

# The Use of Collections and Services of Academic Libraries in Ghana: A Case Study of Ghana Communication Technology University, Accra, Ghana

Afua Frempong-Kore<sup>1</sup> and Benedicta Krampah Akoto Bitherman<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Ghana Communication Technology University, Tesano, Accra

Email: <sup>1</sup>[afuagyaakoto@yahoo.com](mailto:afuagyaakoto@yahoo.com) and <sup>2</sup>[bkrampah@gctu.edu.gh](mailto:bkrampah@gctu.edu.gh)

**Abstract**— An academic library is established in an institution of higher learning to provide services that will meet the information needs of students, lecturers, researchers and the entire academic community. The use of the library and its resources by the students of the institution is therefore a must for both faculty and students if academic work would go on successfully. This study examines the extent of use of library resources in Ghana Communication Technology University, Accra, Ghana. Two separate questionnaires were used to gather data. 400 registered library users were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The findings revealed that 46.87% of the students sampled visited the library to read for examination while most faculty members visited the library to consult journals, electronic or print resources and to read newspapers. Also, students used the online catalogue to locate materials more than faculty. It was recommended that faculty give reading assignments that will require students to consult journals and other resources in the library, not just for examination purposes. The library should also embark on aggressive awareness creation on regular basis to showcase the various resources available in the library.

**Keywords**— Academic Libraries, Ghana, Ghana Communication Technology University.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries exist for their use. This is because the library provides users with the relevant sources of information that meet the needs of its users. The academic library is the nerve centre or the hub around which scholarship revolves. It is an indispensable instrument for intellectual development (Yusif & Iwu, 2010). Libraries help to educate people, accelerate progress and provide the data required for the solution of increasingly complex economic, social, educational, cultural, political and scientific problems. Libraries aid independent students in their investigations and it provides opportunities to researchers in their research endeavours. A library no doubt exercises a major influence on the learning process, providing the individual with opportunity of learning how to learn,

how to discover through self-directed study (Frempong-Kore, 2018). Jubb and Green (2007) observe that academic libraries have for centuries played critically important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host universities or colleges. Opara (2001 cited in Eiriemiokhale, and Ibeun, 2017) posits that the library stands in the same relationship to the society as the memory of an individual by making available and accessible to its user's information required for teaching and independent study. The main purpose of an academic library as stated by Aina (2004) is to support the objectives of an academic environment in the areas of learning, teaching, research, and service. In the opinion of Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) libraries are indispensable in academic communities.

The relevance of the library in this age of technology has however, been dwindling as students don't seem to have the use of a library anymore as they can have access to information resources right on their phones. In their study, Abosede & Ibikunle (2011) reveal an increasing concern over students' use of the libraries in higher institutions in Nigeria. Studies by Osinulu (1998 cited in Onuoha & Subair, 2013); Akin & Ajayi (2008), also talk about the declining use of libraries within the university system.

The use of university libraries promotes active learning, thus contributing to students' ability to think critically and work well independently or in group. Studies by Oluwadare (2006); Yusuf & Iwu (2010), show that even though libraries are being used, they are, however, reduced to places of reading as most students make use of the library when preparing for examinations. In situations where users even try to make use of the library and its resources they are found to be confronted with various challenges including, inadequate internet supply, difficulty in catalogue use, obsolete materials and poor shelving according to (Okere & Onuoha, 2008; Amkpa 2000). Despite all these, Frascotti, Levenseler, Weingarten, & Wiegand, (2007) argue that libraries are trying to re-invent themselves by going beyond the provision of print information resources to the provision of electronic information sources and also employing

ICT use in different areas of services. However, in the view of Nweze, (2011) the best way a library can fulfil its function is by pursuing a policy of evaluation. To support this notion, Agboola, and Bamigboye, (2011) state that library use is an important measure of output of services provided by libraries. An understanding of library use would therefore, aid the planning of future services that could encourage and enhance library patronage, thus, the need for the present study. Evidence shows that not many studies have been carried out on the use of academic libraries in Ghana. This study aims to reveal how the Ghana Communication Technology University Library has been utilized by its faculty and students.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The responsibility of supporting learning and research within the university environment, through the provision of information materials has always been that of the university library. However, research and observation suggest a decline in library usage as some students may not be taking advantage of the resources provided by the university library. Where such is the case, students may find it difficult coping with the rigors of academics. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates library use among faculty and students of Ghana Communication Technology University.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A conducive environment for learning and research has often been associated with the use of libraries, however, the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided in academic libraries are mainly determined by library users. The importance of libraries in the educational system cannot be over emphasized, this is also established by Lance, Rodney & Hamilton-Pennel (2000). At every point in time the management of a library should be aware of the current needs of their users so as to be able to serve them in the best possible, and this vary from one library to another as well as from time to time. This therefore, calls for regular surveys to be conducted on user needs on various aspects of library usage, an exercise which is considered to be an invaluable guide in determining the future directions of library developments as opined by Yusuf and Iwu, (2010).

