

Prospects of Digital Libraries in Enhancing Academic Materials Access:

A Survey of Libraries in Kilimanjaro Region's Higher
Learning Institutions

By

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16.11.2012

UbuntuNet-Connect 2012 Conference (November 15-16, 2012)
Kunduchi Beach Hotel
Dar es Salaam – Tanzania.

Introduction

Background Information

2

- The United Republic of Tanzania realizes that education is the pillar of national development, for it is through education the nation obtains skilled manpower to serve in various sectors in the nation's economy.
- The government have therefore put efforts to strengthen education in both levels so as to ensure that access to education is available to as many Tanzanians as possible.

Background...

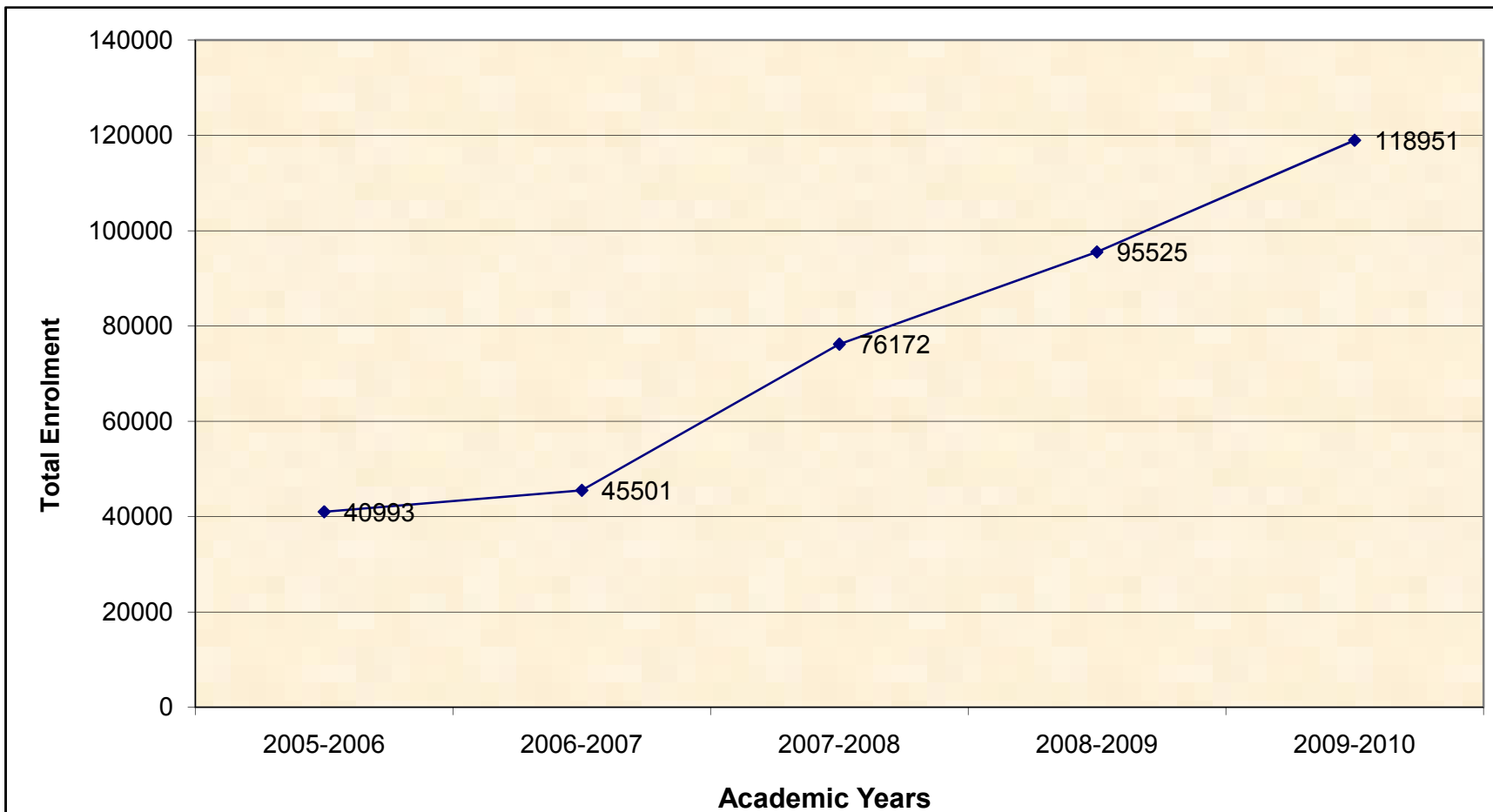
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- With those efforts in place, the net number of students enrolled to primary and secondary schools have been increasing with years.
- The increasing number of students enrolled in primary and secondary schools lead to the increasing number of students admitted to HLIs.
- For instance, the net enrolled students in HLIs for five consecutive academic years from 2005/06 to 2009/10 have been increasing with years.

