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## Contribution of Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries in Supporting Teaching and Research in Universities

Sayuni Harun Ntullo  
Research Scholar  
Department of Library and Information Science  
University of Lucknow  
Lucknow -226007 India  
[sayunintullo1@gmail.com](mailto:sayunintullo1@gmail.com)

Babita Jaiswal  
Department of Library and Information Science  
University of Lucknow  
Lucknow -226007 India  
[drbabitajaiswal@gmail.com](mailto:drbabitajaiswal@gmail.com)

### Abstract

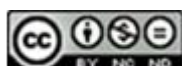
This study aimed to determine what the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) has done to improve teaching and research by Tanzanian universities. COTUL was founded in 2002 to link the then 76 member libraries electronically, thereby improving resource sharing and the collective nature of the institutions. A mixed-methods approach was employed to collect quantitative data through 154 distributed questionnaires and qualitative insights through in-depth interviews. A remarkable response rate of 77.9 percent has thus been ensured, suggesting robust engagement with the study. While the findings establish how COTUL has greatly enhanced scholarly access, it has had suboptimal utilization rates. It is reported that only 41 percent of the respondents utilise the sources provided to them every week. Barriers in training and marketing seem to be critical factors impeding fuller adoption. These notwithstanding, the benefits of COTUL's efforts to train library professionals and negotiate access to resources were well acknowledged to add more value to improving Tanzania's academic landscape. The end was with the recommendation that, if developed, their initiatives would better help in optimising resource utilisation towards the quality of teaching and research in Tanzania universities. This research recommended the need to have collaborative structures in library management, which call for proper sustained funding and strategic outreach for maximum impact by the consortium.

**Keywords:** COTUL, Resource Sharing, Academic Libraries, Capacity-building, Information Technology

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### Introduction

The development of library consortia across Africa over the last two decades represents a transformative shift in how libraries collaborate and share resources. Modern consortia focus on joint subscriptions to electronic resources, which enhances convenience in access, usage, and training for member institutions. Unlike traditional consortia, which were primarily concerned with physical book sharing, the current trend emphasizes access over ownership of



resources. According to Darch (2019), individual libraries often lack the financial capacity to acquire all the resources they need independently, making resource sharing vital for improving access to information. This shift toward access represents a key adaptation to the evolving demands of academic libraries in the digital age.

The Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) was established in 2002 as part of a broader East African initiative to create regional library consortia to foster collaboration among Tanzanian universities and research libraries. While Kenya and Uganda have made significant progress in establishing their consortia and subscribing to e-resources using their resources, Tanzania's progress has been slower. COTUL continues to rely heavily on donor funding, which has limited its capacity to operate independently. In contrast, both Kenya and Uganda initiated e-resource subscriptions much earlier and have managed to fund these through local resources. This discrepancy raises the question of whether COTUL's dependency on donor support is still a major obstacle. Additionally, the financial contributions made by universities and research institutions themselves, particularly through fee structures, should be revisited to assess their role in supporting consortia efforts.

Notably, the observations made by Msuya and Mungwabi some years ago still seem relevant today. COTUL's formation was intended to serve as a starting point for the development of a more powerful regional consortium that would eventually bring together libraries from Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. However, while the regional vision was strong, the execution of resource sharing at a regional level has not fully materialized, especially when compared to the advancements made by Kenya and Uganda. COTUL's current reliance on external funding contrasts with the progress made in the neighbouring countries that have successfully funded their consortia independently.

Despite these challenges, COTUL has evolved and continues to play an important role in promoting access to electronic resources, training library staff, and negotiating affordable resource access for its 76-member libraries. Initiatives such as the installation of fibre optic cables have aimed to enhance internet access in Tanzanian universities and research institutions. However, many institutions have not yet fully leveraged these infrastructural improvements (Buwule, 2024), indicating a gap in the effective utilisation of available resources. Institutional Repositories (IRs) have become an important global trend in academic libraries, offering access to research outputs and preserving valuable academic work. However, in Tanzania, there remains a significant gap between the volume of scholarly work produced and its accessibility through IRs. While IRs are an important development worldwide, COTUL's focus has primarily been on promoting access to electronic resources and enhancing training in information retrieval services. The limited integration of IRs into COTUL's initiatives highlights the need for more focused efforts on improving the management of research outputs within the consortium.

