NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES CONSORTIUM (ZULC) WITH REGARDS TO THE STANDARDISATION OF CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION PROCESSES

BY

FELIX MASUNUNGURE
(NOO4 2283F)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the challenges faced by the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC) with regards to the standardisation of cataloguing and classification processes. The consortium is made up of the Africa University Library, the Bindura University Library, the Chinhoyi University of Technology Library, the Harare Institute of Technology Library, the Masvingo State University Library, the Midlands State University Library, the National University of Technology Library, the University of Zimbabwe Library and the Zimbabwe Open University Library. The study was based on the premise that the initiative could not be successful if the cataloguers were not aware of it and did not agree with it. In addition to that, the initiative could not be successful if the libraries used different lists of subject headings, lacked a policy on the maximum number of subject headings to be generated per catalogued item, used different classification schemes, used different library management systems, were poorly networked, did not agree on the areas that could be standardised in cataloguing and classification processes, and could not afford the costs for staff training, manpower and equipment that could be needed for cataloguing and classifying library collections in retrospect. The study was of great relevance because it would help the ZULC to map the way forward as far as the institution of common standards for cataloguing and classification processes was concerned.

The research design for the study was the survey method. Using the purposive sampling method, 50 questionnaires were sent to core-cataloguers in the participating libraries. 36 questionnaires were collected from 8 of the libraries, thus giving a response rate of 72%.

The findings of the study revealed that the consortium had no challenges regarding the list of subject headings used by the participating libraries. However, the ZULC had little challenges regarding the extent to which the cataloguers for the members of the ZULC agreed or disagreed with the initiative. It also emerged from the study that the consortium had some challenges regarding the presence of a policy on the maximum number of subject headings that could be generated per catalogued item and the classification schemes that were used by the participating libraries.

The findings of the study also revealed that the consortium had great challenges regarding the areas that could be standardised in cataloguing and classification processes, the level of network connectivity at the libraries, the library management system used by the member libraries, the cost of recruiting additional manpower required to carry out the cataloguing and classification of library collections in retrospect and the cost of equipment that was required.