The Strategic Management Practices in Academic Libraries in Kenya: The Case of USIU Library

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Abstract

This research investigated the practices of strategic management in academic libraries. The paper is based on a study that was conducted in 2009-2010. Using USIU library as a case study, it aimed to find out the nature of shifting paradigms in information management, establish the key challenges and ascertained how strategic management was practiced. A descriptive research design was used with a sample size of 153 drawn from students, library and teaching staff. Descriptive, inferential statistics and factor analysis were used. The volatility in information industry has necessitated the application of strategic management principles in information management. This is characterized by far-reaching impacts of ICT, paradigm shifts in users' behavior and subsequent changes in librarian's roles with implications on library's strategy development, implementation and evaluation. Staff welfare matters and leadership are critical in successful implementation of the desired strategy. The study concludes that strategic behavior in academic libraries is being inhibited by the leadership behavior, structures, systems, and lack of strategy supportive policies. It underscores the critical role played by library management in building competitive organization. It recommends installation of appropriate leadership models for better alignment of staff goals with those of the library. Strategic behavior should be nurtured in academic libraries through involvement of all stakeholders in strategic management process. The study further recommends need for clear communication and measures of institutionalizing library vision, mission, objective, values, and timely evaluation of performance. Librarians should play a front role in reflecting responsiveness to library's strategic issues in their professional practice.

Key Words: Strategic Management, Academic libraries, Strategic Behavior, Information Management, Management Systems, Change Management, Library Strategy

Introduction

Advances in telecommunications, new techniques in information and knowledge management have facilitated the rapid transformation of data, information and knowledge into digital form, while leaps in fiber optical communication, wireless technology and software development have aided the provision of powerful new methods of information (Lawrence & Averil, 2002). This scenario has forced many organizations to re-examine their strategies in the last decade (Abraham and Leavy, 2007), and libraries are not exceptional.

It is evident that for the past few years, academic libraries have been operating in a high-velocity environment where information demand, competition, technology, access and copyright issues are constantly changing. However, there has been little systematic empirical research focusing on how academic libraries should strategically respond in order to remain relevant. Pearce and Robinson (2007) observed the need for managers and policy makers in organizations to understand how to react to changes in the environment. Globally, academic libraries have been seeking to sustain

competitive competencies in the changing environment. Macmillan and Carlisle (2007) advocated for adoption of a management approach that interacts with their internal and external models of change and embracement of creativity and innovation in order to change at least as fast as consumer expectations. Chakravarthy and Lorange (2007:2) quoted the CEO of Nestle where he had said "to maintain leadership position, firms need to leapfrog, move faster and go beyond what consumers will tell". The adoption of strategic management practices and systems in organizations is therefore critical.

The Nature of Strategic Management Practices in Academic Libraries

Strategic management is defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives and adapt in the environment (Ward & Peppard 2002). Genus (1995) said that strategic management focuses on integrating all organizational activities for the purpose of achieving organizational success. Pearce and Robinson (2007) views strategic management as the process of specifying an organization's objectives, developing policies and plans to achieve those objectives, and allocating resources so as to implement the plans. They describe it as the highest level of managerial activity that is usually performed by the company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and corporate team to provide overall direction to the whole organization.

Abraham and Leavy (2007) argued that the success of theories, concepts and tools in the practice of strategic management is exhibited in careful analysis of industry and competitive conditions, behavior and how managers tackle the task of crafting and executing strategies as opposed to using high powered quantitative techniques. As the pace of change accelerates, Pearce and Robinson (2007) observed that the nature of strategy planning work has shifted from emphasizing analysis and forecasting to communication, co-ordination, and control. This study has noted that library services have evolved over the course of time, and little thought has been given to what strategies might be employed. Many academic libraries are also not certain of underlying implications. Riggs, (2005) said that changes are evolving and being implemented rapidly without forethought. Many academic libraries lack preparedness for this shift. Many are also in dilemma of how they should reform the management process, systems and practices in order to cope (Beinhocker & Kaplan 2006).

Moreover, many academic libraries in Kenya lack clear alignment of their mission and facilities to the emerging trends. Also warranting is the strategic behavior in respect to mushrooming shifts in information seeking behaviors of users. More recent research on usage of electronic resources indicated that a rapidly growing percentage of the use of electronic library resources occurs outside of the library. A study by Tenopir (2003) concluded that students would rarely go to the library to retrieve electronic resources using obsolete equipment when their own computers are faster, better equipped to handle multimedia and loaded with all software they need to complete their assignments.

