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ENHANCING MOMENTS OF TRUTH TO AMPLIFY USERS' PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KENYA

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Abstract

There is a weakness in the way university libraries manage various moments of truth. The moments of truth in libraries is defined by various stimuli during users' visits to the library and interaction with services, products and staff. The impressions formed during this process are based on what users see and the subsequent encounters, treatment and experiences. These define how users perceive the library in general. This study postulated that enhancement of moments of truth influences users' perceptions of the library. It aimed at finding out the elements that define the moments of truth to a student user and establish how users' perceptions is influenced by moments of truth at university libraries. The study was based in four purposively selected university libraries; two public and two private universities. A quantitative approach was adopted while convenience sampling technique was applied to obtain a sample size of 400 full time and part time students. Both SPSS and excel were used to analyze data where the descriptive and inferential analysis and statistics such as percentages, mean, Chi-square, regression, and ANOVA were carried out. Thematic analysis technique was used for the open-ended questions. The study had a response rate of eighty one percent. Results revealed that the state of the library is an influencing factor on the choice of a university for private universities as compared

to public universities. Users' experiences in the library had a sixty one point zero three percent satisfaction index. The experiences of students in the libraries account for the highest impact on their perception. The visual elements account for twenty five point nine one percent. Ninety four point eight percent of students share experiences and incidences they encounter in the library with their colleagues through various channels. Library aspects most preferred were, conducive study environment, staff friendliness and professionalism. Slow internet, staff mannerisms and attitudes, insufficient and old books, noise, less and faulty computers, and congestion at the digital sections of the libraries were among the things students do not like. The study concluded that all the four moments of truth have an influence in library image management. The first, second and ultimate moments of truth mostly affect users' perceptions of the libraries. Experiences emerged as the most important element affecting users' perceptions. The study recommended that institutions should establish measures that make user interactions with the library memorable. This study is valuable to library managers in creating and retaining positive impressions and perceptions of university libraries. It calls for policies and measures that address designs, ambience, ecstasy and sufficient physical facilities; service quality standards as well as the training of library staff on customer-relationship management skills.

Keywords: Moments of Truth, Perception of Library, Library Image, Library Impression, Perception of librarian, Library Customer Care, User Satisfaction.

Background and Rationale

The business dictionary (2015) describes moments of truth from customer service perspective as instance of contact or interaction between a customer and a company through a product, sales force or visit that gives the customer an opportunity to form or change an impression about a company. This description underpins areas of interaction that a customer has with products, services and staff. These areas of interactions generate impressions which may be favorable or unfavorable in the customer's minds. In an organization, there are numerous moments of truth that one can encounter within a day. Such moments affect the credibility of companies' relationship with customers and their perceptions about its products and services.

According to Araujo (2013), moments of truth can be categorized into four major areas. The zero moment is where a customer has an unmet need and is looking for a solution or searching for potential options. The first moment is the first interaction with a product or service and constitutes customers' first impression. The second moment is the actual consumption and use of the product or service and the customers' experience with that process. The final one is the ultimate moment of truth where customers share their experience with others who are experiencing their own zero moment.