking for information materials that we do not have in our collection, we refer them either to Makerere University or Law Development Centre because they have almost all the required information materials about Law".

Research/Literature Search: This service involves studying information materials mainly based on individual user requests, notifying the users about the existence of certain resources and making them available. Searching is done from both print and online resources. The intention is to "save the user's time so that they can effectively administer justice" as revealed by one of the librarians. Another librarian said:

"We provide information to our users on how to find the information they need on request for assistance so that they do not waste time looking for information materials. We guide them in selecting the most appropriate information resources and services".

Selective Dissemination of Information: Selective Dissemination of Information was described as a special type of current awareness service which provides each user with the references to documents to their predefined areas of interest selected from documents published recently or received during a particular span of time. The High

Court and Supreme Court libraries create their users' profile which are matched with the document profile and the notification about the availability of a document in the library is sent to users through their electronic mails. Feedback from library users is sent to library staff on the library's general electronic mail address. This service is provided to save the time of the library users that could have been wasted on the way to the library and on reading through a number of items looking for the required information. One library staff said:

"We have a list of electronic mails of all the judicial officers and Judiciary staff. So, we created a mailing list which we use to send them information about the libraries' new stock and other information that we feel is relevant to them in relation to their field of specialisation".

Internet/E-mail Services: The High Court library has 5 computers and Supreme Court library has 3 computers and all are connected to the Internet. The premises also have Wi-Fi that connects users' laptops and smart phones to the Internet.

Circulation Services: Circulation services involve allowing users to borrow library materials for use outside the library premises. This service is extended only to library users who present valid identity cards, register with the library and sign in the borrower register. On return of the resources, the librarians clear them out and issue back their identity cards. However, the justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the High Court do not leave their identity cards in the libraries, but instead sign on the issue out cards or the borrowers' register. The borrowers' register enables librarians to tell who borrowed a particular resource and the period they have spent with the item for easy follow-up.

Photocopying Services: This is considered an important aspect of reader services activities in the Judiciary of Uganda libraries. It serves as a substitute for book loans which saves the scarce materials from getting lost in transit while also saving the time. In addition, it helps to maximise the use of the collection. However, photocopying is limited to only 10 pages at a time for both libraries. This is especially so if the source is a copyrighted material.

Newspaper Clippings. This involves cutting out articles, and pictures from the newspapers, classifying and filing them for future reference. Focus is laid on articles and pictures about the Judiciary of Uganda and other articles related to law. An example of such a clipping is shown in Figure 1.

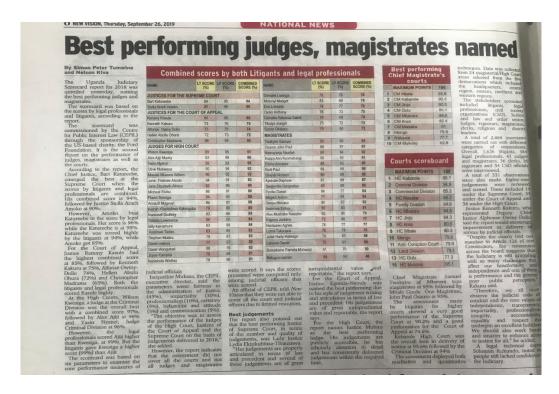


Fig 1: Sample Newspaper clipping

Source: The New Vision, Thursday September 26, 2019

# 6.2 Users of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

The second research question addressed by this study was to determine the users of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. The findings are as presented in Figure 2.

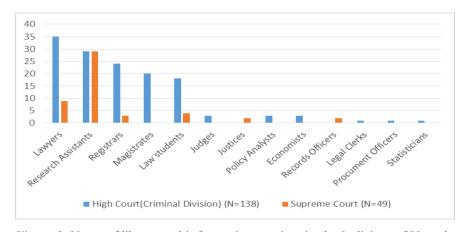


Figure 2: Users of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

The High Court library had more users (138(74%) while the Supreme Court Library had 49(26%). The findings also revealed that the High Court library was more accessible to the users who included policy analysts, economists, procurement officers and statisticians compared to the Supreme Court. This was probably because of the variations in the

nature of business conducted by the courts being served by these libraries. The findings also revealed that while the High Court library serves judges, the Supreme Court library serves justices. However, both libraries had an equal number of research assistants as these provide research support to both the judges and justices.