Challenges in Strategic Information Management

Published studies reveal little empirical work which seeks to explore and understand the underlying challenges in strategic information and knowledge management. Moreover, there has been little systematic empirical research focusing on competitive strategizing and library's management model appropriate for the changing environment. Many academic libraries are limited by management model which are occasionally characterized by bureaucratic processes and top-down decision making, concentration of power at the top and deafness to foreign ideas (Corrall, 2005). Allio (2008) argued that the standard management model that served the industry for most of last century is no longer best suited to meet the demands of greater technological innovation and subsequent adaptability necessary for a library to survive and thrive in the rapidly evolving competitive information industry. This study aimed to establish the managerial practices, model, system and strategic behavior in academic libraries in order to enhance employee creativity and innovation necessary for coping with complexity in the changing environment.

At United States International University (USIU), the overall strategic management process is usually initiated and coordinated by the director of institutional planning and development. Heads of functional units such as the library are hence expected to involve their staff in the process. The execution and evaluation is also expected to be a joint effort of all stakeholders. This study found the need to ascertain the practice on the ground, identify the gaps and recommend appropriate measures.

Materials and Methods
A descriptive survey design was used to obtain data for accurate description of strategic management practices at USIU library. The design helped to critically ascertain the strategic behaviour and systems available at USIU library. Data was collected from sixty (60) undergraduate students, fifty (50) postgraduate students, (30) members of teaching staff and twenty two (22) library staff through questionnaires where stratified sampling technique was used for both students and teaching staff while census was used for library staff. The likert-scale questions in the questionnaires were used to establish various perceptions sought from respondents. Collected data was analysed by use of SPSS, excel and use of thematic technique for open-ended questions. Descriptive statistics mainly mean, mode, frequencies, and percentages were used for quantitative data. Chi-square was used for multiple likert questions to establish significance of the results in selected areas. The analysed information was presented in a descriptive format with support of frequency tabulation, charts and in other instances descriptive statements have been used.

Results

The overall response rate of the study was 74 percent.
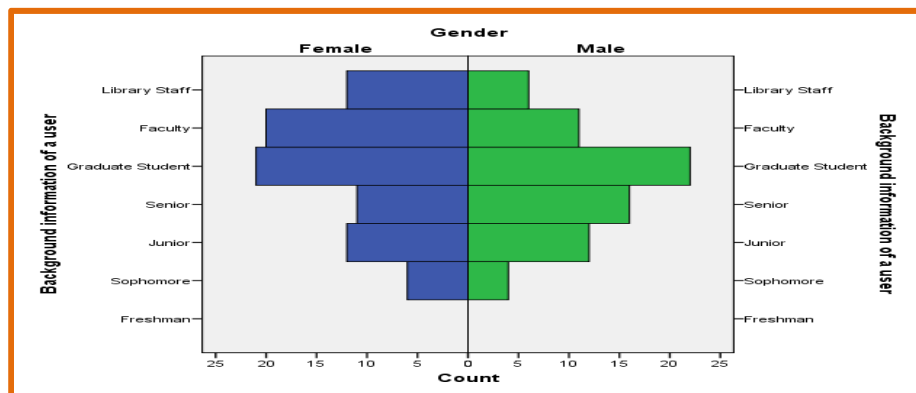
Fig 1: Response Rate

The high response rate was instrumental in making meaningful conclusion of this study.

Technology Awareness in Libraries

There is a moderate level of awareness of technologies used in libraries. Analyzed data gave a mean awareness of 2.96 out of five which represent 59.2% awareness.

Table 1: Respondent's Level of Awareness of listed Technologies in Academic Libraries

Common Technologies used in Academic Libraries, n= 153	Mean	Percentage
1. Storage: PCs, servers, external hard discs	3.69	73.8%
2. Identification: Barcode, biometric	3.38	67.6%
3. Databases: Electronic books, electronic journal databases	3.27	65.4%
4. Digital Library Software: e.g. Green stone, Dspace, e-prints, etc.	3.05	61%
5. Library information management systems	2.59	51.8%
6. Networking: Thin client-server technologies	2.42	48.4%
7. Library Web 3.0: The application of interactive, collaborative and multimedia web-based technologies to web-based library services and collection	2.33	46.6%
Average	**2.96**	**59.2%**

There is a moderate positive correlation between the different clients of library and general awareness of different technologies used in academic libraries.