Perera (2005), Behling and Cudd (1967 cited in Aforo, 2012) submits that satisfying user needs is essential to the management of libraries. Because in their view the library user is regarded as the most logical source to determine whether the library is playing its role satisfactorily or not. Popoola (2001) also observes that information availability does not mean accessibility and

use and that academic libraries should stimulate demand for their products and services. In support of this view point, Mason (2010) opines that librarians must be sympathetic and helpful to all students.

Several authors have written on the use of academic libraries. A typical one is that of Akhtar and Krishna (2006) whose survey on the use, collection and services of IIRS library, revealed that; majority of the users (41.25%) of the IIRS library use the library services daily, that majority of the respondents (81.25%) mainly used the library to borrow books and other materials, and that only a least number of respondents used the library for audio-visual materials. It also came to light that, most of the respondents (87.50%), preferred the print collection - books as compared to electronic collection, (68.75%) used CD-ROM, followed by 86.25% use for current periodicals. Okiy (2000), in a study on students and faculty use of academic libraries in Nigeria, with particular reference to Delta State University, also found that respondents used books more than other materials and that they browsed the shelves to locate these materials. A study by Unomah (1985 cited in Nwezeh, and Shabi, (2011) on student utilization of academic libraries in Nigeria, found that most of the students found their lecture notes sufficient and felt there was no need to read textbooks. The study continued that on borrowing, 68% had no books on loan. It also came out that most of the faculty members did not promote student use of the library as, 76% of the students said their lecturers did not give them reading lists. The students were not equally given any guidance by faculty as to the use of the library and its resources, making them not find the need to use the library and even when they did found difficulty in doing it. This supports Amkpa (2000) in the study of the use of the University of Maiduguri Library where it was discovered that majority of students did not use the library effectively because they did not use the library catalogues.

Udo-Anyanwu, Jeff-Okafor & Mbagwu (2012) in their comparison of the use of library resources between students at Imo State University and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, grouped library materials into three broad categories namely: oral information; printed information and digitised information. The study established that in both libraries, students utilised printed information more than digitised information and oral information was never used in any of the libraries. The study also identified insufficient library space as the greatest problem facing the use of both libraries. Ugah (2007) also in his study found out that textbooks account for most library visits. The study further stated that only

a few of the student respondents used reference materials. Don (2006) discovered that library computer access is utilized by students far more than faculty, while interlibrary loan services are used more by faculty members. Similarly, a study on the use of Olabisi Onabanjo University Libraries, by Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) discovered that male students used the library more frequently than their female counterparts. Interestingly, Julien (2000), observed that regular library users are active learners who participate more in class, and this group of students read, write and study more.

Osinulu (1998 cited in Onuoha & Subair, 2013) investigation of patterns of library use at Ogun State University, Nigeria, by scrutinizing user records and data, again revealed low usage of the library and subsequently, low use of library services, which was attributed to lack of awareness. In the study of Akin & Ajayi (2008) on the use of Federal University of Technology Library in Nigeria also found out that out of 475 students, only 82 used the library on daily basis. Oyesiku & Oduwole (2004) again in their study revealed that students use the library mostly during examinations to study and to do class assignments. The study further revealed that the library collections were inadequate to meet users' demands, probably the reason why the library is mostly used for reading and doing assignment. Okiy (2000) further found that although students constituted majority of the users in the library that was studied, most respondents were found to use the library 2-3 times a week or daily.

In a related study, Onuoha, Ikonne, & Madukoma (2013) while studying library use and research productivity of postgraduate students, concluded that postgraduate students placed more importance on books (print) followed closely by internet provision and electronic journals. Yusuf & Iwu (2010) established in their statistical study in Covenant University that students utilise the online public access catalogue more than the manual catalogue. Kamanda (1999 cited in Onuoha & Subair, 2013) in a study at the East African School of Library and Information Science Library, Makerere University, Uganda observed that more than half of the students experienced problems in locating library information materials. It came out that majority of the students either located materials through browsing the shelves or sought assistance from library staff, but did not make full use of the card catalogue.