## 6.3 Reasons for utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

Saracevic-Kantor (2009) theory of use-oriented value of library and information services states that users interact with a library and information service, that is, use or attempt to use a service, for some reason(s). It was therefore prudent to ascertain the reasons why users utilised the library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. Various reasons were given including the need for timely access to legal information, promotion of human rights, fast decision making, research, to prosecute cases diligently, effective administration of justice, for equity and respect, accountability, the need to deliver quality service to the public and to stimulate and sustain public trust. For instance, one respondent wrote:

"I cannot administer justice without referring to the library resources. I need the services for my daily work"

The findings of the study are also in agreement with Dawra (2003) who pointed out that the main aim of utilising library and information services in court libraries is to stimulate and sustain user's satisfaction in the utilisation of legal and other related information resources. Therefore, there is always a reason for the utilisation of library and information services.

## 6.4 How the library and information services are utilised in the Judiciary of Uganda

The third research question sought to establish how the library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda are utilised. In order to address this research, question the study examined the frequency of utilisation of the library and information services in the two libraries, how the specific library and information services are utilised, and also assessed the level of satisfaction with the services.

The frequency of utilising the services by the library users varies from one library to another and from one user to another. The frequency of use by library users for each of the libraries was analysed and the findings are shown in Figure 3.

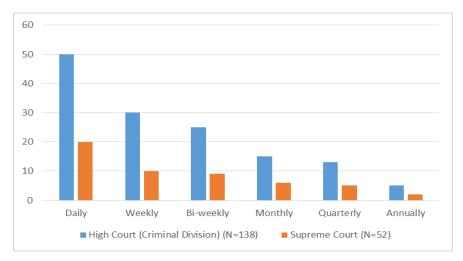


Figure 3: Frequency of use of library and information services

The findings in Figure 3 reveals that the majority of the library users of the two libraries use the services on a daily basis. In the High Court library, 50(36.2%) utilise library and information services daily, 30(21.7%) use them weekly, 25(18.1%) bi-weekly, 15(10.8%) monthly, and 13(9.4) quarterly, while 5(3.6%) use the services annually. On the other hand, at the Supreme Court library, the majority 20(38.4%) of the users also use the library and information services on a daily basis, 10(19.2%) use weekly, 9(17.3%) bi-weekly, 6(11.5%) monthly, 5(9.6%) quarterly and 2 (3.8%) use the services annually. These findings imply that library and information services satisfy different information requirements of users. Therefore, the frequency of utilisation varies from one user to another based on their information requirements at a given period of time.

It was necessary to ascertain how specific library and information services are utilised in the Judiciary of Uganda. The findings reveal a high level of utilisation of the library and library and information services whereby 38.7% regularly utilise the services, 39% sometimes utilise and only 22.2% rarely use the services. This signifies high use of the library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. Details in the Figure 4.

The study also sought to establish the level of satisfaction with the Library and Information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda. The findings indicated that 64(34%) were very satisfied, 33(17%) were averagely satisfied, 89(47%) were fairly satisfied, while 4(2%) were not satisfied with the services provided.

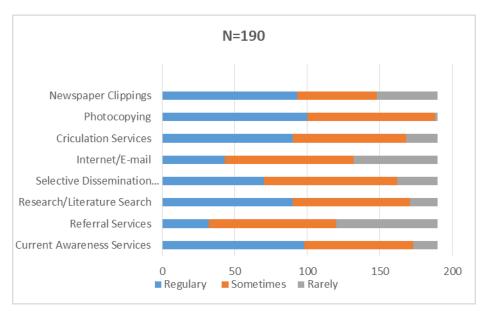


Figure 4: Frequency of use of library services

# 6.5 Factors influencing utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

Library users identified various factors that influence the manner in which they utilise the library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. These included knowledge about the library services, library policies, currency of the library collection, Internet connectivity, ICT and library skills. These are presented in Figure 5.

