

**REVITALIZING THE SOMALI NATIONAL LIBRARY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND
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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation titled “*Revitalizing the Somali National Library: Challenges and Opportunities*”, is my own research work developed from a careful synthesis of scholarly works about the position and status of libraries in post-conflict settings and a methodical collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data from Mogadishu, Somalia. It has never been presented either in part or entirety to this or any other higher educational institution for any award. Whatsoever, where the works of other scholars have been cited and utilised, due reference has been made thereof.

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Approval

I certify that this dissertation titled "*Revitalizing the Somali National Library: Challenges and Opportunities*" has been duly compiled and processed by Abdirahim Mohamed Nor, examined through a Viva Voce defence, and revised in accordance with the recommendations of the examination panel. It is hereby submitted to the College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS), Makerere University, for final approval.

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Date:.....*15/10/2026*.....

Sylvia Namujuzi, PhD

(Supervisor)

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving mother, Zahra Mohamed Abdulle. Your prayers, patience and sacrifices have illuminated my journey. Also, I dedicate this work to my dear sister, Anab Mohamed Nor, whose unwavering support, love, and belief in my dreams have been a constant source of strength and inspiration.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AET	: Africa Educational Trust
AMISOM	: African Union Mission in Somalia
CCTV	: Closed-Circuit Television
CD-ROM	: Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
CDs	: Computer Discs
CGTN	: China Global Television Network
DA2I	: Development and Access to Information
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
DVDs	: Digital Versatile Discs
EAC	: East African Community
EFASOM	: Education for All Somalia
FGDs	: Focus Group Discussions
HEC	: Higher Education Commission
HEIs	: Higher Educational Institutions
ICTs	: Information and Communication Technologies
IFLA	: International Federation of Library Associations
ILL	: Inter Library Loan
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organizations
INSLIBS	: Institute of Library and Information studies
INSLICS	: Institute of Library, Information and Communications Studies
IsDB	: Islamic Development Bank
ISIS	: Islamic State
JAWS	: Job Access with Speech
LION	: Leaders in Our Neighborhood
LIS	: Library and Information Science
MOU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIC	: Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPAC	: Online Public Access Catalog
QC	: Qatar Charity
RALSA	: Rwanda Archives and Library Services Authority

READ	: Readyng Extracting Analyzing and Distilling
SAF	: Somali Aid Foundation
SALBOT	: Sierra Leone Book Trust
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goal
SFS	: Somali Family Services
SIRA	: Somalia Information and Resilience Building Action
SLA	: Somali Library Association
SLAALIS	: Sierra Leone Association of Archivists Librarians and Information Scientists
SNL	: Somali National Library
SOMASA	: Somalia Academy of Science and Arts
STEM	: Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
UN	: United Nations
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	: United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	: United States
USA	: United States of America
USB	: Universal Serial Bus
WAMY	: World Association of Muslim Youth
Wi-Fi	: Wireless Fidelity
WISOM	: Windle International Somalia
WWII	: World War II

Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the current state of Somali National Library with the intent of exploring and proposing viable strategies for its revitalization and sustainable operation. The study was guided by four objectives: to establish the current state of the Somali National Library, to identify challenges that may hinder its effective functioning, to examine opportunities that can be harnessed for revitalization, and to recommend strategies for revitalizing sustainable operations. A qualitative case study approach was adopted. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and document review involving staff of the Somali National Library, Library and Information Science professionals, officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and representatives of non-governmental organizations supporting library development. Social Systems Theory informed the study by providing a framework for understanding the Somali National Library as an interconnected system whose effective functioning depends on the availability and coordination of its human resources, facilities, technologies, collections and stakeholder relationships. The major findings revealed that the Somali National Library faces significant shortages of human resources, information resources, technological infrastructure, facilities, and operational support systems necessary for effective service delivery. The study further established challenges related to inadequate funding, limited professional staff, weak technological capacity, and insufficient community engagement. Despite these challenges, opportunities exist through government support, partnerships with non-governmental organizations, international cooperation, fundraising initiatives, professional development programs, and community participation. The study concluded that the successful revitalization of the Somali National Library requires addressing critical resource and capacity gaps before full reopening to the public. The study recommends strengthening human resource capacity, mobilizing sustainable funding, improving technological infrastructure, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, expanding community engagement initiatives, and developing strategic partnerships to support the long-term sustainability of the library.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study focused on documenting the strategies for revitalizing national libraries in post-conflict settings. Somali National Library was selected with emphasis on challenges, opportunities and prospects. The chapter presents background information about the importance of libraries in general and the credibility of national libraries in post-conflict settings. In the chapter also, the problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, theoretical framework, as well as the operational definitions of key terms used in the study are covered.

1.2 Background to the Study

Libraries play a vital role in the development of nations (Osuchukwu & Ayeni, 2019; Wojciechowska, 2023). They providing access to information, supporting education and literacy, and fostering community engagement; are gateways to knowledge, offering resources and services that promote learning, creativity, and informed decision-making; serve as community hubs, offering spaces for social interaction, cultural activities, and lifelong learning; curate information resources (Murugan & Krishnan, 2018); and play a notable role in the preservation of cultural heritage (Friday & Chinwe, 2023). The above roles are played by community, public, academic and national libraries. The focus of this study are national libraries.

A national library is a setup that is established to collect and preserve publications of a country (Lamani & Sedam, 2022; Reimer, 2018). It is an official repository of printed works, a general access library; an information-bibliographical center and a center of coordination, planning and stimulation of the entire library system of the nation (Lamani & Sedam, 2022; Mari, 2020). In relation to other libraries, national libraries occupy an independent and exceptional position. Primarily, they serve as a nation's memory, preserving its cultural and intellectual heritage, and promoting knowledge dissemination, thereby acting as a central repository for all published materials related to or originating from the country, ensuring long-term access to this information for current and future generations. They also play a crucial role in supporting research, education, and national development (Mari, 2020). Owing to the prime importance

bestowed upon national libraries, the setups have been targets of malicious damage during periods of concussion and conflict. It is worth noting that Libraries play an important role in wartime, supporting the community (Antczak & Gruszka, 2023). However, war breakout causes significant damage to library infrastructure, collections, and services, and disrupts the overall functioning of the library system (Chorna, 2024).

Although the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict specifies that libraries be safeguarded (Blue Sheild International, 2023), in times of conflict, libraries and archives become targets of partisan attack especially those either seeking to bring human inheritance to ruin (memoricide) (Morris, 2024), or simply abusing and misusing (Prochaska, 2023). During World War II (WWII), libraries were targeted by Nazis for cultural obliteration (Leavitt, 2015; Prochaska, 2023; Steig, 1992). In 1992, Serbian forces deliberately targeted the libraries and archives of Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, and reduced to ashes the National and University Library's irreplaceable collection of unique manuscripts, archives and works of art as well as the national collection of books (Morris, 2024; Prochaska, 2023). In 2013, Islamic jihadists fighting for the control of Mali, set national library on fire. A similar scenario was observed during the turmoil that followed the Iraq war, when the great library in Mosul was torched by called Islamic State (ISIS) in 2015 (Prochaska, 2023). In recent time, the Russo-Ukrainian war has shown a repeat of what has happened in other environments during wartime. For instance, Anghelescu (2022), Kosciejew (2023) and Gosart (2024) have reported that Russian forces have methodically destroyed competing narratives on the occupied territories by burning or removing books in Ukrainian and on culture and history, classifying them as "extremist" literature. In Gaza, Palestine, Israel's bombardment of the strip has caused loss of irreplaceable cultural heritage as the library system has been a prime target (Moustafa, 2023). Where the libraries have not been grossly damaged, they have been used as camps for humanitarian assistance and as bases for the fighters (Morris, 2024; Prochaska, 2023). Technically speaking, their services have been halted with staff, owing to the fortified fear, have also either ran into hiding or even left the countries for fear of their lives.

National libraries are part and parcel of the major institutions that are prioritized in post conflict reconstruction and rebuilding (Morris, 2024; Prochaska, 2023; Qvortrup, 2017). Society needs libraries to create awareness for empowerment and to create opportunities for affected communities' engagement in social and economic sectors. Communities need libraries so that people can exercise their democratic rights and play an active role in societal development,

human freedom and prosperity (Lamani & Sedam, 2022). Thus, efforts to revitalize national libraries in post-conflict settings are indeed vital. Revitalization refers to the process of making something grow, develop, or become successful again (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). It denotes efforts taken to rejuvenate something so that its everyday life functions are restored and involves

various forms of revival ranging from replacing minor components to transforming the old systems for newest and most efficient models (Wilczkiewicz & Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk, 2015). Revitalizing the national libraries in post conflict settings means the initiatives for rebuilding these institutions because they essential for rebuilding societies after conflict, including Somalia.

From a Social Systems Theory perspective, national libraries operate as interconnected systems comprising human resources, collections, technologies, infrastructure, policies and stakeholder networks. Any disruption to one of these elements impacts the institution's overall operation. Consequently, revitalization requires coordinated restoration of these interdependent components to ensure effective and sustainable service delivery.

Although studies have documented the effects of conflict on libraries in countries such as Bosnia, Iraq, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the current state of the Somali National Library and the strategies required for its sustainable revitalization. This knowledge gap necessitates research to inform policy and practice regarding the restoration of national library services in Somalia.

1.2.1 The Somali National Library

Somalia is located in the horn of Africa. It is one of the countries that have witnessed decades of civil war which has ravaged its infrastructure, including important educational and cultural institutions (Korotayev & Voronina, 2024; Rosmanto et al., 2021; Nur, 2017). The Somali National Library is one of the key institutions that have been affected. The Somali National Library (SNL) was established for public access in 1976 as a result of a collaborative effort between the Somali government, UNESCO, and UNDP. It began in a rented location with a modest collection but moved to a larger facility at the Mogadishu Cultural Center in 1986 and has since, functioned as a public, academic, and research library while promoting Somali literature through its writing center and publishing services. In addition, despite facing resource and staffing challenges, its spearheaded library cooperation initiatives, including the creation of a union catalog and specialized classification systems (Nur, 2017). However, despite SNL

serving as a vital component of the country's intellectual and cultural legacy, it was severely damaged and neglected throughout the conflict and is currently completely closed. Many obstacles have stood in the way of efforts to revitalize SNL. Despite facing obstacles, there is high interest by the government and there have been efforts by government and stakeholders to support the revitalization of the Somali National Library (Hassan, 2014). Against this backdrop, the aim of the study was to explore the strategies that should be undertaken to revitalize the Somali National Library, ensuring its long-term sustainability as an essential resource for national education, cultural preservation, and development.

1.3 Statement of The Problem

National libraries serve as a nation's memory, preserving its cultural and intellectual heritage and promoting knowledge dissemination by acting as central repositories for all published materials related to or originating from the country (Mari, 2020). Ideally, such institutions play a critical role in fostering national identity, supporting education, and enabling informed decision-making. However, following the outbreak of civil war in the early 1990s, the Somali National Library (SNL) once a vital hub for cultural preservation and literacy promotion was severely affected. Although the physical structure of the library remains partially intact, its services have been completely halted (Nur, 2017) and as a result, it is closed to users (CGTN Africa, 2023). The continued closure and limited functionality of the Somali National Library raise concerns about its ability to fulfill its national mandate. Despite growing interest in institutional recovery and cultural heritage preservation in post-conflict societies, there is limited empirical evidence on the current state of the Somali National Library, the challenges affecting its effective operation, the opportunities for its revitalization, and the strategies needed to ensure its sustainable functioning. This knowledge gap limits the availability of evidence needed to inform policy, planning, and decision-making concerning the restoration and long-term operation of the library. Therefore, this study sought to establish the current state of the Somali National Library, identify the challenges affecting its effective operation, examine the opportunities that can be harnessed for its revitalization, and propose strategies for its sustainable operation.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess the current state of Somali National Library with the intent of exploring and proposing viable strategies for its revitalization and sustainable operation.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i) To establish the current state of the Somali National Library after the civil war.
- ii) To identify the challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of the Somali National Library.
- iii) To examine opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of the Somali National Library.
- iv) To recommend strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of the Somali National Library.

1.6 Research questions

The study was poised to provide answers to the following research questions.

- i) In which state is the Somali National Library after the civil war?
- ii) Which challenges are likely to hinder the effective functioning of the Somali National Library?
- iii) Are there any opportunities that can be harnessed to enhance the effective operation of the Somali National Library?
- iv) How can the operations of Somali National Library be revitalized and sustained?

1.7 Scope of The Study

This study had three scopes; geographical, content and time as discussed below.

1.7.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted at the headquarters of Somali National Library. The institution is located in Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia.

1.7.2 Content Scope

The proposed study was limited to assessing the current state of SNL, the likely impediments or barriers to the effective operations, the opportunities available for tapping to rejuvenate library operations and functions, and the possible interventions that ought to be undertaken for sustainable and revitalized operations of SNL once it has been reopened.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study evaluated and appraised the efforts made to revitalize the national library between 2007 to 2025 with the aim of identifying the opportunities, challenges and possible strategies that could be leveraged for sustainable operation of the library.

1.8 Justification of The Study

The revitalization of the Somali National Library aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting access to knowledge and strengthening national institutions (United Nations, 2015).

1.9 Significance of The Study

Empirically, the findings of the study might be important to the policy makers in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) by highlighting the current state of the resources in possession of SNL. Theoretically, the accomplishment of this study will add considerable input to the existing knowledge body about revitalization of national libraries in post- conflict settings. Normatively, the accomplishment of the study will enable the researcher to meet the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science in Information Science of Makerere University.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Social Systems Theory, which was developed by Bertalanffy (1968). The theory views organizations as living systems made up of interdependent elements that interact with one another to form a functioning whole. The effectiveness of a system depends on how effectively its different components work together, such that weakness in one component may affect the functioning of other components and the overall effectiveness of the system.

National libraries can be viewed as social systems because they consist of interconnected subsystems that interact with one another and with their external environment. These subsystems include human resources, collections, ICT infrastructure, physical facilities, financial resources, policies, and management structures. National libraries also interact with various stakeholders, including users, government agencies, academic institutions, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and information service providers.

In the context of this study, the Somali National Library (SNL) was viewed as an interconnected system whose effectiveness depends on the availability and interaction of these components. Social Systems Theory was selected because the revitalization of SNL cannot be achieved by addressing one component in isolation. For example, improvements in collections require appropriate human resources to organize and preserve them, adequate infrastructure to house them, ICT to support access and digitization, and effective management and funding to sustain these activities.

The theory was applied to guide the study's four objectives. In assessing the current state of SNL, the study examined the condition of its major components. In identifying the challenges, the study considered how weaknesses in particular components affected the functioning of the library as a whole. In examining opportunities, the study considered available resources, partnerships and forms of support that could strengthen the library's components. Finally, in recommending strategies for revitalization and sustainable operation, the study considered the need for coordinated interventions across the interconnected components of the library system.

The theory therefore provided a framework for interpreting the findings by examining the relationships among the different components of SNL. It also informed the development of recommendations by emphasizing that sustainable revitalization requires coordinated improvements in human resources, collections, ICT, infrastructure, funding, management, policies and stakeholder engagement, rather than treating these areas as isolated issues.

1.11 Operational definitions of key terms

National Library: A national library is an institution created by a government to act as the primary repository of a nation's intellectual and cultural heritage (Lamani & Sedam, 2022). This study defines a national library as the principal institution responsible for collecting,

preserving, and providing access to Somali publications and cultural heritage materials to support national development.

Revitalization: Revitalizing means the process of restoring energy, life, or effectiveness to something that has weakened or become inactive (UNESCO, 2003). In this study, revitalization refers to restoring and strengthening the Somali National Library's infrastructure, services, human resources, collections, ICT capacity and institutional functions so that it can resume effective and sustainable operations.

Strategies: A strategy (from Greek word *Strategos*) is a high-level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty (Barad, 2018). It may be planned or reactive (Cory, 2024). In this study, strategies were defined as reactive and planned activities that ought to be undertaken for purposes of realizing sustainable operation of the Somali National Library.

Challenges: These are defined as new or difficult circumstances that institutions may face when running their routine activities (Chaivisit et al., 2024). In this study, challenges refer to the anticipated new and difficult circumstances that are likely to minimize the likelihood of the Somali National Library from becoming efficient and effective once it is reopened.

Opportunities: These are occasions or situations that make it possible to do something that one wants to do or have to do, or the possibility of doing something (Neelima & Chennapalli, 2022). In this study, the same definition was adopted.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study aimed at generating new knowledge about revitalization of library services in post-conflict settings. According to Lim et al. (2022) and Ward and McComb (2017), knowledge generation is a logical undertaking that calls for connecting the new knowledge with what is existing in the knowledge base. Thus, the purpose of this chapter was to review foundational knowledge about revitalization of library services in post-conflict environs. The intent was to acquaint the researcher with cross-cutting about library services in post-conflict settings so that a clearer understanding of the underlying issues is gained (Breslin & Gatrell, 2023; Kraus et al., 2023). Further, the review was vital for establishing recurrent knowledge gaps and inconclusive arguments that needed to be filled and or clarified (Boumezrag, 2022). The review was structured under themes that have been developed from the specific objectives that the proposed study seeks to achieve as stated earlier in Chapter 1. The themes are: Effect of conflict on the resources and facilities of national libraries, Available opportunities for supporting functional National Libraries in conflict and post-conflict affected settings, Challenges hindering functional operation of National Libraries in post-conflict settings; and Strategies for sustaining functional operation of National Libraries in post-conflict settings. The chapter closes with a section about the emerging gaps.

2.2. Effect of conflict on the resources and facilities of national libraries

Libraries are vital institutions for social change and intellectual advancement (Ajidahun, 2011). As comprehensive repositories of information across diverse disciplines, libraries facilitate scholarly inquiry and cognitive growth. According to studies, having access to library resources not only supports formal education but also fosters information literacy, which is essential for community development and socioeconomic mobility (Ajidahun, 2011). Libraries act as tools to promote long-term educational progress and lessen social injustices by democratizing access to knowledge.

National libraries are highly regarded than other types of libraries because they play unique roles in preserving national heritage, serving as bibliographic centers, and providing access to a nation's published output (Lison, 2023). Among others, they are lauded for fostering national

development, supporting and sustaining research, education, and cultural preservation (Hagerlid, 2011; Lison, 2022, 2023). To foster the above, national libraries must be stocked with a variety of resources. According to Aryee and Apronti Tetteh (2024), resources refer to print and non-printed materials in libraries that cater for user needs such as learning, teaching, and research. These materials include newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, manuscripts, maps, documents, periodicals, cassettes, Computer Discs [CDs], videotapes, Digital Versatile Discs [DVDs], Blu-ray discs, e-books, audiobooks, journals, databases, and textbooks (Aryee & Apronti Tetteh, 2024; Kaur Appiah et al., 2024; Scoulas, 2021).

Depending on the type, national libraries have resource requirements. Some national libraries play the storage and preservation roles while other national libraries, on top of these functions, provide user services. A public library, according to Jenkins et al. (2022), is an everyday setting with a core business tailored to the needs of the local communities they serve and where users can access curated information and signposting at no cost. Beyond this, public libraries conduct outreach programmes to ensure that no information user is left behind (Jenkins et al., 2022). By default, therefore, a national library that provides public library services has more resource requirements than a national library that has no component of public library services.

Like other critical resources for national development that are targets for warring parties and factions, national libraries stand to lose vital resources during civil and armed conflicts. According to Jaber (2017), the case example of American invasion of Iraq in 2003 signposted the extent of losses that countries bedeviled by conflict suffer regarding their information resource centers. There was massive looting of information materials from museums, Iraqi universities and their libraries, the National Library and Archive, and other institutions. Jaber's observation reinforces the views of Salaheddin and Yacoub (2015) who noted that when the ISIS invaded the Central Library of Mosul, around 2,000 books were lost through looting and arson. As well, many archeological antiques and Islamic sites were demolished. In coherence with the above, Prochaska (2023), using the case example of on-going Russo-Ukraine conflict, noted that in times of conflict, libraries and archives become all too often the targets of partisan attack by those who seek to bring human inheritance to ruin, or simply to abuse and misuse it. It therefore imminent that conflict-affected communities or countries lose substantial information through looting and malicious destruction of library resources, including national libraries.

