

# **The Effectiveness of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors in Promoting the Usage of E-Resources: A Case Study of Mzumbe University**

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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AMBASSADORS  
IN PROMOTING THE USAGE OF E-RESOURCES: A CASE STUDY OF  
MZUMBE UNIVERSITY**

**By**

**Elizabeth Slaqwara Sulle**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Information Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam**

**University of Dar es Salaam**  
**May, 2022**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the University of Dar es Salaam a Dissertation entitled: **Effectiveness of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors in Promoting Usage of e-Resources; A Case Study of Mzumbe University, Tanzania** in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Information Studies) of the University of Dar es Salaam.

.....  
Dr. Evans Wema  
(Supervisor)

Date.....

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I, **Elizabeth Slaqwara Sulle** declare to the University of Dar es Salaam that this dissertation is my original work and that it has never been presented and submitted at any other University or higher learning institution for a similar purpose or any other degree award.

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### **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my lovely Mother, Maria Paulo Sulle, and my late father, Paulo Slaqwara Sulle

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |                                                             |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| APA    | American Psychological Association                          |
| COTUL  | Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries    |
| DLTS   | Directorate of Library and Technical Services               |
| FGD    | Focused Group Discussion                                    |
| GPA    | Grade Point Average                                         |
| ICT    | Information Communication Technology                        |
| IFM    | Institute of Finance and Management                         |
| IR     | Institutional Repository                                    |
| MKO    | The More Knowledgeable Other                                |
| MLA    | Modern Language Association                                 |
| MU     | Mzumbe University                                           |
| MUERUS | Mzumbe University Electronic Resources Utilization Strategy |
| MUL    | Mzumbe University Library                                   |
| OAN    | Organizational Access Number                                |
| OPAC   | Open Public Access Catalogue                                |
| QRC    | Quick Recognition Code                                      |
| SKA    | Students' Knowledge Ambassadors                             |
| SPSS   | Statistical Product and Service Solutions                   |
| SUA    | Sokoine University of Agriculture                           |
| UDSM   | University of Dar es Salaam                                 |
| UK     | United Kingdom                                              |
| USA    | United State of America                                     |
| ZPD    | The Zone of Proximal Development                            |

## **ABSTRACT**

This study assesses the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors (SKAs) in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources in academic libraries in Tanzania. Specifically, the study intended to identify the criteria used to select SKAs in promoting the usage of e-resources, explore perceptions of fellow students towards the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources, and examine the challenges of using SKAs' to effectively promote the usage of subscribed e-resources and identify strategies that could be used by MUL to improve SKAs' effectiveness in promoting the usage of e-resources. A descriptive case study research design, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the study. Along with this, cross-sectional surveys, FGD, and observation were employed to collect data. Whereas SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data, content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. Important criteria considered in selecting SKAs to join the programme include self-confidence, self-motivation, ICT competencies, and information search competencies as well as communication skills. The study also noted that SKAs are generally perceived positively by peers in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. In terms of challenges, various factors that hinder the effective use of SKAs include low internet connectivity, inadequate mentorship, inadequate funds, lack of incentives, inadequate ICT facilities, and misconceptions about the role of SKA. The study concludes, that the best selection criteria for SKA must be guided by well-

written rules and policies headed by librarians. The study indicates the need for SKA's mentorship to improve peers' positive perceptions of SKA's effectiveness in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. Therefore, the study concludes that there is a need to address several challenges affecting the effectiveness of SKA as well as improve viable strategies that aim to promote the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of electronic resources. Based on its results, the study recommends several issues including putting in place SKA selection criteria guidelines or policy that intensifies the mentorship of SKAs, guaranteeing the sustainability of the SKA programme, establishing a progressive ICT infrastructure, and ensuring commitment from librarians.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces this study that looked at the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. The chapter begins with a background of the study, which is followed by a statement of the problem. The chapter also provides the objectives of the study, research questions, and significance, scope, and limitations of the study. In the end, the chapter presents definitions of key terms used in the study.

### 1.2 Background to the Research Problem

The practice of engaging students as knowledge ambassadors to promote the use of information services among their peers began around the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Appleton and Abernethy, 2013; Towler, 2010). Knowledge ambassadors' programmes emerged as a result of increasing concern about poor usage of e-resources in university libraries (Peter, 2013). It is among the strategies for increasing the usage of e-resources and widening students' involvement in outreach activities targeting their peers on and off-campus (Gartland, 2015). It is reported that students' engagement in promoting e-resources is a critical target strategy in most institutions of higher learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Schlak, 2017).

This approach has previously successfully worked for the majority of European countries including the United Kingdom (UK) and America (Tariq, 2018). In the United Kingdom, engagement of student knowledge ambassadors (SKA) in academic libraries is perceived as a common useful programme since it is practiced by many higher learning institutions to facilitate various activities based on the nature of individual institutions (Holt and Cribb, 2012). In the UK, SKA is selected based on several criteria including excellent speech, self-motivation, and possession of a general understanding of widening-participation issues. The selected SKA are given training based on the requirements of the institutions (Ylonen, 2010). Moreover, Appleton and Abernethy (2013) and Walton (2010) revealed that the effectiveness of students' collaboration affairs and practices can be perceived as useful in the improvement of academic library resources and student support services. In the USA, the Milner Library works together with student government leaders to engage students as knowledge ambassadors. These SKAs are selected as volunteers based on different criteria and given training before being scheduled to work in partnership with librarians to promote the use of library resources and services (Trowlor, 2010; Schobernd et al., 2009). Moreover, Ylonen (2010) asserted that the major role of student knowledge ambassadors is to bridge the gap existing between fellow students and library resources through training and sharing current academic library resources. Also, Gartland (2015) and Sanders and Higham (2012) revealed that peers perceive SKAs as role models in the academic arena.

Similarly, academic libraries in some African countries are practicing the use of student volunteers as knowledge ambassadors. These countries include Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, and Kenya (IUM, 2020). In these countries, SKA's responsibility is to promote the library resources and services as selected based on several criteria set by the programme coordinators. These students are given training on how the subscribed electronic resources are utilized by their fellow students. For example, In Kenya, most universities consider the use of SKAs as an important strategy for promoting the usage of e-resources among fellow students. The practice involves the use of various strategies that include working in teams, institutional newsletters, magazines, intranet, online tutorials, reading lists, peer trainers programmes, partnerships with peer students, OPAC, email, regular usage of social media, word of mouth, and websites (Ndungu, 2016; Kibe and Kwanya, 2015). Many academic libraries in Kenya aim to engage students as knowledge ambassadors to link library services and resources to their fellow students. They indicated that after using SKA to promote the use of subscribed e-resources, the number of e-resources used in academic libraries increased to 93.8% (Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018).

In Tanzania, Mzumbe University Library is the only and first academic library to engage SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources among fellow students. The SKA was initiated at MU in early 2017 as the MU electronic resources utilization to promote the usage of electronic resources (MUERUS, 2017). Before then, the Library employed various strategies to promote the use of e-resources. Some of these strategies involved working with Mzumbe University Student Organization (MUSO) and the usage of exhibitions, library website, social media, hostels (in and out of campuses), academic staff offices, flyers, and brochures (Isibika and Kavishe, 2018). All these were meant to boost the usage rate of e-resources.

The usage of e-resources subscribed to by academic libraries varies from one library to another and from one database to another. For example, Emerald Database accounted for 48% of e-resources usage at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) in 2018, 41.1% in 2019, and 28.1% in 2020. In contrast, at Mzumbe University (MU), the database contributed 30.5% of use in 2018, 28.1% in 2019, and 21.3% in 2020. At Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) the statistics stood at 11.2% in 2018, 18.4 % in 2019, and 40.5% in 2020 while at the Institute of Finance and Management (IFM) they stood at 9.6% in 2018, 12.1% in 2019, and 10.5% in 2020 (COTUL, 2020).

In the case of Mzumbe University, before the introduction of SKAs, the usage of Emerald, Sage, and Taylor and Francis databases was at 37% in 2015, before it dropped to 32% in 2016 and 31% in 2017 (MU, 2017). This decrease forced MU Library to use SKAs as the key strategy to increase the usage of these resources. The usage statistics of e-resources after the introduction of SKA for the year 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 was 6002, 10,881, 6527, and 11,225 respectively, which was comparatively, lower in the past years (MU, 2021). Although SKA programmes have resulted in increased usage of e-resources in some developed and developing world (Ylonen, 2010; Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018), there was uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of the one used by MU Library on the Main Campus in Morogoro. Hence the need to conduct this study became vital.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Academic libraries worldwide have been employing various strategies to promote subscribed e-resources to enhance their utilization to support teaching, learning, and research, which are the core functions of universities (Mwantimwa and Mollel, 2019). One of the strategies adopted by these libraries is to use SKAs (Kibe and Kwaya, 2015). Mzumbe University Library is so far the only academic university in Tanzania that has adopted the SKAs strategy as a means of addressing the low usage of subscribed e-resources. Low usage of e-resources among academic institutions has brought unjustifiable answers to financial queries (Ohmiyati, Wook, and Sahari 2021). These academic libraries spent a large amount of funds to pay subscribed e-resources while usage continues to be very low in some of the databases observed through statistics on the weekly reports 2018-2020 and financial reports (MU Financial report, 2018, 2019, and 2020). However, it is not clear if the library's use of this new strategy has been fruitful. In fact, without the evidence of significant improvement in the usage of subscribed e-resources, MU's spending of large amounts of money on subscribed e-resources (MU Financial report, 2020) is unjustifiable. So far there is no available evidence to that effect and the available studies have focused only on identifying strategies for increasing usage of the resources (Isibika and Kavishe, 2018), awareness and use of electronic resources (Akpojotor, 2016), and the impact of e-

resources use in students' academic performance (Manda and Wema, 2011). Furthermore, studies that have focused on the role of SKAs in enhancing the use of e-resources have been carried out in contexts other than Tanzania (Tarig, 2018; Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018; Ylonen, 2010). It is therefore imperative that a study that would assess the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the use of subscribed e-resources in academic libraries in Tanzania is necessary. This study was hence carried out to fill this significant gap in the current literature that deals with the use of libraries' subscribed e-resources in Tanzania

#### **1.4 The Main Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of e-resources at Mzumbe University Library.

##### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Identify the criteria used to select SKAs to promote the usage of e-resources
- ii. Explore the perception of fellow students towards the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MUL
- iii. Identify challenges MUL face in effectively using SKAs' in promoting the usage of e-resources
- iv. Assess the strategies used by MUL to improve SKAs' effectiveness in promoting the usage of e-resources

#### **1.5 Research questions**

Specifically, set out to answer the following specific research questions:

- i. What are the criteria used to select SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MUL?
- ii. What are the perceptions of fellow students towards the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MUL?
- iii. What are the challenges MUL faces in effectively using SKAs to promote subscribed e-resources use?
- iv. What are the strategies used to enhance the effectiveness of SKAs in the promotion of subscribed e-resources?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will have a significant contribution to the existing knowledge on the use of knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. Also, the findings of this study will contribute new knowledge for college and university policymakers, librarians, researchers, information officers, planners, and electronic resources stakeholders in identifying proper ways of addressing issues that influence students' use of e-resources. The findings are also expected to contribute to the establishment of strategies that will improve students' access to electronic resources for decision-making in their academic activities. In terms of practice, the findings can also contribute to equal access and use of electronic resources (information) to bridge the information gap as a fulfillment of sustainable development goals. Finally, the finding of the study aims to increase the use of electronic resources for the subscribed e-resources at MUL.

## **1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study assessed the effectiveness of SKA in promoting the usage of e-resources at the library, in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. The study was conducted at MUL main campus because it is the only one that uses SKAs to promote the usage of subscribed e-resources. As such, its findings might not be generalizable to other universities in the country. Nevertheless, the results reflect the reality observed in other African universities, for example, Kenya. In terms of limitations, reaching respondents, for example getting SKAs to take part in focus group discussions was not easy. To deal with this challenge, the researcher used class representatives to engage SKAs in their classes and schedule discussion sessions on her behalf.

## **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

### **1.8.1 Academic Library**

Klain and Shoham (2019) defined an academic library as an organization established inside a higher learning institution to support teaching, learning, and research to its users. This study uses this definition.

### **1.8.2 Electronic Resources**

Electronic resources are defined by Kumari (2015) as an online resource that can be accessible 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world through the application of a computer or any other digital gadget. They include e-books, e-journals, online databases, internet sites, and full-text articles which are subscribed to by academic libraries in Tanzania through the consortium. This study uses this definition.

### **1.8.3 Knowledge Ambassadors**

Kibe and Kwanya (2015) define knowledge ambassadors as student volunteers who are willing and eager to promote library services to fellow students. This study uses this definition.

### **1.8.4 Promotion**

Mollet (2013) defines the term promotion as a method used to deliver information to users about library services and resources to ensure that a user is attentive to services and resources available. In this study, the term has been used to mean academic libraries' raising awareness about and improving the usage of subscribed e-resources through websites, brochures, booklets, banners, workshops, and social media.

### **1.8.5 Effectiveness**

This refers to the degree to which something is successful in generating a preferred effect or results throughout the time and following the institutional procedure in accord agreement with performance expectations (Schweigert, 2006). This study uses this definition.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has introduced this study that focused on the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources in academic libraries. The chapter has provided the study's background information from the global and African perspectives before narrowing the narrative down to the situation in Tanzania where the study has been conducted. Furthermore, the chapter has stated the problem under investigation, objectives, research questions, indicated the significance of the study, its scope and limitation, and definition of key terms. The chapter that follows presents the literature review based on the objectives of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an elaborate literature review regarding the use of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources in university libraries. The pieces of the literature review are linked to the research objectives and are divided into several sub-sections as outlined below. The first section presents a general overview of knowledge ambassadors. This is followed by sections presenting literature on the criteria used to select SKAs and the Perception of fellow students towards the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MUL. That is followed by sections discussing challenges facing the effective use of SKAs and strategies that could be used by Mzumbe University Library to enhance the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of e-resources. The final sections of the chapter also synthesize the reviewed literature and identify the research gap that this study sought to fill. The chapter ends by providing the conceptual framework that would guide the study.

#### **2.2 An overview of Knowledge Ambassadors**

Electronic resources play an important role in enhancing teaching, learning, and research activities in higher learning institutions (Mwantimwa, Elia, and Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2017). As a result, academic institutions across the world provide a broad range of these resources for use by undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers, and other information users in their respective institutions. Various initiatives made since early 1990 to enhance the availability of scholarly e-resources and information in Africa have resulted in a significant increase in the number of institutions accessing these resources (Mollel and Mwantimwa, 2019; Lwoga and Sukums, 2018; Manda, 2005). However, while the number of higher learning institutions subscribing to these resources has increased enormously, the resources' use has been unsatisfying (Mwalongo, 2018; Mtega et al., 2013). This indicates that e-resources subscribed to by individual institutions or through COTUL, a consortium in Tanzania, are underutilized. In particular, databases such as Emerald, Wiley, Sage Publications, and Taylor and Francis have been reported to be significantly underutilized by students and faculty members of different higher learning institutions (Mwantimwa, Elia & Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2017).

Different factors, including lack of awareness and limited information search skills, are contributing to less effective use of these resources (Adeoye and Olanrewaju, 2019; Wema, 2018; Msagati, 2014). In addition to these, Wema (2018) found that the utilization of e-resources was not only affected by lack of information literacy and computer skills, but also by insufficient access to computers and slow Internet. In response to the low use of these e-resources, institutions have been adopting strategies to improve the situation. These include the adoption and use of student knowledge ambassadors to promote the usage of e-resources.

Knowledge ambassadors are "student volunteers who are willing and excited to promote information services" at high learning institutions (Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018:3). While the strategy of engaging SKAs in the United Kingdom (UK) is well accepted by academic libraries in the developed world (Gartland, 2015; Ylonen, 2010), it is a new concept in most African countries (Kibe and Kwanya, 2015; Tariq, 2018). Scholars identify the practice of using

knowledge ambassadors differently in different situations. For some, the term peer mentoring programme (Peter, 2013) is adopted while others refer to individuals involved as library ambassadors (Barber, 2009), knowledge ambassadors (Gikandi and Ndungu (2018), and student ambassadors (Tariq, 2018; Brenza et al., 2015; Gartland, 2015).

In the UK, for instance, Student Knowledge Ambassadors are used to market different courses offered by universities (Gartland, 2013). Furthermore, at the Lincoln Library University, there were hired to respond to first-line inquiries and promote all library services to their fellow students and other library users. They often work hand in hand with library staff who are responsible for arranging library events, developing library tutorials, and posting to library websites (Peter, 2013).

Nevertheless, through this practice, libraries and universities create awareness of library resources and services by capitalizing on the connection between knowledge ambassadors and fellow students. The SKAs are usually trained by librarians or experts on the use of subscribed e-resources and searching skills. Skills acquired would allow them to train their colleagues to eventually kick-start their life-long learning (Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018). MUL at the main campus in Morogoro is the academic library in Tanzania that has adopted SKAs in promoting the use of subscribed electronic resources.

The use of ambassadors is not only limited to library services, but this is a market strategy for many types of products. For example, in Indonesia ambassadors are used as information providers for various products and services. This was adopted to increase market competition and develop deeper insight into the consumer's behavior toward their product and services (Wang and Hariandja, 2016).