This study aims to evaluate COTUL's contributions to supporting teaching and research in Tanzanian universities through the utilisation of electronic resources. The objectives include assessing the extent of electronic resource usage, identifying barriers to effective utilization, and exploring strategies to improve training and marketing efforts. Despite progress in facilitating access to scholarly materials, low utilisation rates indicate a need for enhanced efforts to maximise resource usage. The findings of this study will provide actionable insights that can help strengthen library cooperation and improve service delivery, ultimately benefiting Tanzania's academic community.

## Literature Review

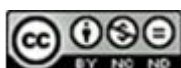
Library cooperation, also known as library consortia, is a concept that has experienced immense growth over time; however, its exact development date is unknown (Nfila & Darko, 2002). The earliest instances of cooperation were noticed in the collective development of collections and interlibrary loans. The latter was popularised with the development of extended communication facilities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Millard, 2010). The evolution of the library environment from physical to electronic sources has necessitated the formation of consortiums that facilitate the shared access and utilization of such digital information resources. Such collaborations have been the backbone for libraries to come together and bargain collectively for better prices, increase professionals' skills through joint training, and many more (Darch, 2019). There has been an increased utilisation of information and communication technologies. Now, contemporary consortia further enable resource sharing not in the physical world format, but through subscription to collective electronic resources.

At the international level, the International Coalition of Library Consortia came to fruition in 1996 and has since played a very important role in interlinking all library consortia around the world (Feather, 2015). The ICOLC provides a forum for strategic planning, information sharing, and advocacy in matters of library needs that promotes an alliance among the approximately 170 member consortia around the globe. Among some of the benefits offered to libraries are cost-cutting through group purchasing, along with the benefits of joint marketing or fundraising campaigns. In addition to that, the commitment of the alliance to professional development improves the skills of the library staff, thereby improving the services and experiences in libraries in general (ICOLC, 2023).

Consortium building in Africa has become an essential strategy to provide resource access to more libraries than any other period, especially during the digital age. For example, as is the case for institutions such as Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC) and Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL), which are designed to facilitate electronic resource sharing, and to consider the physical reality of assembling broad collections in individual libraries (KLISC, n.d.; Darch, 2019). This is also reflected in the case of the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries, established in 2002, which argues for shared electronic resource acquisition and capacity building for librarians (COTUL, 2017). Given the growing academic interest in the management of research data, libraries have started being considered as potential partners for data distribution and support to researchers at various stages of research activity (Wolski & Richardson, 2011; Brochu & Burns, 2019). This collaborative structure not only increases the resource-access point but also positions libraries centrally within the larger research ecology for the ultimate benefit of the academic institutions and the communities they serve.

## Challenges Facing COTUL in Managing Library Knowledge Sharing

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools in university libraries has become essential for providing electronic resources. However, despite the availability of these tools, many academic libraries, including the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL), face significant challenges in their effective management. Studies by Emmanuel and Sife (2018) highlight that challenges such as acquisition, preservation, maintenance, and training hinder the effective utilization of e-resources. Awuor (2023) further emphasises that developing countries face barriers like



inadequate funding, which impedes the adoption of ICT. This lack of resources affects the management of information and creates obstacles in the dissemination of knowledge among stakeholders, thus leading to insufficient utilization of valuable electronic resources available to library users.

Financial constraints significantly contribute to the challenges faced by academic libraries in Tanzania. Limited budgets allocated by university funding bodies have made it increasingly difficult for libraries to subscribe to essential electronic resources and maintain them effectively. Nkebukwa (2016) points out that inadequate funds restrict access to vital resources and training, which further compounds the issue of low utilisation rates among postgraduate students and academic staff. The absence of comprehensive training on utilizing these resources results in poor information retrieval skills and a lack of awareness about the available e-resources. Consequently, even when libraries subscribe to modern databases and digital collections, they remain underutilized, leading to missed opportunities for supporting teaching and research enhancing academic performance and research output.