Background...

4

Trend of Students Enrolled in HLIs (2005/06–2009/10)



Background...

5

- To cater with the increasing demand for higher learning education, some of the institutions have decided to put in place the distance learning courses.
- But distant students are physically separated with their lecturers and learning materials that are normally available in-campus.

Problem

6

- The increasing number of students enrolled to HLIs entails for an increasing number of library users.
- With the increasing library users it is mandatory to increase library resources such as librarians, seating spaces, and library materials.
- Presence of distance learning courses simply implies that distant students are likely to miss access to in-campus academic materials.

Digital Libraries

7

- Technological advancements have shown a substantial growth in various areas, one of which is the ICTs.
- Advancements in the ICTs have been observed in many application domains, one of which is in education,
- In education, ICTs can facilitate provision of library services to library users through Digital Libraries (DLs).

Digital Libraries...

- A DL is a library in which collections are stored in digital formats and accessible via computers. The digital content may be stored locally, or accessed remotely via computer networks (Greenstein and Thorin, 2002).
- A DL is based on documents in digital form that are handled like traditional library documents in standard processes (collecting, cataloging, and providing access) and that are made available online for users (Seadle and Greifeneder, 2007).

Digital Libraries...

- DLs are asserted to bring:
 - Improved sharing of library materials,
 - Improved and wider access of library materials,
 - Improved timely access of library materials, and
 - Improved preservation of library materials.

Objectives of the study

10

- The general objective of this study was to find out prospects of using digital libraries in enhancing academic materials access to library users in the HLIs in the study area. Specific objectives of the study were;
 - i. To examine status of existing libraries in the area of study in serving library users

Objectives...

11

- ii. To ascertain challenges facing the implementation of digital libraries in the study area, and
- iii. To find out ways to which digital libraries implementation can help to supplement traditional libraries in providing access to academic materials.

Methodology

Research Design

13

- A cross section research design that involves asking questions to respondents at a single point at a particular time was used.
- The reason for selecting the cross section survey design is that it was time and resource effective.
- The design enabled the researchers to come up with best results

Description of the Study area

14

- This study was conducted in Kilimanjaro region.
- Kilimanjaro region is one of the 30 regions of Tanzania.
- The headquarters of the region is Moshi.
- Kilimanjaro region is bordered to the North and East by Kenya, to South is bordered by Tanga region, to South-West by Manyara region and to West by Arusha region.

Study area...

15

- The region is composed of five higher learning institutions as follows:
 - ▣ Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College (KCMCo),
 - ▣ Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies (MUCCoBS),
 - ▣ Mwenge University College of Education (MWUCE),
 - ▣ Stefano Moshi Memorial University College (SMMUCo) and
 - ▣ The Open University of Tanzania (OUT)-Kilimanjaro Centre.

Population, Sampling and Sample Size

16

- This study involved only four higher learning institutions, where OUN was not involved.
- Simple random sampling technique was employed to obtain the representative sample of 112 respondents from the population as follows:
 - 2 librarians from each institution
 - 1 admissions officer from each institution
 - 5 academic staff from each institution
 - 20 students from each institution

Data collection

17

- Both primary and secondary data were collected in this study.
- The main data sources were:
 - questionnaires,
 - interviews,
 - internet search, and
 - physical observations of the libraries in place