## **2.3 Student Knowledge Ambassadors Selection Criteria**

Previous studies, as elucidated in the sections that follow, reveal that student knowledge ambassadors are selected based on several criteria as illustrated below:

### **2.3.1 Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Grade Point Average (GPA) is one of the best selection criteria for effective student knowledge ambassadors (Barnes, 2017). Students with higher GPAs tend to be the best academically and meet the standards and expectations of a particular university. As such, these students present great candidates for SKA programmes since their academic success is associated with the recognition of the value of information resources that support academic performance. The student GPA considered as selection criteria for SKA must possess added characteristics of being a confident speaker, higher level of education, and strong personality (Ndungu and Gikandi, 2018). Other criteria for selecting SKA include the ability to communicate effectively, ability to work in problem-solving ability as well as for analytic skills, flexibility and adaptability to new knowledge related to library activities, and administrative skills (O'Kelly et al, 2015). Besides, Meyer and Torreano (2017) recognized students' interest in and commitment to promoting library services as the basis for picking knowledge ambassadors. Similarly, Clifford et al. (2012) identified unique abilities such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, leadership, time management, and influences as critically significant in the selection of the SKAs.

Furthermore, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) acknowledged the high performance of students during e-resources training sessions, students' willingness, and self-confidence as potential criteria for recognizing students for inclusion in SKA programmes. A study by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) revealed that Knowledge ambassadors were selected through diverse outreach methods through which librarians pleaded with participants to volunteer their skills and time by taking part in the SKA program. Those that agreed were asked for their contact details in a bid to establish a comprehensive capacity-building programme. Kibe and Kwanya (2015) further observed and emphasized that SKAs should be selected based on attributes such as good interpersonal skills, kindness, positive attitude, open-mindedness, and flexibility. Based on this literature, it is clear that knowledge and skills on a broad spectrum of academic matters are a pre-requisite for student knowledge ambassador roles.

### **2.3.2 Self-confidence**

Self-confidence refers to believing in oneself (Benabou and Tirole, 2002). A confident individual has trust in self-abilities, capacities, and judgments and this enhances success in day-to-day challenges and achievement of goals (Malmquist, 2020; Greenacre, Tung, and Chapman, 2014). It is acknowledged that a self-confident person brings happiness following the achievement of task goals, which results in a more energized and motivated self, ready to take action to achieve more goals (Malmquist, 2020). Librarians and IT experts select students as knowledge ambassadors on the grounds of their self-confidence.

Similarly, a study by Feltz (2007) highlighted self-confidence as an important factor that distinguishes successful people from unsuccessful ones in the achievement of goals. In practice, there is a notable relationship between self-confidence and self-motivation because one's belief in successfully executing the desired behavior enhances motivation and, thus, creates a platform for dedicating more energy to ensure the work is done (Karimi, 2014; Haldar, 2010). Therefore, effective performance in searching for electronic resources during students' training sessions can be attributed to self-confidence and self-motivation explaining the inclusion of such individuals in SKA programmes.

### **2.3.3 Competence in IT**

Information technology (IT) competence refers to a set of IT-related explicit and tacit knowledge possessed by individuals, which enables them to exhibit information technology expertise in a particular subject area (Heiskanen, et al, 2018). This competence is a vital element of any successful knowledge ambassador because, as argued by Aagaard (2013), such individuals are supposed to be change agents facilitating the implementation of organizational changes such as knowledge management strategies meant to enhance information sharing. To be effective change agents, knowledge ambassadors require knowledge from a variety of disciplines; among these, information technology competencies are critical because they are fundamental to access to and usage of subscribed electronic resources (Aagaard, 2019; Heiskanen, Thidell and Rhode, 2018). It is therefore vital to ensure that SKAs are picked based on ICT competencies in addition to other important qualities.

Although these are the criteria seen in the literature review it was not certain whether these were the criteria used at Mzumbe University owing to the different nature of study settings and changes in the type of services rendered by Mzumbe University against those reviewed.

## **2.4 Perception of fellow students towards Effectiveness of SKA**

Robbins (1996) defines perception as a process by which sensory impressions give meaning to the environment. According to Mullins (2008) perception is a dynamic and complex way in which individuals select information (stimuli) from the environment, interpret, and translate it so that meaning is assigned, which results in a pattern of behavior or thought. Different scholars have explained fellow students' perception of the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors' in promoting the use of subscribed e-resources. Brenza et al (2015) observed that informal perceptions of these volunteers among students are vital in the impression a university library makes about its services as well as its value. This is an important aspect because how students perceive academic libraries has a significant impact on attitudes towards the value of libraries. However, Fagan (2003) showed that the majority of fellow students lacked an understanding of academic libraries' functions and SKAs' roles. In some cases, SKAs were perceived as part owners of library resources and services, which meant that they were part of libraries and their collaborators rather than students' partners (Peter, 2013; Ramsden, 2008). In contrast, fellow students were noted by other studies to perceive SKAs as role models in academic learning and that SKAs had an unavoidable role model responsibility to take care of in academic arenas (Gartland, 2015; Sanders and Higham, 2012). Similarly, a study conducted by Chimah and Nwokocha (2019) on volunteerism indicated a role model position that SKAs were put in by their peer, which allowed them to contribute to better academic library usage, and better grades and test scores, limited misconduct, and good academic progress.

Morgan et al. (2013) asserted that partnership between librarians and students is perceived as an effective and useful strategy for improving the usability of library resources and services among fellow students. Through this partnership, libraries are capable of promoting subscribed e-resources by getting SKAs to assist their peers' students to use different subscribed databases. The method is also considered a very strategic one for improving university services by integrating library services into students' lives using SKAs (Aagaard, 2013).

The engagement of SKAs in library activities is noted by Appleton and Abernethy (2013) as key in libraries' decision-making regarding service provisions because it allows them to receive feedback the ambassadors receive from peer students. However, a study by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) revealed different results. The study found that SKAs were perceived to have no real value in the promotion of library resources and services.

In contrast, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) revealed a positive perception of SKAs among fellow students, since they were considered to create a good partnership between libraries and students. The students perceived SKAs as helpers and enhancers of their academic performance. As such, it is safe to state that the value of SKAs differs between settings. Therefore, understanding how such a strategy is perceived effective in individual settings is important in establishing if any positive impact is being registered, hence this study and the particular objective that sought to look at this variable.

## **2.5 Challenges Affecting Effectiveness of SKA**

A variety of challenges that hamper the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources have been identified. Ylonen (2010) asserted that student ambassadors are not educators hence they lack the power to work in roles positioned as part of the teaching

profession or librarianship, and have inadequate training to deal with loud students. As such, the ambassadors face challenges that include the inability to organize, train, and coach their fellow students, the inadequacy of confidence, and the inadequacy of skills to facilitate fellow students' in-class sessions (Murphy, 2016). Furthermore, in their survey, Clifford et al. (2012) acknowledged that SKA programmes encounter notable challenges, specifically trendy how they should be organized, assignment of responsibilities, and appreciation and recognition of SKAs for their hard work. Also, inadequate mentorship and support from the librarians to SKAs in managing challenging situations hamper the effectiveness of SKA programmes (Gertland, 2015). Similarly, Barnes (2017) revealed that ensuring that training on promotion and other library programmes is carried out annually or every semester is a challenge for SKAs because they become overloaded with academic activities. In addition, the author states that some ambassadors find it hard to respond to one-on-one training requests and demands to provide feedback from colleagues. Changes resulting from the SKA programme are another challenge facing student ambassadors as Schobernd, Tucker, and Wetzel (2009) asserted. According to the researchers, sometimes these programmes result in increased usage of subscribed e-resources, which results in demand for more time for exhibitions in the midst of other academic activities. Multiple other challenges have been noted by other researchers (Gikandi and Ndungu, 2018; Kibe and Kwanya, 2015), which include inadequacy of funds for SKAs' events, inability to provide incentives to SKAs, and inadequacy of incentives provided to SKAs. The researchers also identified poor internet connectivity and limited time for SKA programmes as students are busy with academic responsibilities, the misconception of SKAs' role in the programme, and poor monitoring and evaluation of SKA programmes as the other challenges. Moreover, monetary expectations from selected students, insufficient equipment like computers for SKAs' events, power cut off, poor recognition and motivation, and informal registration have been challenging. Similarly, building SKAs' capacity is a critical challenge, specifically because it presents a lot of costs (Ndungu, 2016).

## **2.6 Strategies for Effective Use of SKA**

Different strategies are used by academic libraries to enhance the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors. For instance, Peter (2013) revealed that management support and proper programme structuring are used to guide regular meetings, routine activities, and motivation of teamwork to enhance the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors. Furthermore, Appleton and Abernethy (2013) state that the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassador programmes is enhanced through joint campaigns at the end of the year which is used as a means for solving problems, and monitoring and evaluating the programme. Management support, availability of computer labs, close partnership, and supportive and respectful relationships between academic libraries and SKAs are also fundamental in this respect as revealed by Thull and Hansen (2009). According to these authors, institutional support is critical in enhancing the effectiveness of SKA as it motivates students to work in teams and enhances their innovativeness and awareness of library resources.

Similarly, progressive mentorship programmes, allocation of funds, provision of incentives and awarding certificates to ambassadors, monitoring and evaluation of activities performed by SKAs, stable ICT infrastructure development, and enactment of SKA recruitment policy are known to enhance the effectiveness of SKAs (Kibe and Kwanya, 2015). Apart from that, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) have identified allocation of funds for SKAs' activities, signing a

memorandum of understanding, registering SKA programmes as clubs, awarding certificates of appreciation to SKAs, full SKA coordinator commitment, incorporation of SKAs in library normal routines, and integration of SKA's daily activities in the comprehensive library strategic plan as important in promoting the usage of e-resources through SKAs.

## **2.7 Theoretical framework**

In this section, a theory that guided this research is discussed. The study used Vygotsky's Social constructivist theory to explain the effectiveness of SKA in promoting the usage of e-resources in academic libraries. This theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky in 1934, is a social constructivist theory that studies social-cultural views and social constructivist approach (Adams, 2017; Bay, Bagceci, and Cetin, 2012; Sthapornnanon, Sakulbumrungsil, Theeraroungchaisri and Watcharadamrongkun, 2009). The constructivist theory was used because of its strength in which individuals (students) are seen as enthusiastically constructing an understanding of their setting influenced by the social world(s) in which they are working (Mizrachi, 2008; Bates, 2009). The social constructivists' theory uses three important components in the learning process such as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), Social interactions, and The Zone of Proximal Development (Adams, 2017). The usefulness of each component is discussed below.

### **2.7.1 The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)**

The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) refers to the presence of one or more experienced individuals or an adult with knowledge and skills that the learners can learn through training (Adam, 2017). In this study, The More Knowledgeable Others are Librarians and student knowledge ambassadors who are more experienced and knowledgeable than their fellow students concerning a particular activity, idea, or concept.

### **2.7.2 Social Interactions**

Social interactions refer to a process in that learners observe a skillful person and begin practicing new skills taught by experts (Adam, 2017). In this study, social interaction is seen as a socially mediated process between Librarians, Student knowledge ambassadors, and fellow students. It is therefore expected that fellow students would change their behavior from the use of the traditional system of accessing resources to the use of electronic systems after receiving training from students' knowledge ambassadors.

### **2.7.3 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The Zone of Proximal Development refers to close social distance collaboration among more experienced individuals with knowledge and skills to achieve activities with students who know less (Adam, 2017). The supportive activities that are provided by a more knowledgeable mentor to students to solve the problem, develop self-confidence, and the ability to solve or perform the same task in the absence of collaborative mentors in the future time (Shabani, Khatib, and Ebadi, 2010).

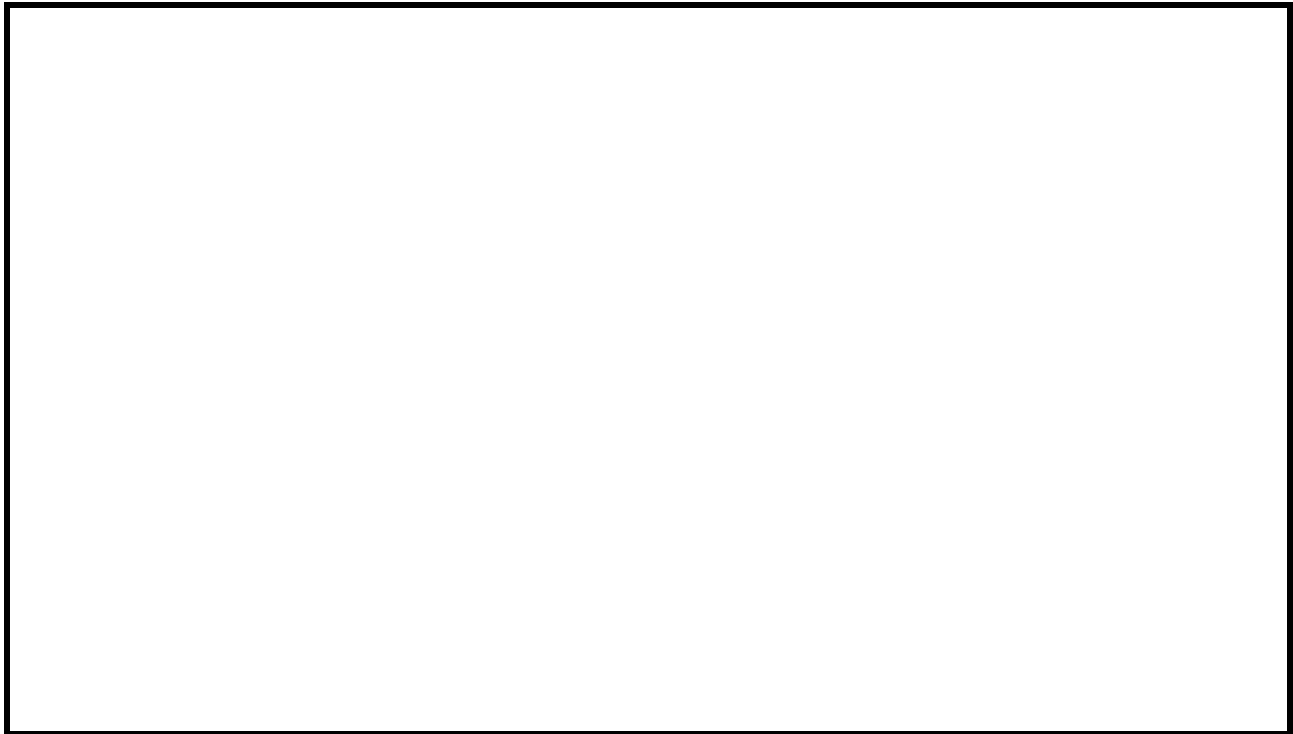
## **Figure 2. 1: Social Constructivists Theory (Source: Lev Vygotsky's, 1934)**

The theory is relevant in this study because it shows the effect of the relationships and interaction among learners (students) and the expert in the learning programme which is the focus of the

study. Also, the theory has been used extensively in learning programmes of Library and Information Studies (Adam, 2017; Bay, Bagceci, and Cetin, 2012; Mizrachi, 2008; Bates, 2009).

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is developed to show the relationships between the variables that the study recognized as significant to the research problem. Figure 2.1 below shows the relationship between variables.



**Figure 2. 2: Conceptual framework for effectiveness use of SKA**

**Source:** Developed by the researcher (2021)

The conceptual framework above shows the relationship between variables. The Independent variable includes selection criteria of SKA and strategies for effective use of SKA. Intermediate variables such as perception toward the use of SKA and effective SKA programme. The dependent variable includes high usage of e-resources or low usage of e-resources. These variables are reflected in the specific objectives that guided this study.

### **2.8.1 Selection criteria of SKA**

Proper selection criteria for the effectiveness of SKA in promoting the usage of e-resources would lead to an effective SKA programme that develops a positive perception of fellow students in utilization of the subscribed e-resources which would increase usage of e-resources. The selection criteria for SKA include; self-confidence, competence in IT, willingness, high GPA, and good communication skills. If selection criteria for SKA are not proper would lead to a

low perception of SKA which would lead to the ineffectiveness of the SKA programme in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources which would decrease the usage of e-resources.

### **2.8.2 Strategies for effective use of SKA**

There are several strategies for the effective use of SKA in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. These strategies include; progressive mentorship programmes, allocation of funds, monitoring, and evaluation of SKAs activities, stable ICT infrastructure development, enactment of SKA recruitment policy, provision of incentives, and awarding certificates to ambassadors. A good implementation of these strategies for effective use of SKA would lead to an effective SKA programme in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources which develop a positive perception of the effective use of SKA programme which would increase the usage of e-resources. Also, poor implementation of these strategies would challenge the sustainability of the SKA programme which would lead to a negative perception of SKA because they failed to perform their work effectively as a result of the low usage of e-resources.

## **2.9 Research Gap**

Different studies on student knowledge ambassadors have been carried out in different parts of the world. For instance, a study by Tariq (2018) examined how student knowledge ambassadors were potential influencers of peers' use of academic libraries in developing countries. Also, Abuiyada (2018) conducted a study on students' attitudes towards voluntary services in academic libraries in developed countries. Moreover, Baker and Sela (2018) performed a study on the role of the student ambassadors and their contribution to developing employability skills while Chimah and Nwokocha (2019) conducted a study on professional volunteering in school libraries and Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) studied the development, challenges, and benefits of knowledge ambassadors in academic libraries in developing countries. Despite the extensive use of knowledge ambassadors in developed and developing countries, still, little is known, particularly in developing countries about how effective SKAs are in improving the use of e-resources in academic libraries. This study, therefore, intends to fill this gap by assessing the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of e-resources subscribed to by academic libraries in Tanzania. The study takes MUL as its focal point.