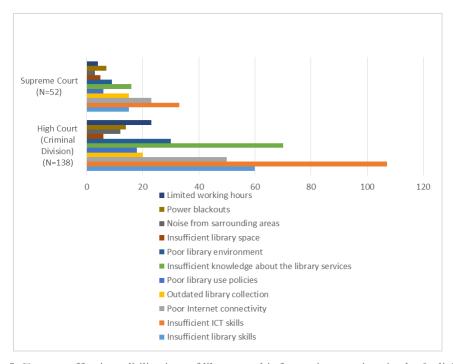


Figure 5: Factors affecting ulitilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

For both libraries studied, insufficient ICT skills stood out as a major hindrance to the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. This was followed by poor Internet connectivity and insufficient knowledge about the library services. Similarly, noise from the surrounding areas, insufficient library space, poor library policies and power blackouts were highlighted as a minor hindrance to utilisation of the library and information services. In agreement with what the library users said, librarians confirmed that users lack knowledge about how to use library and information services.

"Library users find it hard to use library and information services such as the Online Public Access Catalogue and online databases because they lack information on how to use them"

Another one agreed to the fact that the library and information services in this library are not up to date and most of the library holdings such as law journals are very old. He further said that "the library website is not regularly up to date to meet the needs of the library users".

Librarians also cited insufficient funding of the library as a major challenge leading to insufficient bandwidth, thus poor Internet; insufficient capacity building; and ICT facilities. One library staff had this to say:

"In most cases staff training abroad is sponsored by our development partners such as Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS). However, majority of the courses offered by these development partners are for law professionals leaving out library professionals. This makes it hard for staff form the support services to attend these trainings. Currently, the Judiciary on its own has limited funds to support staff training. We hope to overcome this when government increases funding to Judiciary.

On the other hand, library staff were of the view that they find it hard to organise user education more effectively given the different category of users and their status as well as the advent of electronic resources which has changed the information landscape. In agreement with the library users, one library staff said:

"Library users face challenges with the use of online resources. Some such as old users find it hard to use online resource because they are computer immigrants".

Other challenges identified include difficulty in using electronic sources due to poor browsing skills; complexity of online resources; and large mass of irrelevant information provided by online resources which cause confusion to the library users. They indicated that filtering the results from searches to get the required information is time-consuming. This, coupled with slow Internet speed and poor network service, leads to download delay, inaccessibility of some electronic resources and difficulties in navigating through electronic resources. In addition, there was general lack of access to computers as the ratio of computers to library users was 1:30 for the High Court library and 1:20 for the Supreme Court library.

ICT skills of library and information services users in the Judiciary of Uganda were further examined and it was established that the majority of the users lacked the required ICT skills to effectively utilise the library and information services provided by the libraries. For instance, out of a total 138 users of the High Court library, 100(72%) were semi-skilled and 9(7%) were un-skilled; only 29(21%) were skilled. Similarly, only 17(33%) were skilled in the Supreme Court while 30(58%) and 5(10%) were semi-skilled and unskilled respectively.

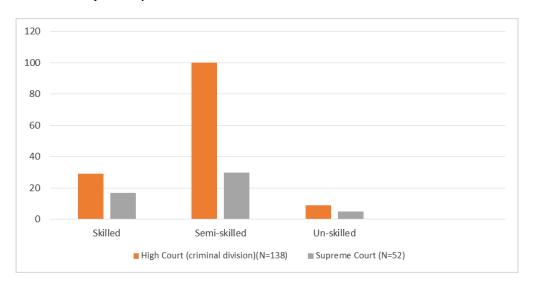


Figure 6: ICT skills of library users

Librarians also revealed that lack of up to date, newer types of user interaction is another challenge hindering utilisation of library and information services. One respondent had this to say:

"There is a clear shift from traditional ways of providing library and information services to modern and digital dimension which is brought about by Information and Communication Technologies. The emergency of new demands surrounding information and its delivery naturally dictates the need for libraries to meet the emerging user interests and desires, and to create newer types of user interaction".