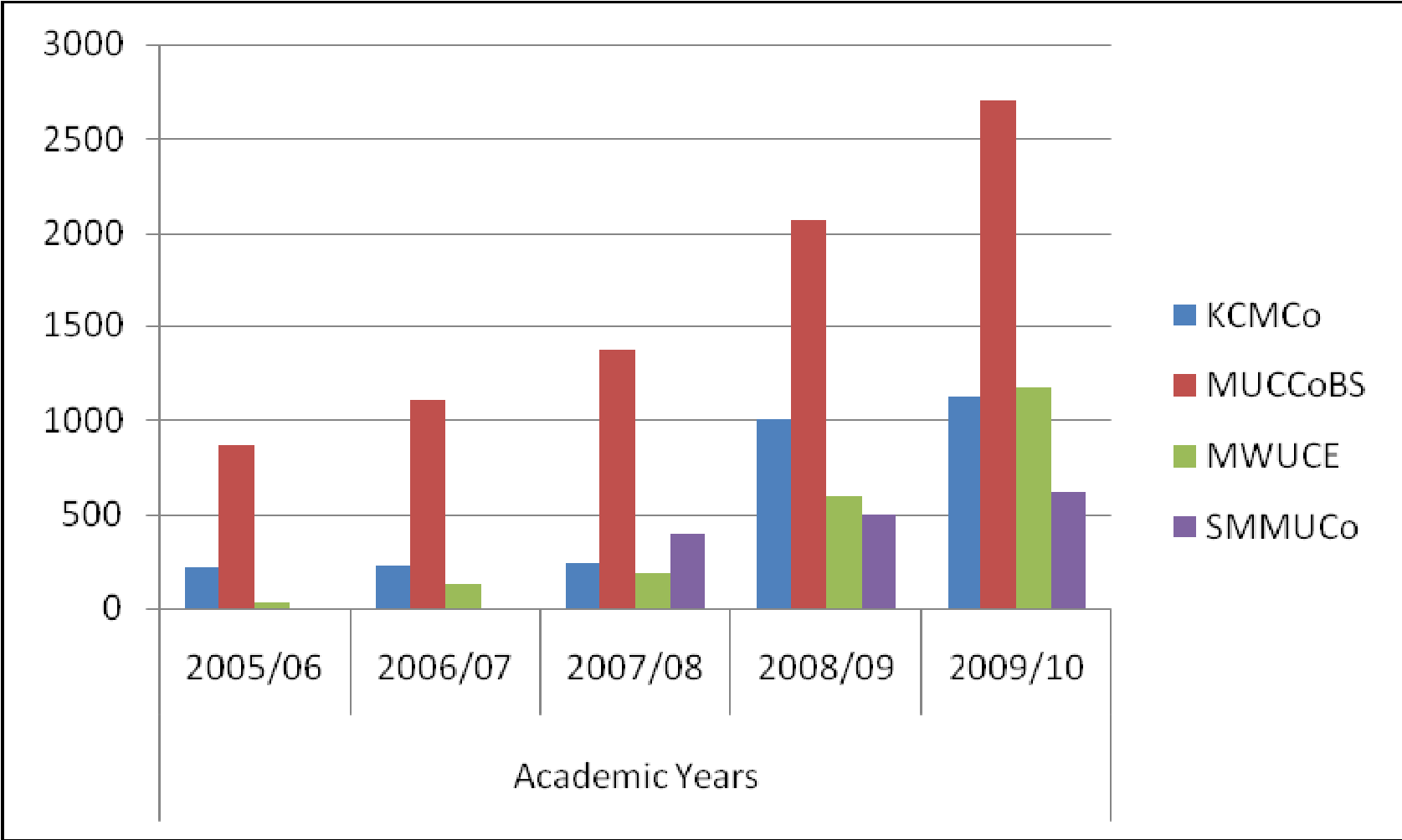
Data Analysis and Presentation

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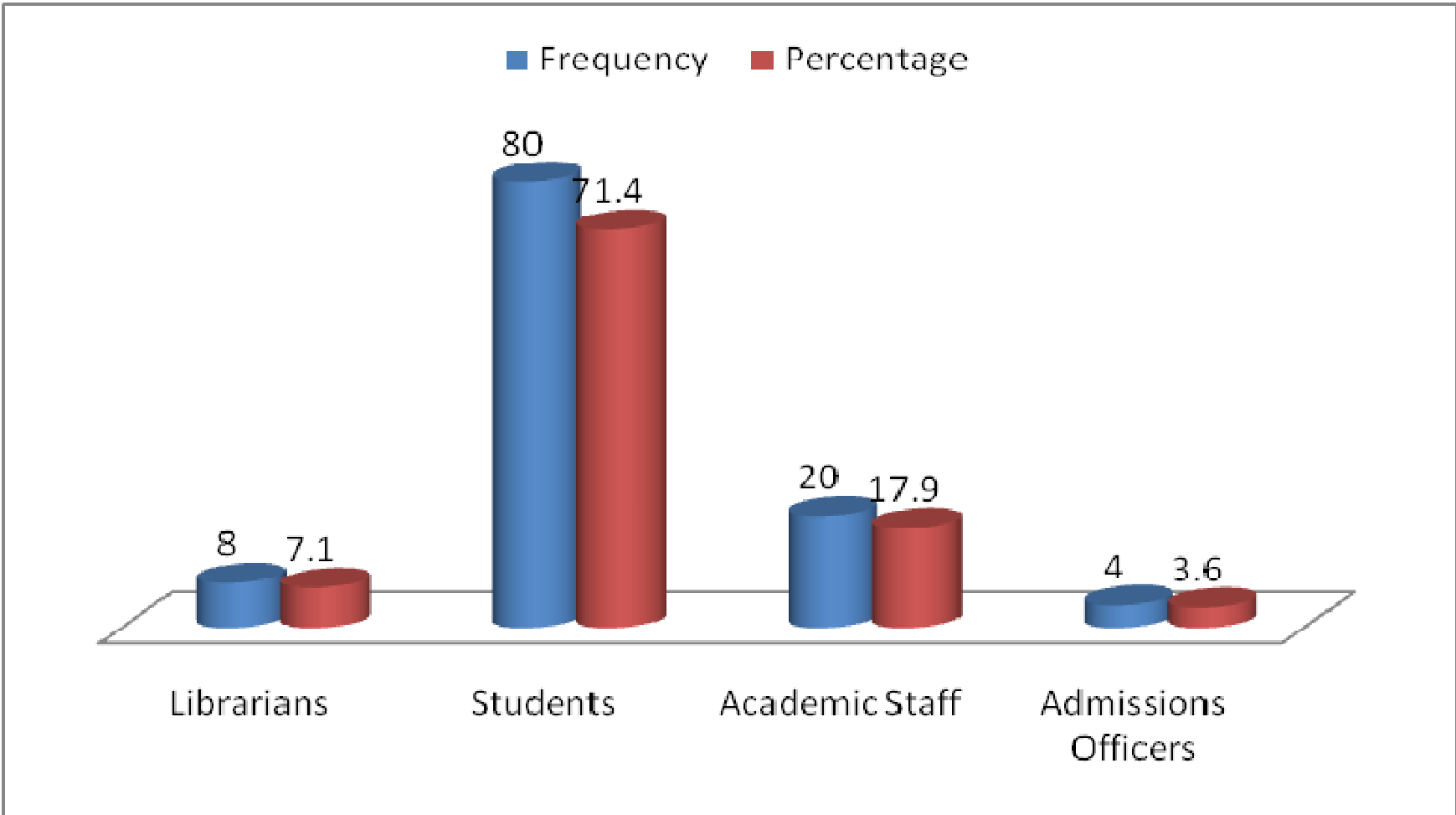
- Data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)
- In this statistical package descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages were determined where the implications of the results led to recommendations.

Findings

Trends of Students Enrollments



Types of Respondents Involved



Libraries status

1. Operating time

- Each of the four HLI in the study area that were involved in this study had at least one main library, a traditional one. Consequently four libraries were visited during this study.
- None of the four libraries operates in 24 Hours
- None of them operates in public holidays
- Only one library operates on Sundays, but it operates for only three hours

Lib status...