## **2.10 Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented the literature reviewed for this study. The chapter has presented the overview of SKA, a literature review based on the objectives of the study. The chapter has gone further to identify the gap noted in the existing literature that this study has filled. Furthermore, the chapter has presented the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have guided the study. The next chapter presents the methodology of the study.

# **CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the choice of research methodology used to conduct this study. Specifically, the chapter presents the design, study area, study population, and sampling procedures of the study. In addition to that, the chapter covers the study's sample size, data collection methods, research instruments, data quality control as well as data presentation and analysis plan. The subsequent sections provide details on the aforementioned.

### **3.2 Research design**

Research design is the procedure for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and analyzing data in research studies (Cresswell, 2014). Similarly, Msabila and Nalaila (2013) defined a research design as a plan of how the aims of a study will be accomplished. In this study, a descriptive case study design has been used. The design is generally used to examine a single field and used to develop an in-depth analysis of a specific context that can be generalized across a population (Cresswell, 2013). The study used a mixed approach where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. Creswell and Creswell (2018:15) pointed out that "using more than one method in data collection and data analysis opens up numerous perspectives for promoting quality in research." In this study, the qualitative approach was selected because the data sought were descriptive and exploratory. The data were considered necessary for this research topic, especially because the study targeted the opinions and experiences of students and librarians on SKAs. On the other hand, a quantitative research approach was used particularly to collect and quantify baseline statistical information and establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables with the help of statistical methods.

### **3.3 Study area**

The study was conducted at Mzumbe University's main campus, in Morogoro, Tanzania. Mzumbe University is a public university located about 25KM away from Morogoro Municipal Council. The university was selected as the study area because at the time of data collection, it was the only one in Tanzania known to engage student knowledge ambassadors in the promotion of subscribed e-resources.

### **3.4 Study population**

Babbie (2013:116) defined population as "any accurately defined set of people or collection of items which are being studied" while Kombo and Tromp (2006) further defined population as "a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement." In the context of this study, the studied population included librarians, student knowledge ambassadors, and students. These populations were targeted based on the likelihood of possessing viable information on student knowledge ambassadors. As such, Librarians have a role in selecting knowledge ambassadors and keeping records on the usage of e-resources. Knowledge ambassadors were students trained by librarians and involved to train users (fellow students) of subscribed e-resources. Students (postgraduate and undergraduate students) were included in the population because they are more eager in using the subscribed e-resources for their research proposals and assignments. This is revealed during training conducted by knowledge ambassadors on the use of subscribed e-resources.

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.5.1 Sample Size**

Cresswell's (2014) sample size is a set of elements taken from a larger population according to certain rules. The sample size of this study was purposively and conveniently selected by using Slovin's formula. The formula was used to calculate an appropriate sample size from a population (Glenn, 1992). A total number of 102 out of 137 respondents were selected for this study. The respondents of this study were 30 postgraduate students and 52 third-year undergraduates 2020/2021 who frequently attended the training conducted by SKAs the researcher used an attendance list and then select the sample, 6 Librarians, 7 SKA, and 7 fellow students who are included in a focused group discussion because are those who are part of the programme. The SLOVIN formula  $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$  where  $n$  = number of samples,  $N$  = population, and  $e$  = sampling error at 0.05, the following calculation of sample size for this study  $n = 137 / (1 + 137 \times 0.05^2) = 102$ . Therefore, the sample size was one hundred and two (102).

### **3.5.2 Sampling Techniques**

According to Taherdoost (2016), sampling techniques are methods a researcher uses to select a population's representatives that can be used to make inferences or generalizations on the whole population concerning an existing theory. In this study, non-probability (convenience and purposive) sampling techniques were used to select the sample required by the study. Convenience sampling was used to select students (postgraduates and third-year undergraduate) 2020/2021 that were conveniently available to fill questionnaires while homogenous purposive sampling was used to obtain key informants librarian who was involved in in-depth interviews and Students Knowledge Ambassadors were purposively selected to take part in focused group discussions (FGDs) and few students.

#### **3.5.2.1 Convenience Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method which picks a sample from a group of people that are not easy to contact or reach (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018; Bhattacharjee, 2012). In addition, the main criterion of this type of sampling method is for participants who agree to participate in a study. In this study, this technique was used to select eighty-two (82) students (postgraduates and third-year undergraduates 2020/2021) that were conveniently available, accessible, and attended training on the usage of e-resources. This technique was appropriate where respondents were not accessible by using simple random techniques due to the large target population. These respondents were approached during their visitation to the library computer laboratory to search for and use e-resources subscribed to by Mzumbe University Library.

#### **3.5.2.2 Purposive Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling is defined by Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) as a method that belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques that permits a researcher to select samples based on their knowledge, relationships, and expertise about the objective of a study. The study used a homogenous purposive sampling to find respondents having shared characteristics, in this case, the SKAs. This method was used to employ a Librarian, SKA, and 7 students involved in FGD, in this study since the researcher believed that the respondents would have relevant and detailed information about the study.

## **3.6 Methods of Data Collection and Instruments**

### **3.6.1 Methods of Data Collection**

Msabila and Nalaila (2013) define data collection methods as procedures for collecting specific information which aim to provide some evidence and facts and allow the distribution of accurate and meaningful data. This study collected both secondary and primary data.

#### **3.6.1.1 Secondary Data**

Secondary data refers to data that was collected by someone other than the user (Creswell, 2013). Common sources of secondary data include information collected by government departments, organizational records, and data that was originally collected for other research purposes. Secondary data used in this study were mainly collected from the Department of Library and Information Science. Other secondary sources used in this study include books, journal articles, research reports, and conference proceedings. These data helped to provide relevant information that has been used to conceptualize this study and connect it to the existing world of knowledge.

#### **3.6.1.2 Primary Data**

Bryman (2012) defined primary data as those “data which were collected afresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character.” Primary data in this study were collected using a questionnaire, in-depth interview, focused group discussion (FGD), and observation methods. Questionnaire and focus group discussions were used to collect data from peer students and SKA, while in-depth interviews were held with library staff, the Head of Departments Library Science and Information Management, and the Director of the MU Library.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

This study used a variety of data collection instruments (questionnaire, interview guide, FGD guide, and observation checklist) to collect primary data.

#### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire developed by the researcher in this study consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, which were then pretested to obtain appropriate responses at the time of collecting data. A total of eighty-two (82) questionnaires were distributed to students. Out of these, seventy-seven (77) were filled and collected from students, creating a ninety-four percent (94%) response rate. Questionnaires were used to solicit views from students with minimal cost and within a short period. The questionnaire was used to gather data on different critical aspects of the study such as the perception of fellow students on the effectiveness of SKA, challenges affecting the effective use of SKA, and strategies used by MUL to enhance the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources.

#### **3.7.2 In-depth interview**

This study used a face-to-face in-depth interview guide in which the researcher prepared a list of questions for the interviewee to respond to. This instrument was used to collect primary data from key informants such as the Director of the Library, the Head of the Department, and 4 Library staff to supplement information gathered from questionnaires. The researcher used a mobile phone to record conversations from in-depth interviews, which were then transcribed through text to capture accurate responses

#### **3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion**

The focus group discussion (FGD) guide is a means of obtaining information on a specific topic raised by a researcher from people in a group (Bryman, 2008). The composition of participants

in each group is six to eight interviewees (Creswell, 2013). Student knowledge Ambassadors were purposively selected to participate in FGDs. This guide was used to explore in-depth thoughts and beliefs held by peer students on the use of e-resources. The FDG guide was also deployed to discover how different groups of students perceive SKAs' promotion of e-resources. The study had two FGDs sessions involving a total of fourteen (14) participants, seven per session. To ensure the anonymity of respondents, labels such as R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, and R7 were used.

#### **3.7.4 Observation**

An observation checklist was employed to collect qualitative data on the availability of ICT facilities and internet connectivity. This observation guide was used to complement information collected through interviews and questionnaires.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis involves several closely related operations that are performed to summarise the collected data and organize them in a way that they answer research questions (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire responses were manually converted into SPSS software and spreadsheets. The data was processed, coded, and analyzed by using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 23, which resulted in providing descriptive data in form of frequencies, and percentages, presented through figures, tables, and graphs. The qualitative data was also gathered and sorted into primary themes, which were then recoded into tally sheets and subjected to content analysis. The major themes that emerged from interviews are reflected in the transcripts from respondents as presented in chapter four below.

### **3.9 Data Quality Control**

Data quality control was crucial to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Sections 3.9.1 to 3.9.3 explain methods applied to enhance the quality of data gathered.

#### **3.9.1 Pretesting of Data Collection Instruments**

Before data collection, the instrument was pre-tested at Mzumbe University-Mbeya Campus to ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the instrument that was used in data collection. It was considered as important for the researcher to pre-tests tools because some of the questions might not be answered by the respondents. The pre-testing instrument was done on a total of seventeen (17) respondents including ten (10) third-year undergraduates, five (5) postgraduate students, and two (2) Librarians to determine the validity and reliability of the research tools, both questionnaires, and interview guide. Moreover, research instruments were pretested to cross-check accuracy, and questions that were answered by respondents were improved before the actual data collection.

#### **3.9.2 Triangulation**

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data analysis methods (Ridenour and Newman, 2008). According to Bell and Waters (2018), triangulation involves approaching aspects of a topic from different perspectives by using a variety of data analysis methods and techniques to come to a better understanding of the problem under study and validate research findings. The use of different methods leads to confirmation of findings from different sources of data. As such, a combination of data analysis methods was used in this study to investigate the problem in

question. Moreover, Creswell (2013) noted that “the use of triangulation focuses on the validation of the findings in terms of their accuracy and authenticity.” The alternative methods are used as verification platforms that check on one another to confirm findings.

### **3.9.3 Ethical issues**

The researcher adhered to all procedures involved in carrying out the academic research study. These included obtaining research clearance from UDSM and submitting it to MU to obtain permission to gather data. Before data collection, respondents were fully informed about this study and its intentions before being requested to participate in it. Information collected was protected and handled with care to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents and used for academic purposes only.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has given an account of how this was carried out. The chapter has described the approach taken and the design employed to carry out the study. The chapter has also detailed how a sample from which data were collected was obtained and how the data were collected and analyzed. The chapter has ended with a description of how data quality was ensured and the observation of research ethics. The chapter that follows presents and discusses the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings of this study that aimed to assess the effectiveness of students’ knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources. As indicated in the previous chapter, the study collected data through various methods (questionnaire, interview, FGD, and observation). The quantitative data collected were analyzed using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 23 and Microsoft Excel 2010 while qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The study

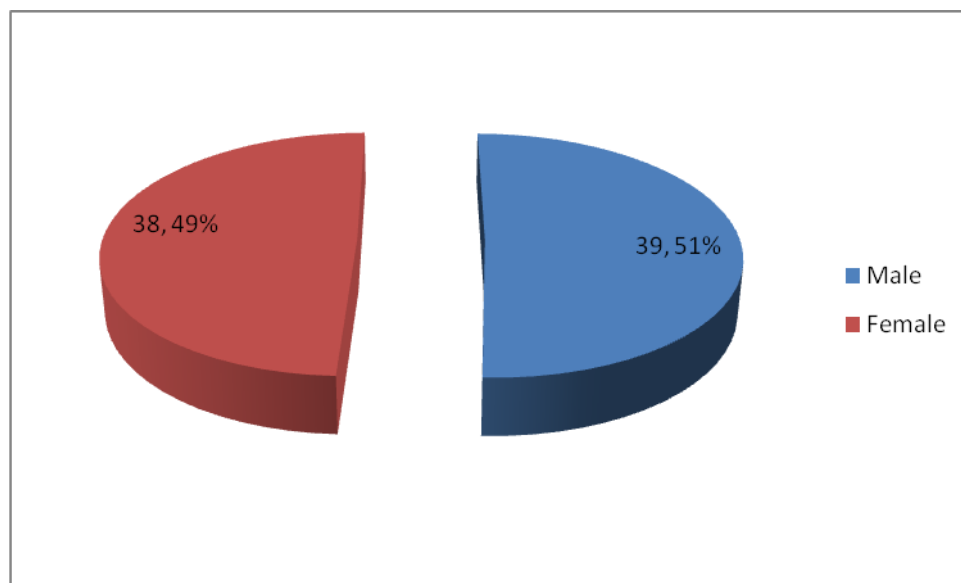
targeted a total of 102 respondents, among which, 6 were interviewed, 14 were involved in FGDs and 82 responded to questionnaires. Out of the 82 questionnaires distributed, seventy-seven (77) were completed and collected from respondents and five (5) respondents did not return the questionnaire. This chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section covers the socio-demographic information of respondents while the second section identifies the criteria for selecting SKAs. Perception of fellow students towards the effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MUL is examined in section three and section four covers challenges encountered by MUL in making effective use of SKA to promote e-resources. In the fifth section, we present and discuss our findings regarding the strategies used to improve the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of e-resources.

## 4.2 Socio-Demographic Information of Respondents

The total number of respondents that took part in the study was 97 respondents because 5 respondents do not return the questionnaire 6 were interviewed, 77 responded to questionnaires, and 14 were FGD. This section presents data on the characteristics of these respondents. These characteristics concerned sex, age, marital status, year of study, education level, and nature of scholarship.

### 4.2.1 Distribution of respondents by sex

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they were female or male. The results indicate that 39 (50.6%) respondents were females while 38 (49.4%) were males. See figure 4.1



**Figure 4. 1: Respondents' sex (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

The results presented in Figure 4.1 reflect the Mzumbe University Policy (2020) that guides the university to ensure there is a balance in the number of female and male students as required by Sustainable Development Goal Number 5 (2003). Moreover, Smith (2015) noted that females are more likely to participate in information seeking and use more quickly than males, meaning that

there is an association between sex and searching for information from different databases. Also, Oyeniyi (2013) asserted that sex is one of the factors that influence the use of subscribed e-resources. Overall, the results suggest success in the efforts made by the government of Tanzania to ensure that there is gender equality in education partly by guaranteeing free education to both girls and boys.

#### 4.2.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

Respondents were also asked to indicate their ages. The results generated from the data they provided show that 27(35.1%) respondents were aged between 25 and 30 years while the smallest number of them 1(1.3%) belonged to the above 40 years age group. The results are summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4. 1: Age profile of respondents (n=77)**

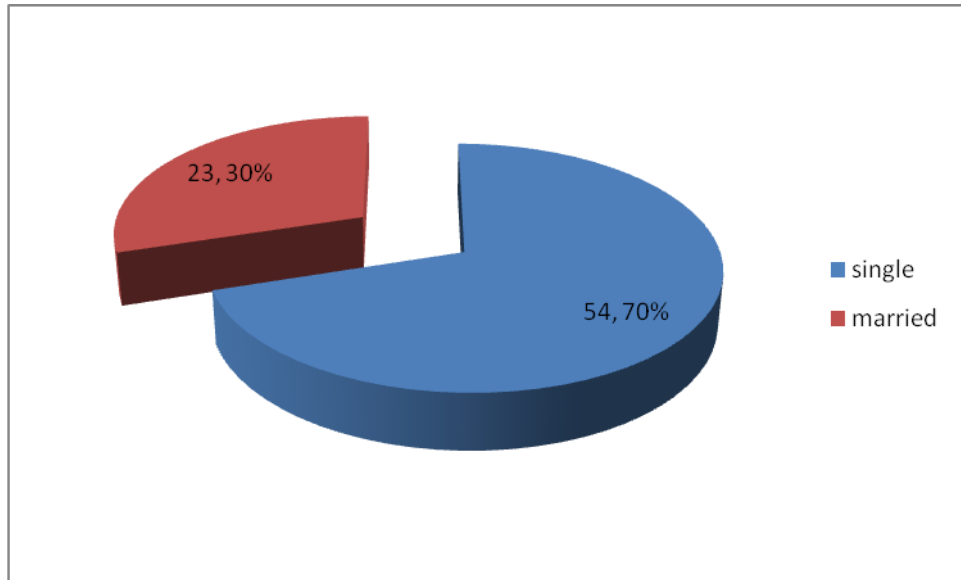
| Age group     | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 20-25         | 15        | 19.5       |
| 26-30         | 27        | 35.1       |
| 31-35         | 24        | 31.2       |
| 36-40         | 10        | 13.0       |
| 41- and above | 01        | 1.3        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>77</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

Based on these findings, it is easy to see that the majority (85.8%) of the respondents were youths aged between 20 and 35. Although this can be attributed to the fact that the study targeted students, especially undergraduates, who were more likely to be young; age has been found to influence the use of e-resources (Thanuskodi, 2016). This study further tested for the presence of an association between respondents' age and their awareness of SKA's involvement in promoting the use of e-resources. The chi-square test carried out produced a P value of 4.013 and a significance level of 0.04 at a 0.05 probability level. Table 4.3 summarizes the results. This result indicates the presence of a significant association between awareness of SKA's role in e-resources promotion and age. The findings are consistent with those from a study by Thanuskodi (2016), which revealed that young students (between 26 and 30 years of age) are more likely to utilize e-resources. As such, it would not be a surprise to find that people of this age group are more aware of SKA's role in promoting the resources.

#### 4.2.3 Marital Status

This study also investigated the respondents' marital status. From the data collected, the study was able to establish that majority 54 (70.1%) of the respondents were single while only 23 (29.9%) were married as summarized in Figure 4.2.