Nimsomboon & Nagata (2003), in a study of Thammasat University Library also listed a number of

problems encountered by users while using the library. These ranged from inadequacy and outdated resources (books, journal, newspaper, computer terminals); and shelving problem as the users cannot find the books on shelves, though they are found in online public access catalogue. A study by Ogunniyi & Efosa (2010) on catalogue use by students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo reported that the problem of catalogue use is associated with lack of knowledge on how to use the library catalogue as indicated by majority of the respondents, 211(52.7%).

Similarly, Singh (1999 as cited in Krishna, Akhtar, Nishat and Sunil 2010) in her attempt to provide background information about the emergence of Indian institute of technology (IIT), Kanpur, discussed the methodology used for data collection, acquisition of periodicals and other documentary collection in this institute. In this study the users were not satisfied with the photocopying services, even though library collection, services and attitude of library staff were rated as good.

A study of the accessibility and use of the Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria by Oluwadare (2006) revealed that the library was well used. This was affirmed by 100(52.6%) of the respondents who claimed to use the library whenever they want to read. Among the study's respondents, 49 (25.7%) claimed that they hardly used the library because materials in the library did not meet their needs. Low use of libraries was, however, established by Haglund & Olsson (2008) who conducted observational studies at three universities in Stockholm, Sweden. The result of the study confirmed that most researchers used Google for everything and were confident that they could manage their information needs on their own. The study further confirmed that researchers had very little contact with the library, and little knowledge about the value librarian competence could add to their research activities.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study was carried out to determine the extent of use of library resources by faculty and students at GCTU library. Specifically, the study was to:

- Ascertain reasons for the use of the library by faculty and students
- Examine sources of information most consulted
- Find out how faculty and students locate needed materials
- Determine frequency of use of the library by faculty and students



- Measure the level of user satisfaction of library services and facilities available
- Find out the challenges users face in their use of the GCTU library.

**V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population was made up of three thousand five hundred (3500) levels 200-400 students. The choice of limiting the study to 200-400 students was done on the consideration that 200-400 students would have spent enough time using the university library and as such were in a good position to answer the questions. Students in 200-400 levels who visited the library within the space of 3 months while this research was being conducted were randomly selected.

Also, faculty members who have been in the employment of the university for five years or more were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Finally, the stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the student respondents for the study. Two separate close-ended questionnaires were used to gather data from faculty and students respectively and data collected were analysed using frequency and percentage counts. In all, 450 copies of questionnaires were distributed, 370 to students and 80 to faculty. 335 out of the 370 distributed to students were completed and returned i.e. is 90.5 % return rate. With that of the faculty 65 out of the 80 distributed were returned which accounts for 81.3% return rate. Data was analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages.

**VI. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage. Table 1A shows that the male respondents constitute a larger part of the survey population, 220 (62.86%) as against 180 (51.43%) of their female counterparts. This is consistent with Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) study which also discovered that male students used the library more frequently than their female counterparts. Table 1B shows that a total of 335 (83.75%) respondents are students while 65 (16.25%) are faculty members. This was not surprising as students constitute the majority in a university population.

Table 1A: Demographic background of respondents "Gender"

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	220	62.86

Female	180	51.43
Total	400	100

Table 1B: Demographic background of respondents "Status"

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Student	335	83.75
Faculty	65	16.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 2 shows that 95 (28.36%) of student respondents use the library daily. 176 (52.54%) of student respondents visit the library 2-3 times a week and 29(8.66%) of them visit the library 2-3 times a month. On the other hand, 22 (33.85%) faculty respondents visit the library once a week, 17(26.15%) visit 2-3 times a week and 11(16.92%) visit daily. This shows that students use the library more than faculty. This is consistent with the findings of Okiy (2000) that most respondents were found to use the library 2-3 times a week or daily.

Table 2: Frequency of library use

Period	Faculty		Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Daily	11	16.92	95	28.36
2-3 times a week	17	26.15	176	52.54
Once a week	22	33.85	35	10.45
2-3 times a month	15	23.08	29	8.66
Total	65	100	335	100

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 3 represents reasons for respondents' use of the library. Various reasons were given by respondents for using the library. 138(41.19 %) student respondents visited the library to consult electronic resources, 157(46.87%) student respondents used the library to read for examination, 9 (2.69%) of them visit the library to consult hardcopy journals and 23 (6.87%) visit the library to consult textbooks.