23

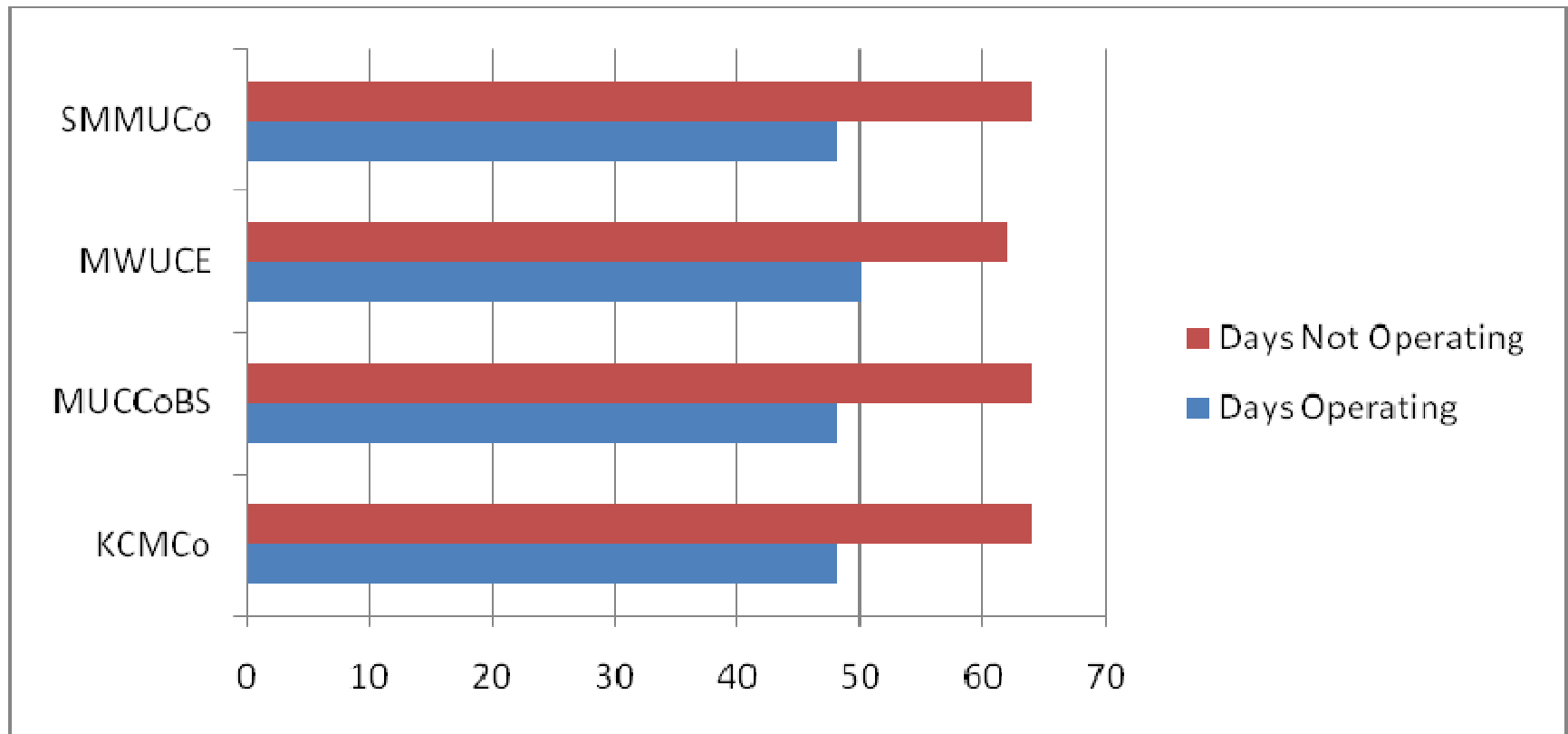
□ Operating time...

Library	Weekdays (Hours)		Saturdays (Hours)		Sundays (Hours)		Calculated Total Operating Hours per week (out of 168Hrs)
	Opening	Closing	Opening	Closing	Opening	Closing	
KCMC_o	0900	2200	0900	1300	-	-	69
MUCC_oBS	0830	2200	1400	1800	1500	1800	69.5
MWUCE	0900	2200	0900	1800	-	-	74
SMMUC_o	0900	2200	0900	1300	-	-	69

Lib status...

24

- **Summary of days in which libraries operates and not in a 16 weeks semester**



Lib status...

25

2. Seating Space

Institution	2011/12 Academic Year		
	Enrolled Students	Library Seating Capacity	Percentage (%)
KCMC _o	961	100	10.4
MUCC _o BS	3890	200	5.1
MWUCE	2600	200	7.7
SMMUC _o	465	50	10.8
TOTAL	7916	550	6.9

Lib status...