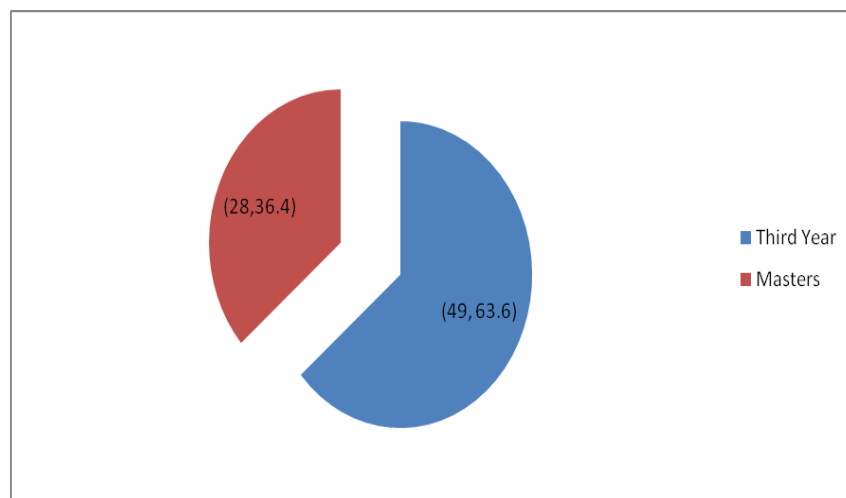
**Figure 4.2: Respondents' Marital Status (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

Demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, and educational level are known to play an important role in the use of electronic resources (Kasa and Yusuf, 2020). For instance, one FGD participant revealed that electronic resource use was influenced by demographic factors such as age, level of education, gender, and marital status. This is consistent with the findings of a study by Kilic and Guzeller (2017), which noted that factors such as age and marital status were determinants of the utilization of e-resources subscribed to by academic libraries.

#### **4.2.4 Respondents' year of Study**

The respondents were requested to indicate their respective year of study to be able to better understand responses to questions further down the study. The results obtained through questionnaires reveal that third-year undergraduate students were 49 (63.6%) while master's students were 28 (36.4%). The results are summarized in Figure 4.3.



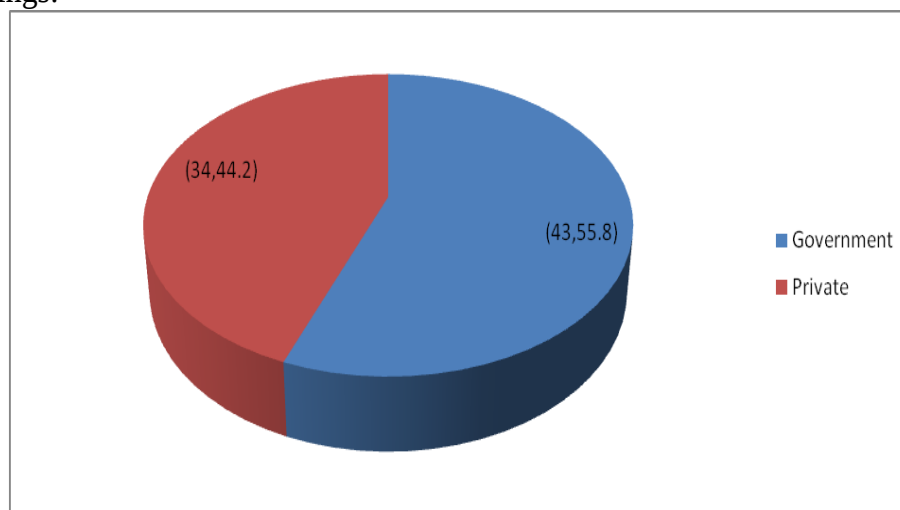
**Figure 4. 3: Students' level of study (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

The observation indicated a higher level of eagerness for third-year and master's students to search and use electronic resources information from multiple databases. This might be due to a mandatory requirement for writing a research report and thesis stipulated in Mzumbe University Research Guidelines requiring the use of a minimum of five to ten current articles in their citation while reviewing literature for their study (MU Research Guideline, 2021). The study also targeted third and master's students since they are the ones expected to use electronic resources in writing a research proposal, seminar presentation, and term paper writing.

#### **4.2.5 Nature of Scholarship**

The nature of the scholarship of respondents was included in this study as a variable to enable the researcher to gather different views and opinions from government and privately sponsored students. The results generated show that 43 (55.8%) of the respondents were government-sponsored while 34 (44.2%) were privately sponsored students. Figure 4.4 presents a summary of these findings:



**Figure 4. 4: Nature of scholarship (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

As far as the information-seeking behavior is concerned, there is a notable difference in information seeking between government and privately sponsored students due to financial liquidity position. Observation revealed that the usage of e-resources helps students to substitute for the scarcity of learning resources in some of the subjects. However, the access to electronic resources was limited most of the time due to low internet connectivity that enables students to access current articles from different databases. As result, students access the needed information using their mobile phones connected to the internet via their bundles. One of the participants in FGD said:

*It is difficult for me to access subscribed electronic information by using my smartphones because of the inability to purchase bundles as I am sponsored by the government and the sponsorship covers only fees while other requirements are covered by my poor village parents (R2).*

Similarly, another participant of the FGD replied with a surprising note as she said:

*Privately sponsored students can access electronic resources using strong and modern smartphones we possess in absence of internet connections at Mzumbe University Library using QR code. Also, the majority of privately sponsored students are living off-campus and therefore it becomes a necessity to own modern smartphones such as iPhone and Samsung with a capacity to access information via an organization access number (OAN). It is a fact that this capacity is possible because of the financial liquidity of privately sponsored students in comparison to government-sponsored students (R3).*

#### 4.3 The Selection Criteria of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors

This section attempts to address an objective of MUL's selection criteria for SKAs. The results of this part of the study have been presented and discussed in several sections section 4.3.1 seeks selection criteria, section 4.3.2 explores students' awareness of SKA, and section 4.3.3 how the students became aware.

##### 4.3.1 Students Knowledge Ambassadors Selection Criteria

Based on prior literature, different criteria used to select SKAs were established. Following this ground, one key informant (a pioneer, the only one who was available during data collection) was asked to indicate the level of importance of each established criteria used when selecting SKAs at MUL. Table 4.2 summarizes the results.

**Table 4.2: SKAs Selection Criteria (n=77)**

| Selection criteria for SKA                | Level of importance |           |                    |               |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
|                                           | Very important      | Important | Slightly important | Not important |
| Self-confidence                           | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Self-motivation                           | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Competence in ICT skills                  | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Competence in Information search skills   | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Knowledge of the subject/Discipline       | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Knowledge about the available e-Resources | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Level of Education                        |                     |           | √                  |               |
| High GPA                                  |                     |           | √                  |               |
| Known by Faculty                          |                     |           | √                  |               |
| Communication skills                      |                     | √         |                    |               |
| Administration skills                     |                     |           | √                  |               |
| Enthusiastic                              | √                   |           |                    |               |
| Strong Personality                        |                     |           | √                  |               |
| commitment to promoting library services  |                     | √         |                    |               |

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

Table 4.2 above responses showed that Self-confidence, Self-motivation, Competence in ICT skills, Competence in Information search skills, Knowledge of the subject/Discipline,

Knowledge about the available e-Resources, and Enthusiastic are very important in selecting SKAs at MUL. The interview key informant explained as follows:

*.....you know that, for a student knowledge ambassador to be selected we librarians need to know his confidence, have awareness of the subject taught at the university, eagerness to give his time to support fellow students, and how much familiar he is with different e-resources available at the MUL, above all, we are looking his willingness to volunteer on the SKA activities.*

The interviewee, on the other hand, indicated that factors such as communication skills and commitment to promoting library services were significant but not very important in comparison to the preceding one by saying:

*aaaah, issues like communication skills and commitment to promoting library services are important because if SKAs fail to communicate with fellow students it will be difficult for him/her to promote e-resources. But the issue of having many skills in communication is not taken very seriously as the one mentioned earlier (Key informant).*

Concerning Level of Education, High GPA, Known by Faculty, Administration skills, and strong personality, respondents showed that they are slightly important by commenting that:

*...Strong personality! High GPA! those are the minor issues in selecting SKAs because a student may have a good GPA but is not willing to support others, on he is missing other skills like searching skills or less interested in promoting e-resources (enthusiastic) and lacks competencies in ICT skills, therefore, we only take students who will be able to give their extra time for SKA activities without demanding any payment.*

These quotations disclose that Self-confidence, competence in searching skills, competence in ICT skills, volunteerism, and willingness are important criteria in selecting SKAs. As well as, having communication skills by students materialize is another important criterion.

From the interview with a pioneer of SKAs at MUL, another library staff who engaged in supporting and coaching the SKAs programme was needed to respond on the same matter, here are their views.

According to one library staff, as revealed during interviews, various factors are considered when selecting SKA as confirmed by one interviewee:

*Student knowledge ambassadors are selected based on the criteria of self-confidence and possession of general knowledge of electronic resources as well as readiness to volunteer in all activities associated with SKAs' role. For instance, willingness to volunteer is very important because there is no payment at all.*

Similarly, another key informant narrated as follows:

*In this library, student knowledge ambassadors are selected by librarians on grounds of willingness to volunteer. We also look at students' self-confidence, information searching competency, effective communication, and attendance of book days and outreach training programmes.*

Additionally, another key informant had this to say:

*I don't know how students' knowledge ambassadors are selected .....my part is to train them on how they will be able to search for e-resources and be able to assist their fellow students to search materials on various databases...I think those who are interested to be part of the programme and have skills to use the computer.*

These quotes show that self-confidence, knowledge, and willingness are important criteria in picking SKAs. Apart from that, it appears that communication and participation in various library activities by students are also important criteria.

To gain more insights, SKAs were also asked in FGD about the selection criteria for SKAs to add more valuable information to the interview done with a Pioneer of SKA. Their responses vary from one to another. For example, one of the SKAs informed as follows:

*..... during an e-resources training session, the librarian called me out as a candidate for the SKA programme. I'm not sure whether there are any criteria in place for selection. What I believe is competency in searching skills and a general understanding of searching for information from various sources. Because I was asking a librarian how to download and cite an article from a subscribed database during training, I believe these characteristics contributed to the librarian's decision to select me (R6).*

On the other hand, Another SKA stated this:

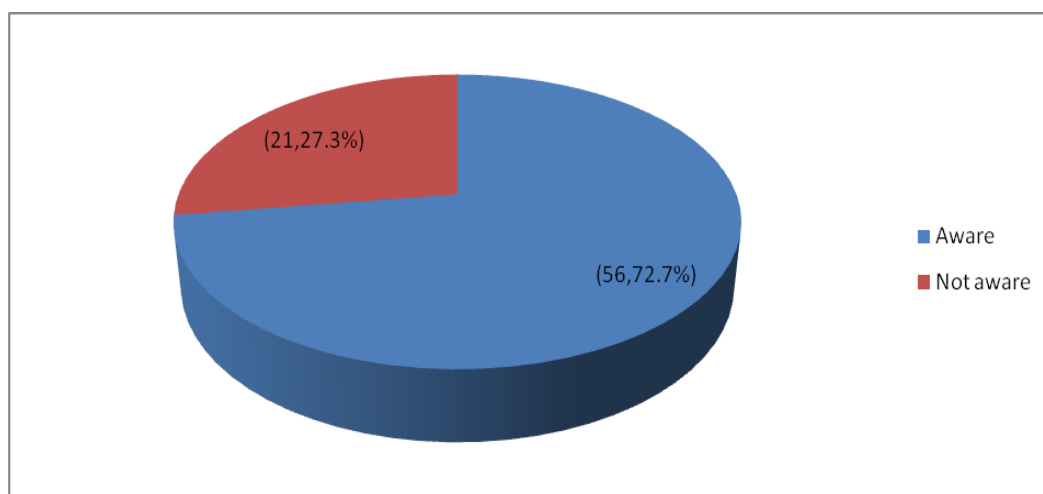
*I was a part of the program because the librarian noticed that I was competent in searching materials from Google, competent in ICT skills, self-assured, and committed to teaching primary teachers how to find information from Google so that they could keep their notes up to date during the outreach program. After a week, the librarian invites me and a few other student knowledge ambassadors to a training session on how to navigate the various databases so that we can teach our fellow students how to search and download articles from the subscribed database. But in terms of selection criteria, I'm not sure... (R1).*

These quotes show that searching skills, general knowledge, and willingness are all key criteria in choosing SKAs. Attendance at outreach programs by students has also proven to be an essential criterion. The findings also reveal that they have no idea if there is a criterion for selecting them.

These findings are in line with those from a study by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) who reported that SKAs are selected by considering self-confidence, high academic performance, and student interest. Similarly, Barnes (2017) reported that students were selected based on high GPA. Nevertheless, Ylonen (2010) noted that there is no single universal model for selecting and working with SKAs. This means that different higher education institutions have different selection criteria in place. The findings are also consistent with those from a study by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) who reported that student knowledge ambassadors were identified and recruited by librarians through different outreach programmes, information weeks, exhibitions, and specialized information literacy programmes.

#### **4.3.2 Students' level of awareness of the selected SKA**

The study investigated students' awareness of the presence of the selected student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of e-resources. The results indicate that 56 (72.7%) students were aware of them while 21(27.3%) were not. Figure 4.5 summarizes the results.



**Figure 4. 5: Awareness of SKAs (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data**

As shown in Figure 4.5 majority of respondents were aware of the selected SKAs. These results were cross-tabulated with those on demographic characteristics to test for association between socio-demographic factors (age, sex, marital status, year of study, and nature of scholarship) and awareness of students on the selected SKAs. Table 4.3 presents the results obtained.

**Table 4. 3: Summarizes the results**

| Category                  | Awareness of students on the selected SKA Ambassadors |    |                    |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------|
|                           | Value                                                 | Df | Asym.Sig.(2-sided) |
| <b>Pearson Chi-Square</b> |                                                       |    |                    |
| Sex                       | 11.463 <sup>a</sup>                                   | 1  | 0.022              |
| Age                       | 14.013 <sup>a</sup>                                   | 4  | 0.004              |
| Marital status            | 2.23 <sup>a</sup>                                     | 1  | 0.089              |
| Year of study             | 11.15 <sup>a</sup>                                    | 1  | 0.002              |
| Nature of scholarship     | 14.01 <sup>a</sup>                                    | 1  | 0.007              |
| <b>N of Valid Cases</b>   | 77                                                    |    |                    |

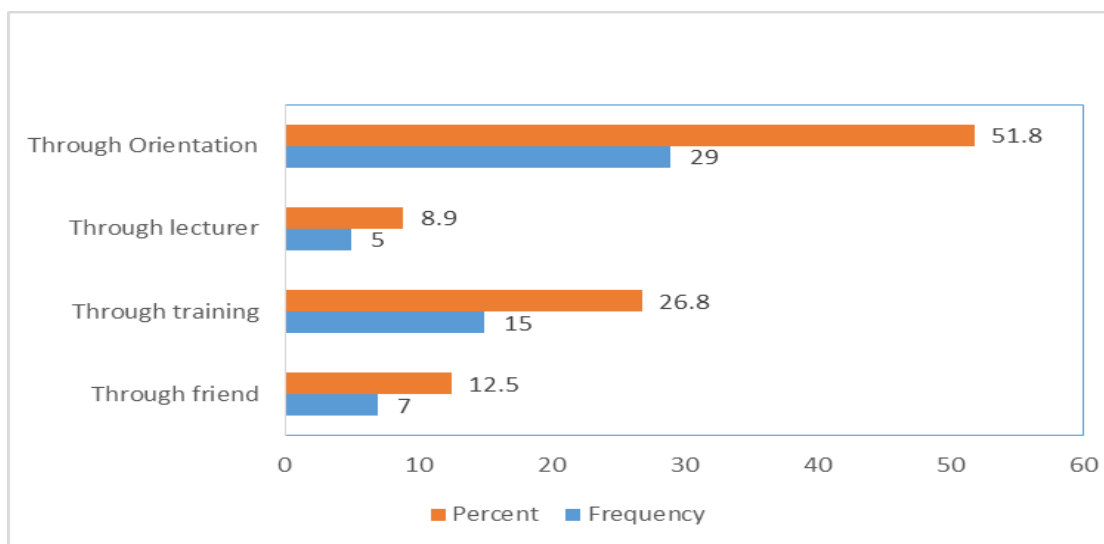
Based on these findings, there is a significant association between respondents' awareness of SKAs and their level of study. This can be attributed to the difference in demands to access various subscribed e-resources to meet needs related to research and other report writing assignments experienced as one advance with education. However, respondents' general high awareness of the presence of SKAs is supported by Gartland (2015), who argues that knowledge ambassadors work collaboratively with students, which means that they can easily identify with each other. In support of this, during in-depth interviews, the Director of Library and Technical Services said:

*A postgraduate and third-year student is very likely to be aware of student knowledge ambassadors because they regularly consult them while searching for current articles when writing their research proposals and term papers.*

Generally, this quotation explains why the majority of third-year undergraduates and postgraduates were aware of SKAs. This awareness is a sign that the latter are doing their job and hence likely to be contributing to the utilization of subscribed e-resources.