Moreover, poor infrastructure exacerbates the challenges of managing electronic resources. Manda (2005), Ndubisi and Udo (2023), and Samzugi (2016) assert that the inadequacy of computers, unreliable internet connectivity, and frequent power outages hinder access to digital resources. These infrastructural challenges are prevalent in many academic libraries in Tanzania, limiting the ability of library users, particularly postgraduate students and academic staff, to effectively engage with e-resources. To address these issues, libraries need to prioritize investments in technological infrastructure and develop comprehensive training programs to improve awareness and usage of available resources. By tackling financial and infrastructural barriers, Universities through COTUL can enhance their capability to manage library knowledge sharing and support the academic needs of its users.

### **Empirical literature review**

The role of University Libraries in facilitating research has gained much recognition in the empirical literature, majorly to shed light on their indispensable contribution towards yielding effective research results. Libraries today have evolved from being confined to or limited to older roles, such as serving as repositories of books and sources of study space, but also to the dissemination and access of digital information, as noted by Jaguszewski and Williams (2013). According to Cox, “Developing university libraries represents the shift from then to now, emphasizing support for young faculty and PhD students in their academic work” (Cox, 2019). Moreover, according to Tripl (2021), universities increasingly invest in research, and the library plays a crucial role in fulfilling the strategy’s expectations and stakeholder’s expectations of service improvement. However, Tella and Sidiq (2017) argue that most libraries are overly dependent on interlibrary loan requests rather than being research libraries. Hence, strategic planning and resource allocation are lacking.

Academic libraries in Africa are looking at the emerging area of focus known as RDM, Research Data Management. Tenopir (2024) reports that most information professionals in Africa believe RDM to be a relatively new area. According to scholars, RDM refers to the organization and management of research data throughout its lifecycle, incorporating activities such as collection, storage, security, and sharing. The management of data represents a broader theme in digitalization and the deployment of information technology in services for library use (Quadri & Adebayo, 2016). In this regard, though, technology is advancing very fast and challenging librarians to adjust their skills for the diverse needs of their users. Because, Olson, L.M., (2021) claims that the quality of library services hinges

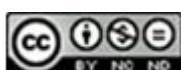
directly on the satisfaction users have, professional librarians' professional training and capacity development are called for.

In Tanzania, the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) plays an important role in the sharing of resources and resource facilitation, although electronic ones pose problems. Regarding investment in resources, low engagement of users has been witnessed, and problems emerge concerning whether COTUL is effectively reaching and training people; from the study, it has been found that despite the intent among Tanzanian researchers to share their work with open-access platforms, sharing of research data sets remains at its primary development stage (Yonah, 2024). This exposes the necessity for more holistic approaches to making COTUL even more responsive to research and teaching needs in Tanzanian universities. Generally, the literature points out some transformative potential of libraries in the digital age, but there is a critical need for analysing their operational frameworks and user engagement strategies so that their contributions may be optimized for research in academia and knowledge sharing in Tanzania.

The development of library consortia has become an important strategy for promoting resource sharing amongst academic libraries worldwide. These consortia of different countries are: ThaiLIS in Thailand, the online catalogue of multiple academic libraries; CALIS in China: a comprehensive academic library network introduced in 2000; the Consortium of Academic Libraries of Catalonia (CBUC) in Spain, grouping state-funded universities and the State Library of Catalonia; and, finally, GAELIC in South Africa, targeting the promotion of document delivery to speed up service delivery to users. It is a development reflecting the increasing recognition of the need for collaboration in library services in the optimization of resources and better access to information (Ghosh, 2022). The formation of library consortia in India is a response to the new demands placed by academic libraries.

