Examination of the Management of Grey Literature in Selected University Libraries in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the management of grey literature, a special and unique source of information for teaching, learning and research. Grey literature is generated in various ways like research, projects, conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia both from within and outside universities. University libraries are however faced with challenges related to its management, leading to inaccessibility. This study sought to examine the management of grey literature in university libraries in Uganda for improved access. The specific objectives were: to examine the state of management of grey literature in university libraries in Uganda; to establish how grey literature is used by university library users; to identify the challenges associated with the management of grey literature and to propose a framework for management of grey literature for enhanced access for university libraries in Uganda. The study was grounded in the discipline of librarianship and guided by Ranganathan's five laws of library science propounded in 1931.

The study adopted a multiple-case replication design involving five university libraries, selected because of their rich collections of grey literature. These were the libraries of Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Martyrs University, Gulu University and Uganda Christian University. The study was both qualitative and quantitative. Data was collected using interview, questionnaire, tools analysis, and document review and observation methods. Nineteen (19) librarians were purposively selected while 371 library users were selected through quota sampling.

The study revealed general absence of streamlined mechanisms for collecting grey literature. Libraries used conventional methods and tools to manage grey literature and these did not allow exhaustive processing, which resulted into difficulty in search, retrieval and therefore, access. Access to grey literature was also limited by availability of one or two print copies of documents to a big number of users. Both librarians and library users were dissatisfied with the manner in which grey literature was managed and proposed measures for improved access. Therefore, a framework for management of grey literature in university libraries for enhanced access was proposed. The framework comprises a registry of grey literature generating activities, an Integrated Grey Literature Information System and a Grey Literature Access Interface. Strengthening or developing institutional repositories, electronic submission of theses and dissertations, grey literature legal deposit policies and digitization are some of the critical areas of intervention proposed for improved access to grey literature in Uganda university libraries.