During conflict periods, the operations of the national libraries is paralyzed. Jaber (2017) and Prochaska (2023) hold that national libraries, like any other libraries, engage in creating new collections as well as updating the stock of existing collections. Due to insecurity and restlessness, the librarians have difficulty in acquiring research materials, something that leads to the stagnation of the collections (Jaber, 2017). Moreover, other activities that national libraries engage in such as the Interlibrary Loan programs are suspended because movements are restricted during conflict periods. Consequently, the services of the national libraries are grossly affected. It is also most probable that information materials in national libraries are lost to environmental damage, whenever there is conflict. Using the example of academic libraries in Palestine, Jaber (2017) established that libraries are dealt a major blow during and after wars because of massive budget cuts. This culminates into shortage of funding, leading to the loss of the information materials to damage by environmental and storage conditions.

Using the context of Palestine, Jaber (2017) noted that when there is protracted civil or interstate conflicts, the human resources such as librarians are rendered redundant. Library professionals are a vital node of the national library system and therefore, when they are in short supply, the rest of the other resources cannot be put into their rightful use. This argument is vindicated by Jaber (2017) who noted that Palestine in the Middle East, has been swamped by decades of war. As result, there is shortage of library professionals because of the disruption of the education system and yet more than 80% of the librarians were aging, almost to the retirement age. The disruption of the education service delivery suffocates succession planning and creation of a pool of library staff to take up the positions once peace prevails. The absence of human resources, therefore, affects the operations of the national libraries.

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that armed conflict negatively affects national libraries through destruction of collections, deterioration of infrastructure, disruption of services and loss of skilled personnel. Library systems are especially vulnerable during times of instability, according to studies from conflict-affected areas including Iraq, Palestine, Ukraine, and others. Nevertheless, the majority of these studies concentrate on recording losses rather than analyzing the post-conflict condition of libraries or suggesting workable solutions for rehabilitation. Furthermore, limited literature specifically addresses the situation of the Somali National Library.

From the perspective of Social Systems Theory, conflict weakens several interdependent subsystems of a national library, including collections, infrastructure, human resources, and information technology. The functionality of the overall library system is affected when these subsystems fail at a certain time.

2.3 Challenges facing revitalization of national libraries in post-conflict settings

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2010) indicates that post conflict settings are fragile. The fragility makes them vulnerable to shocks such as food crises, economic crises and climate change which put pressure on the operations of institutions especially after the available meagre funding is diverted to sustain the basic services (OECD, 2010). Libraries are one of the institutions that are affected by limited funding. According to Ilorah et al. (2009), the limited funding for library maintenance and development is two pronged. Firstly, most libraries do not have adequate finance to acquire information resources and render effective services to the users because of budgetary cuts while also, the prices of information resources continue to soar upwards. Secondly, internally, libraries generate funds from gifts, photocopying, consultancy services, and bookbinding, electronic mail, telex and fax services, among others. The funds generated are used to supplement the library vote (Ilorah et al., 2009). Such sources are suffocated by conflicts and can even manifest during post conflict phase especially when there is insecurity. The irrefutable fear limits the mobility of the users and therefore, these auxiliary services become redundant.

Libraries in post conflict settings lack of skilled personnel. Citing the cases of Somalia and Liberia, Cherry-Ann, and Cowell (2019) noted that libraries were largely staffed by paraprofessionals. Due to lack of requisite knowledge in library resources management such as classification, preservation and storage among others, the quality of services is low. Libraries and librarians face the challenge of addressing the future information needs of their users while ensuring the provision and preservation of information. They must also remain sustainable, relevant, and visible. In this context, they are tasked with delivering innovative solutions and services, all while dealing with pressures to reduce costs and enhance efficiency (McInnes, 2009). By 1994, Rwanda had only 42 individuals formally educated in Library Science, with most holding the equivalent of a 2-year undergraduate diploma or associate degree (Olaka, 2008b). Prior to the genocide, librarian training occurred overseas, resulting in a scarcity of qualified librarians within the country. This shortage contributed to the slow growth of libraries in Rwanda and hindered their ability to adopt new innovations and advancements in the

provision of information resources and services(Olaka, 2015). Somalia, on the other hand, lacks formal training institutions for library science, which has resulted in a significant shortage of skilled professionals in the field. This gap in education has hindered the development and modernization of libraries across the country. Without access to specialized training, aspiring librarians are often left without the necessary knowledge and skills to manage library operations effectively, adopt new technologies, or provide innovative services. Consequently, many libraries struggle to meet the evolving needs of their communities, limiting access to vital information resources and hindering overall societal development. Efforts to establish training programs or partnerships with international institutions are critical for building a competent workforce in the library sector.

Unavailability of relevant information resources is another challenge (Cherry-Ann & Cowell, 2019; Ilorah et al., 2009). Some information resources are not available for-the-shelf purchase, examples are government publications, cultural heritage materials, proceedings of court cases or judgments, audio-visual items like oral testimonies and recorded speeches and news. They can only be acquired by the libraries that have their depository right. In addition, after acquiring these materials, they are processed and organized to ensure maximum utilization and preserved in a suitable environment to prolong their life span. This involves micro filming, air-conditioning and storage facilities which have greater financial implication for the library. As noted earlier, such activities may not be possible because of limited and / or lack of steady funding (OECD, 2010).

Another significant challenge is the inadequate library infrastructure and the presence of outdated materials. Many countries have experienced the problem of library destruction during times of conflict. All provincial libraries and resource centers were completely destroyed in Sierra Leone as a result of the rebel war. Only two public libraries in Freetown, the nation's capital, survived out of the 15 that were originally created, despite being heavily damaged and plundered(Gorvie, 2005). In 1994, libraries in Rwanda experienced widespread looting and destruction of books. At the National University of Rwanda's Ruhengeri campus library, formerly known as Université Nyakinama, around two-thirds of the collection was either stolen or destroyed, while approximately one-sixth of the collection at the Butare campus faced similar fates(Olaka, 2009). On the morning of January 27, 1991, trucks belonging to the invaders began transporting the National Library's property. Over 60,000 books and documents were scattered and torn under the soldiers' feet. Library furniture, including reading

tables, printers, shelves, office chairs, lights, and carpets, was stolen in broad daylight and at gunpoint(Nur, 2017).

When there is protracted conflict that lasts for a long period of time, education is disrupted, leading to increase in illiteracy (Muthanna et al., 2022; Vesco et al., 2025; Yamada & Matsushima, 2020). The disruption is caused by destruction of school infrastructure, displacement of students and teachers, and the psychological trauma of conflict. According to Ilorah et al. (2009), to ensure maximum utilization of some information resources by the users, especially in the rural or community libraries, they should be repackaged in local languages, audio and video tapes as well as drawings/ paintings. When information is repackaged in local languages, the rural dwellers can understand them better and become informed. Despite this ideality, translating information materials into local languages is complicated. Library staff has to be trained to acquire the requisite skill. In addition, some of the indigenes should be trained and re-trained to facilitate information dissemination to rural dwellers who are mainly illiterates (Ilorah et al., 2009).

Overall, the literature suggests that post-conflict national libraries face interconnected challenges related to funding, staffing, infrastructure, information resources and user engagement. These difficulties frequently reinforce one another and seldom arise in isolation. However, the extent to which these challenges affect the Somali National Library remains insufficiently documented, thereby necessitating empirical investigation.

2.4 Opportunities for revitalizing national libraries in post-conflict environments

As noted in the preceding section, national libraries are key resources that ought to be prioritized in post- conflict societies such as Somalia. Efforts must be taken to rejuvenate their operations since the information provided is vital for post-conflict rebuild. According to Mnejim and Mnahi (2019), post-conflict rebuild attracts several non- state actors who play key roles in capacity building, co-financing resource provision and supporting initiatives for the state rebuilding. Basing on this advantage, Mnejim and Mnahi (2019) identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as one of the most popular non-state actors supporting state-building initiatives. That said, national libraries in post-conflict settings have the opportunity of networking and collaborating with NGOs to provide library services to the users. More importantly, the libraries are targeted by the NGOs for peace building initiatives by among others, supporting them to organize out-reach programmes for distribution of

information materials, delivering of lectures, and talks which would stimulate discussion among groups and help them to promote embrace simple steps to promote peace, resolve conflicts and ensure true democracy. Mnejim and Mnahi (2019) reiterate that since libraries keep resources such as periodicals (newspapers, journals, magazines), cultural literature (dealing with peace, governance and democracy), audio-visual materials, internet resources, academic, political and other relevant books, amongst others aiming at true democracy and peace-related, they are inevitable in the peace-building and overall restorative efforts in post-conflict settings. The stakes are high therefore, that the libraries can attract considerable funding from non-state actors. Evidence of this opportunity is mentioned by Jaber (2017) who established that donations constituted the greatest enabler for the reconstruction of libraries in post-conflict Iraq.

Studies (such as Jaber, 2017; Kargbo, 2000, 2001) have shown that library infrastructure is destroyed during the rebel war. Using the context of Seirra Leone, Kargbo (2001) established that libraries were thoroughly looted and vandalized. However, owing to the importance of libraries, within two years of the war ending, the two public libraries in the capital had been renovated and were restocked by Book Aid International and the Book Trust. This development highlights the critical importance of fundraising in the rebuilding of national libraries in post-conflict settings. It resuscitates the functioning of the national libraries, hence enabling them to rebuild their collections. A complimentary example is provided by Books for Africa (2013) which noted that the partnership between Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT) and Books for Africa has helped to rejuvenate the library system in post conflict Sierra Leone through book donations. Books for Africa (2013) attributes the successful rebuilding of the country's library collections to the fundraising initiatives by Professor Dick Simpson of Chicago, IL, and friends of Schools for Salone, a Washington state NGO that rebuilds schools. Fundraising through networks, therefore, provides an opportunity that libraries in post conflict settings can harness to rebuild and repurpose service provision.

Conflicts lead to institutional decay. The striking example that attests to this argument is the Institute of Library and Information studies (INSLIBS) which was an autonomous off campus institution with a separate administration. However, owing to the prolonged internal civil strife, the institution lost most of its lecturers to greener pastures elsewhere (Kargbo, 2001). This deficiency resulted in its merging with the mass communications department at Fourah Bay College, which suffered a similar plight in terms of an exodus of lecturers. Both institutions were incorporated into an Institute of Library, Information and Communications Studies

(INSLICS) attached to Fourah Bay College. This merging never meant an end to the recruitment and consequent training and graduating students in library and information science. This scenario provides a blueprint to post conflict societies such as Somalia that the past glory can be revived by ensuring that a cadre of professional library and information scientists are trained to handle the roles and responsibilities associated with library services. Thus, in post-conflict societies, the existing institutions provide opportunities for reviving their library systems, including the national library. They can do so by among others, by ensuring that the training institutions continue to enroll students for diploma, degree, postgraduate diploma, and master's programmes in Library and Information Science.

The notable efforts that have been undertaken to revive public service and public administration in post-conflict societies have provisions that cater for institutions such as national libraries. The United Nations (UN, 2010) cites examples of Rwanda, Timor-Leste, and Kosovo where public administration systems were shattered by conflicts. The United Nations intervened to re-establish public administration through reform and reconfiguration. According to the United Nations (2010), a common denominator for realizing gains from public administration in post-conflict societies is emphasis on the public service. The emphasis on public service, according to UN (2007), is premised on the fact that a capable public service has a greater bearing on recovery than is generally recognized, both in terms of delivering aid and basic services and in rebuilding national cohesion and the credibility, legitimacy, and trust of government. United Nations has often done so by engaging citizens in identifying their needs and priorities, as well as in planning, implementing, and evaluating policies and programmes that are citizen-centric and equitable (UN, 2010). The credibility of a vibrant public service and why it merits in post-conflict societal reconstruction programmes is equally highlighted by Blum and Rogger (2021) who intimated that building a capable public service is a key component of post-conflict state building. An effective public service is fundamental to the regulation of society, to managing public funds, and to service delivery. National libraries are public institutions, while the librarians it is ae public servants (Ekpenyong & Esin, 2021; Machara & Jain, 2016; Stephens, 2016). Therefore, given the role of information plays in fostering development, efforts for reviving the public service cannot leave out revitalization of the national libraries because rebuilding and rejuvenating them lubricates the performance of other institutions both public and private. Thus, given the importance attached to rebuilding post- conflict societies by the United Nations and other development partners, there are greater opportunities for the revitalization of the national libraries such as that of Somalia.

According to Gorvie (2005), in post-conflict societies, the revival of the national libraries is possible when the professional associations are revived. These provide opportunities for refresher training of staff, networking opportunities and fundraising initiatives, all of which can pave the way for reviving the national libraries. Quoting the example of the Sierra Leone Association of Archivists Librarians and Information Scientists (SLAALIS) which comprises Archivists, Librarians and Information Scientists, Gorvie (2005), acknowledges the role of the revived professional associations in providing advocacy for indigenous books, defining the community rules and standards that improve the practice, networking with funders and donors with a bias on the development of library systems, developing and implementing projects for improved information access and circulation and organizing fundraising occasions, among others. Therefore, the existence of strong professional library associations provides opportunities for reviving the national libraries in post-conflict societies such as Somalia.

Policy reforms targeting the revitalization of national libraries provide revitalizing the effectiveness of national libraries. Strong policy frameworks have been essential for the successful restoration of national libraries. In Rwanda, Law N° 12/2014 of 09/05/2014 was passed to establish the Rwanda Archives and Library Services Authority (RALSA) as a government agency. This agency merged Rwanda's National Library, the newly established first truly public library in the country, and the National Archives. Its mission is to implement government policy related to archives and libraries in Rwanda, provide advisory support on the best practices for managing archival materials, and acquire, process, manage, and disseminate public and private archives and records throughout the nation (Olaka, 2015). Similarly, In Sierra Leone, libraries within government ministries or private institutions may be better positioned to offer essential services and empower individuals effectively. These specialized private libraries not only fulfill the specific informational needs of their institutions but also engage in selective dissemination of information, guiding individuals toward relevant resources in their areas of expertise (Gorvie, 2005).

Although international organizations and development partners have supported library reconstruction in several post-conflict countries, the success of such interventions often depends on local institutional capacity, government commitment and effective coordination among stakeholders. This suggests that successful revitalization is not a given just because NGOs are present.

2.5 Strategies for sustaining functioning national libraries in post-conflict settings

As noted from sections 2.2 and 2.3, the conflict and post conflict periods affect the functionality and sustainability of national libraries. In the aftermath of the conflicts, there is restlessness and anxiety among the communities. This has proven to be a stumbling block to the library users who are either timid to move around or lack the requisite means of transport to visit the library. On the side of the library staff, the opening hours are limited with a few willing to work in the evening and late evening hours. This challenge, however, can be minimized through innovation. Jaber (2017) notes that sound planning is required to keep the libraries functional. These libraries are updating their approaches to layout and technology to satisfy their patrons' needs and improve the services provided. In order to overcome the challenges that librarians face during this time of transition, it is helpful to observe parallel experiences in other parts of the world to identify ways that librarians in other conflict zones have adapted and improved services.

One of the sustainable strategies for revitalizing the functionality of national libraries is deployment of ICTs. In light of this matter, Ebaye and Osim (2022) acknowledges that since there is proliferation of ICT, increased smartphone ownership and growth in internet teledensity, library resources such as CD-ROMs, electronic books (e-books,) electronic journals (e-journals) and much more can be accessed in the library remotely, giving national libraries tremendous opportunities of extending services to other users more access to utilize the electronic information resources. This argument resonates previous views by Jones (2020), that electronic resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-databases, web resources, e-serials amongst others are easily accessible in remote areas.

The limited funding to national libraries has a futuristic effect on the maintenance of the library resources such as paper records as well as visual and audiovisual aids. As noted by Abankwah (2018), Iyishu et al. (2013) and Mukherjee and Das (2023), library materials such as paper, multimedia and audiovisual resources require regular maintenance to ensure their longevity and accessibility. In post conflict settings, national libraries can preserve such resources through digitization. Jones (2020) and Isibika et al. (2021) contend that with the resurgence of ICTs including in post conflict settings eases the migration of print and audiovisual sources to digital forms. When the libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-magazines, the preservation and access functions are steadied and can cease to be a significant barrier to access (Akpojotor, 2016; Joel, 2020). While digitized surrogates improve preservation and access,

they concede that migrating resources to new formats requires extensive time, labor, and technology investments. Moreover, Skinner (2021) observes, digital data is inherently fragile over decades-long time scales. In post conflict settings, efforts should be made to ensure that backup systems, metadata standards and routine migrations are institutionally supported for lasting preservation (Gabas et al., 2023). This can be possible through joint efforts, something that is possible, given the high interest that donors vest in the reconstruction of library systems on post conflict settings (Jaber, 2017). Jaber's argument reinforces the observation of ACCORD (2009) that digitization and increased networking as well as linking with local and foreign centres of learning and excellence, makes libraries to become a vital and indispensable instrument for opening minds and creating awareness of peace and humanity at the individual and social level.

Capacity building initiatives targeting librarians and leadership of national libraries is vital for minimizing the challenge of funding. Anunobi and Ukwoma (2009) argue that multiskilled librarians and library leaders can help the libraries to overcome the challenge of limited funds when they are equipped with internet, marketing, advocacy, and fundraising skills. This increases their capacity to write funding proposals and engage in any other lobbying activities. This strategy has potential for sustaining the functionality of national libraries as examples from different contexts have shown. In post-war Bosnia, funding and support from international donors were essential for restoring the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Riedlmayer, 1996). Similarly, in Sierra Leone, various institutions played a crucial role in funding library initiatives following the country's civil war. Through partnerships with international organizations and NGOs, libraries were not only reconstructed but also provided with essential resources. Organizations such as Book Aid International and the British Council collaborated with local authorities to supply books and training for library staff. These efforts have helped rebuild library collections and enhance services, ensuring that communities have access to vital information and education resources as part of the country's recovery process (Gorvie, 2005). In relation to the above, Jaber (2017) noted that libraries in Baghdad are functioning because of donor funding.

Sector-wide educational reforms are necessary for the rejuvenation of national libraries. At either level of education, curriculum reforms especially those emphasizing ICT literacy are necessary. According to Ilorah et al. (2009), as long as national libraries digitize and offer virtual services in post conflict settings without corresponding changes emphasizing computer literacy, no substantial gains can be realized because the digital materials are more less

inaccessible. To minimise the challenge of a shortage of skilled personnel to run the national libraries, revisiting the curriculum is equally important to factor in the changing needs. For the serving staff, offering professional development opportunities enables librarians to translate theoretical knowledge into practical applications and to adapt general concepts to specific tasks, such as providing e-services. The library profession recognizes the importance of ongoing training due to the growing diversity of information formats and the rising reliance on automated systems (Emmanuel Ebikabowei Baro, May 2013).

Effective library revitalization in post-conflict environments frequently requires collaboration with international organizations. Organizations like UNESCO, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and various NGOs have been crucial in aiding library development in regions affected by conflict. For instance, the National Library of Sierra Leone has received significant support from Book Aid International and various other international donors (Gorvie, 2005). Similarly, Rwanda saw organizations like Book Aid International begin sending books in 2003, alongside groups such as Books for Africa. These donations greatly contributed to the expansion of libraries and helped meet the informational needs of the increasing number of students pursuing higher education. After the genocide, numerous institutions and some individual countries provided funds to support the libraries of newly established higher education institutions, including the Kigali Institute of Education, Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, ISAE, and Kigali Health Institute (Olaka, 2015). Somalia could benefit from similar partnerships to secure funding, technical assistance, and training programs for librarians, which would enhance their skills and capacity to serve the community effectively. These collaborations could also facilitate the development of library infrastructure and improve access to vital resources for the population.

Community participation has been shown to be effective in ensuring the sustainability of library services. Research indicates that when local communities actively engage in library planning and operations, libraries become more relevant and accessible (Lor, 1996). Sierra Leone's public libraries, for example, developed community-driven literacy programs to increase library usage and promote reading among various age groups, fostering a culture of learning and engagement within the community (Gorvie, 2005). For the Somali National Library, engaging local communities through literacy programs, book donation initiatives, and digital literacy workshops could significantly boost public interest and utilization, making the library a vital resource for education and community development.