Mahajan (2015) mentions that Indian academic libraries cope with the challenge of 400 universities and around 18,600 colleges thus affecting budget cuts and material costs so that no single library alone can meet the demands of the users. However, INFLIBNET and the UGC: InfoNet e-journals consortium are initiated to allow a network of resource sharing among academic institutions. This network provides high-speed internet connectivity and access to electronic journals, thus greatly alleviating space and management burdens associated with print resources. The UGC-Infonet network allows for collaboration so that libraries can share resources in a way that the need of the user is considered (Koneru, 2024). Further examples of site-specific consortia- the CSIR and INDEST in India- emphasize the numerous models for collaboration developed in libraries. The CSIR consortium connects 40 scientific laboratories, hence offering e-journals for research purposes, while the INDEST consortium includes elite educational Institutions with deep discounts and full access to resources (Saibaba & Guha, 2024). The final example is the Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy, where consortia among libraries that have a common interest in astronomy in a shared effort can be seen effectively. Apart from access to critical resources, consortia create a collaborative culture among institutions that enables them to better serve their respective communities and adapt to the changing landscape of information technology (Francis, 2015).

Despite the existing literature on library consortia, there has been a noticeable gap in identifying the specific ways through which the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) has contributed to the development and sustainability of university libraries in Tanzania. While other studies have discussed the general role of library consortia, they lack a focused examination of COTUL's contributions to teaching, learning,



and research in Tanzanian universities. This study seeks to fill that gap by assessing COTUL's impact on teaching and research support in Tanzanian universities.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach by integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to assess the contribution of the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) in supporting teaching and research within Tanzanian universities. The research is carried out in selected University libraries, including the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), Ardhi University (ARU), Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Mzumbe University (MU), University of Dodoma (UDOM), University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Institute of Finance Management (IFM), Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA), Dar es Salaam Tumaini University (DarTU), and Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST). The target population included all library staff actively engaged in COTUL activities.

The Yamane formula was employed to calculate a sample size of 154 respondents. Data collection utilized simple random sampling to ensure representativeness and purposive sampling to focus on key informants for valid and reliable data. Structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews were conducted to gather comprehensive insights into the research problem. Specifically, in-depth interviews were conducted with librarians, heads of libraries, and directors to deepen the understanding of the research issue. Out of the 154 sampled respondents, a subset was selected for in-depth interviews, ensuring rich qualitative data. The validity and reliability of research instruments were confirmed through pilot testing with a smaller group of respondents. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining respondent confidentiality.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative responses. Quantitative data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26. Measures were put in place to ensure data quality, with strict adherence to validity and reliability standards. The combination of data collection methods and analytical techniques provided a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of library resources and services, yielding valuable insights into COTUL's role in enhancing academic performance and research capabilities within Tanzanian universities.

### **Findings**

The researcher distributed 154 questionnaires to the employees of selected University libraries in Tanzania, which are the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), Ardhi University (ARU), Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Mzumbe University (MU), University of Dodoma (UDOM), University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Institute of Finance Management (IFM), Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA), Dar es Salaam Tumaini University (DarTU), and Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST). Fortunately, 120 were filled and returned, while 34 remained unanswered. This accounted for 77.92 percent of the response rate and all questionnaires were returned. Based on these assumptions, a 77.9 percent response rate for this study is outstanding. Table 1 indicates the response rate of participants from Tanzania's various University libraries. Also, findings show the stratification of the participants into age groups. Among them, 29.2 percent are between the ages of 18 and 25, and 25 and 34. In addition, 18.3 percent are between the ages of 35 and 44, 15.0 percent are between the ages of 45 and 50, and 3.3 percent are beyond the age of 51. The study confirmed that respondents are of suitable age to provide appropriate

answers to the issues presented. Furthermore, age has a significant influence on delivering a relevant answer in terms of the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries' contribution and objectives.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents**

University	Questionnaire Distributed (f)	Questionnaire Received (f)	Response Rate (%)	Age Group Distribution (%): 18-24	25-34	35-44	45-50	51 and Above
Open University of Tanzania (OUT)	20	16	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Ardhi University (ARU)	15	12	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS)	18	14	77.8	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Mzumbe University (MU)	16	12	75.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
University of Dodoma (UDOM)	20	16	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM)	25	19	76.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Institute of Finance Management (IFM)	10	8	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA)	10	7	70.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Dar es Salaam Tumaini University (DarTU)	10	8	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST)	10	8	80.0	29.2	29.2	18.3	15.0	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>120</b>						