Table 2: Correlations between the different Clients of Library and General awareness of different Technologies used in Libraries

	Spearman's rho	Storage	Identification	Databases	Digital Library	Library information management	Networking	Library Web2.0
Background information of a user n= 153	Correlation Coefficient	.142	.183(*)	.203(*)	.302(**)	.082	.206(*)	.104
Sig. (2-tailed)		.080	.024	.012	.000	.314	.011	.203

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This indicates that the level of awareness varies with year of study among the students.

According to factor analysis tables below, technology awareness in the library yielded eigen value of 3.778 and loaded significantly on one component as shown below.

Table 3: Communalities and Components Extraction on Technologies in Libraries

No.	Technologies in Libraries	Initial	Extraction	Component Matrix on Technologies in Libraries; Component = 1
1.	Storage devices	1.000	.535	.731
2.	Identification technology	1.000	.581	.762
3.	Electronic Databases	1.000	.395	.628
4.	Institutional Digital Library software	1.000	.629	.793
5.	Library information management	1.000	.582	.763
6.	Networking technologies	1.000	.646	.803
7.	Library Web 2.0	1.000	.410	.640

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. 1 component extracted

Table 4: Total Variance Explained on Technologies in Libraries

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1.	3.778	53.968	53.968	3.778	53.968	53.968
2.	.923	13.193	67.161			
3.	.595	8.500	75.660			
4.	.556	7.939	83.599			
5.	.433	6.185	89.785			
6.	.397	5.667	95.451			
7.	.318	4.549	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

This indicates that there is advance use of technologies and its impacts are significantly affecting academic libraries. There is also moderate level of awareness on paradigm shifts which have been occasioned by adoption of ICT in libraries. Analyzed data gave slightly high percentage awareness (65%).

Table 5: Respondents' Level of Awareness on Paradigm Shifts Occasioned by Adoption of ICT in Academic Libraries

Paradigm shift induced by ICT in libraries (n= 153)	Mean out of 5	Percentages
Traditional libraries to digital libraries	3.83	77%
Card catalogs to Web OPACs	3.82	76%
Chains/ magnetic strips to RFID tags	3.76	75%
Print journals to online electronic journals	3.35	67%
Ownership to open access model	3.31	66%
Library physical access to remote accessibility	3.17	63%
Information availability from libraries 9am –9pm to 24/7	3.03	61%
Photocopies to digital copies	3.00	60%
Standalone libraries to Information networks	2.85	57%
Real time to virtual libraries	2.22	44%
Average	**3.23**	**65%**

Shift on the Role of a Librarian during Digital Era

The wide use of ICT and digitization of information has caused a tremendous shift on the role of a librarian. An overwhelming number of library users are increasingly aware of these shifts. Analyzed data indicated

seventy six percent (76%) of total respondents agreed to the new roles of a librarian in digital era. Figure 2 below provide ranking of new roles of a librarian during digital era.
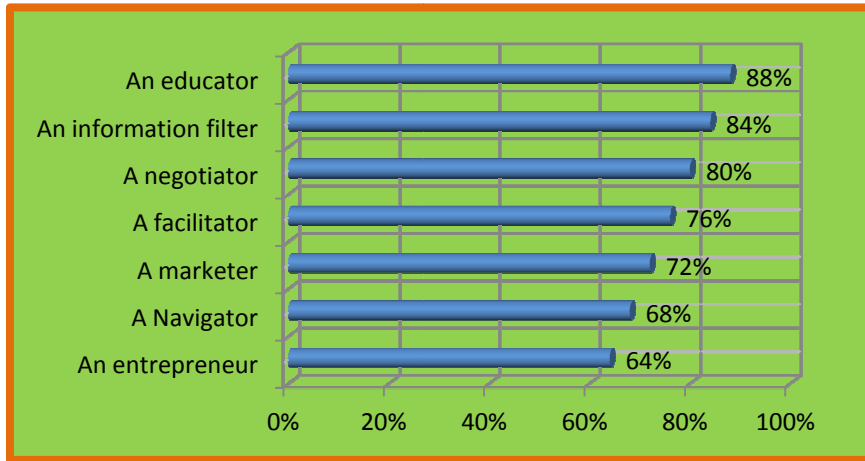
Fig 2: Users' ranking on the New Roles of a Librarian during Digital Era

The educational, information filtering, negotiating and facilitating roles yielded very high percentage which indicates great importance of these particular roles in academic libraries in present times.

Library's strategic issues such as information access, technology, and the library professionals are all positively correlated to the changing roles of a librarian both as a negotiator and as a navigator. This indicates that advances and dynamics on information access, technology, and the library professionals necessitate the important role of a librarian as negotiator and as a navigator.