Translating information materials to local languages for increased access, especially in the rural settings, can be possible when special training programmes are created. To this effect, Ilorah et al. (2009) recommend the need for conferences, workshops, seminars, and symposia which ought to be organized to enlighten librarians on better ways of managing translation activities. Strategies including staff training, digitization, fundraising, community engagement, and policy reform all help to enhance various library subsystems when viewed through the prism of social systems theory. The effectiveness of revitalization efforts therefore depends on coordinated interventions across multiple subsystems rather than isolated actions.

2.6 Research Gap

Existing literature provides substantial evidence regarding the effects of conflict on libraries and the strategies used to revitalize library systems in post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Iraq. The literature also highlights typical issues such as insufficient budget, a lack of qualified workers, infrastructure damage, and collection loss. However, most of these studies are based on contexts outside Somalia. As a result, there is no empirical data on the Somali National Library's current state, the challenges to its proper functioning, opportunities for its revitalization, and the strategies needed for a sustainable operation. This study was therefore undertaken to address this knowledge gap and contribute context-specific evidence to support the revitalization of the Somali National Library.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that guided the study. Specifically, it focuses on the research approach followed, the guiding research design, the targeted study population, the sample size involved, and the corresponding sampling techniques used in deriving the sample. Further, the chapter covers the data collection methods and the respective instruments used. This section is followed by the scientific procedures observed in ensuring that the reported and discussed findings were derived from quality data. Next in series, are the data processing, analysis and reporting conventions that were adhered to by this study as well as the ethical considerations borne in mind. The chapter winds with limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Approach

The study examined the revitalization of the Somali National Library in a qualitative research prism. The researcher used a qualitative research approach to answer the main questions of the study. Qualitative research thus involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world (Knothe, 2025; Telaky & Mwanyoka, 2024). The researcher's role in using this approach was to capture meanings through interpretation of narrative and descriptive data about the lived experiences of the participants. The qualitative approach was selected to guide this study largely because it provides a basis for acquiring a detailed and complete picture of reality (Lim, 2025; Parter et al., 2025).

3.2 Research Design

The proposed study followed a case study design. According to Schoch (2020), a case study design involves intensive investigation on the complex factors that contribute to the individuality of a social unit as the design emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. The case study design was adopted because it explores phenomena that lack in-depth preliminary research or formulated assumptions (Karunarathna et al., 2024). The case study design was particularly appropriate because the study focused on a single institution, the Somali National Library, within its real-life post-conflict context. The approach made it possible for the researcher to examine at institutional opportunities, challenges, and revitalization strategies from the viewpoints of

several stakeholders, which produced a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3 Study Population

Mogadishu city, the capital of Somalia where the National Library is headquartered, has a population ranging between 1.7-2.9 million people (Earle, 2021). However, a section of this entire population was targeted by the study. A targeted study population denotes a section of the entire population from which a sample is derived (Ifeanyi-Obi, 2022). In this study, only library and information scientists, NGOs supporting library and information management, officials from Ministry of Education and Culture and staff working in the National Library were targeted. The staff who were working in the National Library in the temporary space at the National Museum of Somalia were targeted because they have experiential knowledge about the scope of resources possessed as well as the logistical, structural, human resource-related and administrative challenges that face the institution. The Ministry and NGO officials were targeted because they collaborate with leadership of the National Library while the LIS professionals were engaged in the study to provide rich data about the daunting challenges that are likely to face the reopening of Somali National Library as well as the possible strategies that can be implemented to sustain the operations of the institution.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the selection of a section of the study population to engage in a study (Makwana et al., 2023). To come up with a sample for participating in the study, purposive sampling was adopted. Alternatively called judgmental sampling, this technique entails selection of an individual or individuals to take part in the study on the account that they possess professional and /or experiential knowledge about the study question (s) and therefore, have potential data to answer the set research questions (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024; Robinson, 2024). According to Kumar (2018), Lokot (2012) and McKenna and Main (2013), qualitative studies report comprehensive and well-balanced findings when key informants are involved as respondents because they have better perspectives about performance of a given activity under their orbit or jurisdiction.

The participants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the study and their knowledge or experience related to the Somali National Library, library and information services, government policy, or initiatives supporting library development. The four participant

categories were selected to provide different perspectives on the current state of the Somali National Library, the challenges affecting its functioning, the opportunities available for its development, and possible strategies for its revitalization and sustainability. Within each category, participants were approached based on their relevance to the study objectives and willingness to participate. The sampling process continued until data saturation was reached within each participant category.

3.5 Sample Size

Qualitative studies are not driven by inclusion of large samples and neither is representativeness a prerequisite. Rather, the emphasis is on deriving rich, comprehensively but intelligibly substantiated findings. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) noted that when 9-17 interviews or 4-8 focus group discussions (FGDs) are administered, data saturation is reached. Despite this recommendation, Kumar (2018) and Crouch and McKenzie (2006) noted that involving 40 or less participants in a qualitative study is ideal as this helps the researcher to build and maintain a close relationship and thus improve the “open” and “frank” exchange of information. The sizeable sample helps in mitigating bias and validity threats inherent in qualitative research. In this study, 7 LIS professionals, 5 Ministry of Education and Culture officials, 7 NGO officials and 10 library staff were targeted by the study, bringing the total number to 29 participants. The identities of the LIS professionals were obtained from the records of SNL. In total, they were 17. However, only 7 were purposively selected because they had visited SNL more times than the rest. This category was included in the study because they possess both professional and experiential knowledge which was targeted to enrich this study with enriched argumentation. There were 5 officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture whose scope of work was either directly or indirectly related to Library and Information management in the country. These were purposively selected and engaged in the study in order to provide data on administrative and policy issues related to SNL. More on, there are several NGOs in Somalia, 7 of which, were engaged in activities related to literacy promotion, information management and library development. These have dealt with SNL in different activities both in the past and present and therefore, they were included in the study to provide data about the challenges likely to be faced, the available opportunities that can be usurped to revitalize SNL as well as identifying the possible avenues that could be harnessed to sustain the operations of SNL. The SNL staff were involved in the study because they are currently working behind closed doors towards the reopening of the institution. Therefore, their inclusion was important for generating data to realize the study’s objectives.

The sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation rather than statistical representation. Data collecting went on until further interviews revealed no significantly new facts, themes, or viewpoints. All four participant categories showed signs of saturation, suggesting that the sample size was sufficient to meet the study's goals. Data saturation was reached at different points within the four participant categories. Saturation was reached after interviewing four (4) LIS professionals, two (2) officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture, four (4) NGO officials, and six (6) SNL staff. At these points, no new themes, insights or patterns were emerging from additional interviews. Therefore, the final sample comprised sixteen (16) participants, although twenty-nine (29) participants had initially been targeted.

3.6 Data Collection methods

Kumar (2018) and Odiya (2009) highlight that there are several methods and instruments that a researcher can use in collecting qualitative data. These include interviews, observation, focus group discussions, informal interviews, elicitation interviews and document review. In this study, interviews, observation and document review were used.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews entail dialogic exchange of information between the researcher and an individual or group (De Villiers et al., 2022; Knott et al., 2022). The information exchanged during the dialogue became data which were processed, analyzed and reported as findings which answered the study's research questions. In this study, interviews were administered to all categories of respondents. Each interview was timed, and the expected duration was communicated to the participants before the interview started. All the interviews lasted for 60 minutes. Prior arrangements for convenient time for interviews were made by the researcher by consulting with the participants. The interview questions were arranged in consonance with themes developed from the specific objectives to ensure that all the necessary data capable of answering study research questions were collected. Due to logistical and security concerns, interviews were collected using telephone conversations. To capture every detail, with participants' permission, all interviews were audio recorded, and the verbatim transcriptions were then analyzed. In addition to audio taping, side notes were taken on rough papers as checks to the consistency of the participants. Interviews were chosen because they allowed participants to give in-depth explanations of their perspectives, experiences, and suggestions for the revitalization of the Somali National Library.

3.6.2 Observation

Objective 1 of the study sought to establish the existing resources in Somali National Library. These include human, technological, information materials as well as facilities for sustaining library services. The suitability of the facilities as well as the adequacy of the technological and information materials were assessed using non-participant observation method. Due to logistical limitations and the researcher's location outside Somalia, two qualified Library and Information Science professionals based in Mogadishu assisted in conducting the observations. They received a briefing on the observation checklist, observation protocols, and reporting criteria prior to data collection. Their role was limited to observing, documenting and photographing the facilities and resources identified in the checklist. All of the observation logs, photos, and reports produced during the exercise were then examined and analyzed by the researcher.

3.6.3 Document Review

Documents from line ministries, departments and agencies considered relevant to the study were reviewed. In this study, the READ approach proposed by Dalglish et al. (2020) was applied. This approach involves Reading (R) the materials gathered for data mining, skimming through the textual information to extract (E) relevant data, critically analyzing (A) and relating the extracted data with the study purpose and then making meaning of the data by distilling (D) out what is most important to present as findings. The intent was to extract relevant data that would help to corroborate primary data obtained from interviews and observation (Casey & Wong, 2020). The researcher synthesized the accessed documents and did data mining for purposes of eliciting meaning, acquiring more understanding and developing new threads of knowledge (O'Connor, 2019). These sources were very critical in advanced research because they enable the researcher to bring to the fore, hidden textual discourses that are vital for answering the study's research questions (Erklund Klarsson *et al.*, 2020; O'Connor, 2019).

3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

The following instruments were used in data collection.

3.7.1 Interview Guide

The study used a formal in-depth interview guide. This was structured according to the study's research objectives for purposes of ensuring that every critical part of the study dimensions

was addressed sufficiently. The interview guides were sectionalized into five (5) sections. Section A captured the Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, B captured data on thematic questions about the current state of SNL after the civil war (Objective 1), C covered questions/statements on the challenges likely to hinder the sustainability of the reopened SNL (Objective 2), D captured questions about the opportunities for revitalizing SNL; and E contains questions about the strategic interventions for sustaining the reopened SNL (See Appendices B to E)

3.7.2 Observation Checklist

A checklist was prepared to enable the researcher to make a comprehensive audit of the quality and status of the existing technological and information materials in the library. This audit was equally used on assessing the facilities existing in the library in order to determine their adequacy and condition. The key aspects that were included in the observation checklist included: Universal Access, Collections Development and Preservation, Technological Advancements, Funding and Sustainability; Ethical Considerations, Staffing and Development, Availability of Facilities; and Availability of Auxiliary Services. These dimensions were further dichotomized in order to capture adequate data that was capable of answering the study's research questions (See Appendix A).

Every item on the checklist was evaluated for operational condition, availability, and suitability.

3.7.3 Document Review Guide

This instrument was prepared and divided into themes according to the study objectives. The purpose of categorization was to ensure that key documents were listed under each theme while also, the mined data are arranged according to the thematic areas in order to ease identification and right placement at the analysis and reporting stages. The guide contained a list of the key/potential documents that were reviewed for purposes of mining more data to corroborate that generated from interviews and observation (See Appendix F).

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Data

An introductory letter from Makerere University's East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS) was obtained by the researcher prior to data collection, and it was given to participants and relevant authorities.

To ensure validity and reliability of data collection tools, the researcher observed the following; duly completed interview guides were submitted to my supervisor for scrutiny and further guidance on the phraseology of the questions and statements. Amendments made by the supervisor were incorporated. After the amendments were done, a pilot test to assess the face validity of the tools was administered to 10 purposively selected participants who were excluded from the actual data collection phase. The data obtained were analyzed and a mini report of findings produced and submitted to my supervisor for further review. After ascertaining that the tools were well designed and comprehensive, data collection started on September 5, 2025.

Given that interviews are criticized for collecting biased data, the rigor of data collected by this study ensured by observing the protocols of minimizing bias in interviews by Alshenqeeti (2014). First, the researcher avoided leading questions throughout the interview sessions such as why have you refused to reopen the library to users? Are there any challenges that might face SNL if it reopens soon? Were the potential opportunities that existed before the closure of SNL well utilized? And so forth. These were replaced by probing questions to elicit the desired bias free responses. In addition, all the sub-questions used in the collection of interview data were derived directly from the main research questions. Lastly, thick descriptions were used when reporting the findings.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim at the end of each data collection day. The researcher went over the transcripts multiple times so that they could get familiar with the information and find significant quotes related to the goals of the study. By comparing the answers from various participant categories, the patterns that emerged were examined and refined. Observation data were analyzed by reviewing completed observation checklists, field notes and photographs. The READ approach was used to analyze document review data, which were then categorized based on the goals of the study. Findings from interviews, observations and document review were compared and integrated through triangulation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. When appropriate, participant quotes were used to support the findings' narrative presentation.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In this study, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants were assured and maintained. Participants' identities were protected, and pseudonyms or labels were used when presenting the findings. The data from participants were stored safely and only accessed by the researcher. Finally, whichever data is to be reported in this study underwent annotation, paraphrasing and cross-matching by consenting authors to ensure that the views of these studies were not reproduced.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The emerging findings based on the data gathered through a series of interviews with purposively selected participants, data extracted from the reviewed documents and observable insights are presented and discussed in this chapter. The findings are presented in lieu of the four specific objectives that the study sought to achieve, namely: To establish the current state of the Somali National Library after the civil war, To identify the challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of the Somali National Library, To examine opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of the Somali National Library,; and To recommend strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of Somali National Library. Four categories of participants took part in the study: four (4) LIS professionals and these were renamed *LIS A*, *LIS B*, *LIS C* and *LIS D*; two (2) officials from Ministry of Education and Culture, renamed *MINIST1* and *MINIST2*, six (6) library staff, renamed: *LIBA 1*, *LIBA 2*.....*LIBA 6*; and three (3) NGO staff were renamed, *Green*, *Orange* and *Khaki*. The presentation of the key findings is preceded by an overview of data saturation and when it occurred.

The findings presented in this chapter emerged from a thematic analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes and reviewed documents. Data were coded based on recurrent themes and patterns associated with the goals of the study. The conclusions were reported based on the grouping of similar codes into more general themes. Data obtained from interviews were triangulated with observation and document review findings to enhance credibility and provide a comprehensive understanding of the revitalization of the Somali National Library.

4.2 Data Saturation

Qualitative interviews reach data saturation. Data saturation refers to a point/stage during the process of data collection at which the views provided by the additional interviewee is not generating any new insights or meaning (Ahmed, 2025; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Naeem et al., 2024). As declared earlier (Chapter 3, Section 3.9), at the end of each data collection day, the audios were transcribed, and the generated transcripts analyzed to establish patterns in the data as well as possible themes to be derived. Initially, 7 LIS professionals, 5 officials from the

Ministry of Education and Culture, 7 officials from NGOs and 10 Librarians who worked in SNL. Data saturation point was reached for each category of the samples as shown in Table 1.

Table 4. 1

Data saturation points for the different categories of participants

Participant	Number targeted	Number interviewed (Saturation)	Dropped
LIS Professionals	7	4	3
MoEC	5	2	3
NGOs	7	4	3
SNL Staff	10	6	4
Total	29	16*	13

Key: NGO= Non-Governmental Organization; MoEC= Ministry of Education and Culture; SNL=Somali National Library

As shown in Table 4.1, the study findings are reported from the views of 16 participants. The interviews with the remaining number (13) were dropped. This decision was taken because no new themes, insights, or patterns emerged from the 4th, 2nd, 4th and 6th participants for LIS, MoEC, NGO and SNL staff respectively. This was a clear testimony that inclusion of other interviewees would not be helpful because adequate data had been gathered (Saunders et al., 2018). The captured data were rich enough to provide a comprehensive understanding of dynamics of revitalizing the SNL. Reaching data saturation in this study was vital because this guaranteed the strength and validity of data collection as well as the credibility and accuracy of the findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

4.3 Demographic Information

Sixteen (16) participants took part in this study, and by gender, the most (12) were male, while only four (4) were female. Although a large proportion was male, this implying a great under representation of women, the study findings were gender sensitive as voices of both males and females were captured by the study. The findings on the tone of age showed that the mean age was 26 years, although the study has some component of some component of outliers as 5 of the 16 respondents were in their early 30s. The researcher never considered this variation as a major issue as the top management of NGOs and officials from MoEC occupied senior positions where medium to old age (30 years and above) is associated with experience and

better decision-making. The mix of youths and old participants in this study was a further manifestation of how different categories of people in Somalia, the young and old, treasure the national library as a vital asset for supporting and sustaining their livelihoods both in the present and long term and therefore, a possibility that these different categories of Somali people should be catered for by any plans aiming at boosting the sustainable operations of SNL. This finding is in consonance with the observation of Omona (2020) whose study that adopted the Development and Access to Information (DA2I) framework, established that library and information services are an important pathway for achieving SDGs given their notable contributions to the various economic and social transformation. This makes the library services such as those to be provided by the revitalized SNL very critical towards the socio-economic development of Somalia. The viability of the national library towards the socio-economic development of post-conflict environments such as the case of Somalia is equally emphasized by ACCORD (2020) that libraries and librarians have always played an important role in strengthening information management and fostering access to information in society for instance by serving as barriers to calls for violence and dangerous ideas, and providing the local community members with information and education that can enable them to appreciate peace and bring an end to violence.

Working experience was another exciting demographic variable that the study assessed. Both categories of participants had worked in their respective positions for more than 10 years. This long tenure of service implies that the participants wielded great experience which portrays a good image about the quality of the findings reported in this study. It is indicative that the findings reported by this study emerged from a rich tapestry about SNL.

4.4 The Current State of the Somali National Library

Objective One (1) assessed the current state of Somali National Library (SNL). Apparently, SNL is non-functional. In its functional state, a national library is supposed to have library infrastructure that consists of the buildings, strategic policies for digital and social inclusion, free access to the internet, ICT systems, staff, catalogues, collections, technology and facilities. This infrastructure is necessary because it enables the national library to play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges related to information poverty. To establish the current state of the above aspects of the national library infrastructure, interviews were administered to the key informants while more data to provide answers to the corresponding research question that stated “What is the current state of the Somali National Library?” were derived from the use

of observation method. The emerging themes and their corresponding findings are charted on the following subsections.

4.4.1 Adequacy of the available staff

The Somali National Library remains completely closed to the public and is not yet operational. However, a few staff members currently work in a temporary space within the National Museum to handle limited administrative and preparatory tasks. The main library building itself is inaccessible and non-functional. Regarding the available personnel, the study found that most of the staff members are paraprofessionals, with limited formal training in library and information science (See Table 4.2)

Table 4. 2

Staffing levels in SNL

Library Section	Gender	Qualification
Director General	Male	Masters of LIS
Admin & Finance	Male	Bachelor of Accounting
	Male	PDG of Sharia Law
Janitorial Staff	Female	Limited Formal Education/Never went to school
Library Services	Male	Bachelor of Social Sciences
	Female	Bachelor of Education
	Female	Bachelor's in journalism
	Female	Bachelor of Science in Management
Planning & Policy	Male	Bachelor of Public Administration
ICT	Male	Bachelor's in information technology
Archives	Female	Bachelor of Public Health
Total		11

Source: SNL HR Records, 2024

As shown in Table 4.2, the Somali National Library (SNL) currently has a total of 11 staff members distributed across six major sections: Administration and Finance, Janitorial Services, Library Services, Archives, ICT, and Planning & Policy. The data reveal a noticeable gender

imbalance, with males forming the majority of the workforce, particularly in the ICT, Administration, and Policy sections, while females dominate the Library Services and Janitorial areas. In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of staff are paraprofessionals, holding degrees in disciplines outside the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). For instance, staff in the Archives Section hold degrees in Public Health and Law, which are not directly relevant to archival science. This indicates a lack of personnel with specialized training in records and archives management.

Similarly, in the Library Services Section, most employees possess qualifications in Social Sciences, Education, Journalism, and Management, reflecting the absence of professionally trained librarians. This situation weakens the library's service delivery capacity, as professional librarians are essential for cataloguing, reference, and information organization functions.