Other hindrances included lack of clear library policies which can guide the librarians on how best to serve their users; unreliable power supply; and limited working hours. The findings revealed that the library only operates from Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm and yet some users would wish to use it over the weekend and past 5:00pm because those are the convenient days and time for them to read.

Noise was noted as another factor affecting utilisation of library and information services at the High Court Library. This comes from the surrounding neighbourhood such as city square given the fact that this library is situated in the city and the heart of Kampala.

The above factors affecting utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda show that the services are being utilised but the factors mentioned hinder effective utilisation thus creating a gap in service delivery in the administration of justice in Uganda. The above findings are in agreement with Gurikar & Gurikar (2015) who observed that the inaccessibility, condition and inadequate library resources affect the use of library and information services.

# 6.6 Suggestions to improve utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda

Based on the hindrances identified, both library users and the librarians suggested measures for improving the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. They suggested regular user training, formulation of viable policies, regular update of library and information services, subscription to materials relevant to the Ugandan laws, digitisation of the libraries, increasing the bandwidth to improve the Internet speed, provision of more and relevant ICT facilities, updating the libraries' websites, provision of adequate library space, regular updating of the library and information services, working on weekends to increase the working hours, provision of adequate funding, capacity building for library staff, installation of noise-proof equipment in the library, procurement and installation of power backup systems, and relocation of the Supreme Court library to a more accessible place.

In agreement with the librarians, the library users suggested digitisation of both libraries. This was corroborated by responses from the librarians who confirmed that the greatest areas of intervention to achieve effective administration of justice in Uganda is digitisation. One librarian had this to say:

"If we can get funds for digitising the library holdings and library and information services, then that will be a great achievement because we will be able to reach out to our clients from wherever they are without physically coming to the library. Our clients especially the young lawyers like using online resource".

#### Another one said:

"If we can get funds to fully digitise the library, then we shall be good to go into the modern world and modern trends of providing and utilising library and information services will be achieved".

One librarian suggested that training in the use of library and information services should be part of all users' education and an ongoing process.

"There is therefore the need for instruction in the use of library and information services at all levels of the library users. For electronic library and information services, detailed instructions in methods of searching and formulation of clear requests and referencing are necessary.

Further suggestions include re-designing and transforming library and information services to meet the demands of modern library users, and increasing of library funding.

## 7 Discussion of findings

This study has identified various library and information services provided by the Judiciary of Uganda. Some are similar to those identified by Akinyemi (2017) and Eze-Onwuzuruike and Uwaechina (2020). These include selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), reference services, internet/e-mail services, and photocopying services provided by libraries of the Nigerian Judiciary. There is, however, a need to scale up the services to enhance ICT adoption and integration of social media in the provision of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda.

It is notable that library and information services provided in the Judiciary of Uganda influence service delivery and the administration of justice in Uganda. As noted by Pareek and Gangrade (2016), library and information services are key elements in court libraries in encouraging social inclusion, by striving to serve all those in their user communities. Thus, the Judiciary of Uganda, just like any other institutions, cannot survive without reliable library and information services. It is therefore a good practice for librarians to disseminate the available library and information services to their users and to train them on how to use the services for effective administration of justice.

One of the main functions of libraries is directed at actively exploiting the collection to satisfy the information needs of library users. This study has established that the majority of the library users in the Judiciary of Uganda are judicial officers. Although the research

assistants were dominant, these carry out research on behalf of the justices and judges. The most crucial component of the 21<sup>st</sup> century library is the user. Every effort put into the establishment of a 21<sup>st</sup> century library would be wasted if the library is not meant for use because the library user is the most important person in any library setting. Irrelevant materials do not inspire users to visit the library and if they do not visit the library, even the available library and information services cannot be utilised. Therefore, library users greatly impact the library and information services provided and, consequently, their utilisation.