26

3. Libraries Expandability

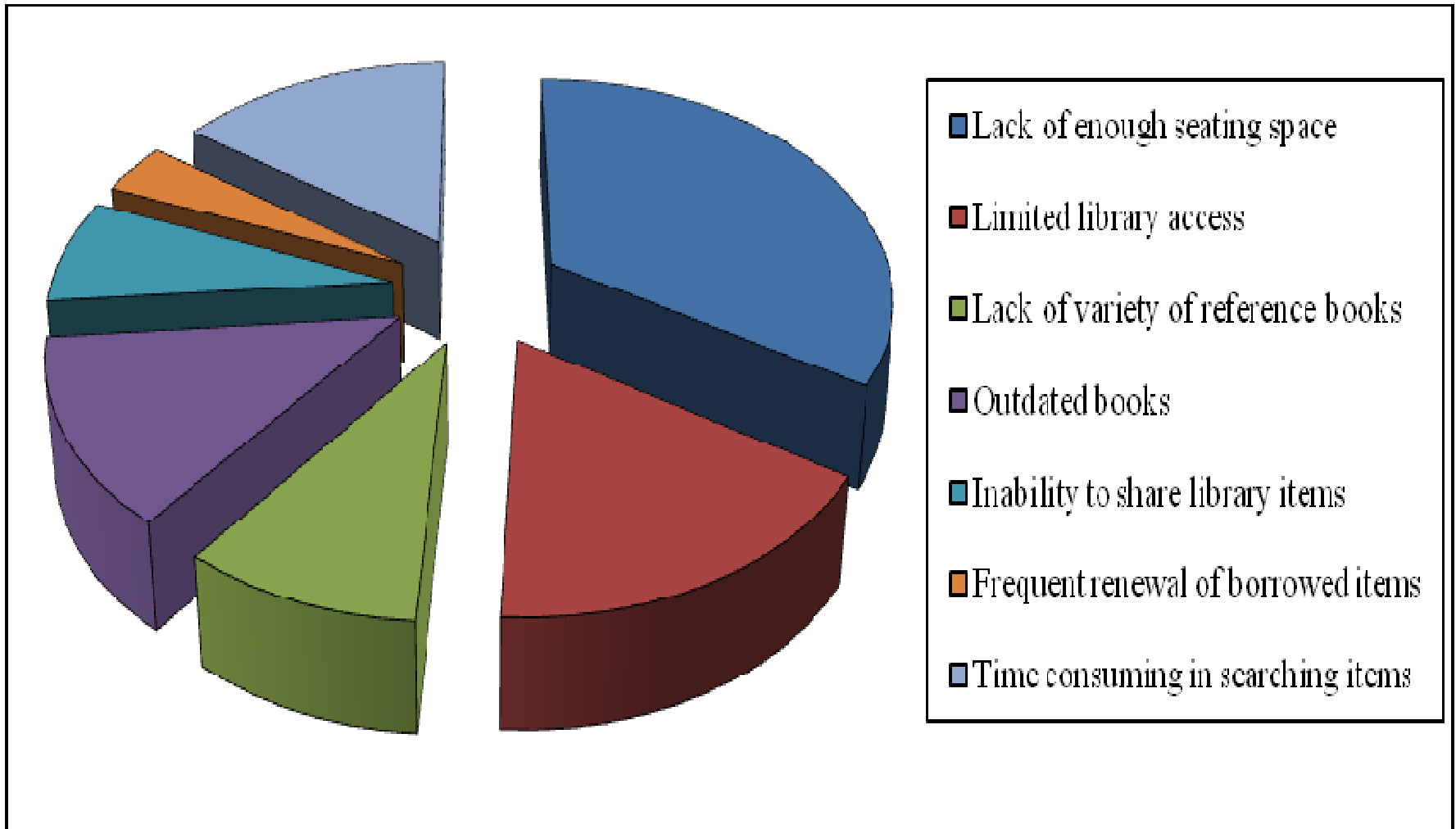
- all surveyed libraries are built with block walls and concrete of which libraries' physical expansion looks impractical

4. Item Searching

- all of the libraries have software to facilitate items searching, however the software is only accessible within the library premises