### 4.3.3 Ways of becoming Aware of SKAs

Respondents aware of the presence of SKAs were asked to indicate how they became aware. The reason for this part of the study was to find out ways respondents became aware of SKA so as establish ways that are effective in positioning SKAs in the promotion of e-resources utilization. The results obtained indicate that the majority 29(51.8%) of students become aware of SKAs through library orientation while the least 5(8.9%) of them become aware through lecturers. However, results revealed further than 21(27.3%) students were not aware of SKA as presented in figure 4.5 above. Figure 4.6 summarizes the results of ways by which students became aware of SKA.



**Figure 4.6: Ways of creating awareness about SKA (n=56)**  
**Source: Field Data (2021)**

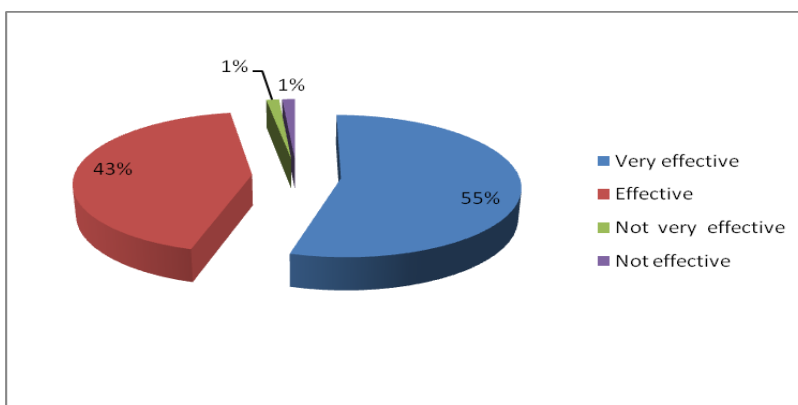
Based on these results, orientation plays a key role in informing students about SKAs at MU. In addition to this, training plays a considerably big role in the same. In addition, one respondent in an FGD revealed that the use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) made some students aware of SKAs. Through interviews with library staff, it was learned that comprehensive orientation programs are implemented every year to introduce new students to library services and resources. During these periods, students have fully informed about SKAs and their role in promoting the use of library resources and educating fellow students on how to access them. Similarly, the literature reveals that library orientation is a great way to introduce students to collections, spaces, and services that libraries provide and to create close partnerships with students (Andres, Graves, and German, 2016).

## 4.4 Perceptions of Students towards Effectiveness of Student Knowledge Ambassadors

Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the role of SKA. The reason for this question was to find out the level of acceptance of SKA and their roles by peer students, as elaborated in the successive subsections below.

#### 4.4.1 Students' Perception of Effective Role of SKAs

Respondents were asked about the essence of SKAs in the promotion of the use of subscribed e-resources. This was done in an attempt to understand how SKAs' role in subscribed e-resources promotion is perceived by fellow students. The results obtained indicate that the majority 42 (55%) and 33(43) of respondents considered SKA very effective and while only a least of them found them not very effective 1(1.3%) and not effective 1(1.3%). Figure 4.7 summarizes the results.



**Figure 4. 7: Students' perception of the role of SKA (n=77)**

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

In general, the results show that SKAs are generally found effective by almost all students that were part of the study. These findings have been supported by those generated from qualitative data gathered through interviews with library staff. For instance, one interviewee said:

*Based on my understanding of student knowledge ambassadors, they are effective in creating awareness among students on the use of subscribed e-resources. For many years, the utilization of MUL subscribed e-resources has been very low; repeatedly bringing accountability queries from the financial department, demanding justification of the large amounts used to subscribe to e-resources through COTUL. But, for sure, there is a slight increase in the resources' use since the implementation and use of the students' knowledge ambassadors programme to promote their use. Through this, we have managed to eliminate the accounting.*

Similarly, one FGD participant revealed that:

*I personally negatively perceived the role of student knowledge ambassadors during the first time of my appointment. But, immediately after receiving training from librarians on the use of subscribed e-resources databases, I changed my perceptual attitude framework and saw the role of student knowledge ambassadors as a helper in searching articles from different databases (R4).*

Furthermore, another FGD participant admitted to having negatively perceiving SKAs at first as the statement that follows shows:

*I negatively perceived the role of student knowledge ambassadors during the first impression. However, this changed immediately after receiving training from them on the use of subscribed e-resources databases. I have seen them as role models and helpers in searching for information in different databases (R2).*

These quotations reveal that student knowledge ambassadors are effective after receiving training and change their negative perceptions and see SKA as role models and helpers in searching for information from subscribed databases.

Like these findings, a study by Gartland (2015) found that student knowledge ambassadors were seen as motivational role models in the search for articles and other information needed for academic purposes. Similarly, Kibe and Kwanya (2015) noted that modern students generally trust their fellow mentors more than authorities, making SKAs an option with the potential of facilitating effective knowledge creation and sharing. At the same, Tarig (2018) argues that student knowledge ambassadors are role models and ambassadors for universities' subscribed e-resources.

#### 4.4.2 Methods Preferred by the SKA in Promoting Usage of e-Resources

Respondents were asked about the method most preferred by SKA to promote the use of e-resources. What has been found based on the responses received on this has been indicated in Table 4.4

**Table 4. 4: Methods used by the SKA in Promoting Use of e-Resources (n=77)**

| Method                | Agree     | Disagree   |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Social media          | 53(68.8%) | 24(31.2%)  |
| Word of mouth         | 56(72.7%) | 21(27.3%)  |
| Training session      | 46(59.7%) | 31 (40.3%) |
| Orientation programme | 47(61%)   | 30 (39%)   |

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

##### 4.4.2.1 Word of Mouth

According to the just presented results, word of mouth appears to be the e-resources promotion method most preferred by SKAs as suggested by the majority 56(72.7%) of the respondents. According to the results, MU's Orientation programme appears to be the least preferred method because the SKA was involved in the orientation programme to create awareness among new students to tell them that they are available in there is proximity to support on any challenges that they may encounter when visiting different subscribed databases. On this variable, one FGD participant admitted the preference for word of mouth as follows:

*I, in my role as a student knowledge ambassador, prefer communicating in person the value of subscribed e-resources to my fellow students. I usually do so in classrooms, during discussion sessions, and in one-on-one encounters with individual students to develop self-confidence in obtaining needed resources for their academic activities from subscribed databases (R3).*

Similarly, during an interview session with library staff, it was noted that SKAs prefer word of mouth. This was attributed to proximity, social behavior, being of the same education level, and sharing class venues. The findings are consistent with those made by Ndungu (2016), which indicated that direct word-of-mouth is preferred because it is a free, effective, and extremely powerful medium; especially if promoters that use it are influential and trustworthy. Through word of mouth, a library can build a friends-of-the-library network that would partner with the library in promoting the usage of e-resources. Similarly, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) noted that the method was approved as the most preferred for promoting the usage of e-resources. However, the method is likely to suit SKAs with outstanding persuasion power, ability to articulate arguments, and practical searching skills with fellow students.

#### 4.4.2.2 Social Media

According to the findings on promotion methods preferences among SKAs, social media is the second most preferred method as suggested by 53 (68.8%) respondents. These findings correspond with the researcher's observations, from which it was noted that SKAs were promoting e-resources through WhatsApp groups. This was confirmed by taking note of conversations in which it was noted that students were receiving alerts to attend training on the emerald database to check new articles available in Emerald and JSTOR databases. SKA's use of social media in this respect was also noted during interview sessions with library staff. Similarly, one FGD participant stated that:

*Yes, we commonly use social media to create awareness among our fellow students about the usage of e-resources. We do so through platforms such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Lincoln. We share information regarding electronic resources and training sessions to reach every student at the university. Not only that, but we also advertise the next training session date and venue using social media as well as other meetings of SKA (R2).*

Furthermore, during the in-depth interviews, the Director of Library acknowledged that:

*Student knowledge ambassadors make use of different methods to promote our subscribed e-resources. However, among these, the most used and seemingly preferred methods are social media and word of mouth. They are also invited to seminar sessions during class sessions to create students' awareness of the available databases and their subjects of specialization to access while preparing their presentations.*

Supporting these findings, Tariq (2018) acknowledges that student knowledge ambassadors mostly communicate with each other and other students informally, except for times when there are special events. The most commonly used communication method is a social networking and it has proven to be effective as well. This argument can be attributed to the fact that this communication channel is generally cost-effective, time-saving, efficient, and available for everyone within and outside institution premises. A study by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) acknowledged that one of the strategies that libraries have explored and are employing these days is the use of social media. Effective use of social media in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources promises positive outcomes since a majority of the students are active and potential users of different social media platforms.

#### 4.4.2.3 Training Sessions

The findings have also indicated that 46 (59.7%) respondents have identified training sessions as one of the methods used by SKAs to promote e-resources. Although not mentioned by as many respondents as the previous methods, it was learned through FGDs that the method is one of the strongest used to promote subscribed usage of e-resources at Mzumbe University Library. The method was reported to be used as a means of creating awareness about e-resources available through the library. The prominence of this method in SKAs' promotion of e-resources offered by MU Library was also confirmed during interviews. For example, during an interview session, the Director of the Library acknowledged the value of training sessions as follows:

*Training sessions are used by SKA as an effective method of promoting the use of e-resources at MUL. I believe the method is used that much because SKAs find it easy to use as it allows them to expose many students to different subscribed e-resources at once.*

These findings are consistent with those reported by a study carried out by Ankrah and Atuase (2018), who reported that the low use of e-resources in university libraries is a result of low publicity and inadequacy of training. Principally, this type of training enhances the usage of e-

resources in academic libraries by elevating awareness and the level of confidence in coping with varying searching techniques.

#### 4.4.2.4 Orientation Programme

According to these findings, SKAs also prefer promoting the use of e-resources through orientation as indicated by 47 (61%) respondents. Regarding this, during an interview session, the Director of the Library shared the following statement:

*The orientation programme is used by student knowledge ambassadors to familiarize themselves with new students as well as orient them on e-resources subscribed to by the university library. They use these occasions to also introduce new students to techniques used to access the resources. The programme is also used to disseminate information about the university's ICT infrastructure.*

Similarly, interviews with library staff confirmed that orientation was used by SKAs to expose new students to subscribed e-resources. According to a study by Anders, Graves, and German (2016), using student volunteers in orientation events helps to reduce library anxiety among participants, enhances engagement with new students, and creates important connections between library services and university students' academic life. In general, orientation comes in different formats, such as classroom visits, library tours, and in-house hunts. However, regardless of the format, the method serves as a critical platform for introducing new students to academic library resources and the services available to students.

#### 4.4.3 Subscribed Databases Promoted Effectively by Student Knowledge Ambassadors

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of databases commonly promoted by student knowledge ambassadors in the library. This question aimed to find out databases highly promoted by SKA. The results indicated majority 59 (76.6%) of respondents accepted Emerald as the database highly promoted by SKA and the least 12 (15.6%) of respondents accepted Taylor & Francis as the database promoted by SKA as summarized in figure 4.8.

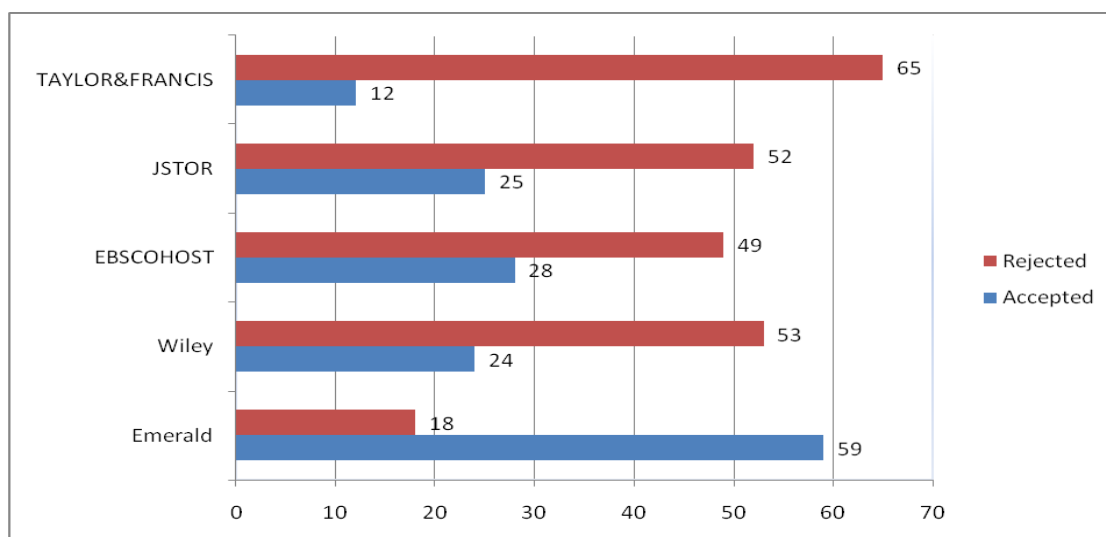


Figure 4. 8: Promoted database by SKA (n=77)

Source: Field Data (2021)

According to the results, the Emerald database is the most promoted by SKAs working with MUL. The effects of the promotion efforts made on the database have been reported to be obvious as learned during an interview with the Head of the Library Science and Information Management Department. The interviewee said:

*As I know, Emerald is regularly accessed by many students because of its high level of awareness about it. This is due to the promotion done by Emerald themselves through Emerald Knowledge Ambassadors Programme. The database also does a series of follow-ups on SKAs' activities to obtain up-to-date information regarding the use of their database. The follow-up is done through meetings conducted with SKAs by Zoom and Webinar sessions.*

In addition, one of the FGD participants revealed that:

*I got information on Mzumbe University's subscription to a database such as Emerald through Emerald Knowledge Ambassador Programme. The programme also provided me with different searching skills needed to use the Emerald database, information on changes to their interface, and skills on using smartphones via Organizational Access Number (OAN) to access the database in the absence of university internet (R4).*

Generally, the findings of this study show that the majority of students access e-resources from a few databases while, in reality, they are required to use information from different databases subscribed to by MUL. The use of various databases will allow users to acquire knowledge from a broad spectrum of authors. However, SKAs should promote all databases subscribed to by MUL.

#### 4.4.4 Perceived role of SKAs in Promoting Use of e-Resources

Respondents were asked to assess the effective role of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of e-resources. Table 4.5 summarizes the results generated from the responses acquired.

**Table 4. 5: Perceived roles of the SKA in Promoting Use of E-Resources (n=77)**

| Perceived roles                                                      | SA |      | A  |      | D  |      | UND |      | SD |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|----|-----|
|                                                                      | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    | F   | %    | F  | %   |
| Mentoring and inspiring their peer students                          | 38 | 49.4 | 27 | 35.1 | 5  | 6.5  | 6   | 6.5  | 1  | 1.3 |
| Linking the library e-resources to fellow students                   | 25 | 32.5 | 36 | 46.8 | 6  | 7.8  | 6   | 7.8  | 4  | 5.2 |
| Linking students with librarians                                     | 22 | 28.6 | 23 | 29.9 | 14 | 18.2 | 13  | 16.9 | 5  | 6.5 |
| Providing feedback about e-resources to both library and their peers | 29 | 37.7 | 29 | 37.7 | 3  | 3.9  | 12  | 15.6 | 4  | 5.2 |
| Training peers on how to search subscribed data bases                | 23 | 29.9 | 44 | 57.1 | 1  | 1.7  | 7   | 9.1  | 2  | 2.6 |
| Improving students' academic performance                             | 25 | 32.5 | 38 | 49.4 | 4  | 5.2  | 6   | 7.8  | 4  | 5.2 |
| Improving the image of the library                                   | 38 | 49.4 | 30 | 39   | 1  | 1.3  | 4   | 5.2  | 4  | 5.2 |
| Motivating students to utilize library services                      | 28 | 36.4 | 41 | 53.2 | 1  | 1.3  | 4   | 5.2  | 3  | 3.9 |

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D= Disagree; UND= Undecided; SD= Strongly Disagree

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

##### 4.4.4.1 Mentorship to Fellow Students

The results indicated most 38(49.4%) respondents strongly agreed that SKAs were mentoring and inspiring their peers to use e-resources while only 1 (1.3%) strongly disagreed. During FGDs, one participant said the following on this:

*It is during training sessions conducted by student knowledge ambassadors that I developed a sense of positive perception, closer collaboration, and trust in the knowledge and skills they possess concerning techniques used for searching subscribed electronic resources at MUL. The student ambassadors' approach and politeness in training assisted me in easily grasping different ways of accessing electronic materials. I appreciate the student knowledge ambassadors' programme and the librarians(R5).*

These results are congruent with what Ylonen (2010) found. The researcher noted that the proximity of student knowledge ambassadors and peers can be of unique importance in any mentoring role undertaken by student ambassadors. Through this zone proximity development, the ambassadors' experience can easily be transferred through coaching and mentoring peers on a face-to-face basis to develop self-efficacy. This would enhance student knowledge ambassadors' and peers' social interactions; creating grounds for better understanding of techniques and methods for browsing electronic resources available in their libraries.