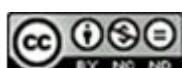
**Source:** Field Data (2024)

The data reveals a relatively consistent response rate across the universities, with most institutions achieving an 80 percent response rate except for TIA (70%), MU (75%), and MUHAS (77.8%). Out of 154 questionnaires distributed, 120 were returned, resulting in an overall response rate of approximately 77.9 percent. The consistency in response rates suggests that the questionnaire distribution process was generally effective across all institutions. Notably, institutions like the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), Ardhi University (ARU), and others achieved the highest response rates, which indicates strong engagement from respondents at these universities.

Age group distribution is uniform across all institutions, with a similar proportion of respondents in each age bracket. The majority of respondents fall into the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups, each accounting for 29.2 percent. The 35-44 and 45-50 age groups followed. This distribution indicates a predominantly younger demographic, which is typical for university settings. The uniformity in age distribution across all institutions suggests that the respondent pool is representative of the general age demographics of university populations.

## Descriptive Analysis

### Contribution of COTUL to improving Access to scholarly resources in libraries

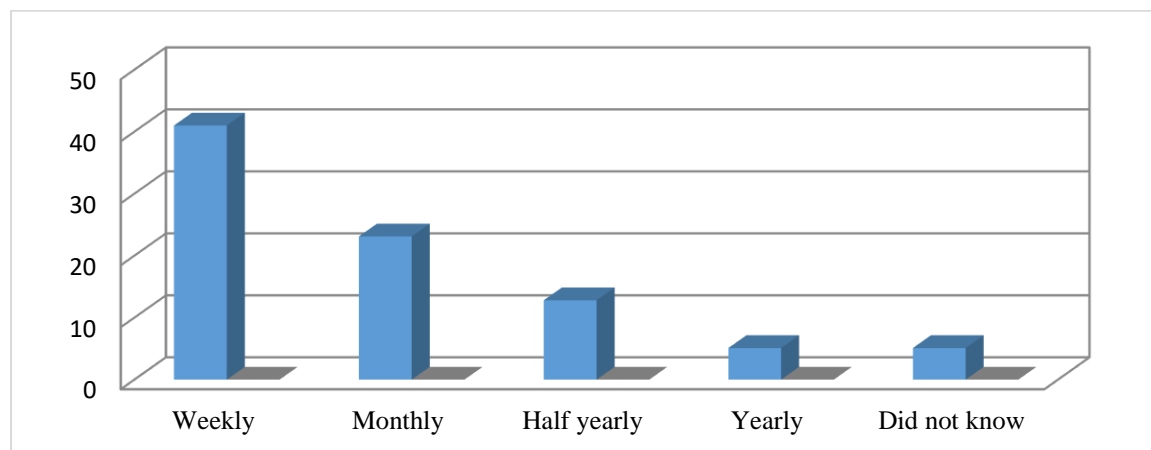




Respondents further explained how their libraries benefit from COTUL. This was intended to find out if COTUL’s involvement in improving access to scholarly resources had any good returns to the libraries in question. The results are summarised in figures 1 and 2.

**Frequency of utilisation of resources COTUL uses for teaching and research purposes**

In this section, respondents were asked to indicate how frequently COTUL provides utilisation of resources for teaching and research purposes. Figure 1 is an indication of how frequently resources were utilized in university libraries for teaching and research purposes.



**Figure 1: Frequency of utilisation of resources**

**Source:** Field Data (2024)

The results showed that as few as sixteen, 41 percent of the respondents indicated weekly. This was followed by low as a third, nine, 23.1 percent of the respondents indicating that resources were utilized every month, while few, five, 12.8 percent indicated that frequency of utilization was half-yearly, respectively. Two, 5.1 percent of respondents indicated that the resources were utilized once a year, and another two, 5.1 percent did not know how often the e-resources were utilized in their libraries.