Table 6: Correlation of Library's Strategic Management Issues and New Roles of a Librarian as a Negotiator and as a Navigator

Strategic Management Issues n= 153	Spearman's rho	A negotiator	A navigator
Information access	Correlation Coefficient	.198(*)	.244(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.002
Funding	Correlation Coefficient	.166(*)	.306(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.000
The user services and support	Correlation Coefficient	.112	.247(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.169	.002
Technology	Correlation Coefficient	.272(**)	.355(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000
Environment	Correlation Coefficient	.095	.222(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.243	.006
The library professionals	Correlation Coefficient	.195(*)	.263(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.001
Institutional objectives	Correlation Coefficient	.124	.155
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.128	.056

All the new roles of a librarian during digital era loaded significantly on one component yielding a strong eigen value of 3.192. The factor analysis tables below provide a clear picture.

Table 7: Communalities on the New Role of Librarian during Digital Era

No		Initial	Extraction	Component Matrix the New Role of Librarian during Digital Era Component = 1
1.	A negotiator	1.000	.356	.597
2.	A navigator	1.000	.515	.718
3.	A facilitator	1.000	.645	.803
4.	An educator	1.000	.411	.641
5.	An entrepreneur	1.000	.312	.559
6.	An information filter	1.000	.576	.759
7.	A Marketer	1.000	.376	.613

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. 1 component extracted

Table 8: Total Variance Explained on the New Role of Librarian during Digital Era

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
8.	3.192	45.595	45.595	3.192	45.595	45.595
9.	.850	12.140	57.735			
10.	.815	11.639	69.374			
11.	.687	9.818	79.192			
12.	.674	9.621	88.813			
13.	.416	5.937	94.750			
14.	.367	5.250	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The one strong component indicates how each new role is significant during the digital era hence a greater needs of focus on each of them.

Challenges Encountered in Strategic Information Management

The percentage score below provides ranking of challenges encountered in strategic information management.

Table 9: Key Challenges Encountered in Strategic Information Management

No.	Challenges (n = 153)	Percentages
1.	Low staff morale	84%
2.	Poor communication	83%
3.	Information illiteracy among library users	82%
4.	Insufficient bandwidth in the institution	82%
5.	Shifting users' preferences, tastes and expectations	82%
6.	Limited provision of information resources on open access model	79%
7.	Infringement of intellectual property rights	78%
8.	Challenges in the provision of seamless integration to different databases, electronic and online resources	78%
9.	Lack of administrative support	78%
10.	Lack of institutional repositories	77%
11.	Unforeseeable changes in the environment	77%
12.	The management style, structures and systems	76%
13.	Staff shortage	76%
14.	Resistance to change	76%
15.	Financial constraints	74%
16.	Lack of skills and competencies from staff	74%
17.	Non-disclosure of vital information	72%

No.		Percentages
18.	Advanced internet infrastructure	71%
	Average	**78%**

This indicates that all the above challenges are adversely affecting academic libraries and hence the greater need for appropriate coping strategies.

The study further sought for appropriate response measures needed at academic libraries in order to cope to the highly changing environment. The table below provides ranking of various suggested measures.

Table 10: Measures to Overcome Challenges in Strategic Management in Academic Libraries

No.	Measures; n= 153	Percentages
1.	Strengthen the role of library in supporting research and development	90.8%
2.	Periodic compensation review	87.8%
3.	Have excellent equipment	87.6%
4.	Conducting periodic environmental surveys	86%
5.	Strengthen the role of library in information literacy program	85.8%
6.	Annual user satisfaction surveys	84.8%
7.	Rigorous technological innovation	84.2%
8.	Services differentiation and positioning	84%
9.	Objective annual staff development programs	83.8%
10.	Provision of online point-of-need tutorials	82.4%
11.	Through innovative and aggressive marketing and promotion	81.6%
12.	Regular review of library strategy, departmental structures and administrative systems	80.6%
	Average	**84.6%**

The need for conspicuous role of library in supporting research and development topped the list of measures (90.8%). It also stood out that all the suggested measures are (average scores = 84.6%) very appropriate and requires careful consideration when crafting a library strategy during the development process. All the strategic management issues affecting libraries showed an overwhelming percentage agreement score.