Although the ICT Section is staffed by personnel with degrees in Information Technology, the section remains under-resourced to meet the library's growing digital infrastructure needs. The Administration and Finance Section includes graduates in Accounting and Islamic Studies, while Janitorial Staff have limited or no formal education, highlighting skill gaps in operational maintenance. This overall staffing inadequacy constrains SNL's ability to deliver comprehensive and quality user services. Libraries depend not only on infrastructure and collections but also on the expertise of qualified staff. As noted by McKeown (2016) and Hibner & Kelly (2013), the effectiveness of a library depends on the interconnection between its facilities, collections, and human resources. Without skilled professionals to manage and develop information services, even well-equipped libraries struggle to fulfil their mission of supporting learning and knowledge access effectively.

4.4.2 ICT Systems and their performance in SNL

The operation of a modern library system cannot perform well in isolation of information and communication technologies (ICTs). This study assessed the knowledge, skills and competences of SNL staff in ICTs, the availability of computers and other ICT equipment, the availability of miscellaneous ICT equipment, the availability of computers and miscellaneous ICT equipment for users and the suite of ICT applications that are supposed to be utilized by a modern library. The sub-sections below, provide a description of the findings.

4.4.2.1 Knowledge, skills, and competences of SNL Staff

The knowledge, skills, and competences of the staff at SNL were assessed. The assessment was made using 8 statements covering the different ways and means by which the ICTs are integrated in the running of the routine services of a library (Table 4.3). The following results were obtained.

Table 4. 3

SNL staff's knowledge of ICTs and Library Applications

Statements	Adequacy of knowledge/ Skills/ Competences in ICT and Library Applications (n=6)						
	No skill	Beginner	Advanced	Beginner	Skilled/ Competent	Expert	
1. I have the knowledge of computer/IT	-	2	3		1	-	
2. I can work on MS Office	-	-	-		4	-	
3. I am aware of library automation	-	-	1		5	-	
4. I can work on integrated library software	3	3	-		-	-	
5. I have knowledge of content management system	4	2	-		-	-	
6. I can work on Calibre, DSpace	6	-	-		-	-	
7. I have knowledge about HEC Digital Library	6	-	-		-	-	
8. I have skills in online information searching	-	-	-		6	-	

Source: Field Data, September 2025.

As shown in Table 4.2, all the SNL staff revealed that they possessed adequate knowledge of computer/IT and were experts. The participants revealed that they were able to run basic computer applications including installing software, troubleshooting minor issues that developed from time to time. In the same vein, most of the participants revealed that they were skilled or competent in working with MS Office for administrative functions. Equally, a very high number (5) had a high degree of awareness about library automation and what it does in

regard to improving the quality of the library services. Despite the above enablers, the study established that a very big number of SNL staff rated themselves “Beginner” regarding ability to work on integrated library software. Similarly, most of the staff indicated that they possessed “Beginner” skills in the use of content management system while most equally rated themselves “Beginner” regarding working on Calibre and DSpace. Further submissions showed that most of the SNL staff have superficial knowledge of the HEC Digital Library. Regarding online skills for searching information, most of the participants rated themselves “Advanced Beginner” and therefore, they could not support the users diligently whenever they would be asked to offer some help in information searching online. This finding implies that the staff of SNL lacked adequate knowledge, skills and competences to utilize the ICTs for better services delivery.

4.4.2.2 Computers and other ICT Equipment

This study sought to establish whether SNL had adequate computers and other ICT equipment for supporting service provision. Besides the computers and laptops, emphasis was on the availability of printers and scanners as these are vital ICT equipment that simplify the tasks of the staff. Table 4.4 shows the results that were obtained.

Table 4. 4

Availability of computers and ICT equipment for use in SNL

ICT Equipment	Availability		Number
	Yes	No	
Computers	√		5
Laptops	√		2
Printers	√		1
Scanner		√	0

Source: Field Data, September 2025

Table 4.4 indicates that the Somali National Library has only a few outdated computers and limited ICT facilities, and currently lacks any functioning library system. Although five desktop computers and two laptops were observed, these devices are obsolete and unable to support modern digital operations. Staff reported that most of this equipment was donated nearly eight years ago and cannot accommodate current versions of integrated library management or content management systems.

In addition, the library has no functioning automation infrastructure or digital cataloguing system. This means that, if operations were to resume, all processes would rely entirely on manual methods. With no operational network, servers, or library software, the Somali National Library presently operates without any established library system or digital framework.

The shortage of printers and the complete absence of a scanner further demonstrate the limited ICT capacity. Therefore, the current technological state of the Somali National Library is inadequate to support modern library and information services. Significant investment in ICT infrastructure and systems development will be required before the library can reopen to the public.

4.4.2.3 Miscellaneous ICT Equipment for Library Staff

Besides the ICT equipment assessed in sub-section 4.4.2.2, the participants were asked about the availability of miscellaneous ICT equipment for library staff. This inquiry was supplemented by physical observation of the library to establish whether the equipment was available. Table 4.5 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 4. 5

Availability of computers and ICT equipment for use in SNL

Equipment	Result			Number
	Available and functional	Available not functioning	Never available	
Television	-	-	Never available	-
Photocopier	1	1	-	1
Projector	1	-	-	1
Microfilming machine	-	-	Never available	-
Barcode readers	-	-	Never available	-
UPS	1	4	-	4
Digital Cameras	-	-	Never available	-
External hard drives	1	1	-	2

Source: Field data, September 2025

Table 4.5 shows that the Somali National Library lacks most of the essential equipment required for efficient and effective library operations. The findings revealed that although a few items such as photocopiers, projectors, and external hard drives are available, many of these are either outdated or non-functional. The unavailability of functioning photocopying machines and projectors poses a significant challenge to the library's ability to provide value-added services.

For instance, projectors are essential tools for transforming a national library from a static book repository into a dynamic hub for education, community engagement, and public learning. However, since the available projector at SNL is no longer functioning properly, the library is unable to perform this role effectively. This finding aligns with Amin et al. (2018), who observed that multimedia projectors enrich the learning process by supporting visual and interactive materials such as images, videos, and documentaries. Similarly, Sari et al. (2024) emphasized that the use of multimedia projectors helps create a stimulating learning environment and allows instructors to organize lessons in a more systematic and engaging way.

The absence of photocopying machines further limits SNL's ability to deliver services beyond lending books. Without reprographic services, users cannot reproduce or access copies of information materials, which restricts their access to knowledge resources. This also complicates librarians' efforts to preserve rare and fragile materials, support research, and enhance user satisfaction. As Udochukwu (2019) noted, reprography plays an important role in libraries by facilitating large-scale information dissemination, preservation of records, and protection of rare documents for future generations.

In addition, SNL does not have microfilming machines, barcode readers, or digital cameras. These tools are critical for modern library operations. Microfilming machines help preserve fragile materials such as newspapers and rare books, while barcode readers improve efficiency, accuracy, and automation in circulation processes. Likewise, digital cameras play an essential role in digitizing library collections, enhancing accessibility, and supporting digital preservation.

Overall, these findings indicate that SNL currently lacks the basic ICT and technical infrastructure required to provide modern library services. This situation further confirms that the library is not yet equipped to reopen to the public in its present state.

4.4.2.4 4 ICT applications for Library Services

In the present time, libraries are faced with the challenge of meeting the changing user needs in the shortest possible time. This condition is even worsened by the fact that a vast amount of information is generated and transmitted from all corners of the world. To offset this challenge, library systems are investing time and substantial resources to the use of modern communication channels to provide services (Table 4.6). This study on SNL based on the above dictum to establish whether at present, the library system has ICT applications for using in the provision of library services. The following results were obtained.

Table 4. 6

Availability of ICT applications for use in library service provision

Application	Availability	Status
Personal e-mail	Y	Nonfunctional
Facebook	Y	Dormant
WhatsApp	Y	Active
X	Y	Dormant
Website	Y	Flags error
Blog	NS	Not available
YouTube	Y	Dormant
LinkedIn	N	Not Available
Flickr	N	Not available
RSS	NS	Not available
Tiktok	N	Not available

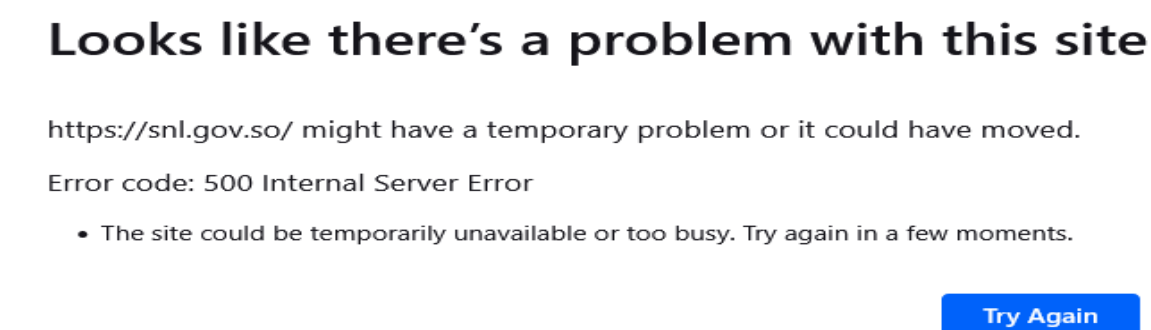
Source: Field Data, August 2025 N=No; Y=Yes; NS=Not Sure

Table 4.7 shows that while some ICT applications for library service provision exist in name, most are either inactive, inaccessible, or have never been utilized by the Somali National Library (SNL). Tools such as Blogs and RSS feeds have reportedly never been used, while professional and content-sharing platforms like LinkedIn, Flickr, and Tiktok are completely unavailable. This greatly limits the library's digital visibility and its ability to engage users in the online environment.

Applications such as YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and personal email accounts are available but largely dormant. For instance, while SNL has an official website

(<https://snl.gov.so/>), searches for it return an error message, indicating that the site is currently inactive or offline (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4. 1: Error message that pops up when searching for SNL's Webpage



Source: <https://snl.gov.so/>

In terms of social media, several SNL pages can be found online, a situation that has emerged because different groups and individuals - including both Somali diaspora members and local enthusiasts - have made independent attempts over the years to revive or promote the institution. As a result, there are multiple Facebook and X pages claiming to represent the Somali National Library. Among these, only the Facebook page appears to have been recently active, although its last update was made more than six months ago (March 30, 2025). Even then, the post was related to public engagement rather than library services.

This finding demonstrates that SNL's social media presence is fragmented and lacks centralized management or communication strategy. Most of the available online platforms are either outdated, inactive, or used for unrelated content such as sharing general cultural information or global achievements like Nobel Prize announcements. Similar inactivity was observed on the library's YouTube page, where the only uploaded video dates back more than eleven years.

Overall, these findings reveal that SNL has not yet embraced ICT and digital platforms as tools for library service delivery or community outreach. Without a coordinated digital communication strategy, the library remains largely invisible online and misses opportunities for knowledge sharing, networking, and public engagement.

Figure 4. 2: Dormant Facebook page of SNL



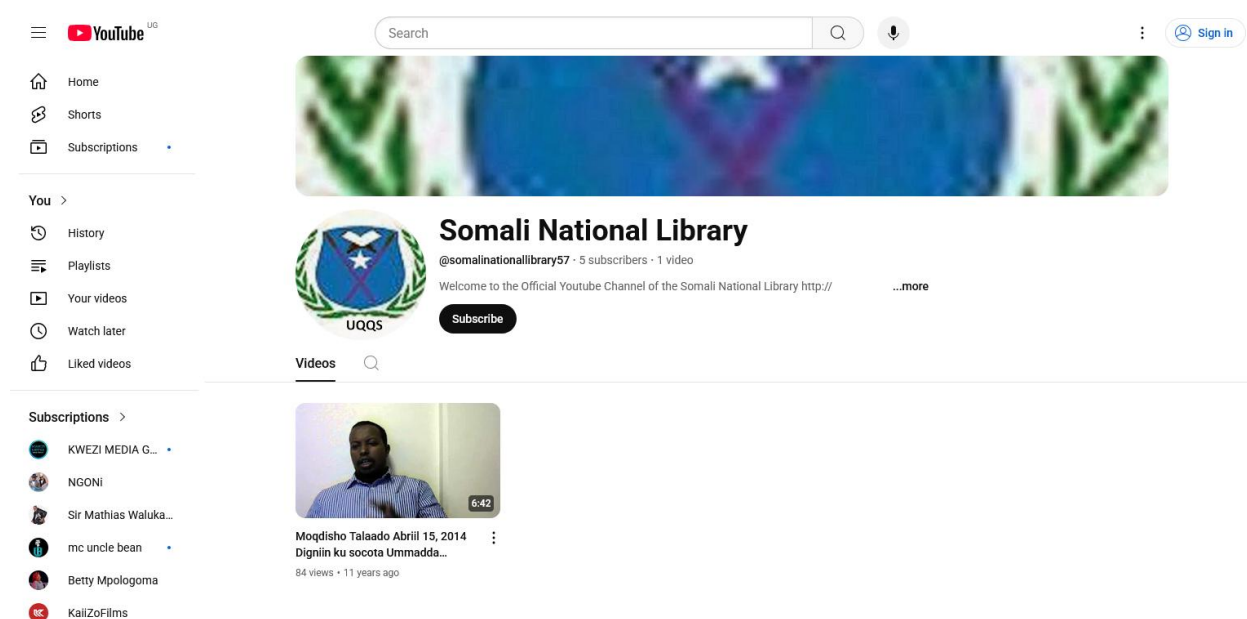
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Maktabadda.qaranka/>

Figure 4. 3: Dormant X handle of SNL



Source: <https://x.com/somalinlibrary>

Figure 4. 4: Dormant YouTube page of SNL



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/@somalinationallibrary57>

4.4.2.4 Availability of Computers for Users

Computers are essential resources for both in-house library operations and user access to digital information services. However, the Somali National Library (SNL) currently lacks any operational computers or library systems for user services. The library is not yet open to the public, and therefore, no user-access computers are in use. Although there are rooms within the library building that were initially designated for computer use, they remain incomplete and non-functional. One of these rooms contains empty workstations, showing preliminary installations such as internet cabling and power pedestals, but no actual equipment. The second room reportedly had a few old computers in the past; however, these are no longer in use, and the space is now inactive. This situation confirms that SNL presently has no functional ICT infrastructure or public-access computer facilities. As a result, it is not yet in a position to provide digital or electronic library services to users until the institution is fully rehabilitated and re-equipped.

4.4.2.5 Miscellaneous ICT Facilities for Library Users

As is the case with the mainstream library activities, there are miscellaneous ICT facilities and resources that must be housed by a running library system. In the interviews with the LIS professionals and SNL staff, mention was made of facilities such as the internet, Wi-Fi,

printers, scanner, photocopier and OPAC. Table 4.7 shows the results obtained from the interviews and validated through observation.

Table 4. 7

Availability of miscellaneous ICT for library users

Equipment	Result		
	Available and functioning	Available not functioning	Never available
Internet	N	Y	-
Wi-Fi	Y	N	-
Home Printer	Y	Y	-
Home Scanner	Y	Y	-
Photocopier	N	Y	-
OPAC	-	-	Never available

Source: Field data, September 2025

N=No, Y= Yes, Wi-Fi=Wireless Fidelity, OPAC= Online Public Access Catalog

Table 4.8 indicates that the Somali National Library currently has very limited ICT facilities for users, most of which are either non-functional or used only for administrative purposes. Although the library building has internet installations, the connection is not active. In the meantime, staff working on temporary administrative tasks within the National Museum use a private Wi-Fi connection to facilitate basic communication and reporting.

Other ICT facilities such as printers, scanners, and photocopiers exist in very small numbers and are either outdated or not functioning. Furthermore, the library has never introduced an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) or any other automated library system, which makes retrieval and access to library resources impossible.

These findings clearly show that SNL lacks the essential ICT infrastructure required for modern library operations. Since the library remains closed to the public and without functioning digital systems, users currently have no access to computers, the internet, or electronic catalogues. Therefore, SNL is not yet capable of providing modern, technology-based user services until substantial rehabilitation and re-equipment take place.

4.4.3 Collections

The study also assessed the collections available in SNL and their status in the present time with intent to establish whether they can provisionally support and sustain the user needs if the institution was to fully open to users. The following results were obtained through observation (Table 4.8).

Table 4. 8*Description of the collections housed by SNL*

Collection type	Collection's components	Status			Remarks (Obtained from interviews with the SNL staff)
		Available in large numbers	Available in small numbers	Unavailable	
Traditional and print collections	Print books	-	✓	-	The collections of textbooks were decimated by mismanagement
	Digital (eBooks)	-	✓	-	Most e-books lost due to malfunctioning hard drives
	Journals.	-	-	✓	Lost membership
	Magazines	-	-	✓	Lost membership
	Newspapers	-	-	✓	Lost subscription
	Encyclopedias	-	-	✓	Lost to damage
	Dictionaries	-	-	✓	Lost to damage
	Print copies of Local Government documents	-	✓	-	Follow-ups never made
	Print copies of Central Government documents	-	✓	-	Follow-ups never made
	Digital books	-	-	✓	Never subscribed
	Digital journal articles	-	-	✓	Never subscribed

Collection type	Collection's components	Status			Remarks (Obtained from interviews with the SNL staff)
		Available in large numbers	Available in small numbers	Unavailable	
Digital and electronic collections	Data databases	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Journal Databases	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Newspaper databases	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Digitized historical documents	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Digitized special collections	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Open access journals	-	-	√	Never subscribed
	Open access textbooks	-	-	√	Never subscribed
Special and non-traditional collections	Audio recordings	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Video recordings	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Historical maps	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Archives	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Photographs	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Other visual assets (charts, infographics)	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Physical objects (models, handouts, flipcharts)	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Historical items	-	-	√	Lost to damage
	Others (Music instruments)	-	-	√	Never available

Source: Field Data, September 2025

A standard library is supposed to house a variety of collections in adequate quantities if it is to provide the best services for the users. For national libraries such as SNL which serve as national repositories, a variety of collections are supposed to be managed by the institution. Against this proposition, the study assessed the availability of the different categories of collections with the intent to establish whether or not, SNL is ready to serve the user needs, should it be reopened soon. The following narratives provide a dissection of what was established by the study using the observation checklist and the remarks made by the SNL staff through interviews.

4.4.3.1 Availability of traditional and print collections

SNL currently possesses very few traditional print materials. The study established that the library does not have any active collections of magazines, newspapers, journals, encyclopedias, or dictionaries. Most of these materials were either destroyed during the years of conflict or lost due to poor storage conditions. Only a few surviving items and mainly old government and parliamentary documents remain preserved in the facility, though their condition is deteriorating. These findings confirm that the Somali National Library currently lacks the essential print and reference materials required to support research, education, and national information services. Even the few surviving documents are insufficient to meet the potential information needs of users once the library reopens. This situation stems from the long period of inactivity during which no new collections were acquired or preserved. The absence of both traditional and electronic resources underscores the urgent need for comprehensive collection development, digitization, and preservation strategies as part of the library's revitalization process.

4.4.3.2 Digital and Electronic Collections

The findings presented in Table 4.8 indicate that the Somali National Library completely lacks digital and electronic collections. Observations during fieldwork confirmed that the library does not possess any digital books, electronic journals, databases, or digitized archival materials. Similarly, there are no open access journals or textbooks in use. This absence of digital and electronic content means that even if the library were to reopen soon, it would not be able to meet the needs of academic, research, or general users who rely heavily on online information resources. Moreover, the loss of historical and audio-visual materials suggests that SNL has lost a substantial portion of its institutional and cultural memory, since digitization is

globally recognized as one of the most reliable methods for information preservation in both developing and developed countries. The findings therefore emphasize the urgent need for a comprehensive digitization strategy and the establishment of a sustainable digital repository as part of the broader revitalization efforts for the Somali National Library.