There are various reasons users utilise library and information services in the Judiciary. The Judiciary of Uganda library and information services are utilised in order to access timely legal information, establish the right book, decision making and prosecuting cases diligently and research. Although the reasons vary from one user to another, there must be reasons for the utilisation of library and information services. These findings concur with Saracevic-Kantor's theory of use-oriented value of library and information services that users interact with a library and information service, that is, use or attempt to use a service, for some reason(s) but during the interaction the reason(s) may be altered, but there are reasons at all times. As a result of the interaction, users obtain responses or results, be they positive or negative (Saracevic & Kantor, 2009). This is also in agreement with Dawra (2003) who pointed out that the main aim of utilisation of library and information services in court libraries is to stimulate and sustain users' satisfaction in the utilisation of legal and other related information resources. Johnson (2015) also suggested that library and information services are utilised to guide library users in accessing information for decision making, and promote problem solving approaches. Therefore, users always have reasons for utilising the library and information services provided. Librarians should provide library and information services relevant to the users' needs.

There are various ways library and information services are utilised not only in the Judiciary of Uganda, but in various library environments. Without differing so much from the Judiciary of Uganda, Johnson (2015) established that the methods through which library and information services can be used include use of digital media, such as the library's website, e-mail lists, blogs and podcasts; print materials, such as posters, and handouts; events such as orientation tours and workshops; and other methods such as brochures, flyers, library publications, direct mail, Web 2.0 applications and through displays. The manner in which library and information services are provided influences

the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. Pareek and Gangrade (2016) established that the global Internet enables individuals and communities throughout the world, whether in the smallest and most remote villages or the largest cities, to have equality of access to information for personal development, education, and informed democratic participation.

A number of factors affect the utilisation of library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda. These include insufficient library skills, poor Internet connectivity, outdated library and information collection, inadequate access to ICT facilities, insufficient staff, and unreliable power supply. This is reinforced by Gurikar and Gurikar (2015) who noted that the inaccessibility condition and inadequate library resources affect the use of library and information services. Such factors affect the utilisation of library and information services and are a hindrance to decision making, access to legal information and administration of justice.

This study has identified measures that can be adopted to improve the utilisation of library and information services including digitisation and capacity building for the library staff. For the users, Gurikar and Gurikar (2015) advised that effective instruction should decrease the time which would have been wasted in searching bibliographic databases and would open more possibilities for the users. It is also believed that improving users' knowledge of the available library and information services could be a motivating factor for more usage and more demands on the library.

# 8 Conclusion and recommendations

Library and information services are key important elements in effective administration of justice in Uganda. This study has confirmed that judiciary libraries provide almost similar services but users have varying reasons why they utilise the services. Provision of library and information services should address user needs. Librarians should be knowledgeable of their users and the users' needs to promote effective utilisation of library and information services. Users' involvement in library planning offers possible opportunities for increasing library funding, credibility and effectiveness of the Judiciary of Uganda libraries. This is because users are the best placed to identify their own needs, and to set priorities amongst their needs. Library users in the Judiciary of Uganda should therefore be involved in library planning.

Various factors hinder effective utilisation of library and information services in the judiciary. Consequently, they affect administration of justice. Technology, more than

anything else, greatly impact library operations. ICT skill levels of the users, space provision, services provided, library programmes, and user expectations all affect the utilisation of library services. Reduced budgets have also significantly impacted library and information services provided in the Judiciary.

Therefore, this study recommends re-designing and transformation of the Judiciary of Uganda's library and information services to meet the current user needs in order to enable effective administration of justice. The Judiciary should consider digitisation and provision of online access to information resources, subscription to electronic resources, capacity building for both the library staff and users, marketing of the services and putting in place policies that will promote effective access and utilisation of library and information services.

## 9 Implications of the study

The above recommendations call for increased funding towards library and information services in the Judiciary of Uganda in order to adopt modern ICTs, capacity building and subscription to electronic resources. The government should also increase the Judiciary's budget to enable it to fund the library. This is one among not so many studies carried out to address library and information services utilisation not only in the Judiciary of Uganda but across many national judiciaries globally. It therefore serves as a springboard for further library and information studies on the Judiciary. In addition, this study is of significance to Judiciary policy makers and other stake-holders as it highlights some of the important issues that should be considered when planning for library and information services in the Judiciary.

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