Strategic Management Issues considered when Crafting Strategy of an academic Library

Technology was rated to have greatest magnitude and weight on academic library and hence its critical consideration.
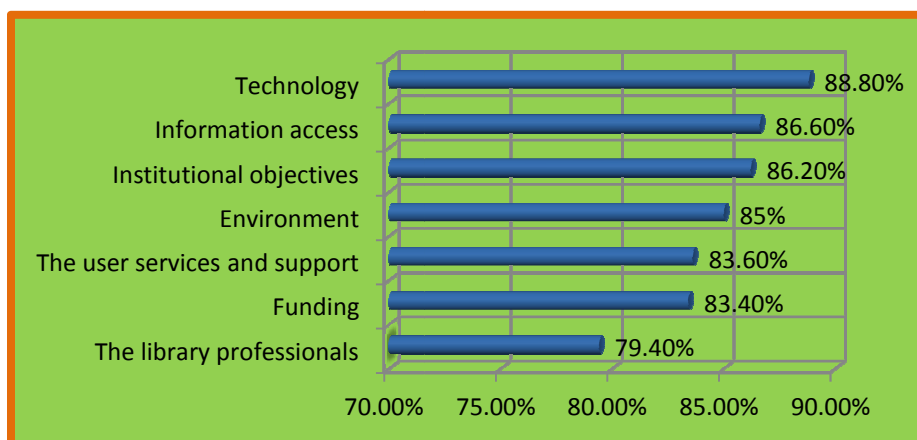
Fig 3 Ranking of the Magnitude of Library's Strategic Management Issues on Library Strategy

Library professional was rated least among the strategic issues while technology was regarded to have the greatest magnitude. However, the average percentage score of 84.71 percent indicates that the magnitude of all the above strategic issues on academic library was significantly high.

Management of Strategic Change

Majority of respondents indicated a relative neutral position regarding various change management initiatives.

Table 11: Ranking of Change Management Initiatives

No.	Change Management Initiatives	Percentages
1.	Changing the system and structures as well as getting rid of obstacles that undermines strategic behaviour	70%
2.	Continuous training programs for staff and users	64%
3.	Institutionalizing change process through standard operating procedures	63%
4.	Institute mechanisms that ensures team work and collaborative approach to problem solving	57%
5.	Prompt communication and open discussion with library stakeholders	57%
6.	Develop and ensure leadership development and succession	57%
7.	Library managers to maintain interactive dialogue with staff in order to manage issues that may blindside them	55%
8.	Coherent policies on hiring, promoting, rewarding and developing staffs	53%
9.	Coaching and replacement of staff who cannot cope with change	50%
10.	Periodic attitude surveys to chart the progress of change effort	47%
	Average	**57%**

Lack of effective involvement of all stakeholders in strategic management process explains the basis for the above responses. Surprisingly, a greater percentage of users (37.9%) disagreed that library has ensured prompt communication and open discussion with stakeholders for intended changes from time to time.

Library Staffs' Standard of Excellence in Service Delivery

Respondents agreed with suggested standard of excellence where the following percentage ranking was established.

Table 12: Ranking of Standard of Excellence in Academic Libraries

No.	Suggested Standard of Excellence	Percentages
1.	Timely acting on feedbacks and recommendations gotten from users' satisfaction surveys	88%
2.	Encouraging team approach to information services	88%
3.	Through regular in-house staff training programs and regular maintenance of facilities	87%
4.	Through periodic open forums with all library staffs	87%
5.	Involvement of library users and all library staff in change management initiatives	86%
6.	Through established strategy-supportive policies and operating procedures	86%
7.	Institutionalizing library's values and philosophy	85%
8.	Instituting a comprehensive code of ethics and compliance procedures	84%
9.	Through benchmarking schemes and programs	84%
10.	Through staffs' annual performance appraisals	82%
11.	Through one-to-one coaching, mentorship and guidance	75%
	Average	**85%**

The results provided measures of enhancing library staffs' standard of excellence. Notably, performance appraisals are meant to uplift staff morale but analyzed data did not concur with this

proposition. The negative correlation (-0.222) indicates an inverse relationship between these two variables. The result further indicates users' desire to express their views and expectations and the need for prompt responses.

With reference to the paradigm shifts and changes that are occasioned by adoption of ICT in academic libraries, respondents were asked to suggest what they thought as ideal measures for consideration during the development, execution and evaluation of library strategy. Fourteen suggestions were given as follows:

    i.   Continuous research on user needs
    ii.   Strengthen staff training and development program
    iii.   Institute responsive feedback mechanism and system from all stakeholders
    iv.   Involve, train, and educate users on library's strategic management process
    v.   Link library strategy to institutional strategy and goals
    vi.   Strengthen the role of librarian as an educator
    vii.   Create practical linkages between library strategy development and implementation
    viii.   Evaluate strategy for feasibility and acceptability
    ix.   Digitize information resources
    x.   Facilitate acquisition of ipads for users
    xi.   Allow access to electronic resources from outside the institution
    xii.   Establish effective performance management systems
    xiii.   Take advantage of fiber optic cable to improve access to electronic information on campus
    xiv.   Establish standards on user support and services.

