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Customer Care Service Strategies and Challenges in Arusha Public Library- Tanzania

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Abstract
Purpose: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the strategies utilized by the Arusha Public Library (ARPL) to improve customer service and the challenges that the library faces. The specific goals were to discover ARPL's strategies for improving customer service and investigate the problems that employees face in doing so.
Design/methodology/approach: The data was collected using a triangulation method. Questionnaires were given to 11 library staff (professionals and para-professionals), and interviews were given to the ARPL Director and two department heads. The researchers also looked at the surrounding environment, including the library collection, different types of library furniture, customer service services, and customer service skills. The quantitative data was examined and presented thematically, whereas the qualitative data was analyzed and presented numerically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 22.
Results: From the findings of the study, ARPL employs a variety of tactics to improve customer service. These include library staff training, the procurement of current and relevant items, recognizing customer needs, raising library user awareness, and advertising library services. The study also discovered that ARPL is facing a number of challenges that are impeding the improvement of customer care services, including a lack of managerial support, poor infrastructure, insufficient funds to purchase relevant and current materials, changing library user behavior, and poor customer service skills among library staff. The Tanzania Library Association (TLS) and Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB), which are responsible for the proliferation of public libraries in Tanzania, should work together to overcome the current issues at ARPL, according to the report.
Originality/Value: This research is significant because it adds to the existing body of knowledge. Specifically, it addresses pertinent issues and challenges in customer services in modern libraries.

Key words: *Customer Care, Public library, Marketing, Customer services, Library Staff Library Services, Tanzania*

Introduction

A public library is a community center that makes all types of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It is primarily utilized by local residents to gain access to information that impacts their social, economic, and political lives. (Saur, 2001). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as cited by Kinya (2011) indicated that public library is the principal means through which the records of man's thoughts and ideas and the expression of his/her imagination are made freely available to all. In the 17th century, the word "public library" was coined in Latin (bibliotheca public) as a technical phrase to separate the general university libraries of Oxford and Cambridge from funded libraries. During the nineteenth century, the spread of printing, public education, democratic institutions, and urbanization led to the foundation and development of public libraries in the United States and the United Kingdom. (Kinya, 2011).

African countries' public libraries were established shortly before or after their independence. (Mcharazo & Olden, 2016). This was done through the efforts of individual groups or organizations (Mcharazo, 2000). In Nigeria, the first regional public library started in 1953 with the help of UNESCO in supporting education to all categories of people (Edoka, 2000). In Tanzania, the first public library started in 1963 to provide services to local people and it was located in Iringa Region (Olden, 2005). The campaign was spearheaded by the local council, an adult education lecturer, and a trained Danish librarian who just happened to live nearby. The Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) currently manages over 25 public libraries in Tanzania, all of which are supported by the Tanzanian government. Tanzanian public libraries, like those around the world, are responsible for servicing the individuals who use the services they provide.

Customer Care Services in the Public Libraries

Customer care service provision is a concept widely practiced in both private and government business organizations to ensure that satisfactory service deliveries to customers (County, Mugo, & Mathu, 2021). Because of the increase of information providers, libraries have come to realize that they are not the sole providers of information services needed by information customers. As technology advances, customers who pay physical visits to libraries may decrease. According to Nitecki and Davis (2019), attention to customers and the services they want and receive, has gained increased prominence in recent times. Customer care services for so long have been associated with the private sector where it was linked to issues of profitability and providing a competitive advantage over rivals and effective service delivery (Orayo, Maina, Wasike, & Ratanya 2019). Historically, customer care service was viewed as a

concept used in business enterprises as a means of leveraging profits; while in the context of libraries, it has been used as a means of enabling libraries to achieve their unique missions and as a determinant of service delivery (Ax-Fultz, Eshbach, Loomis, and 2016; Kutu & Olabode, 2018). This perception of customer care service from the library is in line with Ranganathans' second law of information science, in his second law which states that, "every reader his or her book". This implies that libraries should cater for the diverse interests of the different categories of users who are visiting the library (Orayo *et al.*, 2019). Prior to this era, customer care was not a focal point in libraries as they were only the ones who providing reading services to users. This made the public librarians work on the assumption that serving their customers was a natural aspect of their work, and as long as they performed it well, no additional efforts were required (Ouda, 2015).