4.4.3.3 Special and non-traditional collections

The findings in Table 4.11 reveal that the Somali National Library has very few materials in its special and non-traditional collections. Although the library retains some archival materials, these are limited in scope and remain unorganized. Other components of the collection such as historical maps, photographs, and visual assets were largely lost or damaged over time due to inadequate preservation facilities and prolonged inactivity. Furthermore, materials such as audio and video recordings, physical objects (including models, handouts, and flip charts), as well as academic works like theses and dissertations, are completely unavailable. This situation indicates that SNL's special collections are not sufficiently developed to support users engaged in advanced research or studies with components related to genealogy, culture, or national history. The findings underscore the urgent need to rebuild, preserve, and digitize Somalia's special collections to ensure that historical and cultural materials are not permanently lost and can serve future generations of researchers and learners.

The findings in sub-sections 4.4.3.1 – 4.4.3.3 have shown that SNL lacks adequate collections. These must be availed before any plans to reopen it to the public are concluded. Without these collections, the services rendered to the users will be poor or low quality. This finding is in agreement with Ajidahun (2011) who observed that a library is a repository of big amounts of information materials that enables users to acquire knowledge about diverse subjects and disciplines that helps to lift a man from the hollowness and shallowness of life to the depth of the wisdom of nature. Moreover, libraries can exhume and revive a man from the grave of poverty, despondency and deprivation and put him perpetually to sit in the palace among the princes and kings. However, the above functions can only manifest when the library is stocked with adequate collections. This finding is also supported by the Social Systems Theory which upholds the need for ensuring that all the components of a given system are supported at the same time to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness with which it serves the communities /function for which it is deployed to serve.

4.4.4 Availability of furniture

In the modern time, a library has transformed from a bookstore to a multipurpose hub for learning, collaboration, and community engagement. Furniture ate therefore must-have facilities in a library setting. Cognizant of this, efforts were made to assess the availability of chairs and tables for supporting learning, collaboration, and community engagement. The following results were obtained;

Table 4. 9

Availability and status of Furniture in SNL

Type	Component	Numbers (quantities)			Comment
		Available, in good condition	Available, in bad condition	Unavailable	
Seating	Chairs	50	3	-	Inadequate
Facilities	Tables	7	2	-	Inadequate
Furniture for Storing and organizing materials	Shelving units	-	-	-	-
	Book display racks	-	-	-	Inadequate
	Periodical and newspaper stands	-	-	Unavailable	Not available in the institution
	Filing and storage cabinets	1		-	Inadequate
	Book browsers	-	-	Unavailable	
Furniture for staff and user services	Circulation desk	-	-	-	-
	Reference and information desks	-	-	-	-
	Book trolleys/carts	-	-	-	-
	Book returns	-	-	Unavailable	Never tried before
Furniture for	Study carrels	-	-	Unavailable	Individual users

Type	Component	Numbers (quantities)			Comment
		Available, in good condition	Available, in bad condition	Unavailable	
individual and group study furniture					preferring carrels can hardly visit SNL
	Lounge and soft seating	-	-	Unavailable	Never provided
	Modular and bench seating	-	-	Unavailable	Never tried out
	Powered tables and workstations	-	-	Unavailable	Never purchased before

Source: Field Data, August 2025

As shown in Table 4.9, SNL was lacking most furniture for supporting library service provision. Even those that were available, the numbers were small for those in running condition, with the biggest numbers of furniture heaped in in deserted rooms because they were either not usable or damaged beyond repair. The description of the existing furniture is provided below.

4.4.4.1 Seating facilities

The study established that SNL had chairs and tables for users and even staff. However, the largest number existing was in a bad state. For instance, out of the 9 tables, only 7 were in running condition. This implies that the hurried re-opening of SNL would result in chaos since the users and staff would be overwhelmed by a lack of adequate seats and tables.

4.4.4.2 Furniture for storing and organizing the information Materials

The proper organization of information materials in a library setting requires shelving units that are useful in storing books and other media, bookcases, and display rack which are useful in showcasing the new acquisitions. Other important furniture includes book browsers, filing and storage cabinets. At SNL, most of these facilities are lacking. For instance, the library does not have book browsers and stands for periodicals and newspapers while only display rack

exists. The rest of the other furniture for organizing information materials exist in reasonable quantities but are unusable because they are in bad condition. This finding therefore implies that SNL is not ready for re-opening because unless this equipment is availed, the operations of the library will be chaotic.

4.4.4.3 Furniture for supporting staff and user services

In a library setting, staff require furniture to dispense service. Among others, SNL has a circulation desk which serves as a central hub for checking materials in and out and doubles as the initial point where the users interact with the librarians. Also, reference and information desks are important because they provide an interface where the librarians assist the users with research questions or any other informational needs. Further, book trolleys or carts are important because they ease the transportation of the returned books and other information materials for reshelving while cabinets (also called book returns) that are often placed near the entrance of the library provide a convenient, self-service return of library items. The above suite of furniture is necessary for efficient and effective library services. As shown in Table 4.9, SNL is lacking Book returns while the circulation desks, reference and information desks and book trolleys are inadequate. Given the immense scale or size of the library, it is plausible to infer that much as reopening the library is a matter of urgency, restocking the institution with the more of the said facilities is very important because what is existing in ‘bad condition’ is by far irreparable.

4.4.4.4. Furniture for Supporting Individual and group Study

Libraries support individual user and group study needs. As said earlier, the modern library has transformed from a mere bookstore to a hub of knowledge where discussions, collaborations and group learning take place. For individual study, one of the important provisions are study carrels which are partitioned small workstations that provide privacy and minimize distractions for quiet, focused study. Even in the general study areas, comfortable seats such as sofas, armchairs, and floor cushions are supposed to be in place because they create relaxing areas for casual reading or quiet conversation. At SNL, both categories of furniture are unavailable which by implication, infers that even when SNL reopened any time, the service quality would be low because the seating needs in the general study zones and study carrels are unavailable.

For group learning to be effective, there must be designated points or zones with modular and bench seating. These provide reconfigurable and mobile seating options that can be easily

rearranged to support group work or quiet reflection. At SNL, these are unavailable and therefore, even if the library reopened anytime from now, unless this furniture is installed, then SNL would not support the group learning needs of its potential users. Outside the computer labs and internet kiosks in the libraries, management is supposed to ensure that there are tables and desks with built-in power outlets and USB ports for charging laptops and other devices. These are necessary for providing users with the best experience especially where the kiosks cannot accommodate many users. Those with own gadgets can therefore use such powered tables to utilize own gadgets like laptops. At SNL, such powered tables are unavailable.

4.4.5 The availability and status of auxiliary facilities/services

Library settings are supposed to be self-contained with an array of value-added services that are necessary to augment the in-house activities for an eliciting user experience. The library staff were asked about the availability of the auxiliary facilities/services at SNL (Table 4.10). The following results were obtained.

Table 4. 10

Availability and status of auxiliary facilities/services

Facility/Service	Availability and status		
	Available, functioning	Available, non- functioning	Unavailable
Supports for the physically challenged	-	-	√
Parking lot	√	-	-
Security	-	-	√
Mother baby lounge	-	-	√
Refreshment points	-	√	-
Auditorium	-	√	-
Printing spaces	-	√	-
Inter Library Loan (ILL)	-	-	√
Literacy and tutoring programmes	-	-	√
Career and business support	-	-	√
Language learning	-	-	√
Library of Things	-	-	√
Exhibitions and Art	-	√	-

Source: Field Data, September 2025

As shown in Table 4.10, SNL lacks several critical and necessary auxiliary facilities/services for supporting the needs of the users. For instance, SNL lacks both physical space enhancements and specialized resources and services for the physically challenged users. Through observation, it was established that the building access does not have accessible parking, ramps, automatic doors and barrier-free entrances for people with disabilities while inside the building, the existing aisles are narrow that they cannot accommodate wheelchairs and motorized scooters. Moreover, the existing desks were not height-adjusted to cater for the people with disabilities and so are the facilities like restrooms which are not accommodative for users with disabilities. In addition to the above, through interviews with the SNL staff, it was established that SNL never had specialized resources and services for the disabled users such as assistive technologies (screen readers like JAWS, magnification software, voice recognition programmes and text-to-speech software. As well, SNL does not curate collections of large-print books, audiobooks, and Braille materials. In addition to these shortages, SNL lacks specialized equipment such as trackball mice, specialized keyboards, and braille embossers. Therefore, the needs of persons with disabilities were not catered for by SNL. This provides insights that when SNL is reopened, its operations and architectural facilities should be reconfigured to take care of the people with special needs.

While it has a functioning parking lot, the space can only accommodate 5 vehicles. This includes the vehicles of the administrators and librarians. By implication, on days when the number of vehicles owing users surpasses the carrying capacity, the spillover is denied access and use. The study also established that the available parking lot does not have security personnel. This has been the case since the time when the library was operational. As a compensatory security measure, most administrators, librarians, and users have installed car CCTVs to wade away intruders and suspicious bandits. As a result, when the parking lot is filled to capacity, the continuous sirens cause unnecessary noise that disrupts the users.

SNL has no refreshment point. In the planning of the library system, these were not considered and what might be used now are makeshift structures. When such café or snack options are unavailable, both the users and librarians find the environment uncomfortable and uninviting. In the same vein, the library staff intimated that SNL has an auditorium. However, this is not functioning/ was not functioning right from the time the library was operational. It was observed that the configuration of the available auditorium requires a redo because its public address system connections were misaligned with the stage and so, are the seats which are

substandard. Thus, as SNL is mooted for reopening, it is important that the auditorium be face-lifted.

The library does not have places/slots allotted for printing and scanning services. As shown in Table 4.10, the absence of these slots implies that the users are denied a chance of reproducing some of the information materials for use outside the library premises. This undermines the quality of the services on the one hand and brings about the rapid deterioration of the information materials as well as their security especially when the users are allowed to take out the materials to other service points located away from SNL's premises. Further to note, Table 4.9 shows that SNL does not have an inter library loan (ILL) service. The LIS professionals intimated that an ILL is very important for enriching user experience and satisfaction because if SNL had it, in case a user requested for a resource that is unavailable in its holding, SNL would ably borrow it from another library system through this loan agreement.

SNL does not have literacy and tutoring programmes. The library staff and LIS professionals revealed that much as libraries are supposed to support user literacy through reading programs for children, homework help, and tutoring services for students, among others, SNL has never had arrangements of this kind. This implies that some of the potential users who would be coming for such programmes are left unserved. This highlights a key area that needs to be considered before SNL can reopen officially. Relatedly, all the participants revealed that SNL has never offered career and business support services for her users. It should be remembered that in a modern library setting, some staff are supposed to provide resources for job seekers, including resume help, access to career-focused books, and information for entrepreneurs and small businesses. By doing so, the librarians not only appeal to the needs of many users but also create increased awareness and positive word of mouth that can attract more and more users. Thus, the unavailability of career and business support services is a key area that should be looked into before SNL can be reopened. This requires prior planning that among others, entails sourcing subject matter experts to handle such responsibilities.

Language learning and 'Library of Things' are other auxiliary services that libraries are supposed to provide. This is even more necessary for national libraries like SNL. Incidentally, the submissions from the library staff and NGOs working hand in hand with SNL showed that the two services have never been provided by the institution. Libraries such as SNL are supposed to provide resources for supporting the learning of new languages, including digital programs and collections of books in various languages. Besides, the 'Library of Things' which

entails lending out non-traditional items such as tools, musical instruments, among others increase the relevance of the national library towards socio-economic and cultural transformation of the served/beneficiary communities. Therefore, any possible reopening of SNL should take these services into consideration.

Lastly, the study established that SNL has a record of hosting exhibitions and art. During the time when the institution was operational, the library staff, NGOs and LIS professionals revealed that SNL used to display the work of local artists, host art-making nights, or feature galleries to showcase different forms of art. The remnants of this service were visible in the photo gallery of the institution as well as some plaques that were exhibited decades ago but are still in the holding of the institution. This implies that plans for reopening of SNL should consider rejuvenating this auxiliary function that once attracted many people from local, regional and international circles to the institution.

As long as the above resources and facilities are lacking, SNL is yet to be ready to serve the public. The scarcity of the resources and facilities noticed in SNL mirrors observations that have been made in other environments that have been marred by conflicts. For instance, Prochaska (2023), using the case example of on-going Russo-Ukraine conflict, noted that in times of conflict, libraries and archives become all too often the targets of partisan attack by those who seek to bring human inheritance to ruin, or simply to abuse and misuse it. It therefore imminent that conflict-affected communities or countries lose substantial information through looting and malicious destruction of library resources, including national libraries.

The several resources and facilities described above should be available and adequate because they are required to meet the different needs of the users. This assertion resonates the Social Systems Theory that was invoked by this study. As long as the resources and facilities are lacking, SNL will cease to be classified as a system. More light on this matter is shed Aryee and Apronti Tetteh (2024), Kaur Appiah et al. (2024) and Scoulas (2021) who noted that national libraries must be stocked with a variety of resources such as newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, manuscripts, maps, documents, periodicals, cassettes, Computer Discs [CDs], videotapes, Digital Versatile Discs [DVDs], Blu-ray discs, e-books, audiobooks, journals, databases, and textbooks.

These findings support Social Systems Theory which views organizations as interdependent systems. The Somali National Library's capacity to function as a cohesive institution was limited by labor shortages, ICT infrastructure, and collection limitations.

4.5 Challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of SNL

Objective Two (2) sought to assess the challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of SNL. While some of the challenges were mentioned by the participants, others were derived from state of the collections, skills gaps, facilities such as furniture and the status of the existing auxiliary facilities. Table 4.11 provides the summary.

Table 4. 11

Challenges that might hinder the effective operations of SNL

Challenge	Manifestation	Derivation	Degree of impact
Shortage of manpower	• Lack of operations staff • Lack of maintenance	Participants	Severe
Insufficient collections	• Unmet user needs	Participants	Severe
Limited number of users	• Fewer vehicle owning users • Lack of seats • Inadequate services	Participants	Moderately severe
Exclusionary services	• Disabled persons unserved • Driving users are left out	Researcher	Very severe
Infrastructure decay	• Outdated computer systems • Dilapidated furniture	Participants	Very severe
Retraining and Skills Development	• New skills required such as AI	Researcher	Severe
Regaining community engagement	• Switching to alternative resources	Participants	Severe
Regaining user awareness	• Lost connections because of low awareness	Participants	Less severe

Source: Field Data, September 2025

The extent and magnitude of the challenges shown in Table 4.10 are anticipated to undermine the smooth running and operations of SNL once it has reopened on the following ways.

4.5.1 Shortage of Manpower

As said earlier, SNL has 11 staff members (See Table 4.1). However, majority lack the requisite skills to run modern library operations. The LIS professionals and Officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture expressed worries that unless efforts are not taken to Fast-track the skilling of the paraprofessionals who are currently working on the plans for the reopening of SNL, it is highly likely that the services provided by SNL will not be efficient and effective. Besides, the core activities that a professional librarian would have executed such as preservation of the information materials housed by SNL will either be poorly performed or inappropriately implemented or missed out altogether. The emphasis about the worries stated above are illustrated in the following verbatim quotes.

“...it is crystal clear that unless radical measures are undertaken to retool and upskill the current staff working in SNL, the services provided by the institution won’t improve to the expectations of many because unless there are adequate staff to manage the several services that SNL is to be reopened to provide, the colossal sums of money to be invested in its reopening will have gone to waste..... this need is very urgent because in the absence of adequate librarians, user experience will always be below the expected levels....” (LIBA 2, 4 September 2025)

In regard to executing the core processes that SNL is anticipated to perform, the LIS professional said.

“..., libraries have core activities such as classification, preservation, weeding, among others...these activities are best performed when a person has specialized knowledge on how to do, which often is taught in HEIs for more than one semester...characteristically, when the staff tending information resources lack this knowledge, the risk of information loss will be high....for instance, digitization requires specialized skills, serving as an academic librarian requires sufficient training....This by implication means that a library system that does not have professionally trained staff cannot ably maintain her information

materials with some stored in gunny bags while others are kept in non-standard record boxes...moreover, in the temporary place at the National Museum, the existing staff have failed to place the boxes containing the remnants of the collections drawn from the defunct SNL on pallets....they must be deteriorating further.....” (LISA 3, 5 September 2025).

The views above were verified by the researcher through observation where it was established that in the current temporary place where SNL is operating from, the boxes were heaped and placed in a disorderly manner, with no visible palletization. As a result, there is a possibility of mildewing, which affects the contents in the boxes (see Figure 4.5). Besides, it was observed that the contents of the boxes were placed adjacent to a window that lets in intense sunlight, thus exposing the collections to degradation by ultraviolet light rays.

Figure 4. 5: Left- Boxes placed on the floor & Right- Boxes placed in a room adjacent to a window



Source: Field Data, September 2025

The shortage of skilled personnel to sustain the operations of SNL once it is reopened to the users is not the first of the kind. Studies elsewhere have shown that in post conflict settings, there is always a dire shortage of personnel to manage the activities of national libraries. For instance, citing the cases of Somalia and Liberia, Cherry-Ann and Cowell (2019) noted that libraries were largely staffed by paraprofessionals. Due to lack of requisite knowledge in library resources management such as classification, preservation and storage among others, the quality of services is low. Libraries and librarians face the challenge of addressing the future information needs of their users while ensuring the provision and preservation of information

4.5.2 Insufficient Collections and user spaces

However, since the Somali National Library now lacks a significant amount of the collections necessary for a functional national library, all participants expressed concern that, should it reopen, it would not fully serve the purpose for which it was established. As shown under subsection 4.4.3, SNL lacks most of the collections and therefore, should it reopen without considerable procurements or sourcing efforts to stock the different sections, then, few users will pick interest in visiting the facility because it cannot meet their needs. This challenge is magnified by the shortage of seats and desks for the users. The capacity of SNL is 230 users per day and therefore, the available furniture at the temporary place is less than that by a very huge margin. The above observation resonates the findings of Cherry-Ann and Cowell (2019) and Ilorah et al. (2009) who decried the unavailability of relevant information resources is a big challenge stifling the operations of libraries in post conflict settings. Some information resources are not available for-the-shelf purchase, examples are government publications, cultural heritage materials, proceedings of court cases or judgments, audio-visual items like oral testimonies and recorded speeches and news. They can only be acquired by the libraries that have their depository right.

4.5.3 Exclusionary services

The study established that SNL never had breast-feeding areas or spaces for mothers while its architectural configuration does not cater for the physically challenged persons. Based on these features, unless the facelifting of SNL takes consideration of the above groups of users, its services will always exclude them. Services targeting these categories will always be underutilized while the mission of the SNL of equitable service provision will not be realized. Further to note, all the respondents expressed concern that if the parking lot at SNL is not extended, the current parking space of 5 vehicles will equally continue to exclude the potential users with vehicles because even in its neighborhoods, there are no parking lots. LIS professionals decried this situation and said that as long as SNL does not address this deficiency, the diversity of the holding that it will have in the years to come will continue lying idle or underutilized.

4.5.4 Infrastructure decay

SNL's temporary place has furniture and computer systems that are used by the staff. Through observation, it was confirmed that a large number of the furniture is missing some components

and therefore, sooner or later, they will be unusable. The SNL staff mentioned that the currently available user furniture is not in a very condition to the extent that its usefulness might not go beyond 6 months after reopening. This challenge is likely to be magnified by that fact that there is likely to be more competition for the furniture due to their smallness in number and consequently, they will be strained by the overwhelmingly huge numbers of users. In relation to the above, the LIS professionals who often visit SNL after calling up for consultations revealed that the computer systems that are currently in use are ancient and may not be compatible with the needs of a modern library. One of the LIS professionals said.

“....One day, I was invited by management of SNL to take their staff through use of some software such as EndNote....I was perplexed by how slow their computer systems were....some of the software that I attempted to install were not compatible because the Hard Disk system were 32x and yet the software could only upload on hard disks with operating system (Windows) of 64x type...leaving that a side, the computers froze most of the time while their accessories such as printers and GUIs such as the monitors also appeared in trouble. Therefore, unless these low-end computer systems are replaced, the library services can hardly be improved by automation.... this is likely to keep SNL less operationally efficient.....” (LISA 1, 4 September 2025)

The challenge of infrastructure decay likely to be faced by SNL once it resumes services has been reported in other post conflict environments. Nur (2017) reported that library furniture, including reading tables, printers, shelves, office chairs, lights, and carpets are normally vandalized during war and even when war has ceased, some cannot be re-used. When the furniture is in a deplorable state, the library operations are inhibited since users find it impossible to use the facilities without furniture and so are library staff who need some specific furniture to provide the services.