Discussion

Paradigm Shifts, Turbulence and Challenges Affecting Academic Libraries

Beagrie (2005) noted that the application of ICT in libraries today is indispensable and underscores how it has enlarged the scope of acquisition, processing, organization and dissemination of information and knowledge with subsequent impacts on processing speed, cost, space, and time. Troll (2002) observed that the rate of technological change will continue to accelerate requiring libraries to maintain an acceptable program of hardware and software upgrades, as well as training of employee and users. Notwithstanding, this study established moderate level of awareness of various technologies currently in use at academic libraries. Low level of awareness can be regarded as an impediment to acceptance and subsequent use of a new technology, and this can adversely affect execution of desired strategy (Pearce & Robinson 2007), although Carlsson, et al (2006) acknowledged that other factors may affect the non-acceptance and usage of technology.

The study confirmed that digitization of information has caused a tremendous shift on user information seeking behavior, and also on the role of a librarian with majority of users being moderately aware of these changes. There was 79.8% awareness of the changing role of a librarian among library users. A factor analysis yielded a strong eigen value of 3.192 indicating high significance of each of the prescribed role during digital era. The result corresponds with Bridges (2003) analysis on librarianship trends in libraries.

It was established that the strategic management of information in academic libraries is facing various drawbacks due to increasing unpredictability in technological advancement. It is becoming impossible to know with the necessary precision what to commit to today in order to be successful

tomorrow (Foskett & Brindley, 1999). The study further revealed that USIU library staffs are not sufficient to support strategy execution. Insufficient workforce will cause delay and may partly explain why 72.5 percent of respondents said that strategy execution is being overtaken by events.

Non-disclosure of vital information was found to be inversely related to maintenance of interactive dialogue with library staff. Dialogue would definitely ensure disclosure of information which is extremely important in strategy execution. Foskett and Brindley (1999) contended that discloser of vital information that includes financial status is vital to employees. Understanding financial positions of the parent institution and its financial priorities can prevent library staff from frustrations and uncertainty.

Shifting users' preferences and tastes is positively correlated (0.312) to library opening 24/7. Academic libraries should be flexible by extending its operational hours to 24/7 or find ways of allowing accessibility of their sources and services by users irrespective of time and distance. Moreover, the shifting user preferences and tastes are positively correlated with provision of online point of need tutorials (0.317), research and development (0.235) and services differentiation (0.246). This indicates that the shift in user's preferences and tastes require responsive provision of online library tutorials, candid support of research and development, services differentiation, flexible operating hours, and responsive information literacy program. Consistent with Tenopir (2003) findings, Vezzosi (2009) emphasized that today's users want the universe of resources, including library collections at their fingertips and presented as part of their web experience. To meet this expectation, Vezzosi urged that libraries must place their collections and services within popular, emerging web platforms, search engines, internet booksellers, social networking sites, course management systems in order to deliver their expertise at the point of need.

84.6% of the respondents agreed with the various measures for overcoming challenges faced in strategic management of information. These measures included; resolute development and execution of library strategy, support of research and development, periodic review of compensation, having excellent equipment, conducting periodic environmental surveys, strengthening the role of library in information literacy, carrying out user satisfaction surveys, rigorous technological innovation, services differentiation, positioning of library and its services, offering variety of annual staff development programs, provision of online tutorials, having innovative and aggressive marketing and promotion programs, and regular review of library strategy, departmental structures and administrative systems.

There is need to find out why the performance management system is negatively impacting the staff morale and productivity at USIU library. This is because according Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2003) performance appraisal systems make it clear to employees what is expected of them and assure line managers and strategic planners that employee behaviors will be in line with the organization's goals.

Strategic Approach to Information Management

Strategic management, which emphasizes on redefining goals and objectives and reordering priorities based on a complex and dynamic environment, has been adopted at USIU. 62.7 percent of respondents were in agreement that library has embraced the practices of strategic management in information management. According to survey by Rigby and Bilodeau (2007) of the top ten management tools commonly used by companies, strategic management was ranked at the top followed by customer relationship. Adoption of strategic approach to management practices has become vital for organizational survival in a high volatile operating environment. According to Strickland and Thompson (2001), it allows a firm's top executives to anticipate change and provide direction and control of an organization.