Statement of the problem

Customer care service is a crucial issue to both the public and private sectors. However, the effectiveness of these services to the public and private sectors has become ineffective due to various reasons which include but are not limited to shortage of funds, poor infrastructure facilities, and lack of qualified staff (Ouda, 2015). Customer care service, however, does not only apply to business enterprises alone but it is applicable to service provider organizations as well (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). So public libraries are not left out in this regard.

Due to the growing competition in information provision, rising customer expectations, and widening access to information, public librarians have to realize that improved customer care services are needed if they need to remain in the market (Singh, 2003; Chopra, 2019). Libraries face stiff competition and are expected to treat

their customers well in order to survive in the information industry. However, the idea of customer services has not yet received much attention in most public libraries as evidenced by the scarcity of literature on the subject (Singh, 2003; Chopra, 2019;). Thus, it is not clear whether or not there are significant efforts made to improve customer care services in public libraries. In this regard, the study aimed to examine the measures taken by Arusha Public Library in enhancing customer services and identify the best ways to overcome the prevailing challenges (if any) on customer care services with public libraries.

Arusha Public Library is located in Arusha Region, Tanzania and it is under the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB), The (TLSB) is in charge of building, developing, equipping, and marketing public libraries, information centers, and documentation centers.

Public libraries in the country, like everywhere, are responsible for offering information literacy and user education training to all individuals, especially the challenged and marginalized. ARPL is currently facing a number of issues that are preventing it from offering high-quality customer service to its customers. However, despite the fact that the situation has persisted for a long time, no research has been conducted to determine what ARPL may do to entice more consumers to visit the library and use the available services and materials. As a result, the goal of this study is to identify such difficulties in order to come up with feasible solutions that ARPL can utilize to address them.

Objective of the study
The main objective of this study was to assess strategies used by ARPL to enhance customer care services to library users

Specific objective
Specifically, the study was guided by two objectives, namely:

i. To identify the strategies undertaken by Arusha Public Library to enhance customer care services; and
ii. To explore the challenges encountered by ARPL public staff in the enhancement of customer care.

Literature Review
Strategies to Enhance Customer Care Services in Public Libraries
Different scholars have written about strategies to enhance customer care services from various fields including the library field. According to Olorunfemi (2018), various strategies have been adopted by libraries toward improving customer care services to increase the use of library resources and services. On the other hand, Orayo *et al* (2019) and Ejiro (2021) indicated that the provision of quality services is accompanied by reliable internet connectivity, good response to customer queries, and a conducive reading environment that attract customers to consistently visit the library. This refers to those public libraries that should strategically think about how to improve the image of the institution through a focus on the customers' needs and requirements. (Ouda 2015 & Orayo *et al*, 2019) commented that public libraries can apply customer care enhancement services such as interlibrary loans, free internet services, and long opening hours of the library. In addition to that issues regarding new books on shelves, a good parking lot, and thanking users for using the library armed with the right skills, knowledge and confidence of library staff enhance customer care services (Rehman, Shafique & Mahmood, K 2011). In addition to that (Olorunfemi, 2018) and (King, 2018) pointed out that the rich and current collection is one of the strategies that public libraries can adopt to enhance customer cares services. Thus, library management should ensure that library collection facilities are more attractive and appealing to

users. This implies that due to technological advancement, the public libraries should figure out how they can meet users' information needs. Additionally, (Olorunfemi 2018) as cited from (Saur,2001) acknowledged that public libraries have to ensure that all library staff can communicate effectively with their clients. This suggests that public librarians are expected to have good public relations skills, competent enough to articulate ideas clearly and effectively, and be able to conduct market research to identify users' information needs (King, 2018). The management should offer frequent training to its staff for them to remain up-to-date and confident in the ICT era which is full of information exposure.