#### **4.4.4.2 Linking Library e-Resources**

The results have indicated that 36 (46.8%) respondents agreed that student knowledge ambassadors linked library e-resources to fellow students while 25 (32.5%) strongly agreed and 4, (5.2%) strongly disagreed. This ambassadorial role of SKAs was confirmed during interviews where library staff revealed the potential that student knowledge ambassadors have in this respect as one interviewee put it:

*Student knowledge ambassadors play a critical role in the creation of awareness of the resources available in the library and linking them to fellow students. Also, the language used by student knowledge ambassadors is easily understood by fellow students since they solve the same problem concerning academic matters.*

The results are consistent with those reported by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) who asserted that knowledgeable ambassadors assisted students with quick searches and directed them to other library resources and services since they have zone proximity with peers rather than librarians. Similarly, Walton (2010) noted that SKAs play different roles at different universities in the United Kingdom (UK) where they volunteer in tasks such as shelving, serving at reference desks, and promoting library services and resources to fellow students. Likewise, Barnes (2017) revealed that many libraries have turned to student volunteers to establish a connection between their services and other students. On the whole, the libraries' recruitment of students is based on the understanding that SKAs can easily engage and relate with other students to learn hence likely to successfully promote the use of library resources.

#### **4.4.4.3 Linking Librarians with Students**

The results have indicated that 23 (29.9%) respondents agreed and 22 (28.6%) strongly agree that student knowledge ambassadors create social interaction between students and librarians while only 5 (6.5%) strongly disagreed. This was supported by results from FGDs. For instance, one participant said:

*Honestly, the student knowledge ambassadors bridge the gap between me and the library staff. When I have queries to do with accessing electronic resources, for instance, using OAN and relevant journal articles for use in my assignments, I usually file them with student knowledge ambassadors. This is more convenient than working with library staff because that would only be possible during working*

*hours. Using student knowledge ambassadors allows me to receive immediate responses to my resource requests (R5).*

These results can be likened to those published by Ylonen (2010) who reported that student knowledge ambassadors have an important role to play that involves bridging the gap that exists between two worlds (information user and information provider). Similarly, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) noted that knowledge ambassadors liaise with librarians to ensure that their peers are trained and learn about library resources and services. Student knowledge ambassadors also facilitate the provision of library services, particularly access to electronic resources beyond library staff's working hours. As a result of the accessibility of student knowledge ambassadors to other students, 24/7 access to e-resources is made possible.

#### **4.4.4.4 Provision of Feedback**

In this part, the results have shown that 29 (37.7%) respondents strongly agreed that student knowledge ambassadors provide feedback about e-resources to both the library and their peers while 29 (37.7%) agreed and only 4 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. Interviews with library staff supported this result. Responding to a question on this matter, one interviewee said:

*One of the greatest roles played by our student knowledge ambassadors is the provision of feedback to the library management on the level of e-resources usage by students. Their feedback covers usage rates and the type of information needed by a majority of users.*

Likewise, Barnes (2017) found that student knowledge ambassadors helped their library with feedback on information resources use. On the same note, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018:21) revealed that “SKA serve as a good source of feedback on students’ experience with the library services and act as mentors to newly arrived students”. According to this author, library-student collaboration has the potential of being mutually beneficial and presents an important strategic partnership for contemporary libraries. Student knowledge ambassadors serve as good sources of feedback on students’ experience with a library and its resources. Therefore, these individuals are vital for libraries hence the need to strategize and incorporate their functions in organizational strategic plans.

#### **4.4.4.5 Training on E-Resources**

Regarding this role, it has been seen that the majority 44 (57.1%) of the respondents agreed that SKAs trained their peers to search subscribed databases and 23 (29.9%) respondents strongly agreed with this while only 2(2.6%) strongly disagreed. For this result, see Table 4.3. During in-depth interviews, the Director of Library emphasized the importance of the training role played by SKAs as follows:

*In our library, student knowledge ambassadors organize training for fellow students on how to browse different databases that we subscribe to. Such training is conducted to provide updates on news articles related to Mzumbe University programmes.*

Through this result, this study can be likened to the one by Kibe and Kwanja (2015) who reported that SKAs trained their peers to search subscribed databases. The study further noted that SKAs educate peers about library resources and services available at their institutions to enhance their utilization. Regular training sessions for students have proved more fruitful when knowledge ambassadors are actively involved, specifically when the training is customized to the specific needs of students.

#### **4.4.4.6 Students’ Performance**

The results in Table 4.3 have also indicated that 38 (49.4%) respondents agreed with the suggestion that SKAs improve students' performance and 25 (32.5%) strongly agree while only 4 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. In support of this, one FGD participant acknowledged that:

*Students that are committed to and frequently use subscribed e-resources (current articles from reputable databases) are said to have better academic performance. This has been more noticeable in research reports submitted by both undergraduates and postgraduates. Since SKAs are fundamental in facilitating the students' access to and use of these resources, it can be argued that the performance improvement we see is partly thanks to them(R3).*

The result echoes what has been reported in a study by Tariq (2018) who identified similar benefits of SKAs. According to the researcher, for libraries, SKAs are beneficial because they facilitate research productivity, publications, grants, and quality of teaching while students benefit through enhanced experiences, learning, and final academic outcomes (Cribb and Holt, 2012). In reality, knowledge ambassador programmes help libraries mainstream their impact on institutional performance, and on this ground, librarians are encouraged to exploit the full potential of these programmes.

#### **4.4.4.7 Image of the Library**

As also seen in Table 4.3, 38 (49.4%) respondents strongly agreed that students' knowledge ambassadors improve the image of the library while 4(5.2%) strongly disagreed. This, therefore, shows that SKAs have a positive impact on how MU Library is viewed among users. This was strongly confirmed during interviews with library staff. For instance, the Director of the Library left no doubt regarding SKA's ability to boost the library's image as the following statement shows:

*Student knowledge ambassadors play a critical role in publicizing our library's subscribed electronic resources to fellow students. This results in increased utilization of the resources. Not only that, but they also improve searching skills and techniques for finding articles from reputable journals. This allows users to find what they need hence changing their minds about the library.*

Such an influence from SKAs was also recorded by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) reported that these individuals are crucial in enhancing the image of the library by promoting the use of library services, particularly electronic resources. Similarly, Tariq (2018) argued that one of the most important things done by SKAs is acting as the face of the university library and striving to make it look better in the eyes of users. The ambassadors provide vital information to new students, and quickly enhance their understanding of and coping with the new academic environment. As such they are seen as role models to new students and learners.

#### **4.4.4.8 Utilization of Library Resources and Services**

The results in Table 4.3 have indicated that the majority 41(53.2%) of the respondents agreed that student knowledge ambassadors motivate students to utilize library services and 28 (36.4%) strongly agreed while 3 (3.9%) strongly disagreed. The observations made by the researcher revealed that the use of subscribed databases at the Mzumbe University Library has been increasing at a slow pace since the adoption of SKA promotion strategies. This increase was likely contributed to student knowledge ambassadors' creation of awareness on the available e-resources and equipment of students with search techniques. For example, a database like Emerald seems to be more highly used by users this is due to the support done by Emerald themselves through Emerald Knowledge Ambassadors Programme. The database also does a

chain of follow-ups on SKAs' activities to get up-to-date information concerning the use of their database Table 4.6 summarizes the usage statistics of subscribed electronic resources at MUL.

**Table 4.6: E-resources Usage Statistics**

| S/N | DATABASES              | 2018-2021   |               |              |               |
|-----|------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|     |                        | 2018        | 2019          | 2020         | 2021          |
| 1   | Emerald                | 4504        | 7162          | 5376         | 7339          |
| 2   | Jstor                  | 382         | 895           | 432          | 948           |
| 3   | Sage                   | 5           | 1             | 1            | 18            |
| 4   | Taylor and Francis     | 62          | 770           | 45           | 790           |
| 5   | EBSCOhost              | 946         | 1784          | 497          | 2118          |
| 6   | Royal Society Journals | 107         | 269           | 176          | 12            |
|     | <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>6002</b> | <b>10,881</b> | <b>6,527</b> | <b>11,225</b> |

**Source: MUL E-Resources Usage Statistics, 2021**

Similarly, Kastner (2015) asserted that student knowledge ambassadors perform multiple tasks including mentoring peers and bridging the gap between library services and peers students. According to Tariq (2018), with their self-confidence, strong personality, presentation skills, and communication skills, SKAs act as the face of the library they work with and improve its image. Apart from that in the 2020 year, there was a decrease in e- resources usage. The findings have been supported by an in-depth interview with a head of one of MU Library departments who revealed that the library's SKA programme was affected by COVID -19 because all training was stopped, resulting in a sharp drop in e-resources usage. Therefore, signs like these of peer students benefiting from the roles played by SKAs are understandable and develop self-efficacy in performing the same assignment when they are alone in the future time.

#### 4.5 Challenges Affecting Student Knowledge Ambassadors

This section seeks to address the question about the challenges to effective's use of SKA in promoting e-resources use by students. At first, respondents were asked to indicate challenges faced by efforts to effectively use student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of electronic resources. The results generated indicate that there is a variety of challenges impeding SKAs usage. These have been presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4. 7: Challenges affecting the use of students' knowledge Ambassadors (n=77)**

| Challenges Affecting Students' knowledge Ambassadors | SA |      | A  |      | D  |     | UND |      | SD |     |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|-----|-----|------|----|-----|
|                                                      | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %   | F   | %    | F  | %   |
| Poor internet connectivity                           | 48 | 62.3 | 22 | 28.6 | 2  | 2.6 | 4   | 5.2  | 1  | 1.3 |
| Inadequate ICT facilities                            | 40 | 51.9 | 30 | 39   | 4  | 5.2 | 3   | 3.9  | 0  | 0   |
| Lack of incentives                                   | 39 | 50.6 | 26 | 33.3 | 3  | 3.9 | 8   | 10.4 | 1  | 1.3 |
| Inadequate funds                                     | 26 | 33.8 | 39 | 50.6 | 4  | 5.2 | 8   | 10.4 | 0  | 0   |
| Inadequate mentorship                                | 31 | 40.3 | 34 | 44.2 | 4  | 5.2 | 8   | 10.4 | 0  | 0   |
| Misconceptions of SKA                                | 33 | 42.9 | 32 | 41.6 | 3  | 3.9 | 7   | 9.1  | 2  | 2.6 |
| Lack of commitment                                   | 42 | 54.5 | 24 | 31.2 | 4  | 5.2 | 7   | 9.1  | 0  | 0   |
| Shortage of time                                     | 24 | 31.2 | 32 | 41.6 | 4  | 5.2 | 16  | 20.8 | 1  | 1.3 |
| Copyright issues                                     | 39 | 50.9 | 23 | 29.9 | 12 | 16  | 3   | 3.9  | 0  | 0   |

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D= Disagree; UND= Undecided; SD= Strongly Disagree

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

#### **4.5.1 Poor Internet Connectivity**

According to these findings, poor internet connectivity is a huddle for MU Library's attempts to effectively use SKAs as revealed by the majority of 48 (62.3%) of the respondents that strongly agreed that this challenge existed. In support of this finding, qualitative results from data gathered through interviews with library staff acknowledged the presence of this challenge. Based on responses obtained from interviewees, internet connectivity is a big problem for the Mzumbe University Library. Among other things, this challenge greatly limits access to e-resources. Similarly, participants of FGDs confirmed this challenge. For instance, one participant said:

*Internet connectivity is a challenge to our efforts to promote the use of subscribed electronic resources. As a result, we often use our bundles via phones to access e-resources specifically using the organizational access number (OAN) (R7).*

The findings are similar to what other researchers (Wema and Manda, 2011; Mwantimwa, Elia, and Ndenje, 2017; Wema, 2018) have reported. Likewise, a study by Akpojotor (2016) acknowledged that efforts to promote the usage of e-resources were being pushed back by low bandwidth and limited internet speed. This challenge limits downloads of relevant articles from reputable journals and therefore lowers the usage of e-resources as well as the number of downloads.

#### **4.5.2 Inadequate ICT Facilities**

According to 40 (51.9%) respondents, the inadequacy of ICT facilities/ infrastructure is the other challenge inhibiting the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors. This was confirmed by data from interviews with library staff. According to these respondents, student knowledge ambassadors are not presented with enough tools for promoting the use of e-resources. Similarly, FGDs revealed that there were no ICT facilities allocated to support SKA activities. This finding is supported by Ndungu and Gikandi's (2018) study. According to these researchers, the inadequacy of facilities for supporting knowledge ambassadors' activities is among the critical challenges faced by knowledge ambassadors programmes. Similarly, Wema (2018) acknowledged that the inadequacy of ICT infrastructure impedes academic libraries' promotion of e-resources. The prevalence of this challenge has been made known by various other scholars (Isibika and Kavishe, 2018; Manda, 2005; Wema and Manda, 2011), who identified limited computers on which users can browse e-resources as a challenge faced by efforts to promote the use of the resources. The availability and accessibility of ICT facilities to students are largely important and a determinant of the electronic resources use, particularly for students conducting research in partial fulfillment of requirements of the award of their respective degrees.

#### **4.5.3 Lack of Incentives**

Lack of incentives is another challenge limiting the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting e-resources as confirmed by the majority 39(50.6%) of the respondents. This was also obvious in the data from interviews with library staff. These interviews revealed that there are no incentives available to motivate student knowledge ambassadors to play the roles they have accepted in the promotion of e-resources use. As would be expected, FGD participants supported this finding. During the discussions, it was learned that the ambassadors were not even provided certificates of recognition of the role played in the promotion of e-resources.

In support of this finding, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) reported that an inadequate incentive for knowledge ambassadors undermines their effectiveness in supporting the use of e-resources. Similarly, Cliford et al. (2012) acknowledged that an effective student knowledge ambassador's programme is not possible with notable challenges such as failure to appreciate or recognize the role played by ambassadors. Incentives that may exist in form of payment and certificate awards can motivate ambassadors and result in the creation of a fruitful partnership between the library and students.

#### **4.5.4 Inadequate Funds**

According to the results, 26 (33.8%) respondents strongly agreed that inadequacy of funds undermines the effectiveness of SKAs. This was further noted through analysis of interview data in which it was learned that there were no funds allocated in the library's budgets to student knowledge ambassadors' activities of promoting the use of e-resources. For instance, the Director of the Library and Technical Services confirmed this by saying:

*Currently, there is no allocated budget for SKA activities. However, we expect this to change. In future financial years, we expect to see funds set aside to support this programme to ensure it is implemented in a sustainable manner.*

Similarly, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) acknowledged that an inadequate budget for SKAs' activities inhibits their effectiveness in promoting e-resources use. Similarly, the inadequacy of funds to facilitate outreach activities were identified by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) as a challenge faced by SKA programmes.

The interview with the head of the department acknowledged their concern and understanding as a department of library science and information management that inadequate searching skills are a challenge to the majority of our library users and we opted for the deliberate strong effort to set reasonable funds to conduct series of training on the use of electronic resources to enhance the use of our subscribed databases. The findings were also supported by one respondent of FGD as she replied:

*Searching skills is a critical problem for the majority of students. Students only know how to search information from Google and not from subscribed databases by the library which requires simple searching techniques and advanced searching techniques (R5).*

Furthermore, an observation confirmed that the majority of the third year and postgraduate students who were conducting research as part of fulfillment for the accomplishment of their degrees commonly use previous outdated printed thesis reports as their main source of information rather than using current articles subscribed by the MUL which is barely an indication of inadequacy searching skills of various subscribed databases.

The findings are similar to a study by Mwantimwa, Elia & Ndenje-Sichalwe (2017) that low usage of electronic resources was due to poor search techniques tied to a lack of formal information search skills training due to a shortage of funds allocated for training purposes.

This is manifested by the low use of current articles from subscribed databases prevalent to student researchers specifically in their old reference citations in their dissertation and thesis which reduces the quality of their output. Therefore academic libraries cannot escape from frequent training to update students' searching skills from reputable subscribed databases.

Incorporating SKA programmes in a long-term university strategic plan can help to rectify this problem by serving as a justification for funds allocation.

#### **4.5.5 Inadequate Mentorship**

As seen earlier, most 31(40.3%) respondents strongly agreed that inadequacy of mentorship impedes the effectiveness of SKAs' promotion of e-resources. This feeling was strongly shared by SKAs that took part in FGDs. For instance, during one session, one participant was heard saying:

*There was too little mentorship from library staff and the majority of the librarians were not willing to collaborate with us while some of the staff were even discouraging the activities of the programme. To be honest, there is limited support from some of the library's staff for our activities. As such, making an effort to play our role can be very tiring (R1).*

However, interview data shows otherwise. According to interviewees, there are various training opportunities provided by librarians to SKAs. These are offered as part of building the capacity of the SKAs to enable them to search for e-resources and correctly reference them. In addition, the training is part of efforts to raise SKAs' awareness about databases subscribed to by MUL.

Nonetheless, the quantitative and FGD findings are supported by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) who acknowledged that inadequate SKA mentorship limits their effectiveness in promoting the use of e-resources. In addition, Gertland (2015) noted that inadequate mentorship and support from the librarians in managing challenging circumstances impede SKAs' effectiveness. Furthermore, Ndungu (2016) approved that building SKAs' capacity is significant, particularly in covering promotion events and training costs. Mentorship of ambassadors, received from librarians that are conversant with digital information enhances the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors and simultaneously changes other students' perception of the SKA programme.

#### **4.5.6 Misconceptions Towards SKAs**

According to the results, 33 (42.9%) respondents strongly agreed, 32(41.6%) agreed, 3 (3.9%) disagreed, and 2 (2.6) strongly disagreed that there were misconceptions about SKAs. In other words, students at MU have misconceptions about SKAs. The findings were supported by ones from FGDs. According to one participant:

*The majority of students negatively perceive SKAs. Some consider us as people that are merely wasting the time they could use on academic activities. This usually happens during the first encounters between SKAs and students. However, this perception gradually changes as students attend more training on the use of e-resources and ICTs to search for materials in MUL (R4).*

Similarly, the researcher noted that the majority of librarians negatively perceive the activities and roles of SKAs at MUL. However, few librarians, particularly those involved in the mentorship of SKAs on the use of subscribed e-resources and those working in the Department of Library Science and Information Management perceive them as helpers and role models. These also consider SKAs as people that are easily approached by their fellow students that need answers to different queries related to the use of subscribed e-resources.