The study revealed that only few of library users participated in Strategic Management Process (SMP). An overwhelming majority disagreed that their views were sought during library's SMP. This points out the lack of stakeholders' involvement in strategy development process. According to Pearce and Robinson (2007), all stakeholders should be involved in strategic management process. Involvement of staff in strategy development as Pearce and Robinson noted, helps people to understand why change is needed. They held that staffs are also more likely to feel they have a personal stake and are likely to exhibit commitment to decisions made if they have contributed to the development process. They emphasized need of discussing possible changes in policies or services in advance with those affected in order to mitigate potential problems at implementation stage. Lack of stakeholders' participation in decision making process and particularly in strategic management process can be linked to the organizational structure, system and culture prominent in an organization. Thompson, (1990) argued that management practices and style contributes to organizational culture and can support or inhibit the strategic behavior.

There is enormous literature that describes the kind of management structures; leadership models, systems, culture and how they may constrain people the freedom to be creative and innovative. Allio (2008) propagated that competitors can see and learn many things about a potential organization but are unable to see the management model and practices thereof, and this gives ultimate competitive advantage. Allio further noted that creativity and innovation fosters organizations competitiveness and sustained success. Harvard Business essentials (2003); Goold (2006); (Lee et al, 2007) described various strategies which management can adapt in order to encourage idea generation, build atmosphere of trust, nurture collaboration, and emphasized on appropriate leadership at all levels which is indispensable for nurturing a culture of creativity and innovation.

The information gathered revealed that evaluation of library's goal accomplishment is rarely done. Surprisingly, only 4 out 18 library staff were aware of the review process. Strategy evaluation is the stage of the strategic management process that is often neglected and account why some strategies fail. This stage provides the opportunity to assess how well strategies are doing and is important in supporting accountability. Measuring performance to the goals that were set beforehand allows the assessment of progress. It also identifies areas where corrective action is necessary, trends upon

which the original strategies were developed changed and, therefore, evaluations are required on a regular basis to assess impacts. There may be a need for abandonment, adjustment or crafting new strategies (Dixon et al., 1990; Pearson & Robinson, 2007).

Strategic Management Issues in Academic Libraries

The factor analysis has shown that all the strategic management issues loaded significantly on one component yielding a strong eigen value of 4.072. This indicates high magnitude and the importance of each issue when crafting library strategy. All the issues (technology, information access, institutional objective, environment, user services and support, funding, and library professional) have almost equivalent significance and impact hence their requisite consideration during strategy development process. Particularly, respondents indicated technology as a strategic issue with the highest magnitude on library strategy. This is true because technology is developing all the time. Software development and investment in online systems are growing rapidly. Riggs (2005) observed that an incredible fast progress in information and technologies are transforming the information handling and seeking habits of both librarians and users.

The library's operating environment has also changed as advances in technology continue to disrupt the status quo. The ever changing environment has presented a new set of requisite role of a librarian in order to remain relevant to the 21st century library user. The study established a high need to consider information professional as a strategic issue during strategy development with a relatively high percentage score of 79.4%. As Adamson (2006) argued, with on-going technological revolutions and shifts in information consumer needs, the librarian's job has become to reinforce the feelings and associations of library users with positive emotional attachment to the library services while neutralizing any negative feelings.

Strategic Change Management in Academic Libraries

60.1 percent of respondents termed resistance to change as a major obstacle to strategy execution. Change is inevitable when carrying out strategic alignment of different functional areas in the library. Lynch (2000) said that resistance will be less if the change is not imposed from outside but developed by those involved in the change procedures and that the politics of strategic change first require the persuasion of those involved to adopt the new strategy recommendations. The resistance to change could largely be attributed to management structures and leadership models as well as the organizational culture. According to analyzed information, management style, structures and systems appears to be inhibiting the strategic behavior in academic libraries.

37.9 percent of respondents disagreed that the library has ensured prompt communication and open discussion with stakeholders for intended changes. This study established poor communication of strategic intents as a major weakness at academic libraries. It was vivid from the results that appropriate steps to handle strategic change are rarely communicated and hence the resistance. Pearce and Robinson (2007) advised on publicizing a strategy before it is implemented. Kaufman et al (2003) held that communication, participation and facilitation would respectively overcome resistance to change. Berger et al (1994) and Brickell (2005) discussed the steps to effective

management of strategic change and pointed out that the process requires a means for disclosing, discussing and diagnosing the challenges and then using data to reinvent the organization. Kaufman et al (2003) emphasized the indispensable need of shits in methods, means, processes, and organizational behaviors in order to handle strategic change effectively.