Similarly, (Osinulu et al 2018) quantified that the library may promote customer care services by providing up-to-date information, quick access to library services and retrieval of information resources, and a user-friendly ambiance while engaging with library users.. More recommendation was given out by Kutu & Olabode,(2018) that librarians must see themselves as salesmen who must dispose of their goods and services to those who need to be told and convinced of the need for such goods and services. Users' use of library materials and services is critical to the success and survival of libraries. Furthermore, Odine (2011) in his study on practices of marketing library services among librarians in Delta State, specified that exhibitions and displays of new materials and staff friendliness to users were good marketing tools for libraries. This indicates that library need to be more innovative and proactive when it come to the point of marketing of library resource. The library should use various strategies. The strategies adopted by any library may depend on users' background, age, level of education and information seeking behavior. So it is important to use various ways to

market library service to reach more customers

Challenges on the Enhancement of Customer Care Services by Librarians in Public Libraries

Enhancing customer care service is one of the competences that all libraries and professionals must possess in order to provide efficient service and satisfy users' needs. However, when it comes to improving customer service at the public library, there are a number of obstacles to overcome. Most public libraries around the world, particularly in Africa, are currently facing a funding shortfall that is affecting customer services as a result of a diminishing budget that affects everything from employees to collections, equipment, and premises. (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009; & Osinulu et al., 2017).

Also, (Abdulkarim, 2010) conducted a study on the current state of public library services in Nigeria. The findings revealed that public library services have decreased drastically over the past year as a result of the country's economic and political conditions. The resultant financial crisis has had an impact on infrastructural development and maintenance, the quantity and substance of the collections, and the general provision of services. According to the study conducted by (Abdulkarim, 2010), public libraries lack the appropriate and professional employees required to manage their operations. Public libraries should invest in library staff training in order to have more competent staff who can promote services to users. Similarly, Aderibigbe et al (2017) found that insufficient funding, irregular power supply, inadequate infrastructure and facilities such as photocopiers, computers, and air conditioners, low computer literacy among employees, and a lack of professional training were all key obstacles to efficient

library marketing. Similarly, (Ouda,2015) opined that inadequate funds, lack of a consolidated customer care policy to guide the practices, inadequate information materials against shortage of well-trained staff in customer care, limited space to accommodate most of the customers' limited efforts on customer care services. This calls for public libraries to change the way they offer services to their users to come up with ways that can enhance customer care services they want to remain as customer service providers. Furthermore, (Odine,2011) realized the fact that unreliable and inadequate access to internet have influenced strategies in implementing customer care services in public libraries. In this outlook, public libraries need to apply various techniques in marketing library services and make them excel. In a similar view, poor library infrastructural systems including poor working environment and poor internet connectivity are major obstacles in implementing customer care services in public libraries. Oyovwe-Tinuoye *et al*, (2015) conducted a study and found out that inadequate funds are affecting the enhancement of customer care services in most public libraries. Once the users find it difficult to use library infrastructures they shy away and share negatively on the library performance to other customers. Deliberate measures have to be undertaken to ensure the public libraries are systematically organized, attractive and that they enhance conducive learning environment.

Methodology
This study employed a mixed approach research design (qualitative and quantitative). The two approaches guided the study in data collection, processing and analysis. The quantitative design was used to collect basic statistical data on demographic characteristics, strategies undertaken by ARPL to enhance customer care services, and challenges encountered by ARPL public staff in the enhancement of customer care

services. The qualitative design and observation were used to collect data regarding attitudes, opinions, and behaviour related to the strategies and challenges on the enhancement of customer care services from ARPL staff. The study was conducted in Tanzania at Arusha Public Library. The study area was selected as it is one of the public libraries in Tanzania that is working on improving the enhancement of customer care services. It covered a period of four months starting from November 2020 to January 2021. Since the population of ARPL staff was small, all eleven (11) Arusha Public Library staff were used for the study. Thus, eleven (11) copies of questionnaire were prepared and administered to all eleven (11) library staff as they were the targeted respondents of the study. All the questionnaire were filled in and returned. Secondary data were obtained through reading related literature to the study. Similarly, primary data were collected through a cross-sectional survey using structured self-administered questionnaires with both open and close-ended questionnaires which covered different aspects of the study including respondents' background information, strategies to enhance customer care services as well as the challenges ARPL is facing. Qualitative data were collected through interviews and observation methods. A face-to-face interview was conducted with the library director as the decision-maker and main speaker of a library regarding library customer care services enhancement. Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 22 and presented in the form of the tables while qualitative data were analyzed and presented thematically.