In relation to this, opinions of library directors who hold management positions were requested to identify what advantages their libraries have gained from the said Consortium. Their answers generally concentrated on the monetary advantages of academic collections to their libraries. One library staff appreciated their membership in the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) through the following remark: *“COTUL ensures we have timely access to key resources, especially for research projects. Without this consortium, we would struggle to maintain consistent access to crucial journals and databases”* (D1, 2024). Also, one respondent highlighted the significant role COTUL plays in enhancing access to scholarly resources: *“COTUL has enabled our library to subscribe to essential databases that we could not have afforded independently. This has greatly improved the quality of research and teaching materials available to our students and faculty”* (D2, 2024).

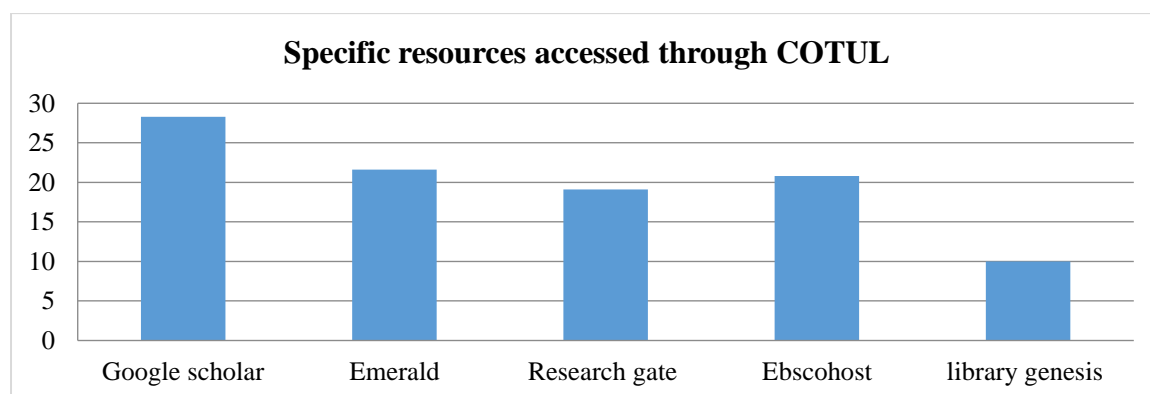


The above discussion captures the response from the Library staff that apart from being valuable to users, scholarly resources at chosen libraries were also found valuable to the libraries themselves.

Supporting this argument, Muthu (2023) and Geronimo and Aragon's (2023) studies noted that libraries have a lot to benefit from scholarly resources. Among the benefits included was that libraries offered affordable resource acquisition and equipment. This could be impossible to achieve if independent scholarly resources allowed libraries to ensure that their users have access to the most current.

### Specific resources accessed through COTUL

In this section, a multiple-response question asked respondents to establish which specific resources were accessed most. The resources accessed most are reflected in Figure 2.

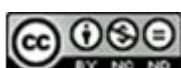


**Figure 2: Specific resources accessed through COTUL**

**Source:** Field Data (2024)

The results indicate that 34 (28.3%) respondents say that Google Scholar was the most accessed resource, followed by 26 (21.6%) respondents who indicated Emerald. EBSCOhost was indicated by 25 (20.8%) respondents, Research Gate by 23 (19.1%) respondents, while 12 (10%) respondents indicated Library Genesis was the most accessed resource.

During interviews, one of the library staff members pointed out: “Resources like Google Scholar and ResearchGate have become indispensable, but it's COTUL's negotiated access to premium databases like Emerald and EBSCOhost that truly enhances our research capabilities” (LS1, 2024). Library Directors also underscored the financial benefits of COTUL in interviews, with one Director noting: “Our budget constraints would never allow us to acquire such a vast range of electronic resources. COTUL's consortium model gives us access to these resources at a fraction of the cost, and this has been a game-changer for our library” (D2, 2024). Another Director added: “Being part of COTUL has opened doors for us, not just in terms of resources, but also in collaborative research and networking with other institutions globally” (D3, 2024). Such feedback aligns with the quantitative data, highlighting the importance of diverse resources provided through COTUL.