The findings are supported by Kibe and Kwanya's (2015) study that found misconceptions regarding the real meaning of the concept of knowledge ambassadors. The study further noted that the misunderstanding results in the ambassadors taking up the roles they are not expected to

execute or are unable to perform. The misunderstanding sometimes has resulted in conflicts or poor service delivery. On this, these researchers found that some knowledge ambassadors were ineffective as they were perceived as dishonest because it was felt that they attempted to solicit favours from librarians. Furthermore, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) acknowledged that some students misconceived the programme as they expected monetary rewards without knowing the programme was purely based on volunteerism nature. The volunteerism nature of the programme also affects the effectiveness of SKA as it is not easy for librarians to demand results from knowledge ambassadors while some ambassadors feel like they are not required to perform their roles and only participate of their own will.

The misconception of student knowledge ambassadors about their role sometimes results in their negative discernment among peer students which thwarts their understanding of what they are taught. Similarly, student knowledge ambassadors associate their role with financial rewards as well as being prioritized when employment opportunities arise. As such, some ambassadors became reluctant to proceed with the programme immediately after discovering the absence of financial rewards and employment opportunities.

#### **4.5.7 Lack of Commitments**

When asked to agree or disagree with the suggestion that lack of commitment to SKA programme was challenging SKAs' effectiveness in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources 42(54.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 24(31.2%) agreed while only 4(5.2%) strongly disagreed. The findings have been supported by an in-depth interview with a head of one of MU Library departments who revealed that the library's SKA programme did not have a coordinator. Instead, it has leaders of subscribed e-resources appointed to lead faculties and schools. Similarly, one FGD participant argued as follows:

*We do not have a programme coordinator. Instead, we have librarians that are responsible for training representative students who have volunteered and selected from faculties and schools. They are known as student knowledge ambassadors (R1).*

This finding is supported by Clifford et al. (2012) who reported that a lack of commitment to SKAs shows itself in the way a programme is organized and how the assignment of responsibilities to maximize SKAs' performances is done.

#### **4.5.8 Shortage of Time**

According to the results generated, 24 (31.2%) respondents strongly agreed that shortage of time hampers the effectiveness of SKAs while only 1 (1.3%) strongly disagreed. Similar findings were generated from the analysis of interview data. The findings show that SKAs lack enough time to provide vital training to their peers. These findings have also shown that the majority of SKAs are unable to multi-task (attending normal classes as well as training their fellow students). This was confirmed by SKAs involved in FGD, who revealed how busy they were with academic activities hence lacking time to train fellow students on the use of electronic resources even when willing to do so.

The finding is supported by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) who acknowledge that given that students' knowledge ambassadors are full-time students with full academic commitment, it is difficult for them to spare adequate time for ambassadorial activities. As a result, some programmes or training sessions have to be delayed or pushed forwarded over a long period against the original

schedules. Similarly, Peter (2013) revealed that even when a SKA programme is relatively inexpensive to implement, a considerable amount of time and dedication is needed from library staff, SKAs, and programme coordinators. On the whole, with the benefits that SKAs provide by extending information services, library staff needs not underestimate the time and effort required to coordinate the programme. An effective student knowledge ambassador programme is only possible where there is enough time for both library staff and programme coordinator.

#### 4.5.9 Copyright issues

The findings on copyright issues indicated that 39 (50.9%) respondents strongly agree that copyright issues were an obstacle to the effective use of electronic resources, and 23 (29.9%) respondents agreed that copyright issues were an obstacle to the effective use of electronic resources, 12 (15%) while only 3(3.9) were undecided. The interview with library staff recognized that copyright issues were a challenge to users because the majority of the current articles were restricted while the old articles were accessible and downloadable in full text. Similarly, the findings were supported by one respondent of FGD as she replied:

*Many subscribed e-resources are copyrighted resulting in low usage. I become frustrated during conducting training to peers on how to use e-resources because when I search an article for example in JSTOR only the abstract is downloaded and at the same time I cannot download a full-text material, especially the current article of 2020-2021 while the old articles such as of 2000-2010 are easily downloadable(R1).*

The study by Kawooya (2007) revealed that copyright was to blame for the lack of African content in the digital environment. The study by Adu & van der Walt (2021) also acknowledged that the majority of institutions in Africa is lacking policies on copyright. Copyright issues limit accessibility to currently subscribed journal articles from reputable databases which discourages peer students from searching and using electronic resources because much time was utilized to secure the needed material content.

#### 4.6 Strategies to Enhance Effectiveness of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors

Respondents were asked to indicate possible strategies that can be used to improve the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors' promotion of the use of subscribed e-resources at Mzumbe University Library. The results obtained are as presented in Table 4.8

**Table 4. 8: Strategies for improving the effectiveness of SKAs (n=77)**

| Strategies to improve SKA                                                           | SA |      | A  |      | UND |      | D |     | SD |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|---|-----|----|-----|
|                                                                                     | F  | %    | F  | %    | F   | %    | F | %   | F  | %   |
| Integrate SKA daily activities in library normal routine                            | 40 | 51.9 | 29 | 37.7 | 6   | 7.8  | 2 | 2.6 | 0  | 0   |
| Provide incentives to SKAs                                                          | 31 | 40.3 | 38 | 49.4 | 7   | 9.1  | 1 | 1.3 | 0  | 0   |
| Monitoring and evaluation of SKA activities                                         | 44 | 57.1 | 29 | 37.1 | 3   | 3.9  | 1 | 1.3 | 0  | 0   |
| Allocation of funds to SKA activities                                               | 33 | 42.9 | 33 | 42.9 | 8   | 10.4 | 3 | 3.9 | 0  | 0   |
| Development of ICT infrastructure                                                   | 42 | 54.5 | 30 | 39   | 2   | 2.6  | 2 | 2.6 | 1  | 1.3 |
| Commitment of SKA programme coordinator                                             | 49 | 63.6 | 22 | 28.6 | 5   | 6.5  | 1 | 1.3 | 0  | 0   |
| Integrating activities SKAs' activities in Mzumbe University Library strategic plan | 51 | 66.2 | 20 | 26   | 5   | 6.5  | 1 | 1.3 | 0  | 0   |

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; UND= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree  
**Source: Field Data (2021)**

#### **4.6.1 Integration of SKAs' activities in library daily routines**

The results on strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of SKAs show that the majority 40 (51.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that integrating SKA's daily activities into the library's normal routine would work while 29 (37.7%) agreed, and 2 (2.6%) disagreed. In other words, the findings show that this is a good strategy. The findings have been supported by results of qualitative data analysis which has stressed the need to get SKA activities integrated into the library's daily functions. According to responses from interviews, such integration would ensure that library staffs focus on some responsibilities while leaving some to SKAs. Similarly, one FGD participant said:

*We wish our activities could be integrated into library routines so that we can get the needed support from the library. The kind of support needed is in terms of internet connectivity and control of the classes during a training session. Furthermore, the support will bring attention to peers during the training session and increase conformability feelings of the SKA in presence of a professional librarian who controls the session (R2).*

A study by Ylonen (2010) acknowledged that SKAs occupy in-between teachers' and students' positions, conveying uncertainties experienced by some student ambassadors. As SKA are not teachers, they are deprived of the authority linked with the teaching profession. Nevertheless, they are expected to adopt the role of a teacher since they are expected to teach fellow students matters to do with electronic resources available in the library. This concern was raised by some FGD participants who said that at times when things are not working out, for instance during disrupted internet connectivity while training is ongoing, some students tend to be disobedient and out of control. During such moments, SKAs do not feel that they are in a position to control such behavior because they lack the authority to do so and therefore expect library staff in the class to take charge. Some FGD participants said that they felt embarrassed when library staff did not intervene to calm students down. According to Barnes (2017), SKAs can play the role of interacting with other students but under the supervision of library staff. Therefore a strong library staff/ambassadors partnership enhances the effectiveness of SKAs.

#### **4.6.2 Provision of incentives**

The findings also show that 31 (40.3%) respondents strongly agreed that providing incentives to SKAs can enhance their effectiveness in promoting the use of e-resources while 38 (49.4%) agreed, and 1 (1.3%) disagreed. These findings are supported by responses from an in-depth interview with the Director of MU Library who acknowledged that SKA works without any incentives as the programme used is purely based on volunteerism and personal willingness. However, incentives were emphasized during FGDs. For instance, one participant said:

*No, incentives are given to us. So, we are advising the library management to consider providing incentives to motivate us. Currently, the morale of becoming a SKA is very low. I strongly think this can be changed with the provision of incentives to enhance the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the use of subscribed -resources among fellow students (R5).*

This finding is consistent with a study by Kibe and Kwanja, 2015), which emphasized that libraries should develop a sustainable model for appropriately rewarding SKAs, specifically those performing extremely well. This can be done by giving incentives like participation

certificates, opportunities to attend training and publishers' tokens. Furthermore, institutions can treat knowledge ambassador programmes as student work programmes through which they should be paid a stipend. This would allow libraries to demand accountability from them. Similarly, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) noted that institutions need to work on incentives to keep ambassadors interested and focused. Awarding certificates to the ambassadors at the end of their functional term gives them the confidence to effectively play their roles and stay interested in promoting the use of e-resources as they will feel appreciated.

#### **4.6.3 Monitoring and evaluation**

The results also indicate that the majority 44 (57.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that monitoring and evaluating student knowledge ambassadors' activities can enhance SKAs' effectiveness in promoting e-resources utilization while 29 (37.1%) agreed, and 1 (1.3%) disagreed. The study's interviews shared this feeling although they also revealed that at the time data were being collected, this was not being formally done. The absence of formal monitoring and evaluation can be attributed to the fact that the programme is fully based on volunteerism; making it difficult for librarians to demand results from the ambassadors. On this, the Director of MUL revealed that,

*The knowledge ambassadors are not being monitored and evaluated as currently, the programme lacks a programme coordinator. Rather, there is only a group leader/librarian training the knowledge ambassadors in respective faculties and schools. Also, the absence of guidelines and written rules and regulations for knowledge ambassadors volunteering the promotion the use of e-resources limits the exercise of monitoring and evaluation to be performed.*

The results on monitoring and evaluation of the programme revealed that the management of MUL provided less priority for monitoring and evaluation of the programme to be done despite the necessity of the function as insisted by the study conducted by Barnes (2017) who noted that monitoring and evaluation of knowledge ambassadors are critically important since it facilitates strategic planning of student engagement. Also, monitoring and evaluation allow libraries to adopt different strategies to enhance the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting subscribed electronic resources.

#### **4.6.4 Allocation of funds**

Allocation of funds to SKA activities is a strategy supported by 33 (42.9%) respondents that strongly agreed it would work and 29 (37.1%) that agreed. The strategy was also acknowledged during an in-depth interview with the Director of MUL, who admitted that the absence of a specific budget for SKAs' activities was a problem. Similarly, one FGD participant said:

*In reality, there are no funds allocated specifically to support the SKA programme. Sometimes we use our own pocket money to procure internet bundles. When we asked the MUL management for financial assistance, they replied that there is no budget allocated for the program. Also, it appears not only the absence of a budget but also there are no incentives provided like awarding certificates of appreciation taking into consideration that we are volunteering (R7).*

Likewise, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018), argued that budgetary allocation is an important strategy for improving the effectiveness of SKA programmes. Also, Kibe and Kwanya (2015) suggested that for such a programme to run smoothly, institutions ought to allocate sufficient funds to it. Therefore, grant funds can be used to cover SKA stipends, create branding and promotional materials, as well as for purchasing food for training sessions and other significant group

meetings (Peter, 2013). Formalization and allocation of funds in comprehensive library annual budgets for student knowledge ambassadors facilitates as well as boosts their efforts to promote the use of subscribed e-resources and do other outreach roles.

#### **4.6.5 Development of ICT Infrastructures**

The results also show that 42 (54.5%) respondents strongly agreed that developing the university's ICT infrastructure can enhance SKAs effectiveness in promoting the use of e-resources while 30 (39%) agreed and 1 (1.3%) strongly disagreed. This was also mentioned during in-depth interviews. For instance, the Director of the Library confirmed that:

*As a directorate of library and technical services, we have a computer laboratory and other computer laboratories owned by the university that SKAs can use as a training venue. However, the challenge is there is limited access to Wi-Fi.*

Also, another library staff interviewed said:

*We have a computer laboratory but is not specifically there for SKAs' activities. It is used by library staff and other library users such as students to browse and type their assignments and term papers. Apart from that, the computer laboratory has unstable internet connectivity.*

This was confirmed through observations, through which the researcher discovered that the library has a very small computer laboratory that can hardly accommodate fifteen (15) students at a time. Also, the laboratory was not connected to the internet and the majority of computers were not working. On the same, one FGD participant said:

*In reality, computer labs are there but not connected to the internet. As result, we tend to use our bundles to connect to the internet while demonstrating the use of subscribed electronic databases to our peers. Connecting to personal bundles limits search and access databases that require MU Internet Protocol (IP) addresses to access them (R3).*

A study by Kibe and Kwanya (2015) acknowledged that investment in infrastructural development is a realistic strategy to ensure that maximum focus is put on key issues to do with student knowledge ambassador programmes to guarantee the use of resources. Truly, investing in ICT infrastructural development can result in increased effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting electronic resources.

#### **4.6.6 Programme Coordinator**

As indicated by 49 (63.6%) respondents, the full commitment of the SKA programme coordinator can improve student knowledge ambassadors' promotion of the use of e-resources. In addition to these, 22 (28.6%) respondents agreed this strategy can work. Likewise, the strategy received support during FGDs. During these, one participant said:

*We don't have any programme coordinator but we have a mentor or trainer who is a librarian by profession. As a result, student knowledge ambassadors and the whole programme encounter difficulties in implementing scheduled activities (R6).*

Furthermore, this suggestion was raised by the Director of MU Library, who acknowledged that at the time of data collection, the SKA programme did not have a coordinator. Instead, the programme has a few librarians appointed to train SKAs and other students on the use of e-resources. Similarly, an interview with other library staff revealed that there is a general feeling that appointing someone to coordinate the library's SKA programme would help SKAs to effectively play their role.

Likewise, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) argue that although libraries benefit from knowledge ambassadors programmes, library staff tend to underestimate the time and effort required to

coordinate such programmes. Similarly, Peter (2013) recognized that although their programme was relatively inexpensive to implement, it required significant time and commitment from the programme coordinator and other library staff. The commitment of both library staff and programme coordinators increases the confidence of student knowledge ambassadors in tackling challenges arising from electronic resources use.

#### **4.6.7 Integrating SKAs' activities in MU Strategic Plan**

The findings also show that 51 (66.2%) respondents strongly agreed that integrating SKAs' activities in Mzumbe University's strategic plan can enhance the effectiveness of SKAs' promotion of the use of e-resources while 20 (26%) agreed and only 1 (1.3%) disagreed. During an interview with the Director of MU Library, it was noted that the daily activities of student knowledge ambassadors are not integrated into the library's strategic plans because the activities rely on volunteerism. Similarly, an interview with one head of department accused the management of failing to incorporate SKA activities in the comprehensive Mzumbe University strategic plans as he said:

*Currently, it is difficult to incorporate SKAs' activities in the MU strategic plans since there is no budget allocated for their activities. As such, it is difficult to integrate their roles into our activities. Also, the absence of the programme in the MU strategic plan makes it difficult for budgeting for the activities of the programme itself*

This strategy is also recommended by Barnes (2017), who argues that promoting services and resources and engaging constituents have become essential strategic goals for libraries. To achieve these goals, more libraries are employing communications strategies to market their resources. Furthermore, Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) asserted that fitting the programme in the library strategic plan with set goals and objectives as well as lobbying for support from the top management is essential. It is reported by Gikandi and Ndungu (2018) that knowledge ambassadors play a vital role in the improvement of the image of the library as well as in promoting the use of library services, especially electronic resources.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented, analyzed, and discussed the findings of this study. The findings have been arranged in terms of the studies of specific objectives. The chapter has used narratives, tables, and figures to present the major findings. The findings presented have shown how the criteria used to select SKAs, how SKAs are perceived, challenges affecting the effective use of SKAs to promote the use of electronic resources, and strategies for dealing with the challenges. The challenges found include poor internet connectivity, misconceptions, copyright issues, shortage of time, lack of commitment from programme coordinator, and inadequate mentorship. Strategies suggested include provision of incentives, allocation of funds, the commitment of Librarians and programme coordinator, availability of ICT facilities, and Monitoring and evaluation of SKA activities. The study is summarized in the next chapter.

### **CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at Mzumbe University Library. The study has employed a

case study design that has used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data. To collect data, the study employed questionnaires, interviews, FGD, and observation methods. The data have been collected from a sample generated using convenient and purposive sampling techniques. In total, the study has used 97 respondents. Among these, 6 were interviewed, 14 participated in FGD, 77 responded to questionnaires distributed to fellow students and 5 questionnaires do not return by respondents. The sections that follow present a summary of the study's findings.