Results and Analysis
The study findings are presented based on the objectives. The objectives of the study were to identify the strategies undertaken and challenges in implementing customer care services at Arusha Public Library.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographics Characteristics (n=11)

Category	Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Age (years)	30-35	0	00
	36-40	2	18.2
	41-45	3	27.3
	46-50	3	27.3
	51-55	2	18.2
	56-60	1	9
Gender	Female	7	64
	Male	4	36
Job Title	Library II	3	27.3
	Library I	1	9
	Senior Librarian	3	27.3
	Principal Librarian	3	27.3
	University Librarian	1	9.1

Source: Field Data (2021)

Strategies adopted by ARPL to Enhance Customer Care Services

Libraries are considered as treasures and knowledge houses or platforms. However, it is not enough for public libraries to only perform the role of knowledge management but rather they have to market their resources. Marketing exposes the resources to library users and requires appropriate ways of promoting the resources for visibility and customer care. Table 2 presents results on the strategies used by ARPL to enhance customer care services:

Table 2: Strategies to Enhance Customer Care Services (n=11)

Factor	Very often	Often	Not often
Training of library staff on customer care service practices;	3(27%)	2(18%)	10(91%)
Acquisition of current and relevant materials;	2(18%)	39(75)	10(91%)
Understand customer needs;	9(82%)	0(0%)	2(18%)
Improving library reference services and provision of conducive reading environment	6(55%)	1(9%)	4(36%)
Provision of conducive reading environment	4(36%)	1(9%)	6(55%)
Management of Library information	4(36%)	1(9%)	6(55%)
Marketing of library services through using various methods.	10(91%)	1(9%)	0(0%)

The findings show that the main marketing strategies that are being used by ARPL were understanding customers' needs and acquisition of current and relevant materials. Conferring to the findings of the study, it specifies that ARPL understands the value of marketing of library services. Marketing of library services is the effective execution of all the activities involved in increasing the satisfaction of users by providing maximum value to them. Indeed, library marketing is vital to keeping users informed and educated about the resources and services that match their needs and interests. The concept of understanding customer needs is one of the key factors which can help library staff to

offer the right service to its users. A good service adds value to library resources by enabling customers to use those resources effectively. This has been evidenced by ARPL findings, which is the key strategy they use to market their services. Libraries need to understand their customers, learners and their requirements and expectations. They need to know how people learn and how the provision of information services contributes to learning. It further infers that ARPL staff are very much aware of the value of understanding the customers' needs. In this outlook, ARL is able to meet its users' needs by providing quality service at the right time and to a right user.

However, ARPL staff indicated that training of library staff on customer care service practices was not very often used to enhance customer care services. This implies that the issue of taking library staff for training is very uncommon at ARPL. This could be due to budget constraints. Due to technological advancement, every library needs to be well equipped with various skills that can help them to offer quality services to users. A librarian should be information literate so that he/she can provide the right information to the right user. Information literacy is very much essential for the smooth dissemination of information. Critical thinking is another important skill of a librarian. However, marketing of library services, understanding customer needs, improving library reference services and provision of a conducive reading environment as indicated by ARPL as the main strategies they are using to enhance customer care, does not directly indicate any financial implication as these can be done within the capacity of library staff. Other information regarding strategies that were used by ARPL to enhance customer care were also collected using observation and interview methods. During the interview, the library Director opined as follows:

" they do not have enough money to take their staff for training and to buy relevant

and current material to improve the library reading environment and to make their collection look current to attract more customers to love to use their services".

In addition, the researcher observed that ARPL general environment was not attracting more customers to admire to use the library as most of the material in the collection were absolute and could not cater to the comers' needs. Further observations exposed that there is an insufficient amount of current and sufficient material to satisfy majority of ARPL users are who are students in primary and secondary schools. This may discourage them from visiting the library and using its services.