4.5.5 Retraining and Skills Development

SNL will reopen at a time when very many bushfire changes have happened on the landscape of library services provision. The SNL staff noted that library services in different environments are applying AI. Besides, many libraries are supporting their users with Systematic Reviews, among other novelties. The SNL staff confessed that they lacked

knowledge in these areas and therefore, the reopening of SNL should be twinned with earmarking of substantial funds to support and staff retooling and retraining such that they can acquire these skills and turn into all-round service men and women. The LIS professionals and officials from Ministry of Education and Culture acknowledged this need but cast doubt about the ease with which the government of Somalia will fund this need because apparently, most sectors are underfunded.

4.5.6 Regaining community engagement and user awareness

The participants raised fears that SNL might take long to attract a large number of users because it has taken long without serving the publics. The LIS professionals revealed that the community had lost grip on SNL and as is common in other post conflict settings, it might take long before the users cultivate interest in the facility, given that over the period when it was closed, many other alternatives service providers have been established in the country. More notable is the fact that the libraries are required to innovate to stay relevant to the users largely because the increased penetration of ICTs such as smartphones are minimizing the relevance of physical visits to libraries. That said, the SNL staff expressed concern that the facility is likely to remain underutilized for some considerable period of time.

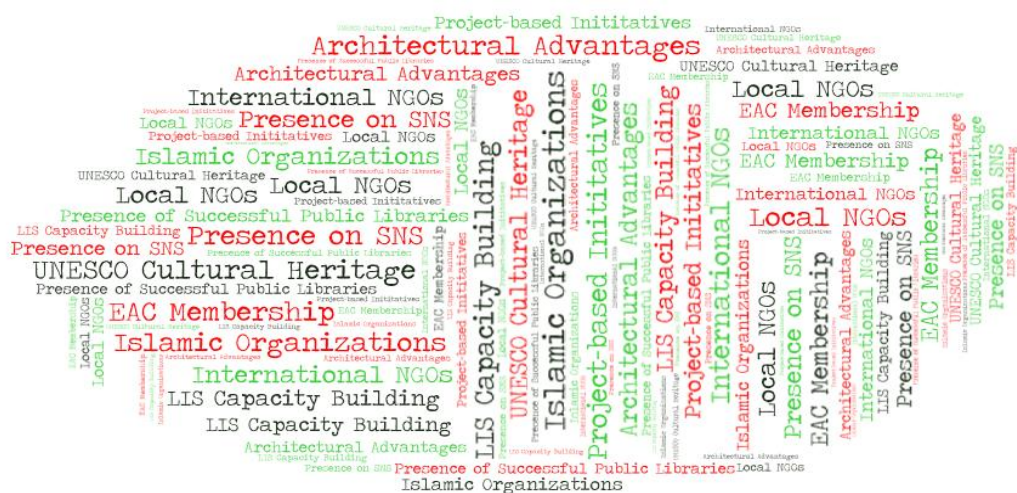
The reopening of SNL, as shown above, is likely to be affected by several challenges. This is possible because national libraries operating in post conflict settings are operating with limited resources and facilities because of shortage of funding. Libraries are one of the institutions that are affected by limited funding. According to Ilorah et al. (2009), the limited funding for library maintenance and development is two pronged. Firstly, most libraries do not have adequate finance to acquire information resources and render effective services to the users because of budgetary cuts while also, the prices of information resources continue to soar upwards. Secondly, internally, libraries generate funds from gifts, photocopying, consultancy services, and bookbinding, electronic mail, telex and fax services, among others. The funds generated are used to supplement the library vote (Ilorah et al., 2009). Such sources are suffocated by conflicts and can even manifest during post conflict phase especially when there is insecurity because the irrefutable fear limits the mobility of the users and therefore, these auxiliary services become redundant.

The challenges revealed deficiencies in important library subsystems, such as infrastructure, human resources, and financial support systems.

4.6 The opportunities that could be harnessed for the effective operation of the Somali National Library

Objective Three (3) examined the existing opportunities that could be harnessed for revitalizing SNL and enhancing its sustainable operation. Through interviews with the NGOs, LIS professionals, Library Management, Education and Culture Ministry officials and SNL staff, several cross-cutting issues were mentioned. These were further verified through data mining from archived reports about SNL, display materials on interior walls of SNL and content that was distilled from the gray literature and SNS. Figure 4.6 provides the summary of the emerging outstanding opportunities.

Figure 4. 6: A word cloud showing the major opportunities available for sustaining SNL



Source: WordArt Programme

The themes in the word cloud above are expounded on in the below themes.

4.6.1 Membership in Islamic Organizations

Most of the participants mentioned that Somalia has strategic advantages and has lots of benefits to reap from its membership in different Islamic organizations. Ministry of Education and Culture officials revealed that the country has been a member of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) since 1969. The OIC is one of the most popular and powerful organizations in the world with 57 member states, making it the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations. It was established that OIC provides member states with developmental and humanitarian support to Somalia and therefore, this provides opportunities for lobbying funds that can be used to support the various functional activities of SNL. Besides

OIC, data mined from collaboration documents accessed from SNL showed that the country is a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Islamic Charity Foundation and World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). These Islamic organizations support several projects for the socio-economic development of Somalia and therefore, these present opportunities that could be harnessed for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of SNL.

The above roles that are likely to be played by the international NGOs in Somalia for the rejuvenation of her national libraries have borne fruits in post conflict settings such as Seirra-Leone. Books for Africa (2013) which noted that the partnership between Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT) and Books for Africa has helped to rejuvenate the library system in post conflict Sierra Leone through book donations

4.6.2 UNESCO's Support

The study established that the glimpses of SNL to reopen and shine again are shown by the long-term commitment that the government of Somalia signed with UNESCO, one of the agencies of the United Nations. The Officials from Ministry of Education and Culture revealed that UNESCO has a long-term relationship with the SNL that dates back to 1982 when UNESCO funded the physical rehabilitation of SNL as well as the National Theatre and the National Museum because of the rich cultural heritage housed by the three institutions. SNL staff revealed that before the closure of SNL, the UNESCO had sunk colossal sums of money into capacity building of the staff and more so professional archivists, boosting of the quality of library services and the cataloguing of the books in SNL's collection. In 2024, the government of Somalia signed an MOU with UNESCO for education and heritage development. An excerpt from Africa News (See Figure 4.7) reported that part of the deal is to "In the area of culture, the memorandum of understanding foresees professional capacity-building and training, especially for museum administrators and archivists. UNESCO will also accompany the country in the rehabilitation of three important cultural sites: The National Theatre, Museum and Library.....ensuring free and quality primary and secondary education, as well as making available open digital resources, including textbooks..."

Figure 4. 7: Excerpt from Africa One showing the pact between Somalia and UNESCO for conservation of cultural heritage



Source: <https://www.africanews.com/2020/02/12/somalia-unesco-sign-education-and-heritage-support-deal/>

The above milestone builds on prior initiatives between UNESCO, Somalia Academy of Science and Arts (SOMASA), Somalia National Commission for UNESCO and Somali Permanent Delegation to UNESCO which organized a national consultation meeting on 23 and 24 November 2020 with international experts seeking to develop a National Strategic Plan for the safeguarding and Promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage on Somalia. By the virtue that SNL is a national repository, it falls in the orbit of these programmes. It is therefore imminent to surmise that the above developments suggest that SNL has opportunities to seize that would support and sustain its operations once it is reopened. This finding implies that the partnerships that UNESCO has established with institutions in Somalia will strengthen the country's public service and consequently, better performance of SNL. The credibility of a vibrant public service and why it merits in post conflict societal reconstruction programmes is equally highlighted by Blum and Rogger (2021) who intimated that building a capable public service is a key component of post-conflict state building. National libraries are public institutions while the librarians it is ae public servants (Ekpenyong & Esin, 2021; Machara & Jain, 2016; Stephens, 2016) and therefore, an effective public service is fundamental to the regulation of society, to managing public funds, and to service delivery.

4.6.3 EAC Membership

Somalia is one of the 8 member states that make up the East African Community (EAC). The other 7 are Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. Somalia is the youngest member state to join the bloc after admission on 23rd November 2023. Basing on this development, the participants in the study were very positive that the reopening of SNL and its sustainable operations would benefit from Somalia's membership to the EAC. For instance, the SNL staff were relishing opportunities of upgrading from top-notch institutions in the member countries that have a long history of churning out graduates in Library and Information Science, Information Systems, Information Technology and Records and Archives Management. The same opportunity was echoed by the participant officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture who acknowledged that the belongingness of Somalia in the EAC has short-and long-term impacts on the performance of SNL once it is reopened. The views of both SNL staff and Ministry of Education and Culture were summarized in the following verbatim.

“....I will never forget the day when every corner of Mogadishu was greeted by drumming and dancing Somali people on learning that the country had been given assent to become the 8th member state to the East African Community Bloc....to us the professionals and our colleagues who are served as paraprofessionals in the public libraries of Kenya including SNL, this was a dream come true because it gives us a leeway to be treated as East African students once we enroll in universities such as Makerere University in Uganda which boasts of the East Africa School of Library and Information Science, one of the oldest schools in the region and in the continent at large that has trained professionals who are not only competitive in the region but also on the global scale....the conferences, the workshops and joint projects will change the shape and face of SNL once it reopens, turning into one of the key one-stop points with the most unique memorabilia on the continent....” (LIBA6, 7 September 2025).

The above verbatim reinforces the submission of the Ministry of Education and Culture official participant who said.

“....The day Somalia joined EAC became an applecart to the development of the country on different facets....the greatest gains are

largely on free exchange of developmental ideas including in education and management of our resources.....referring to the protocols governing EAC, countries such as Somalia with less manpower and personnel including those of LIS and Records and Archives Management will benefit from the cheaper cost of acquiring such skills from the best-in-class universities in the region such as Makerere University largely because, the tuition paid by East African Students is the same....this is quite different from the time before we joined EAC whereby the students who were sent by the government to universities in East Africa were paying astronomical sums of money in tuition because by then, they would be regarded as ‘International Students’..... I am very optimistic that the challenges that have plagued information management in our country and particularly to player institutions such as SNL will be brought to bed....” (MINIST3, 11 September 2025).

The comparative and absolute advantages mentioned above were also cited by the participants from the selected NGOs as well as the LIS professionals. Both participants revealed that the integration of East Africa and admission of Somalia has helped to enhance the seamless flow of knowledge between the states through cutting edge research, collaborations between consultancy firms, trainings, workshops and seminars. These will not only help in refining the skills and competences of the SNL staff after it has reopened to users but will also help SNL staff to benchmark on the best practices from other national libraries in the member states.

4.6.4 Architectural Advantages

Even before closing operations, SNL was operating at excess capacity. It was underutilized and had many sections that were yet to be utilized for not only managing the collections and equipment but also accommodating and catering for the diverse needs of the users. As shown in Figure 4.8, SNL is an expansive structure which when refurbished, will support and cater for the needs of the different user groups.

Figure 4. 8: Different views of SNL



Source: Field Data, September 2025

As shown in Figure 4.8, the facelifting of the dilapidated SNL structures will help to accommodate more collections and even pave way for registering more collections that are apparently unavailable. Further, some of the non-existing auxiliary services such as cafes and cafeteria points, printing and scanning areas as well as breast-feeding and baby resting lounges can equally be catered for, hence expanding the scope of services that are provided by the library to the users. In emphasizing this opportunity further, one SNL staff had this to say.

“...it is very important to note that before SNL closed down, we had several unoccupied and unutilized sections or rooms...once all the structures are refurbished and officially reopened for users to access, it will be possible to extend the scope of products and services that the facility can provide because there are lots of spaces that were unoccupied that can now be used to house the different activities that were hitherto non-existing...” (LISA 5, 8 September 2025).

4.6.5 Presence of supportive Local NGOs

Somalia, owing to its decades of infestation with civil wars, has now been pacified by the AMISOM peacekeeping forces. The prevailing security has provided fertile grounds for the establishment of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are both local and international. The coordinated efforts from these NGOs have greatly restored hopes that many of the once ailing, sick or defunct but critical institutions will be rejuvenated or restored. Beginning with the local NGOs, this study established that Somalia is home to several institutions/organizations whose activities and more so those inclined /biased to promotion of

education, cultural heritage and information management are hoped to benefit the efforts towards the reopening of SNL and later, its sustainable operations. A number of local NGOs were mentioned by the participants including their roles (See Table 4.12).

Table 4. 12

Local NGOs biased on Library development in Somalia

Name	Year	Location	Main focus
Baraarug Library	2016	Mogadishu	to foster a reading culture among the Somali people through hosting community events, promoting peace education and supporting the youth to attain quality education
Somali Aid Foundation (SAF)	2000	Dobley	Community education in Central and Southern Somalia in order to uplift the disadvantaged people from living in squalor
Education for All Somalia (EFASOM)	2006	Mogadishu	Promotes the digital skilling of youth and children
Somalia Information and Resilience Building Action (SIRA)	2018	Bula Hubey	Education programmes and skills training
Somali Library Association (SLA)	2021	Mogadishu	Librarianship and Library initiatives
World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)	2011	Mogadishu	Fostering a reading culture among the country's youth by promoting literacy and quality education. The library also organizes programs on peace education and hosts community events

Source: Secondary Data, Ministry of Education and Culture, September 2025

The LIS professionals who participated in the study as well as the SNL staff appreciated and acknowledged the roles that these NGOs have played towards the development of libraries in the country. Similarly, the participants from Ministry of Education and Culture lauded the

activities of the NGOs especially those that are directly linked to the development and sustainability of libraries. The officials singled out SLA and credited it for the efforts taken in the last one decade to link the former and the current paraprofessionals that are attached to SNL to training opportunities both on local and international scenes. The LIS professionals in acknowledgement of this enabling condition showed optimism that leadership of SNL can leverage this breakthrough made by SLA to boost the skills and competences of the staff currently working on the reopening of SNL.

The participants from Ministry of Education and Culture, LIS professionals and SNL staff were very appreciative of contributions made by the local NGOs in boosting information management projects with particular emphasis on library systems. More praise was heaped to SLA which has promoted programmes and projects for improving the recognition of librarians and libraries across Somalia, organized professional development and training opportunities for the available librarians / information professionals or library staffs, established partnerships with other stakeholders to rebuild and modernize library infrastructure and services, promoting reading, information literacy, and the role of libraries in community development; and serving as a conduit through which Somali librarians are brought together, including those in the diaspora to leverage their expertise and support for the development of the library sector in Somalia (See Figure 4.9). The leadership of SLA were part of the participants in this study and expressed commitment to ensuring that every library system in the country will be rebuilt and boosted with the requisite resources, facilities and manpower. Observably, these policy commitments from local NGOs such as SLA provide a ray of hope for not only revitalizing SNL but also supporting its programmes and plans for sustainable operations.

Figure 4. 9: SLA Mission statement



Source: <https://sla.so/>

On the international front, most participants mentioned that the post conflict developmental programmes for Somalia have attracted a substantial number of international organizations. Some of the organizations are specialized in implementation of projects that will in one way or the other, benefit the operations of SNL (See Table 4.13).

Table 4. 13*International NGOs biased on Library development in Somalia*

Name	Year	Location	Main focus
Windle International Somalia (WISOM)	2019	Mogadishu	Continuous education for communities affected by conflict and displacement through construction of classrooms, sanitary facilities, and libraries while distributing learning materials.
Qatar Charity (QC)	1990s	Mogadishu	Enhancing the performance of public libraries in Somalia through provision of books, training staff, and rehabilitating the national library.
Africa Educational Trust (AET)	1996	Hargeisa	Partnering with Somali Distance Education and Literacy (SOMDEL) program, a radio-based initiative providing basic literacy and life skills to thousands of people in Somalia

Source: Secondary Data, Ministry of Education and Culture, September 2025

The interview participants from Ministry of Education and Culture as well as SNL credited the contribution made by the international NGOs (INGOs) in Somalia with regard to library development and showed optimism that when SNL is reopened, its operations will be sustained by the various kinds of support that are provided by the INGOs to development the library systems of Somalia. Their arguments are summarized by the below verbatim quotes.

“...on own as ordinary Somalis, I don’t think we would have gotten the far we have reached with post conflict reconstruction of our nation on the cultural, educational and information management fronts, had it not been the philanthropic support extended to the different players by the INGOs.....kudos to Qatar Charity for the invaluable support towards the development of our library systems right from the communities to the national level...this gives more an ocean of hope that when our national library is reopened, its operations will be perpetual because the gesture we are seeing of the national theatre and the national museum

enthuse us with hope that our national library will be resurrected sooner than later...” (MINIST 2, 10 September 2025).

The above submission coheres with the summation made by one SNL staff

“... Much as we are still closed to the users, I am very sure that when we are launched back in motion, SNL will become one of the critical information reservoirs of the entire nation....Qatar Charity and its partners have paid over 100 courtesy visits to us and are always working with us to ensure that we produce sound plans and strategies that will transform the face of SNL and transform it into one of the most efficient and well-performing institutions in Somalia...” (LISA 5, 8 September 2025).

Confirmatory evidence of the above submissions was established through the review of related documents accessed from institutional websites. In the recent past, Qatar Charity has intensified her commitment to developing the education sector and cultural richness of Somalia, considering these as pathways to enabling Somalia to realize sustainable development goal (SDG) 4. The INGO has shown greater commitment to boosting the public library system of Somalia (See Figure 4.10) and therefore, it is imperative to surmise that once SNL is reopened, its sustainability is backstopped by the initiatives that Qatar Charity is resigned to implement in the country. According to one of the LIS professionals, it is highly likely that when SNL is reopened, its activities will benefit greatly from Qatar Charity largely because it doubles as an educational institution and one of the greatest cultural monuments in the history of Somalia. Her submission is summarized in the following verbatim quotation.

“...Qatar Charity has for the last few decades written history in the educational and cultural milieu of Somaliland and specifically is supporting and sustaining the conservation of our cultural articles and information materials of enduring value.... It is predictable beyond doubts that when we reopen SNL, it will become one of the priority areas for funding because much of our memorabilia, realia and regalia is in the holding of SNL...the multifaceted support will provide a formidable ground for enhanced service delivery and the upgradation of the existing systems to hybrid ones.....long live Qatar Charity, long live other INGOs operating in our country that are taking both formal and informal

steps and strides to resurrect the national library of Somalia...” (LISA 4, 6 September 2025).

Figure 4. 10: Excerpt showing Qatar Charity’s commitment to developing libraries in Somalia



Source: <https://horseedmedia.net/qatar-charity-inks-new-agreement-to-strengthen-somalias-public-libraries/386815/>

The credibility of NGOs in supporting the performance of libraries in post conflict settings as seen above has been happening in different environments. Mnejim and Mnahi (2019) noted that post-conflict rebuild attracts several non- state actors who play key roles in capacity building, co-financing resource provision and supporting initiatives for the state rebuilding. Basing on this advantage, Mnejim and Mnahi (2019) identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as one of the most popular non-state actors supporting state-building initiatives. That said, national libraries in post-conflict settings have the opportunity of networking and collaborating with NGOs to provide library services to the users. This pathway has led to rejuvenation of many public and national libraries in post conflict settings. For instance, in Iraq, Jaber (2017) who established that donations have constituted the greatest enabler for the reconstruction of libraries.