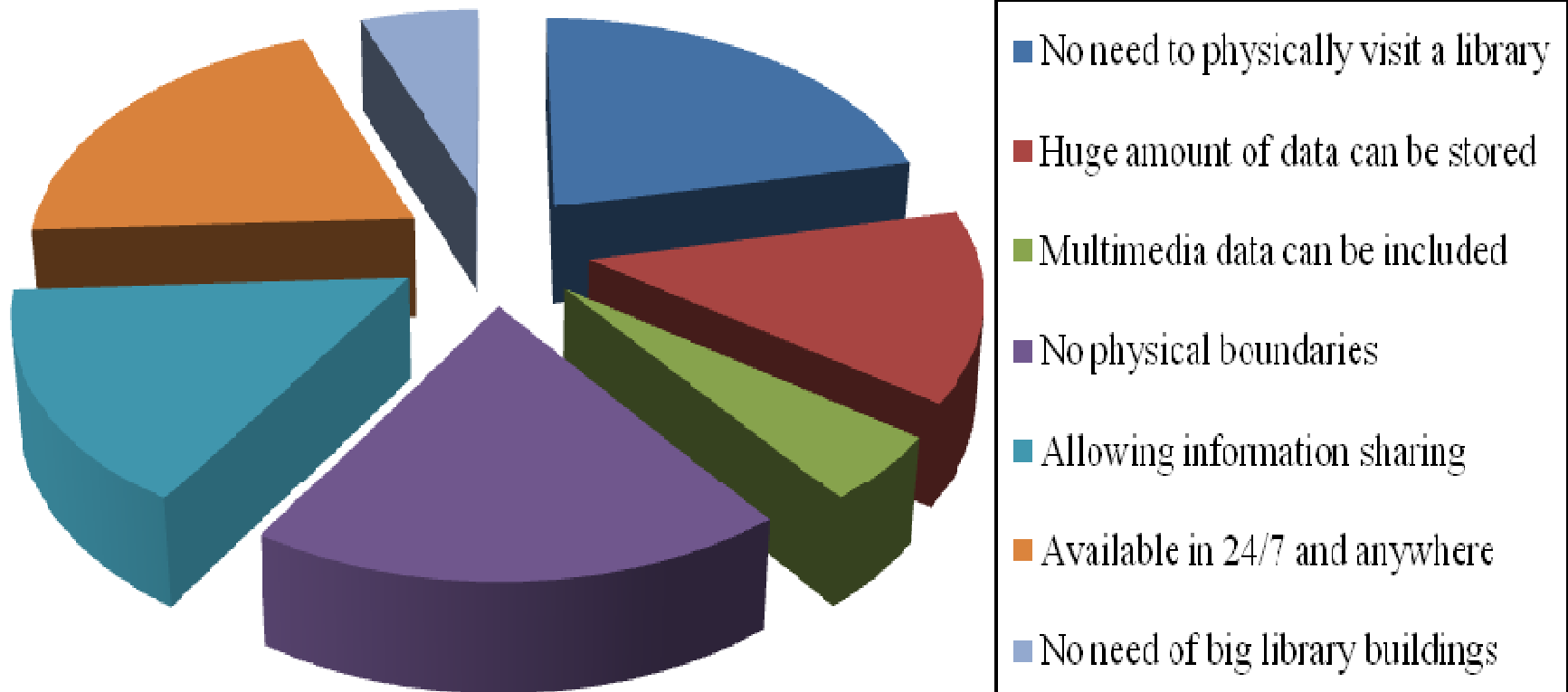
Challenges facing library users

27



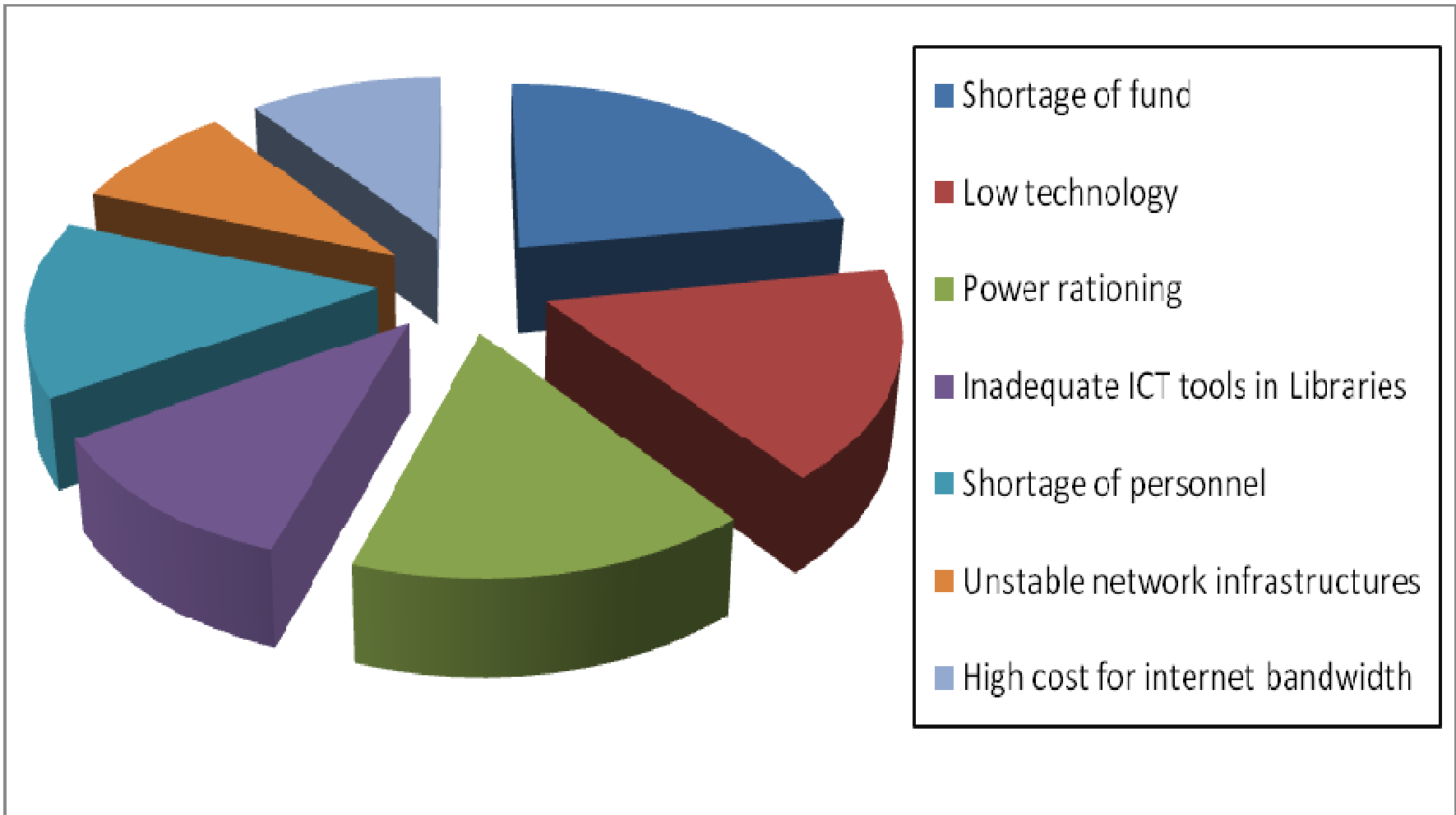
Advantages of DL

28



Challenges facing implementation of digital libraries

29



What to be done?

30

- The higher learning institutions must put deliberate efforts to acquire tools for digital libraries
- The institutions should educate sufficient number of personnel who will establish and implement digital libraries
- The government should establish mechanisms to provide stable power supply especially in higher learning institutions settings
- ICT infrastructures in all levels should be improved

To be done...

- Create appropriate policies which will govern the creation, installation and use of digital libraries
- Create awareness to all stakeholders including policy makers, policy implementers and the community at large on the necessity and opportunities offered by the DLs over traditional libraries so that they can effectively utilize its prospective benefits.
- All key stakeholders should collaborate and genuinely allocate sufficient funds for DLs implementations.

Conclusion

32

- The study does not recommend traditional libraries to be totally replaced by digital libraries.
- And in any way, therefore, digital libraries should not be regarded as a threat to librarians' jobs but rather an opportunity that enhances academic materials access to more library users than ever before.



Thank You!