

Current trends in library and information science in the light of PhD research and studies – 4.

Interview with Fredrick Wawire Otike

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The editorial team of CELISR sent a questionnaire to recent graduates of the Library and Information Science doctoral program at the ELTE Doctoral School of Literary Studies, in order to provide the journal's readers with an insight into the current and future scientific activities of researchers, and to give an idea of the current research trends in the field. The following article contains a brief overview of the PhD research conducted by Fredrick Wawire Otike, University Librarian at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Kenya, with background and future prospects.

academic library, innovation, sustainability, Kenya

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Supervisor: Ágnes Barátné Hajdu, Péter Kiszl

Please say a few words about your professional life, your inspirations.



Photo by the author

I am a librarian by profession with a PhD in Literary and Cultural Studies (Library and Information Science) from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary, which was awarded to me on February 3, 2025. I also hold a Master of Philosophy in information science (Library and Information Studies) from Moi University, Kenya, and a Bachelor of Education (Arts) from Kenyatta University, Kenya. Before pursuing my PhD, I served and continue to serve as the University Librarian at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Kenya, a position I have held since 2010.

I am a research-driven professional, with a strong record of scholarly work reflected in numerous peer-reviewed publications, both locally and internationally, on various issues and trends in library and information science.

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Please give a comprehensive summary of the research on which your PhD studies are based.

My PhD research focused on the implementation of innovation and innovative strategies in academic libraries in Kenya, the study was driven by the rapid pace of technological advancement contrasted with the relatively slow adaptation by libraries and librarians. The study established that academic libraries were undergoing unprecedented transformations, prompted by the diversification of information sources, evolving user information needs, and technological progress factors that have introduced new competitors into the information landscape, effectively ending the libraries' historical monopoly. Grounded in two theoretical frameworks the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and Disruptive Innovation theory, the study argued that libraries must remain attuned to shifting market dynamics and user expectations to maintain relevance; otherwise, they risk obsolescence in the face of disruptive forces. This underscores the need for a proactive, innovation-centered mindset within library leadership and operations, one that embraces continuous learning, strategic agility, and user-centered service design to ensure long-term sustainability and impact.

Who are the primary "beneficiaries" of your research – librarians, users, policy makers?

The primary beneficiaries of this study include librarians, who are responsible for leading the adoption of innovation and related strategies within academic libraries and also contribute to policy formulation. University management, as the parent organization, benefits through its role in providing financial resources, staffing, and infrastructure. Library schools also gain, as they are tasked with educating students on emerging trends in academic librarianship. Additionally, the Kenya Commission for University Education, a government agency responsible for setting standards and offering guidance on the establishment of libraries and university curricula, stands to benefit from the study's findings.

Please summarize the main conclusion(s) of your thesis.

Study's findings indicated that most academic libraries in Kenya remain rooted in outdated service models, lacking the strategic foresight and innovation needed in today's academic and technological landscape. Innovation must be holistic extending beyond service delivery to include structural change, organizational culture, and professional capacity building. The study emphasizes the importance of redefining internal relationships, updating staff competencies, fostering teamwork, and developing actionable, measurable strategies. The research also revealed a concerning stagnation in Library and Information Science (LIS) education in Kenya. Despite a growing number of universities offering LIS programs, there is a striking uniformity in curriculum content across institutions, with little to no evidence of innovation. This lack of curricular modernization contributes to the broader inertia within the profession. Moreover, the study highlights the absence of a regulatory body for librarianship in Kenya. Without a professional authority to guide library standards and professional development, academic libraries are left under the fragmented oversight of the Commission for University Education and their parent universities. In conclusion, this being a hypothesis-testing study, it confirmed all proposed hypothesis statements, reinforcing the urgent need for adoption of innovation and innovative strategies in Kenyan

academic libraries. The study recommends targeted research into LIS education reforms and the establishment of a regulatory body to guide professional development and policy formation in academic librarianship.

Please explain why and how you chose Institute of Library and Information Science at Eötvös Loránd University.

I chose the Institute of Library and Information Science at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary because of its strong reputation for academic excellence and its high standards in offering doctoral programs in Library and Information Sciences. The selection and enrolment were also a result of the Hungarian scholarship that was awarded to me. I was fortunate to work with well-informed and supportive supervisors who provided excellent guidance throughout my research. Notably, my research topic aligned closely with their areas of interest, which made their mentorship particularly valuable. This collaboration resulted in the co-authorship of several research papers on innovation, with a focus on both Kenya and Hungary. As such, I will forever be indebted to Prof. Agnes Hajdu and Prof. Peter Kiszl for their professional and academic support and guidance.

Please say a few words about your future research plans.

With the successful completion of my doctoral studies which sharpened my research skills and built strong collaborations across Hungary, Europe, and Africa I am committed to advancing research in the field of Library and Information Science. Moving forward, my primary focus will be on library research, publishing, and authorship, especially given the notable gap identified in this area during my academic journey. Nonetheless, I will continue to serve as a proactive ambassador for innovation-driven change in libraries by participating in conferences, workshops, and engaging in extensive scholarly writing.