4.6.6 Presence of well-performing public and Mobile Libraries

The reopening of SNL will benefit from the already existing and well-performing public libraries in Somalia. According to the SNL staff, Ministry of Education and Culture and LIS professionals, the existing public libraries (See Table 4.14) will provide nurseries from where the staff to be recruited by SNL once it is reopened can always benchmark critical ideas and work practices and pollinate them into SNL in order to realize operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 4. 14

Active Public and Mobile Libraries in Somalia

Name	Type	Year	Location	Richness features that SNL can benchmark	Comparative advantage (s) that can be harnessed by SNL on reopening
Puntland Library & Resource Center	Public Library	2007	Puntland	Extensive collection of books, State-of-the-Art Computer Lab for 13,000 visitors, Conference Halls, Coffee Shop	Has solid partnerships with Books for Africa, Counterpart International, and UNICEF enabling it to donate and distribute over 2 million books to schools, government bodies, and NGOs, enriching education across the region
Somali Family Services (SFS)	Mobile Library	2003	USA	Runs youth programmes like Leaders in Our Neighborhood (LION) that seek to empower youth with cutting edge information; Connects communities to existing resources	Support from Somali diaspora and communities in Somalia through various initiatives in governance, education, and development. Has footprint in the US (Minnesota, San Diego) Has offices in Nairobi
Hano Community Library	Public Library	1991	Hodan District	State-of-the-art structures and facilities, is a multipurpose centre	Has business development services, Hosts the Somali STEM Hub.

Source: Secondary Data, Ministry of Education and Culture, September 2025

One of the key points advanced by the study participants was that the existing public libraries in Somalia have been modelled along modern standards of library service provision and therefore, they will provide useful insights that can be borrowed and used by SNL staff and management to improve the quality of the products and services provided. To this effect, one of the officials from Ministry of Education and Culture had this to say.

“...the presence of a reasonable number of well-performing public libraries in our country provides us with opportunities that we can leverage to improve and sustain the operations of SNL once it is reopened. For instance, when we leverage the opportunities that have been harnessed by some of the well-performing libraries such as Puntland, we are rest assured that when SNL reopens, it will emulate the strategies that have been undertaken to attract donations of books, ICT facilities and to connect the staff who will be deployed by SNL to access hybrid capacity building opportunities that staff of active public libraries are exploiting for skilling and competence building purposes....this will guarantee the operations of SNL and enable it to implement the mandates that are conferred to it by the laws of the land....”

The opportunities that have been discovered show how crucial it is for external stakeholders to assist organizational systems through partnerships, resource mobilization, and institutional support.

4.7 Strategies for revitalizing and sustaining SNL’s operations

Objective Four (4) explored the strategies that could be developed and implemented to revitalize and sustain the operations of SNL. The results reported under this section were derived from interviews with SNL Staff, LIS professionals, NGO staff and officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Table 4.15 provides a summary of the proposed strategies.

Table 4. 15*Strategies for effective revitalization and sustenance of SNL's operations*

Strategy	Degree of urgency of need*
1. Forming partnerships	Necessary
2. Seeking grants and donations	Important
3. Launching Fundraising campaigns	Dire
4. Lobbying support from established libraries in EAC	Important
5. Conducting community surveys	Exigent
6. Providing valuable community services	Exigent
7. Using effective communication services	Imperative
8. Expanding digital resources	Imperative
9. Develop a phased reopening plan	Imperative
10. Recruiting and training staff	Compelling

Source: Field Data, September 2025 * Importance attached to the strategy.

As shown in Table 4.15, the study participants raised a number of strategies that ought to be undertaken for the effective revitalization of SNL as well as sustaining her operations. While engaging the participants, the researcher went a mile a head and asked the participants to rate the urgency of each strategy using the parameters for describing the urgency of an intervention. These are ‘Necessary’ implying that a strategy is required but never specified a high degree of immediate action, ‘Important’ meaning that the strategy needs to be implemented, but not necessarily right now, ‘Dire’ meaning the strategy is extremely serious or urgently needed, ‘Exigent’ meaning that swift action is needed, ‘Imperative’ meaning that greatly important; and ‘Compelling’ meaning strong demand for attention.

Most participants highlighted the need for forming partnerships between SNL and local businesses, foundations and community organizations. The NGO staff expressed that the arising synergy would enable SNL to benefit from the existing lines of funding that are utilized or harnessed by the partners and consequently, this would attract substantial funding. The SNL staff were optimistic that when such trusting partnerships are formed, SNL would be able to join hands and apply for grants as consortia. The officials from Ministry of Education and Culture reasoned that such consortia are what big organizations such as UN agencies are looking out for.

SNL is apparently lacking almost everything to reopen and operate normally. To resolve this degree of lack, most participants highlighted the need for leadership of SNL to venture into seeking donations and grants. The LIS professionals and SNL staff were very specific on this strategy and mentioned funding agencies and grants awarding international organizations such as Rock Feller Foundation in the United States, Carnegie Foundation in Norway and Book Aid International as some of the key institutions that should be targeted for grants and donations. This submission was echoed by officials from Ministry of Education and Culture who expressed that efforts should equally be taken to apply for funding from UN agencies such as UNESCO which prioritize cultural heritage conservation because once SNL is reopened, it will assume its role of serving as a national repository of cultural resources. One SNL staff however raised the need for approaching this strategy with pragmatism and said the following.

“...grants require technical writing skills and a pitching skill which to my best knowledge is currently unavailable among the existing SNL staff....to usurp such opportunities, efforts are needed to train and equip the existing staff with these skills and or recruiting new staff who are seasoned in grant writing for purposes of ensuring that every existing or upcoming grants are applied for by SNL...”

The need for building strong collaborations is supported by Gorvie (2005) who noted that effective library revitalization in post-conflict environments frequently requires collaboration with international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and various NGOs because these have a proven credit for aiding library development in regions affected by conflict.

SNL is a national resource that will benefit both the current and future generations. The participants implored the leadership of SNL and Ministry of Education and Culture to explore all fundraising campaigns through media, organizing charity runs, holding breakfast symposia and many other similar initiatives in order to ensure that the share of public funds allocated by the government of Somalia can be augmented to ensure that the budgets of SNL as well as its short-and long-term plans are duly implemented. One of the strategies suggested in this line by one LIS professional was the need to lobby HEIs in Somalia to fix a small fee on new entrants that is tagged on developing SNL.

As noted in the preceding section (4.6.3), Somalia is a state member of EAC from where the best performing institutions such as Makerere University are found. SNL staff who have visited

Makerere Main Library rated the unit highly and a great force to reckon with. This submission was equally hinted on by the LIS professionals who graduated from EASLIS at Makerere University wherein, they admitted that Makerere University Main Library can become a key promoter of SNL once it has reopened. The cross-cutting issue raised by all the participants was that such well performing libraries can be lobbied for support by leadership of SNL so that it can benefit from the wealth of resources that these better performing libraries are benefiting from.

Another important strategy that was raised by the participants was the need for conducting community surveys before SNL is reopened and even after it has been reopened. The participants argued that this would help in gathering public opinion and input about the desired services, programs, and concerns. The LIS professionals and officials from Ministry of Education and Culture appraised this strategy as critically important in enabling the communities to own the services that are rendered by SNL and to improve their buy-in as implementing programmes that are mirror their suggestions raises stakes that they will utilize the library to achieve their socio-economic development needs. This finding rhymes the observations of Lor (1996) and Gorvie (2005) that community participation is one sure way of realizing the sustainability of library services. Research indicates that when local communities actively engage in library planning and operations, libraries become more relevant and accessible.

A cross-cutting idea that was raised by all participants was the need for provision valuable services to the community. The participants noted that SNL can become a family brand if after reopening, it offers services that are focused on addressing contemporary community issues such as language learning, business management skilling, adult literacy programmes and provision of business and entrepreneurship ecosystems. NGO staff and LIS professionals credited this strategy and reiterated that this will potentially improve the attachment that communities have for SNL and will cease to look at it as a haven for the academia and educated nationals.

SNL was closed for decades and reopened in 2017 only to close again 2 years later (2019). This reopening period was so incidental that few Somalis knew about it. According to Officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the next full-scale reopening of SNL should aim at ensuring that there is wide publicity. The leadership of the institution should ensure announce reopening plans and new services through multiple channels, including social media,

local news outlets, and direct mailings. This will increase the awareness of the users about the institution.

Modernization of the existing services and adapting them to the needs of the users was proposed by the participants. For instance, most of the SNL staff as well as the LIS professionals identified the need for expanding the scope of the institution's digital collections especially e-books, audiobooks, and online databases so that they can complement physical materials. A strong digital presence is key to attracting a new generation of users. However, as a caveat, the participants intimated that there is a corresponding need for ensuring that SNL has a stable internet connection and offers access to computers. This is especially crucial especially for users with limited home internet access. This finding is in consonance with the observations of In light of this matter, Ebaye and Osim (2022) who acknowledges that since there is proliferation of ICT, increased smartphone ownership and growth in internet teledensity, library resources such as CD-ROMs, electronic books (e- books,) electronic journals (e-journals) and much more can be accessed in the library remotely, giving national libraries tremendous opportunities of extending services to other users more access to utilize the electronic information resources.

The optimization of the internal operations of SNL is critically important. The participants mentioned that full-scale reopening of SNL might not be possible, given then many requirements that are needed to ensure so. The NGO staff and LIS professionals proposed a piecemeal reopening which they conceded, can be actualized when a grand multi-phase reopening of the institution is developed. This argument was echoed by the officials from Ministry of Education and Culture who noted that when a clear, step-by-step timeline for restoring services is created, the SNL staff will easily be onboarded to adjust to the new procedures and to manage user expectations.

As earlier shown in Table 4.2, majority of the staff who are apparently working with SNL from its temporary home in the National Museum lack requisite skills and competences to work in a library. Besides the lack of professionalism, there are trending developments especially due to AI that library staff are applying for better service provision. All the participants acknowledged the need for training staff and empowering them with several skills so that they are able to handle the diversity of user needs. One of the SNL staff had this to say.

“...We are in better position to learn from on-the-job because some of the skills and competences that we need require substantial time. However, for some of the skills, we need to go out for highbred learning in top-notch institutions so that we can enlist the best practices, document them, differentiate and thereafter, replicate them in our mighty SNL... this is the same practice that other institutions under rebuilding are implementing and therefore, I am sure and certain that if the management of the library can plan for that, we would take a short period of time to equip our staff with best skills and competences that will enable SNL to provide quality services sustainably....”

The above finding is in agreement with Anunobi and Ukwoma (2009) who argue that multiskilled librarians and library leaders can help the libraries to overcome the challenge of limited funds when they are equipped with internet, marketing, advocacy and fundraising skills. This increases their capacity to write funding proposals and engage in any other lobbying activities.

The proposed strategies seek to strengthen the various subsystems of the library and improve interactions between the institution and its stakeholders.

The findings should be interpreted within certain limitations. Due to logistical and security concerns, some interviews were performed remotely, and data was gathered from a rather small purposively selected sample. However, the findings' credibility was increased through triangulation using observation, interviews, and document analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn, and the recommendations made. The chapter winds with pointers for further research that should be considered by future researchers if a broader and comprehensive understanding about revitalization of libraries in post conflict settings such as Somalia is to be gained.

5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the possibilities of revitalized SNL. The motivation for the study was to explore the strategies that could be undertaken to realize the sustainable operations of SNL once it is reopened on a full-scale basis. The study was guided by the Social Systems Theory which clarifies that institutions such as SNL are complex systems that are made up of cells (used in organizational settings to mean functional units) that are meshed together in such a way that where there are perturbations on one node of the system, the butterfly effect affects the rest of the system causing a disharmony and therefore, operational inefficiencies. Using this theory, an inside-out analysis of the SNL was made. The four objectives, riding on the procedural guidelines provided by theory were duly achieved. Below is a summary of the results.

5.2.1 The current state of SNL

There is shortage of skilled and competent staff to manage the affairs of SNL. Most of the staff members are paraprofessionals with qualifications in Sharia Law, Public Administration, Journalism, Public Health and Management. Generally, such qualifications are detached from library management and therefore, the holders lack the skills and competences to dispense library services. Also, there is inadequacy of computers and ICT equipment for use in the library. Even those that are available, they are old-fashion and cannot run modern library management software while others are incompatible with important output devices such as scanners and projectors. As a result, SNL can only offer static library services as outreach enhancers such as projectors cannot be run on the existing computers. This challenge is magnified by the fact that the skillset of the available library staff for running some of the available computers/ICT equipment is another limiting factor. Added to the above, SNL lacks adequate print and digital collections. These must be availed before any plans to reopen it to

the public are concluded. Without these collections, the services rendered to the users will be poor or low quality. Apart from inadequate skills and competences, limited computer/ICT resources and fewer collections, SNL also lacked furniture such as seats for users, furniture for holding/keeping some collections and equipment, furniture for supporting library services such as circulation and special furniture for supporting group study. This undermines the quality of services available to the users while also narrowing the scope of services that staff can provide to the users. The above shortfalls were worsened by the fact that SNL does not have some auxiliary services to allure the needs of the visiting users. Such include refreshment points, mother-baby lounge for lactating mothers, supports for persons with disabilities and printing spaces. This limits the potentials of SNL from providing better services to the stakeholders.

5.2.2 Challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of SNL

This study established that when SNL is reopened, the institution will grapple with shortage of skilled personnel to sustain its operations. This is most likely to happen because there are many paraprofessionals that are currently working hand in hand with the concerned institutions in the country to reopen the library. These will be lacking the requisite skills for not only serving the users but also in managing the resources of the library. In addition to this, SNL lacks 98% of the necessary collections that are likely to be sought for by the users. This resource constraint is compounded by the lack of furniture to support the users and librarians which in essence, means that SNL will operate at less than full capacity as all the 230 users that it can serve per day cannot be catered for. The other challenging aspect is that SNL is plagued by the challenge of catering for persons with disabilities. Such include lack of accommodative walkways, rigid interiors, and lack of facilities such as shower rooms that are specially designed for such people. By implication, there is lack of inclusion for all categories of users. Even the available infrastructure is not in good shape for use. It is in deplorable state and must be fixed/ replaced before any services can be provided to the users. Equally important is the fact that for quite a long period of time, SNL has been non-operational. The public has not been served and therefore, it is highly likely that it might take some good time before their interest in the facility is rekindled.

5.2.3 Opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of SNL

The study established that the reopening of SNL is likely to be a venture worth understanding because in the midst of the infrastructural, logistical and manpower gaps, there are several opportunities that could be harnessed to improve operation and performance of the institution.

To begin with, Somalia is a member of vibrant world Islamic organizations and therefore, the possibility of accessing funds and library resources is high. SNL had a stream of funding from this source and therefore, it is predictable that the same foundations and agencies will still support the revitalization of the institution. UNESCO, one of the world's most powerful institutions in supporting the conservation of cultural heritage has already supported the reopening of the National Museum and National Theatre in Somalia. The inclusion of the SNL among the heritage resources of Somalia provides further opportunities for revitalizing the reopening and sustainable operations of SNL. Further revitalization opportunities are also awash in the member states of the East African Community to which Somalia is a newly enrolled member. Higher Education Institutions with decades of experience in library development such as Makerere University in Uganda will have lots of offers for Somalia as it reopens the national library. The opportunities include manpower supply, consultation services, benchmarking opportunities, and consortia projects. These will revitalize the operations of SNL. Further still, before closure, SNL was operating at excess capacity. That said, any extensions let say for refreshment services and other auxiliary provisions are possible because the institution has spacious infrastructure. One other striking observation was that in Somalia; there are many local NGOs that are performing well in rebuilding library services. Their areas of excellence and networks present another open opportunity that SNL can harness to revitalize library operations and services.

5.2.4 Strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of SNL

While the opportunities shown in 5.2.3 have a great role to play in supporting the sustainable performance of SNL, most of the participants cited a number of remedial and actionable strategies that ought to be undertaken to redeem the significance of SNL. The available opportunities for revitalization of SNL will remain pipe dreams if no fundamental efforts are taken to utilize them. This study proposed strategies that are worth undertaking if the revitalization efforts are to become successful. SNL needs to form formidable partnerships with best performing institutions such as the local NGOs and the HEIs in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. These will help it in canvassing for support through proposal writing, strategy making, among others. In addition, leadership of SNL should explore opportunities of registering SNL among prominent donors and funders such as Book Aid as well as individual HEIs in Global North. This will attract more donations and funding. Also, the retraining of the paraprofessionals and equipping them with exquisite skills in proposal writing and marketing of library services will make immense contribution towards the sustainable operations and

performance of SNL. The leadership of SNL can also consider conducting user needs-based surveys so that it can prioritize the most mentioned but missing needs when it reopens. This can facilitate the phased reopening of the institution with most binding areas prioritized and less binding areas of need addressed later on.

5.3 Conclusions

Basing on the preceding summary, the following conclusions were drawn.

5.3.1 The current state of SNL

The reopening of SNL is most likely to be challenging because in its current state, the requirements for running a modern library are inadequate. These include lack of adequate skilled and competent personnel, narrow scope of collections both print and digital, shortage of facilities such as seats and tables and lack of important equipment such as computers and other ICTs. A fully-fledged library must have the above facilities/equipment/resources in place to provide excellent user services as well as running other core library activities. It was concluded that SNL will not attract users because of the narrow scope of services and the shortage of supporting infrastructure and personnel to cater for the needs of the users.

5.3.2 Challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of SNL

The inadequacy of skills and competencies, facilities and equipment imply that the reopening of SNL will be faced by several challenges. For instance, the absence of user support services, complimenting technologies and shortage of infrastructure if unless addressed, will affect the quality of services provided by the institution. The study concluded that the inadequacies such as shortage of skilled and competent librarians, use of obsolete computer systems and out-fashioned library software; and the unavailability of adequate facilities such as seats and storage equipment will not only undermine the quality of library services but will also affect the success of the core library management activities. and result in the mismanagement of the existing information resources and the new resources mooted to be introduced after reopening. The above-mentioned anomalies ought to be corrected by implementing routine institutional capacity building initiatives.

5.3.3 Opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of SNL

The challenges likely to face SNL after reopening will be minimized by efforts to harness the several opportunities that are available within and outside Somalia. These opportunities include membership in Islamic organizations, subscriptions in the EAC, connections with UNESCO,

availability of local vibrant NGOs in the development of library services, among others. must be identified, followed by synthesizing the information about them; and matching them with the key areas that have to be revitalized. This study concluded that SNL leadership needs to develop grand strategies that are focused on utilizing these opportunities using its internal capacities. Where gaps exist, collaborations can equally be explored.

5.3.4 Strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of SNL

The study participants mentioned several strategies that ought to be undertaken to improve the performance and sustainability of SNL once it is re-opened. These were ranked according to the degree of importance that the strategies have towards the institution. This study concluded that the leadership of SNL should implement the said strategies, following their urgency, importance, and relevance.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that revitalization of the Somali National Library requires a systems-based approach. The effectiveness of the library depends not only on the availability of collections and facilities but also on the interaction between staffing, funding, technology, policy support and stakeholder engagement. Weaknesses in one component negatively affect the functioning of the entire institution.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the study aim of assessing the current state of the Somali National Library and identifying strategies for its revitalization and sustainable operation. They are therefore linked to the four study objectives, which focused on the current state of SNL, the challenges affecting its effective functioning, the opportunities available for its development, and strategies for revitalization and sustainability. The recommendations are presented according to priority areas that emerged from the findings and are intended to guide the relevant authorities and stakeholders in planning and implementing the revitalization of SNL.

The following recommendations are proposed based on the study findings and objectives:

Short-term (1–2 years)

- Since SNL has not been operating for a long period of time, there is need for rigorous user education activities so that the public can be informed about the library, resources, facilities and practices and guide them on how SNL can solve their daily problems.

- Given that there is a shortage of the said professionals in the present time, it is recommended that the recruitment looks beyond to include staff from EAC member countries such as Kenya and Uganda which have professionals in this field. This can be boosted by capacity building initiatives for the available paraprofessional librarians in modern ways of library service provision.
- The current SNL staff lack skills and competences of running automated library services. It is recommended that more IT professionals' staff be recruited to provide guidance in the implementation of IT infrastructure and resolve the IT-related issues faced by the staff and the users. For the staff of SNL in particular, there is need for specialized training in automation and content management systems so that they can play an apex role in the efforts to automate the SNL and in developing digital libraries/repositories.
- Substantial investment should be made in the ICT infrastructure. There were few computers, printers and photocopying equipment and these should be expanded. Also, ICT equipment and accessories such as laptops, databases, network servers, multimedia projectors, digital cameras, UPS, scanners, backup devices such as hard disk and DVD/CD could be acquired as these are essential requirements of the technological and digital age.