Challenges on Implementing Customer Care Services at ARPL

Enhancement of customer care in public libraries is constrained by various factors. Table 3 presents findings on the challenges faced by ARPL in implementing customer care services to their users. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of their agreement or disagreement regarding the listed variables on the table about the key challenges for them on implementing customer care services. The responses from respondents were collected using a 4-point Likert scale as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Challenges on Implementing Customer Care Services at ARPL (n=11)

Factors	SA	A	D	SD
Lack of managerial support	2(18%)	1(9%)	1(9%)	7(64%)
Poor infrastructure	8(73%)	0(0%)	1(9%)	2(18%)
Inadequate Funds to purchase relevant and current materials.	10(91%)	0(0%)	1(9%)	0(0%)
Changing of library users' behavior	2(18%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	9(82%)
Inadequate current and relevant material in the library.	10(91%)	1(9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Lack of customer care skills among libraries staff.	2(18%)	1(9%)	0(0%)	8(73%)

Table 3 shows that the majority 7(64%) of respondents strongly disagreed that lack of managerial support was not a challenge for customer care enhancement at ARPL**.** This means that ARPL management is very supportive regarding the issues of customer care services provision. It is evident that at ARPL management is not a challenge on the enhancement of customer care services. This suggests that the ARPL management is willing to support the exercise if other challenges such as inadequate funds, will be solved.

The findings also show that majority of the library staff agreed that inadequate funds to purchase relevant and current materials is the challenge for them to enhance customer care services. Currently, most public libraries worldwide especially in Africa are challenged with a shortage of funds to affect customer services due to a shrinking budget which influences everything, from staff to collections, equipment and facilities. The winds of globalization, marketization and privatization have been sweeping away the long-held political and economic beliefs. Governments and social sponsors have been propagating those social institutions, be they hospitals, schools, colleges or libraries—to become self-sufficient if they are to purposefully work and demonstrate their relevance and competence to their customers. This suggests that ARPL should work hard to find a way of supplementing its budget to meet customer needs as money plays a very big role in all aspects of the enhancement of customer care.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that weak infrastructure is a challenge for improving customer care services, according to data from the same table. Uncomfortable sitting and study facilities, inconsistent internet connectivity, insufficient lighting in the library, and a disorganized collection may all have an impact on customer care service delivery. These findings indicate that ARPL public is hampered by shrinking and insufficient finances to pursue various initiatives to suit the demands and satisfaction of its patrons. Well-organized library service and full of all required material can motivate a good manner of the user to come and use its services.

More importantly, the library structure should be given the highest priority. The structure should be user-friendly, with appropriate lighting, seating, quality library furniture, and restrooms for the convenience of library users, as well as a welcoming setting to attract and keep library patrons. As a result, it is evident that ARPL must address these concerns in order to improve customer service. Additionally, the researchers discovered that infrastructures such as internet connectivity and a lot of automobile noises from outside the facility were not beneficial to customers because the library is located near a public road. To attract more library customers, the exterior and internal

infrastructure systems, as well as the material in the collection, must be upgraded. In respect to the same table (Table 3), respondent strongly agreed that a lack of current and relevant material in the library has a negative impact on the implementation of customer care services in general. Poor collection is a significant difficulty since consumers will be frustrated if they cannot find what they are looking for. As a result, they will flee. A well-organized and diverse collection is an important aspect in attracting more patrons to the library. Contrary to popular belief, persuading customers to visit the library and use its services is a difficult task.

The researcher also noticed an old and irrelevant book and other material on the shelf that does not meet the needs of users. Moreover, the Director stated during the interview that: *"Because of budget constraints, we are unable to purchase relevant and current content that meets the needs of our users, the library collection falls short of the needed standards and contains out-of-date information."* In addition, the findings from the same table revealed that a lack of funding to purchase appropriate and updated resources was a difficulty to improving customer service. A lack of cash can have an impact on all library services because everything the library does requires money.