Standard of Excellence in Library's Service Delivery

An overwhelming majority of respondents (85.6%) agreed with all the assertions on suggested standard of excellence in academic library's service delivery. Excellent standard of performance is paramount in delivering effective services to library users. This is because the business of information is unquestionably becoming competitive. Academic libraries face increasing competition in the information marketplace (Troll. 2002). The competition is greater because libraries are no longer the only information service providers. Through excellence in services, libraries must therefore build a similar, unified, high-value brand on the web in order to compete effectively (Osif, 2006). Troll (2002) noted that libraries must find a creative way to remain relevant to the twenty first century user who has the ability and means of finding vast amounts of information without setting foot in a brick and mortar library.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the academic and managerial discussions of strategy development, execution and evaluation in highly changing environment. The results also broaden the knowledge of how to build strategic responses in academic libraries in order to remain relevant to the 21st century library user. It concluded that library managers must find ways of maintaining technology currency in order to compete successfully for resources amid rising costs and differing institutional priorities. This is largely because; the competitive environment where academic libraries operate requires successful differentiation strategies. If a given strategy doesn't set library apart from the competition, it won't work and hence academic library should make sure that its employees understand how they can help put some teeth into services differentiation.

Challenges affecting information management are enormous. Some are beyond the control of library managers while others can be addressed given the appropriate structures systems and policies. Library management should understand information management from strategic and operational perspective in order to provide effective leadership. It has a role to play in building competitive organization through effective management of the workforce. The staffing needs, motivation, mentorship and continuous training and professional development have to be considered for effective execution of desired strategies and for successive achievement of set objectives. This is possible through formulation and execution of coherent staff policies and adoption of internal practices that expedite employee competencies and nurture behaviors that are required for library to achieve its strategic aims and outcomes.

Measures to strengthen the practice of strategic management in information management are inevitable in academic libraries. The outcome of strategy development is a comprehensive strategic plan which should be acted on and serve as the central guiding document for the library. It is

therefore important to maintain staff support and affirm that the intense effort that went into the development process were not futile. It is also critically important for library staffs to understand different strategies and objectives sought by their library. This cannot be realized without active involvement of all library staff in the strategic management process. Employees who understand the corporate strategy will be able to make better day-to-day decisions that will support library vision and mission with subsequent productivity.

Recommendations

Academic libraries should take advantage of available ICT infrastructure and real-time information spawned by the internet and wireless technology to perfect and differentiate their services, and monitor implementation initiatives on daily operations, steering them to a successful conclusion. In order to meet the rapid changes in information landscape, the shifting users' requirements and needs, technological developments, and expectations, academic libraries should continuously conduct user surveys, analyze the professional development tendencies, innovate its systems and structures, and actively involve its stakeholders at every level of strategy development, execution and evaluation.

Noting the effects of digitization of information sources and services, the librarian should play a more responsive task that includes role as a negotiator: able to identify the needs of users; a navigator: able to search the ocean of information regardless of the format; a facilitator: for information resources and infra-structure; an educator: being familiar with information in different formats and being able to train the users to have the ability to recognize, locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information; an entrepreneur: effective in resource mobilization; an information filter: to provide right information, in right time to the right person from right resource; and a marketer: for effective promotion and marketing of library products and services.

There is need to install appropriate organization culture and prudent administration practices in academic library that encourage staff's participation in decision making process. Anything less would illicit some resistance to any intended change and would negate all the efforts endeavored by management. The library leadership should assist its staff to align their goals with those of their department and the entire institution. This cannot be achieved without interactive dialogue, open discussion, and periodic consultative meetings with staffs. Library leadership should ensure employees' empowerment, participative decision making, and effective communication systems. The study recommends HR systems that foster innovativeness and prudent management practices in order to provide vital support for effective execution of various library strategies. Library leadership should liaise with human resource function for formulation and execution of coherent staff policies and performance management systems that expedite employee competencies and behavior that are requisite for achievement of strategic aims.

In order to create a sense of unity of strategic direction within the library, the study recommends need for library leadership to alter and revamp its communication and management model, structure and systems. This orientation will ensure responsiveness of the library to the various change initiatives. Academic libraries should, publish and disseminate the strategic plan, user satisfaction

survey results and other strategic intentions. The intranet, shared drive, annual reports, students' union meetings, library newsletter, library website, etc. are example of important communication device and platforms that can be considered. Also recommended are measures to ensure flexible operational time and accessibility of library resources and services 24/7.

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