Medium-term (3–5 years)

- Since SNL lacks digital resources, it is recommended that electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals and ETDs be procured by libraries. This will give the library users opportunities to access the world's scholarly literature.
- Given that library services are changing with inventions and innovations in technology, it is recommended that seminars or workshops on open-access databases be organized for SNL staff to raise awareness of these databases. SNL can then develop her e-book and e-journal collection.
- Since ICT applications especially the Social Network Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube platforms of SNL were not active and yet, could be used to provide quick service to users was inaccessible, the study recommends need for reinvigorating these platforms so that the quality of services for user satisfaction can be improved.
- Since SNL is a national repository of Somalia, it is recommended that the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies that are affiliated or linked to SNL should form a taskforce to oversee the reopening of the institution and a committee to oversee her performance and sustainability.

- The reopening of SNL requires wide publicity and continuous SNL-Community linkages. Besides, there is need for continuous grant and project proposal writing to win the institution funding for her different core activities. For thoroughness, this study recommends need for recruiting specialists in marketing and grant proposal writing so that the costs of outsourcing can be minimized greatly.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study has not explored models for sustaining the operations of reopened national libraries in post conflict settings. To fill this void, the study recommends that future studies should consider exploring this study area. Future studies should examine user perceptions of the Somali National Library after reopening, assess the feasibility of large-scale digitization initiatives, and investigate sustainable funding models for national libraries operating in post-conflict environments. Understanding successful revitalization strategies would also be enhanced by comparative research including other post-conflict national libraries in Africa

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Appendices

Appendix A: Observation Checklist

Aspects	Parameters	Status
Universal access	Library resources accessible to all users	
	The facility has special consideration for people with physical disability	
	Digital resources and technology are available	
	Information literacy indicators	
Collection Development and preservation	Adequacy of the collections	
	Digital materials are available	
	Migration manuals existing	
	Standard storage boxes in use for paper records	
	Standard archival boxes are in use	
	The collection has neat materials	
	Finding aids and catalogs are available	
	Finding aids and catalogs are comprehensively written	
Technological advancements	Online databases available	
	Computers and other ICTs (Adequacy and availability).	
	Virtual service provision	
	e-books, online journals and other digital resources	
	OPAC service	
	Digitization of records	
	Social media used	
	Usability of web and online services	
	Facility has unlimited Wi-Fi service	
Funding and sustainability	Evidence of financial support for supporting library operations	
	Evidence of financial support for collections development	
	Evidence of financial support for staff development	
	Evidence of collaborations with other libraries	
	Evidence of collaborations with cultural institutions	

	Evidence of collaborations with religious institutions	
	Evidence of collaboration with public institutions	
Ethical considerations	Evidence of safeguarding user privacy	
	Evidence of safeguarding data privacy	
Staffing and development	Evidence of staff professional development	
Facilities	Quality of washrooms	
	Facility as maternity lounge	
	Facility has adequate seats	
	Facility is air-conditioned	
Auxiliary services	Facility has refreshment points	
	Facility has photocopying and scanning services	
	Facility has mobile phone recharging points	

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Library Officials

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is your age group?

☐ Under 25

☐ 25–34

☐ 35–44

☐ 45–54

☐ 55 and above

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your highest educational qualification?

4. How long had you worked with the national library?’

5. To which department or section do you belong?

6. How long have you worked in this department or section?

SECTION B: CURRENT STATE OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

7. What resources and facilities are (or were) available at the national library?

8. Were these affected by conflict? If yes, how?

9. How adequate are the current resources and facilities?

10. Can they support the reopening of the library? Please explain.

11. Are there sufficient professional staff to sustain the reopening?

12. Does the library have auxiliary services (e.g., photocopying, refreshments)? Can these support operations?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES LIKELY TO HINDER THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

13. What challenges might hinder the effective operation of the reopened national library?

14. How might each of these challenges affect the long-term sustainability of the library?

SECTION D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALISING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

15. What prospects were available for the national library before its closure?

16. Do you think the prospects were adequately harnessed by the national library? If yes, briefly explain how they were utilized

17. If No, what do you think was the issue at hand?

18. Are there existing prospects that could be explored to sustain the reopening of the national library? If yes, list and briefly explain why you think these opportunities are worth chasing.

SECTION E: STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINING THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

19. Which institutional interventions do you propose should be undertaken to revive and sustain the glory of the reopened national library?
20. Anything more to tell me about the reopening and sustaining the operations of the national library?

Thank you for participating

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Library and Information Science Professionals

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. **What is your age group?**
 - ☐ Under 25
 - ☐ 25–34
 - ☐ 35–44
 - ☐ 45–54
 - ☐ 55 and above
2. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. What is your highest educational qualification?
4. How often do you use the national library? (**Terminate the interview in case the participant has never used the national library**)

SECTION B: CURRENT STATE OF THE SOMALI NATIONAL LIBRARY

5. Which resources do you think are available in the national library apparently?
6. Do you think the stock of the resources were affected by the conflicts?
7. If Yes, briefly explain how the conflicts affected the resources in the library
8. Which resources do you think are currently available in the national library?
9. In your opinion, how adequate are these resources?
10. Can they support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.
11. Which facilities are available in the national library apparently?
12. Do you think the stock of the facilities were affected by the conflicts?
13. If Yes, briefly explain how they were affected.
 - a. What facilities do you think are currently available in the national library
14. In your opinion, how adequate are these facilities?
15. Can they support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.
16. Do you think the national library has adequate professional staff to sustain its reopening? Briefly explain your opinion
17. Does the national library have auxiliary services? If yes, mention them

18. In your opinion, do you think the auxiliary services can support the reopening and functioning of the national library?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES LIKELY TO HINDER THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

19. What do you envisage to hinder the successful operation of the national library once it is reopened?
20. Briefly explain how each likely challenge you have mentioned might impede the sustainability of the reopened national library

SECTION D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALISING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

21. What prospects were available for the national library before its closure?
22. Do you think the prospects were adequately harnessed by the national library? If yes, briefly explain how they were utilized.
23. If No, what do you think was the issue at hand?
24. Are there existing opportunities that could be explored to sustain the reopening of the national library? If yes, list and briefly explain why you think these opportunities are worth chasing

SECTION E: STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINING THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

25. Which institutional interventions do you propose should be undertaken to revive and sustain the glory of the reopened national library?
26. Anything more to tell me about the reopening and sustaining the operations of the national library?

Thank you for participating

Appendix D: Interview Guide for NGOs

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. **What is your age group?**
 - ☐ Under 25
 - ☐ 25–34
 - ☐ 35–44
 - ☐ 45–54
 - ☐ 55 and above
2. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. What is your highest educational qualification?
4. How long had you worked with this NGO?
5. How long has your NGO collaborated with national library before its closure?
6. Does your NGO still collaborate with the officials of the national library?

SECTION B: CURRENT STATE OF THE SOMALI NATIONAL LIBRARY

7. In what ways did your organization support the national library before its closure?
8. Do you think the stock of the resources were affected by the conflicts?
9. If Yes, briefly explain how the conflicts affected the resources in the library
10. In your opinion, do you think the existing resources in the national library are adequate?
11. Can they support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.
12. Which facilities do you think might be available in the national library apparently?
13. Do you think the stock of the facilities were affected by the conflicts?
14. If Yes, briefly explain how they were affected.
15. Can the existing facilities support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.
16. Do you think there are adequate professional staff to sustain the reopening of the national library? Briefly explain your opinion
17. Does the national library have auxiliary services? If yes, mention them
18. In your opinion, do you think the auxiliary services can support the reopening and functioning of the national library?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES LIKELY TO HINDER THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

19. What do you envisage to hinder the successful operation of the national library once it is reopened?
20. Briefly explain how each likely challenge you have mentioned might impede the sustainability of the reopened national library

SECTION D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALISING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

21. What prospects were available for the national library before its closure?
22. Do you think the prospects were adequately harnessed by the national library? If yes, briefly explain how they were utilized
23. If No, what do you think was the issue at hand?
24. Are there existing potentials that could be explored to sustain the reopening of the national library? If yes, list and briefly explain why you think these opportunities are worth chasing

SECTION E: STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINING THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

25. Which institutional interventions do you propose should be undertaken to revive and sustain the glory of the reopened national library?
26. Anything more to tell me about the reopening and sustaining the operations of the national library?

Thank you for participating

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Ministry of Education and Culture

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is your age group?

☐ Under 25

☐ 25–34

☐ 35–44

☐ 45–54

☐ 55 and above

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your highest educational qualification?

4. How long had you worked with Ministry?’

5. To which department or section do you belong?

6. How long had you worked in this department or section?

7. How does your Department relate to the national library?

SECTION B: CURRENT STATE OF THE SOMALI NATIONAL LIBRARY

8. Which resources do you think are available in the national library apparently?

9. Do you think the stock of the resources were affected by the conflicts?

10. If Yes, briefly explain how the conflicts affected the resources in the library

11. What resources do you think are available in the national library?

12. In your opinion, how adequate are these resources?

13. Can they support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.

14. Which facilities are available in the national library apparently?

15. Do you think the stock of the facilities were affected by the conflicts?

16. If Yes, briefly explain how they were affected.

17. What facilities do you think are currently available in the national library?

18. In your opinion, how adequate are these facilities?

19. Can they support the reopening of the national library? If yes, briefly explain your opinion.

20. Do you think there are adequate professional staff to sustain the reopening of the national library? Briefly explain your opinion
21. Does the national library have auxiliary services? If yes, mention them
22. In your opinion, do you think the auxiliary services can support the reopening and functioning of the national library?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES LIKELY TO HINDER THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

23. What do you envisage to hinder the successful operation of the national library once it is reopened?
24. Briefly explain how each likely challenge you have mentioned might impede the sustainability of the reopened national library

SECTION D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALISING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

25. What potentials were available for the national library before its closure?
26. Do you think the potentials were adequately harnessed by the national library? If yes, briefly explain how they were utilized
27. If No, what do you think was the issue at hand?
28. Are there existing prospects that could be explored to sustain the reopening of the national library? If yes, list and briefly explain why you think these opportunities are worth chasing

SECTION E: STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINING THE REOPENED NATIONAL LIBRARY

29. What policy measures do you propose to the government for supporting and sustaining the national library once it is reopened?
30. Which institutional interventions do you propose should be undertaken to revive and sustain the glory of the reopened national library?
31. Anything more to tell me about the reopening and sustaining the operations of the national library?

Thank you for participating

Appendix F: Document Review Guide

Key documents to review

1. UNESCO Reports on SNL
2. MoEC Reports on SNL
3. NGO Reports on SNL Collaborations
4. Online Reports about Funding to SNL

Appendix G: Data Collection Transmittal Letter



8th September, 2025

The General Director
Somali National Library
Mogadishu - Somalia

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER – NOR ABDIRAHIM MOHAMED REG. NO. 2023/HD05/20125X

This is to introduce to you the above named student of East African School of Library and Information Science under the College of Computing and Information Sciences, Makerere University.

He is pursuing a Master of Science in Information Science (MSC.INF.SCI). To fulfill the requirements of the programme, he is expected to carry out a field research. His research is entitled: ***Revitalizing the Somali National Library: Challenges and Opportunities.***

The purpose of this communication is to request you to offer him the necessary assistance required.

Please note that all information obtained shall be for academic purposes only.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alice Gitta Kutyamukama
AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE

Appendix G: Turnitin Report



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**REVITALIZING THE SOMALI NATIONAL LIBRARY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**BY
NOR ABDIRAHIM MOHAMED**

2023/HD05/20125X

2300720125

7

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND
INFORMATION SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION SCIENCE
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER 2025

Abstract

Library systems are one of the critical resources that are lost, vandalized or decay during armed conflicts or civil wars. In the post conflict period and especially in planning for state rebuilding, they are again one of the resources that are prioritized for revitalization. This revitalization is undertaken because libraries especially national ones that serve as custodians of cultural heritage are very important as stores of the information of national importance. Such is yet to be realised in Somalia because her national library is still closed to the public to date while her core activities are equally still on a standstill. Cognizant of this situation, this **purpose of this** academic inquiry **was to document the status of the existing resources and facilities** in Somali National Library, examine **the challenges that are likely to be faced when** it is reopened, to examine the opportunities for harnessing so that Somali National Library can be reopened and her operations sustained; and **to propose the strategies for enhancing the revitalization of Somali National Library** and its sustainable performance. **The study was informed by Social Systems Theory** which underscores the need for revitalizing all the system components for realization of holistic gains. The data were sourced from staff of Somali National Library, NGOs focusing on supporting and developing libraries in the country, LIS professionals and officials **from the Ministry of Education and Culture**. **The study took a qualitative approach and the data were collected using interviews, observations and document review**. Results **revealed that** Somali National Library lacks over 95 percent of the requisite personnel, facilities and equipment, computer systems and other accessories, collections and auxiliary facilities for it to fully reopen and serve the public. Thus, in case the said gaps or loopholes are rectified, any plans to reopen the library will not produce tangible results because user services will be narrow, most user needs will not be catered for and some of the existing resources plus the restocked ones will deteriorate in a short time because of lack of technical maintenance. Despite these likely challenges, the study established that Somalia has various opportunities for harnessing to revitalize her national library. While some of the opportunities existed even before its closure, a number of them have showed up due to the influx of many international NGOs and creation of many local NGOs that are biased on community development and institutional rebuilding and especially those with thrust on librarianship and library initiatives. The greatest opportunity is provided by the return of the political philosophy that has seen Somalia join and become a member state of the East African Community. Based on these opportunities, the study proposed several strategies that should be undertaken before reopening, those for reengaging the communities and others for underpinning the sustainability of the operations after reopening. It was concluded that Somali National Library lacks substantial resources and facilities that must be availed before reopening, lest her services will only be poor but also, the institution will operate at excess capacity. To ameliorate these mishaps, the study proposes that various strategies out to be undertaken to support the functional reopening and sustainability of the services and operations such as retooling and retraining staff, engaging in rigorous fundraising drives, recruiting media and project proposal writing professionals, among others. These are needed if the available opportunities are to be utilized efficiently and effectively.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study focused on documenting the strategies for revitalizing national libraries in post-conflict settings. Somali National Library was selected with emphasis on challenges, opportunities and prospects. The chapter presents background information about the importance of libraries in general and the credibility of national libraries in post-conflict settings. In the chapter also, the problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, theoretical framework, as well as the operational definitions of key terms used in the study are covered.

Libraries play a vital role in the development of nations (Osuchukwu & Ayeni, 2019; Wojciechowska, 2023). They providing access to information, supporting education and literacy, and fostering community engagement, are gateways to knowledge, offering resources and services that promote learning, creativity, and informed decision-making; serve as community hubs, offering spaces for social interaction, cultural activities, and lifelong learning; curate information resources (Murugan & Krishnan, 2018); and play a notable role in the preservation of cultural heritage (Friday & Chinwe, 2023). The above roles are played by community, public, academic and national libraries. The focus of this study are national libraries.

A national library is a setup that is established to collect and preserve publications of a country (Lamani & Sedam, 2022; Reimer, 2018). It is an official repository of printed works, a general access library; an information-bibliographical center and a center of coordination, planning and stimulation of the entire library system of the nation (Lamani & Sedam, 2022; Mari, 2020). In relation to other libraries, national libraries occupy an independent and exceptional position.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study aimed at generating new knowledge about revitalization of library services in post-conflict settings. According to Lim et al. (2022) and Ward and McComb (2017), knowledge generation is a logical undertaking that calls for connecting the new knowledge with what is existing in the knowledge base. Thus, the purpose of this chapter was to review foundational knowledge about revitalization of library services in post-conflict environs. The intent was to acquaint the researcher with cross-cutting about library services in post-conflict settings so that a clearer understanding of the underlying issues is gained (Breslin & Gatrell, 2023; Kraus et al., 2023). Further, the review was vital for establishing recurrent knowledge gaps and inconclusive arguments that needed to be filled and or clarified (Boumezrag, 2022). The review was structured under themes that have been developed from the specific objectives that the proposed study seeks to achieve as stated earlier in Chapter 1. The themes are: Effect of conflict on the resources and facilities of national libraries, Available opportunities for supporting functional National Libraries in conflict and post-conflict affected settings, Challenges hindering functional operation of National Libraries in post-conflict settings; and Strategies for sustaining functional operation of National Libraries in post-conflict settings. The chapter closes with a section about the emerging gaps.

2.2. Effect of conflict on the resources and facilities of national libraries

A library is unarguably and indubitably one of the intellectual wonders of life (Ajidahun, 2011). Generally, it serves as a splendid educational masterpiece, a redemptive global phenomenon with robust capacity and ecumenical power and capability to bring the desired and the unimaginable

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses methodology that guided the study. Specifically, it focuses on the research approach followed, the guiding research design, the targeted study population, the sample size involved and the corresponding sampling techniques used in deriving the sample. Further, the chapter covers the data collection methods and the respective instruments used. This section is followed by the scientific procedures observed in ensuring that the reported and discussed findings were derived from quality data. Next in series, are the data processing, analysis and reporting conventions that were adhered to by this study as well as the ethical considerations borne in mind. The chapter winds with limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Approach

The examined the revitalization of the Somali National Library in qualitative research prism. The researcher used a qualitative research approach to answer the main questions of the study. Qualitative research thus involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world (Knothe, 2025; Telaky & Mwanyoka, 2024). The researcher's role in using this approach was to capture meanings through interpretation of narrative and descriptive data about the lived experiences of the participants. The qualitative approach was selected to guide this study largely because it provides a basis for acquiring a detailed and complete picture of reality (Lim, 2025; Parter et al., 2025).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The emerging findings based on the data gathered through a series of interviews with purposively selected participants, data extracted from the reviewed documents and observable insights are presented and discussed in this chapter. The findings are presented in lieu of the four specific objectives that the study sought to achieve, namely: To establish the current state of the Somali National Library, To examine opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of the Somali National Library, To identify the challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of the Somali National Library; and To recommend strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of the Somali National Library. Four categories of participants took part in the study: four (4) LIS professionals and these were renamed *LIS A*, *LIS B*, *LIS C* and *LIS D*; two (2) officials from Ministry of Education and Culture, renamed *MINIST1* and *MINIST2*, six (6) library staff, renamed: *LIBA 1*, *LIBA 2*, ..., *LIBA 6*; and three (3) NGO staff were renamed, *Green*, *Orange* and *Khaki*. The presentation of the key findings is preceded by an overview of data saturation and when it occurred.

4.2 Data Saturation

Qualitative interviews reach data saturation. Defined, data saturation refers to a point/stage in which data generated from additional interviews is not generating any new insights or meaning (Ahmed, 2025; Hermink & Kaiser, 2022; Naeem et al., 2024). As declared earlier (Chapter 3, Section 3.9), at the end of each data collection day, the audios were transcribed and the generated transcripts analysed to establish patterns in the data as well as possible themes to be derived. Initially, 7 LIS professionals, 5 officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture, 7 officials

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made. The chapter winds with pointers for further research that should be considered by future researchers if a broader and comprehensive understanding about revitalization of libraries in post conflict settings such as Somalia is to be gained.

5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the possibilities of revitalized SNL. The library has been closed since 1990s but was reopened temporarily in 2017 and then later closed down until further notice in 2019. The motivation for the study was to explore the strategies that could be undertaken to realise the sustainable operations of SNL once it is reopened on a full-scale basis. The study was guided by four specific objectives; to establish the current state of the Somali National Library; to identify the challenges that might hinder the effective functioning of the Somali National Library; to examine opportunities that can be harnessed for the effective operation of the Somali National Library; and to recommend strategies for revitalizing and sustaining the operations of the Somali National Library. The study was guided by the Social Systems Theory which clarifies that institutions such as SNL are complex systems that are made up of cells (used in organizational settings to mean functional units) that are meshed together in such a way that where there are perturbations on one node of the system, the butterfly effect affects the rest of the system causing a disharmony and therefore, operational inefficiencies. Using this theory, an inside-out analysis of the SNL was made. The four stated objectives, riding on the procedural guidelines provided by theory were duly achieved. Below is a summary of the results;