Findings from the same table suggested that an issue for library workers was a lack of customer service skills. This indicates that ARPL provides customer service. An excellent service adds value to library resources by allowing customers to make optimal use of them. Customers, learners, and their needs and expectations must all be understood by libraries. They must understand how individuals learn and how providing information services aids learning.

A solid customer service competence is a highly sought-after tool in any library service. This is because the first impression visitors get from librarians can lead them to draw a broad conclusion about the library's service quality. ARPL also demonstrated good customer service behavior to users, according to the researchers. The manner they provided services to users was quite appealing. However, due to a lack of customer service understanding abilities, several of the employees lacked confidence.

Discussions of the findings
Strategies to enhance user services

The initial purpose of this study was to find out what strategies the Arusha Public Library employed to improve library service. Findings from table two shows that ARPL has enhanced customer service through meeting users' needs efficiently and providing a pleasant reading environment. The findings are in line with Tooey, Bodycomb, Hinegardner, Mayo, & Prince (2019) who commented that understanding users and building a strategic plan focused on their success is important for marketing library services. However, the study's findings indicate that ARPL is using insufficient marketing resources to promote library services. ARPL is compelled to utilize a variety of tactics to market its services to people as a result of technology innovation. This is due to the fact that users' behavior differs when searching for and utilising information sources ARPL may choose to sell their services using digital media, such as website announcements, as well as print sources, such as booklets, brochures, direct mail, and flyers.

The prosperity of the library is determined by the number of users whose information needs the library can efficiently satisfy. Libraries can achieve this through a combination of factors; these include understanding customers' needs and responding appropriately. This means that librarians must initiate communication with library users at all times and in all situations

in order to fully understand their needs. ARPL should adopt this method because it is one of the most effective way to improve customer service. These findings are in line with those of Orayo (2019), which found that 8 (67%) of respondents agreed that they are always devoted to providing people with what they anticipate. Users become highly motivated and trusting of the library if they receive what they expected on the first day they attended. The findings also agree with Olorunfemi (2018) who concluded that librarians should be willing to advertise library services.

ARPL also stated that providing a pleasant reading environment is an important part of their customer service strategy. These findings agree with those of (Ejiro,2021), who found that the library building, specifically the building, and the arrangement of resources in the library collection, were among the items that were given high value as major criteria that drive consumers to use library services. The findings of the study further agrees with Kutu and Olabode (2018) who showed that majority of the respondents indicated a conducive environment as their promotional strategies. Librarians should provide a good and conducive reading environment, such as a building with adequate air circulation, and reliable internet access. They should also provide good customer service, appropriate information formats, and current information resources, to attract more customers to come and use library services. Thus, in terms of the environment, the current and relevant collection is one of the factors that can encourage users to return to the library.

The primary goal of a library is to meet the information demands of its patrons. As a result, improving user satisfaction is critical to the success of service-oriented businesses, such as libraries, because satisfied customers stay loyal. A library that is rich in all kinds of services, collections, professional and qualified customer service staff with good and commanding communication skills, and an appealing reading atmosphere, has an edge in offering a high-quality service to its users.

Based on the comments raised by library staff, it appears that ARPL reference services are hampered by a number of challenges that must be solved in order to improve customer service. This could be due to a budget constraint that prevents them from meeting all of their needs, such as procuring current and relevant materials for usage, upgrading the library reading environment, and sending personnel to training. However, these findings contradicts that of Rehman Shafique & Mahmood (2011) whose findings showed that respondents agreed that they were satisfied with the overall quality of reference services (mean= 3.6). During the interview, the library Director opined;

"that, due to a lack of funds, we are unable to pursue relevant and current material to meet our users' needs, to improve the reading environment, or to send our staff on even short courses or workshops," but "that, due to a lack of funds, we are unable to reach all of our customers, as you are aware, we are also supposed to reach another user outside the library to satisfy their needs."