### **Collaborations with other Universities**

Regarding collaborations, the results showed that 76 librarians and 44 heads of libraries opined that universities had collaborative projects within and outside of the country. Amongst the areas in which they collaborated were research, publications, training, and access to COTUL electronic resources containing books, journals, and other scholarly work on climatic change. Research collaboration between academics cannot be overemphasized as it presents an opportunity for the development of international links and partnerships toward knowledge sharing and exchange. The knowledge-sharing mechanism through a collaboration strategy lowers the cost of knowledge generation and use, sharing among collaborating partners.

It also enhances the flow of knowledge from both sides. The research conducted by Sita, Kumaraswamy, and Chitale (2022) established the fact that collaborative knowledge sharing links learning to knowledge processes and therefore enhances learning and teaching at the university. It builds the name and reputation of individual universities. Rathi, given and Forcier (2014) in a related study also found that knowledge-sharing collaboration increases participants' experiences. The findings showed that IT systems use facilitated a strategic collaboration goal among the universities, making them partners and hence achieving their strategic goals (Kim & Lee, 2016).

Electronic resources and communications among the universities bridge the distance thus, making partners share and exchange knowledge quickly and effectively. The United Republic of Tanzania's (2010) national research policy supports collaborative engagement among universities to maximize the use of results of research and increase the sharing of knowledge. The policy further indicates that collaborations and interactions lead to knowledge and technology transfer and sharing. An interview participant, a staff from one of the library staff stated:

*Consortium of Tanzania Universities and Research Libraries (COTUL) which is responsible for providing e-resources (books and journals), research training, and local journals published by the universities contributed immensely to knowledge sharing among academics. COTUL was established to enable universities and research libraries to access electronic resources from the Consortium (LS1, 2024).*

Another librarian echoed this sentiment: *“COTUL has created an environment where universities can easily collaborate, exchange knowledge, and participate in joint research projects, which enhances both the quality and visibility of our academic work” (LS2, 2024).* Implicitly, with electronic resources, COTUL contributed a commensurate amount to knowledge sharing in Tanzania's universities. The South African National Library and Information Consortium (SANLiC, 2015), the Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC, 2024), the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL, 2016), and Universiteitsbibliotheek & Koninklijke Bibliotheek (UKB, 2024) in the Netherlands, have all set up electronic resources initiative as a means of encouraging knowledge exchange among the partners for their support of the core business of learning, teaching, research, and consultancy. Collaborations through consortia offer wide access to e-sources as they enhance the creation of knowledge that is shared later to improve academic performance academically.

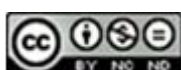
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## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study highlights the significant contributions of the Consortium of Tanzania Universities and Research Libraries (COTUL) toward improving access to scholarly resources in university libraries. The findings show that COTUL has enhanced subscription power, reduced storage space requirements, and helped libraries stay abreast of the rapid information generation process. Library directors highly value the monetary benefits COTUL brings to their institutions. Despite these advances, the study found that usage of scholarly resources is still relatively low, with 41 percent using resources every week, 23.1 percent monthly, and 12.8 percent semi-annually. Google Scholar, Emerald, and EBSCOhost are among the most accessed platforms, while collaboration among libraries, both within Tanzania and internationally, further enhances resource sharing and knowledge dissemination. The findings imply that while there is substantial progress in resource accessibility through COTUL, there is a need to increase engagement with these resources across university libraries. Although the return rate of 77.92 percent from the survey respondents suggests an excellent level of participation, further efforts to raise awareness and training in utilising these resources could enhance usage rates. Additionally, fostering stronger collaboration and communication among Tanzanian universities, as well as international counterparts, is crucial for maximizing the benefits of these resources. To improve the utilization of scholarly resources, it is recommended that library managers implement targeted awareness campaigns, offer training sessions on effective use, and improve outreach efforts within universities. Further research should explore the barriers to resource usage and develop strategies to overcome them, ensuring that the potential of electronic resources is fully realized. Finally, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing, as seen with the South African, Kenyan, and Ugandan consortia, can strengthen Tanzania's position in the global academic community.

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