## **5.2 Summary of the study**

Knowledge ambassador's programmes emerged in academic libraries due to the low use of subscribed electronic resources. However, the efficacy of these programmes has been tested elsewhere; their effectiveness in Tanzania remained unknown. As such, this study sought to assess the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the usage of subscribed e-resources at MU Library in the Morogoro region. To do so, the study targeted to: identify the criteria used to select SKAs, determine how SKAs' role in promoting e-resources is perceived by peers, identify challenges affecting the effective use of SKAs to promote the use of e-resources and identify strategies that can be used by MUL to improve the effectiveness of SKA.

The study has been carried out from the perspective of Social Constructivists' Theory. Data analysis was grounded on the relationship of dependent and independent variables as described in the framework used. A summary of the findings is presented based on the specific objectives of the study are seen in the subsections that follow.

### **5.2.1 The Criteria for Selecting Student Knowledge Ambassadors**

The study has revealed that criteria like self-confidence, competent in searching skills, competence in ICT, willingness to volunteer, and specific knowledge of the subject were found in the study as very important selection criteria to be considered to join the programme but communication skills and commitment of the ambassador was considered as important as selection criteria while GPA, strong personality and known by the faculty were slightly very important as revealed in the study.

### **5.2.2 Perceptions of peer student's towards the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors**

The findings of the study have revealed that the roles of SKA were perceived as very effective by peer students in the promotion of the usage of e-resources. These SKA use different methods to promote subscribed databases and the most preferred method is a word of mouth as revealed in the findings. Apart from that, the finding indicated the majority of SKAs promote the Emerald database more than others which develops a positive perception among peer students. This was evident in students' high level of awareness of the database, which was attributed to database owners' efforts to use SKAs. They perform regular follow-ups through meetings conducted through zoom. However, on the whole, students' perception of the role of **the** SKA in promoting the use of e-resources has been found generally positive. Those that negatively perceive these individuals attributed their stand to SKAs' possession of limited subscribed e-resources searching skills compared to librarians, who were considered skilled enough. Nonetheless, the positive perception majority of students have of SKAs means that there is a contribution made to the access and use of subscribed e-resources.

### **5.2.3 Challenges for the effectiveness of students' Knowledge Ambassadors**

The study has found that the use of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of subscribed e-resources is faced with several obstacles which include poor internet connectivity. The poor internet connectivity has been found to inhibit the effectiveness of SKA in promoting the use of subscribed e-resources. The results have shown that inadequate ICT facilities/ infrastructure, lack of incentives, inadequate funds, inadequate mentorship, copyright issues, misconceptions, and lack of commitment are the other challenges faced.

### **5.2.4 Strategies to enhance the effectiveness of students Knowledge Ambassadors**

The study has found that the integration of knowledge ambassadors' activities into library daily routines would greatly facilitate the effective use of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of subscribed e-resources at MUL. According to the results, provision of incentives to students' knowledge ambassadors, monitoring and evaluation of their activities, allocation of funds, development of ICT infrastructure, and full commitment of the programme coordinator could improve SKAs' promotion of the use of e-resources.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

The knowledge ambassadors program is a strategic activity that offers great benefits for all users of library services. The student knowledge ambassadors played a crucial role in enhancing the image of the library as well as promoting the use of library services and in particular e-resources. It is pointed out in the study that awareness of electronic resources and improved selection criteria for future knowledge ambassadors and collaboration with librarians is essential for effective knowledge ambassadors in enhancing the use of subscribed e-resources that develop a positive perception of peers. However, their influence is impeded by inadequate ICT facilities/ infrastructure, lack of incentives, inadequate funds, inadequate mentorship, and misconception. Universities must address these issues by using well-implemented strategies and recommendations made in the study to maximize the impact of their programme in promoting the usage of e-resources to increase the usage of e-resources.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

The study, based on the finding generated from field data, has revealed that various challenges are limiting the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of subscribed electronic resources. To address them, the interlinked recommendations are made as follows:

The university should put in place a policy and action plan that should stipulate how SKAs should be selected or recruited in the future. The documents should also specify SKAs' responsibilities per semester to allow them to have timetables to guide them in running the programme in a sustainable manner. These documents should also indicate how SKAs will benefit from their participation in the programme.

The study also recommends an intensive mentorship programme for building SKAs' capacity to perform their roles. This can be done through face-to-face training to allow SKAs to raise different issues within the areas of interest of fellow students. This mentorship programme might develop a positive perception of SKAs among fellow students.

Furthermore, the study recommends improvements' to ICT infrastructure that are a key to ensuring the effectiveness of SKAs in promoting the use of electronic resources. For example, computers with internet connectivity will allow SKAs to be effective. This will be so because SKAs will be able to effectively train fellow students to use various e-resources.

Additionally, the study further suggests guaranteeing the sustainability of the SKA programme at MUL is an important aspect. This should be done by integrating SKA activities into library tasks and workflows. This requires the library to develop necessary policies, structures, and frameworks to support the SKA programme. Mzumbe University should fully integrate the activities of SKAs in its five-year strategic plan to plan for an effective budget for SKA activities.

Apart from that, the study recommends that library staff and the programme coordinator are key in ensuring the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the utilization of subscribed databases at MUL. Therefore, their full commitment will enable student knowledge ambassadors to effectively train fellow students because they will be well mentored and equipped with enough skills that create confidence in SKA in performing their work.

Finally, as seen from the study's findings, the lack of incentives is a challenge for the MU Library SKA programme. As such, ensuring that there are incentives such as payment (stipend) and award of a certificate of appreciation and recognition is very important. Therefore the library should establish a mechanism for rewarding and motivating SKAs. This will ensure that the programme offers some accountability.

### **5.5 Areas for Further Study**

This study was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting the use of e-resources at Mzumbe University in the Morogoro region, Tanzania. As the study was conducted in only one academic university, The results may not be generalized to the rest of the universities in Tanzania. As such, the researcher proposes the following areas for future research:

A study to establish the status of SKA implementation in academic libraries is proposed in the study. It is unclear how much SKA has been employed as a strategy in academic libraries to enhance the use of subscribed e-resources.

Also, the study proposes to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of adopting SKA to promote the use of subscribed e-resources in academic libraries. Yet, Mzumbe University libraries have been using SKA to encourage the use of subscribed e-resources; however, the cost of implementing SKA as a strategy is unknown.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PEER STUDENTS

##### Introduction

Dear respondents,

My name is **Elizabeth S. Sulle** a Masters student at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), in the Information Studies Programme. As part of the requirement for the completion of my studies, I am required to carry out research **on the Effectiveness of Knowledge Ambassadors in promoting usage of e-resources**. The purpose of the study is for academic and not otherwise. The information from this study is treated with total confidentiality and the respondents are not allowed to write their names anywhere on this paper. I humbly request for your voluntary participation in this study in responding to the attached questions which intend to collect information that will be used as finding of the study. Do not hesitate to contact the researcher for any clarification regarding the research.

Elizabeth. S.Sulle

Mobile NO: 0716211933; EMAIL: [elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz](mailto:elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz)

#### **A. Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Please put a tick (✓) where appropriate

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: 21-25years ☐ 26-30 years ☐ 31-35years ☐ 36-40 years ☐  
Greater 40 years and above ☐
3. Marital status: **A.** Single ☐ **B.** Married ☐
4. Please mark your year of study: **A.** Third year undergraduate ☐ **B.** Masters ☐
5. Nature of scholarship: **A.** Private ☐ **B.** Government ☐

#### **B. The selection criteria for students' knowledge ambassadors**

6. Are you aware of student knowledge ambassador? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. If the answer is YES, how did you become aware of students' ambassadors? **A.** Through a friend ☐ **B.** During library orientation program ☐ **C.** They introduced themselves to me ☐ **D.** Through a lecturer ☐ **E.** I cannot remember ☐

#### **C. Perception of peer students towards effectiveness of student's knowledge ambassadors**

8. Have you ever been assisted by student knowledge ambassadors on search of information from databases at MU Library? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. What is your perception on the role of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting use of e-resources at MU Library?

- A.** Very effective ☐ **B.** Effective ☐ **C.** Not effective ☐ **D.** Not very effective ☐

Please assess the following roles of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting use of e-resources.

10. What methods do student knowledge ambassadors commonly used for promoting e-resources use at Mzumbe University library? Please tick (✓) all that are appropriate

**A.** Social media ☐ **B.** Word of mouth ☐ **C.** Meeting ☐ **D.** Training session ☐  
☐ **E.** Orientation ☐ other specify.....

11. What types of subscribed databases are commonly promoted by student knowledge ambassadors in the library? Please select all that apply (✓)

**A.** Emerald ☐ **B.** Wiley ☐ **C.** EBSCOHOST ☐ **D.** JSTOR ☐ **E.** TAYLOR AND  
& FRANCIS ☐ other specify.....

**Key:**1=Strong Agree 2= Agree 3=neutral 4= Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree

|    | Roles of Student Knowledge Ambassador                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Mentoring and inspiring their peer students                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14 | Link the library e-resources to fellow students                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15 | Link students with librarians                                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16 | Provide feedback about e-resources to both library and their peer students |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17 | Training peer students on how to search subscribed databases               |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18 | Improving students' performance                                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19 | Improve the image of the library                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 20 | Improve searching skills of students                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 21 | Motivating students to utilize library services                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 22 | Other specify .....                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |

#### **D. Challenges for effective use of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors**

What do you think are the challenges for effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors in promoting use of electronic resources? Please tick (√) in the space provided

**Key:**1=Strong Agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4= Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

|    | Challenges                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Low internet connectivity                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 24 | Inadequate ICT facilities                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 25 | Lack of motivations/incentives                                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 26 | Inadequate funds                                                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 27 | Shortage of time                                                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 28 | Inadequate mentorship or capacity building                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 29 | Misconception or wrong perceptions towards role of student knowledge ambassadors |   |   |   |   |   |
| 30 | Lack of commitment of programme coordinator to student knowledge ambassadors     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 31 | Copyright issues                                                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 32 | Other specify.....                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |

#### **E. Strategies for enhancing effectiveness of Students' Knowledge Ambassadors**

In your opinion, what strategies should be taken to enhance the effectiveness of using students' knowledge ambassadors at MU Library

**(Key: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree)**

|  | Strategy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|---|

|    |                                                                                                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 33 | Incorporating the daily activities of student knowledge ambassadors in library normal routine                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34 | Giving incentives to student knowledge ambassador                                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 35 | Monitoring and evaluation student knowledge ambassador activities                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36 | Allocation of funds to student knowledge ambassadors' activities                                                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 37 | Progressives ICT infrastructure development                                                                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 38 | Full commitment of student knowledge ambassadors programme coordinator                                                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | Integrating the daily activities of students' knowledge ambassadors in the comprehensive Mzumbe University library strategic plan |  |  |  |  |  |

## Appendix 2

### IN DEPTH- INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARIAN

#### Introduction

#### Dear respondents,

My name is **Elizabeth S. Sulle** a Masters student at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), in the Information Studies Programme. As part of the requirement for the completion of my studies, I am required to carry out research **on the Effectiveness of Knowledge Ambassadors in promoting usage of e-resources**. The purpose of the study is for academic and not otherwise. The information from this study is treated with total confidentiality and the respondents are not allowed to write their names anywhere on this paper. I humbly request for your voluntary participation in this study in responding to the attached questions which intend to collect information that will be used as finding of the study. Do not hesitate to contact the researcher for any clarification regarding the research.

Elizabeth. S.Sulle

Mobile NO: 0716211933; EMAIL: [elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz](mailto:elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz)

1. What are the levels of importance of selecting students' knowledge ambassadors at MU Library? (**Key:**1=Very important 2= Important 3=Slight important 4= Not important) (Tick ).

|    | Criteria for selecting Student Knowledge Ambassadors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | Self-confidence                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 2  | Self-motivation                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 3  | Competence in ICT                                    |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | Competence in information search skills              |   |   |   |   |
| 5  | Knowledge of the subject/discipline                  |   |   |   |   |
| 6  | Level of education                                   |   |   |   |   |
| 7  | Communication skills                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | Enthusiastic                                         |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | Strong personality                                   |   |   |   |   |
| 10 | Commitment to promote library services               |   |   |   |   |
| 11 | High GPA 3.0 and above                               |   |   |   |   |
| 12 | Known by faculty                                     |   |   |   |   |

|                     |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Other specify ..... |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|

1. Is there any training given to student knowledge ambassador as a part of capacity building?
2. Have you realized the contribution of students' knowledge ambassador in promoting usage of e-resources?
3. What is your perception of library staff towards student's knowledge ambassador?
4. What challenges are facing effectiveness of students' knowledge ambassadors in promoting usage of e-resources?
5. Is there any allocated budget for sustaining student knowledge ambassador programme?
6. What measures do you take as MU Library Management to ensure the sustainability of the programme?
7. Is there any policy or guidelines for implementing student knowledge ambassador?
8. Do you have strategic plan for sustainability of students' knowledge ambassador?
9. What is your opinion on the best institution strategy to enhance effectiveness of student knowledge ambassadors at Mzumbe University Library?

### Appendix 3

#### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE TO PEERS STUDENTS AND STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE AMBASSADOR

##### Introduction

##### Dear respondents,

My name is **Elizabeth S. Sulle** a Masters student at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), in the Information Studies Programme. As part of the requirement for the completion of my studies, I am required to carry out research **on the Effectiveness of Knowledge Ambassadors in promoting usage of e-resources**. The purpose of the study is for academic and not otherwise. The information from this study is treated with total confidentiality and the respondents are not allowed to write their names anywhere on this paper. I humbly request for your voluntary participation in this study in responding to the attached questions which intend to collect information that will be used as finding of the study. Do not hesitate to contact the researcher for any clarification regarding the research.

Elizabeth. S.Sulle

Mobile NO: 0716211933; EMAIL: [elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz](mailto:elsulle@mzumbe.ac.tz)

1. On your opinion what should be the criteria to select SKA?
2. Who select you as student knowledge ambassador (professional librarian or
3. Are you given training as a part of mentorship ...?
4. How much training do you attended concerning e-resources?
5. How do you perceive the peer's students are they supportive and see you as role model OR helper in the university context?
6. From your experience are there any challenges in performing your role as students' Knowledge Ambassadors?
7. Suggest the best strategies for effectiveness of student knowledge ambassador?

**Appendix 4**  
**OBSAVATION CHECK LIST**

| S/N | Observed item(variables)                                                               | Observing |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1   | Number of Computer labs                                                                |           |
| 2   | sitting capacity in computer rooms                                                     |           |
| 3   | Number of computers connected to internet                                              |           |
| 4   | Power cut off                                                                          |           |
| 5   | Ways of promoting subscribed e-resources y SKA                                         |           |
| 6   | Sources of information consulted by third year and Masters for their proposal writings |           |

THANK YOU

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Telegraphic Address: "REGCOM"  
Phones: 2934306/2934305  
Fax No: 2601308/2604988  
Website: [www.morogoro.go.tz](http://www.morogoro.go.tz)  
Email: [ras.morogoro@tamisemi.go.tz](mailto:ras.morogoro@tamisemi.go.tz)  
In Reply please quote:



Regional Commissioner's Office,  
Boma Road  
P. O. Box 650,  
67117 MOROGORO

Ref. No: AB. 175/245/01J/70

5<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

District Administrative Secretary,  
Mvomero.

Re: RESEARCH PERMIT

Please refer to the above mentioned subject.

2. I am introducing to you Elizabeth Slaqwara Sule who is a bonafide student of the University of Dar es Salaam, who is at the moment required to conduct research in our Region.
3. The title of the research is "Effectiveness of students' Knowledge Ambassador in Promoting Use of e-Resources: A Case of Mzumbe University"
4. This permit is granted from 15 November 2019 to 30 July, 2021.
5. Please provide necessary assistance to enable the accomplishment of the research.
6. Thank you for your cooperation.

  
Erick A. Utomi

For; Regional Administrative Secretary

Copy: Vice Chancellor,  
University of Dar es Salaam  
P.O.Box 35091  
Dar es Salaam

" Elizabeth Slaqwara Sule-Researcher

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Telegram: "DISTRICT COM"  
Tel: 0232601670  
Fax: 023 2601670

District Commissioner's Office  
Mvomero District  
S.L.P. 59  
**MOROGORO**

In Reply Please Quote:  
**REF:Na.AB.19/293/01 'B'/255:**

**07<sup>th</sup> Julai, 2021**

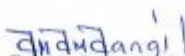
Vice Chancellor,  
Mzumbe University,  
P.O. BOX 1,  
**Mzumbe - Morogoro**

**RE: RESEARCH PERMIT**

Kindly refers to the captioned heading above.

2. I have the honor to introduce to you **Elizabeth Slaqwara Sule** a bonifide Student of University of Dar es Salaam who is at the moment required to conducting her research in our District.
3. The title of research is **"Effectiveness of Students' Knowledge Ambassador in Promoting Use of e – Resources: A case of Mzumbe Uversity"**.
4. The permit granted to her to undertake her research from **15<sup>th</sup> November, 2019** to **30<sup>th</sup> July, 2021**.
5. In a due course you are requested to assist her with all necessary requirements that might be needed to accomplish her research successfully.

With regards,

  
Frazier J. Mang'ula

**FOR: DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SECTRETARY  
MVOMERO**

**COPY:**

1. Vice Chancellor  
University of Dar es Salaam  
P.O. BOX 35091  
**Dar es Salaam.**
2. Elizabeth Slaqwara Sule  
**Researcher.**