Furthermore, the researcher discovered that the ARPL collection contains outdated and irrelevant materials to satisfy the needs of consumers. In addition, the library features unpleasant furniture that makes users uncomfortable while using it, as well as inadequate lighting for the library's collection. Similarly, because the library building is adjacent to a public road and other business buildings, there is a lot of noise. All of these issues have the potential to deprive users of their right to access the library's offered services, which are critical for supplying them with knowledge.

Challenges on Implementing Customer Care Services at ARPL

The implementation of customer service in the library may be hampered by a number of obstacles. The findings from table 3 indicated that poor infrastructure, lack of current and relevant material, and lack of funds to purchase relevant and current library materials are major barriers to respondents promoting library services to customers. When a library does not have the financial means to purchase current and relevant materials, it may continue to hold outdated materials. As a result, users may lose interest in using library services. Similarly, insufficient infrastructure that does not attract consumers may make it difficult for librarians to offer library services to individuals who use them. Strong infrastructure is one of the characteristics that attracts customers to library services. Advents in technology now help libraries to provide users with more access to information. As a result, if the library does not have such a current infrastructure system, attracting consumers to use the library's services will be challenging.

This study also highlights the importance of funding to information services delivery; however, the study identified low library funding as a challenge for public libraries. This implies that inadequate funding affects public libraries in the process of enhancing user care services.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Osinulu et al, 2017), who found that a lack of adequate funding for public libraries has become a severe concern in the delivery of user services. It agrees with the conclusions of (Ouda,2015) who concluded that public libraries have a number of obstacles that obstruct the enhancement of user services, including a lack of funding. Another challenge raised by this study was a lack of managerial support. Managerial support is critical for a library's ability to provide excellent customer service. This is due to the fact that management is responsible for allocating sufficient funding to the library in order to purchase current contents, send employees on training, and update the setting in order to entice users to visit the library.

This implies that if library management's assistance is insufficient, the library will be unable to provide good customer service to its patrons.

This study indicates that one of the major challenges ARPL has in marketing services to their users is a lack of current and relevant material. Because of the low and outdated collection, users may become discouraged from using library services. When the collection lacks current and dependable items that are relevant to the users' needs, it is difficult to encourage clients to use library services. If users cannot locate what they are looking for, they will become irritated and lose faith in the library's service.

To attract more patrons, the library's collection must be well-organized and diverse.

On the shelves, the researcher detected old and unsettled books and other items that do not fulfill the demands of ARPL patrons. Moreover, during the interview, the Director mentioned that *"Because of budget constraints, we are unable to purchase relevant and current content in accordance to users' demands, the library collection falls short of required standards and contains out-of-date material."*

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Despite the fact that ARPL is encountering a number of issues that are obstructing customer service, it must continue to market their services. This is because, regardless of how rich a library is in terms of the quality of its materials and services, the extent to which they are able to retain and attract more consumers to utilize the library determines its value.

Similarly, a library that is underutilized in terms of materials and services is a dormant organ. From the findings of this study, the primary obstacles that affect library marketing include a lack of funding, insufficient infrastructure systems, and a lack of current and relevant material in the library. Despite the fact that improving customer service at ARPL is tough in the current environment, the library should continue to market its various services to its patrons.

Recommendations

The following are probable recommendations from the researcher based on the research findings revealed by the library staff: It recommended that, libraries should utilize varied and modern tactics to promote their services, as it was indicated that they were only employing a few strategies to market their services to users. Another suggestion for ARPL is to look for new ways to raise revenue to supplement what they are receiving from the ministry. This will allow them to improve the library's environment by renovating older items without having to wait for the government to do so. Correspondingly, the ARPL have to seek out partnerships with other public libraries that can provide them with current and relevant materials for its patrons. At the same time ARPL should be conducting regular staff training on customer care services. This will help to improve staff knowledge on the issues relating to customer care services. The public library management also should grant incentives to library staff to enable them to upgrade their skills. It is, however, important for the library management to organize benchmarking activities to compare the performance of their library with others, with an overall target of improving the performance of the library by adopting excellent practices of its partner libraries. The study further recommends that the Tanzania Library Association (TLS) and Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) who are responsible organs for the proliferation of public libraries in Tanzania should work to overcome the prevailing challenges at ARPL.

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