In the case of the faculty, 41 (63.08%) of the respondents read electronic journals and 25 (38.46%) visited the library to do research while 16 (24.62%) read newspapers. Other reasons for using the library by the respondents are also presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Reasons for using the library

Reason	Faculty		Student	
	No.	%	No.	%
To write assignments	0	0	90	26.87
To do research	15	23.08	106	31.64
To consult textbooks	11	16.92	23	6.87
To consult journals (hardcopy)	23	35.38	9	2.69
To consult electronic resources	41	63.08	138	41.19
To read for examination	0	0	157	46.87
To consult reference materials	25	38.46	103	30.75
For reprographic services	7	10.77	75	22.39
To read newspapers	16	24.62	120	35.82
All of the above	0	0	35	10.45

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 4 shows the materials most consulted by faculty or students when they visit the library. It is clear from the table that faculty members use mostly the electronic resources and reference materials provided by the library. 52 (80%) of them used the electronic resources (both books and journals) while 35 (53.85%) of them consulted the reference materials. This is not surprising as faculty members are engaged in active research to extend the frontiers of knowledge. In contrast, students

read more than the other resources. 105 (29.58%) indicated textbooks as the most used material, followed by 91(25.63%) who consulted past student projects. This is consistent with Okiy (2000) whose study revealed that respondents used books more than other materials, it however, contrasts Ugah (2007) study that only a few of the student respondents used reference materials. Other usage rankings are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Materials most consulted

Materials most consulted	Faculty		Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reference Materials	35	53.85	45	12.68
Textbooks	22	33.85	105	29.58
Periodicals (Hard copy)	21	32.31	8	2.25
Newspaper	32	49.23	78	21.97
Past Students' Project	0	0	91	25.63
Electronic resources	52	80	74	20.85

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 5 below clearly highlights the means of locating materials in the library. Browsing through the shelves ranks highest among faculty members, 32 (49.23%), followed by seeking assistance from library staff 22 (33.85%) and 11 (16.92%) using online catalogue. 175 (52.24%) student respondents used the online catalogue to locate materials. This is followed by 98 (29.25%) browsing through the shelves with seeking assistance

from colleagues ranking lowest at 28(8.36%). Very few students seek the assistance from library workers and colleagues. From the table, the number of students using the online catalogue to locate materials is very encouraging and therefore more efforts must be put in to get the other students who are not used to using the catalogue to start using it.

Table 5: Means of locating materials

Means of locating materials	Faculty		students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Browsing through the shelves	32	49.23	98	29.25
Using online catalogue	11	16.92	175	52.24
Seek assistance from library staff	22	33.85	34	10.45
Seek assistance from colleagues	0	0	28	8.36
<b>Total</b>	65	100	335	100

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 6, shows that 159 (44.79%) student respondents agreed that materials they need to consult are always available, followed by 112(18.03%) who said they sometimes find the materials they visit the library for. On the other hand, majority of faculty members 34 (18.03%) respondents only sometimes find materials needed. A small number of the respondents, 23.08 % of

faculty and 18.03% of students claimed that they do not usually find reading materials while no respondent indicated that they have never found reading materials to consult. The finding here is not surprising as majority of the student respondents use the online catalogue to locate materials as shown in Table 5.

Table 6: Availability of reading materials

Availability of material	Faculty		Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Always	16	24.62	159	44.79
Sometimes	34	52.31	112	18.03
I don't usually find them	15	23.08	64	18.03
Never	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	65	100	335	100

Source: Field Report 2021

Table 7 shows the responses on the level of satisfaction respondents had with services and resources available in the library. 39 (60%) faculty respondents and 175(49.3%) student respondents indicated that they were satisfied respectively followed by 128(36.06%) students and 18(27.69%) faculty respondents who were very satisfied. Only a few respondents showed

dissatisfaction with the resources and services offered in the library. This shows that the library is not doing badly in its duty of providing information resources to support teaching and learning. However, there is still room for improvement as a few of the respondents were not satisfied with the library's services and resources.

Table 7: Level of satisfaction with library services and resources

Level of Satisfaction	Faculty		Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very Satisfied	18	27.69	128	36.06
Satisfied	39	60	175	49.3
Not very satisfied	7	10.77	28	7.89
Never Satisfied	1	1.54	4	1.13
<b>Total</b>	65	100	335	100

Source: Field Report 2021

Findings from table 8 below reveal challenges faced by respondents when using the library. As affirmed by 211 (59.44%) of the student respondents and 30 (46.16%) of the faculty respondents, the greatest challenge faced when using the GCTU library is lack of current

hardcopy books. This is followed by unreliable power supply. The least problem identified by both groups of respondents is related to obsolete library equipment as presented in table 8.

Table 8: Challenges faced when using the library

Challenges	Faculty		students	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lack of current hardcopy books	30	46.16	211	59.44
Obsolete library equipment	3	4.62	9	2.54
Inadequate knowledge on how to use the library catalogue	0	0	15	4.23
Unreliable power supply	15	23.08	47	13.24
Unstable Internet supply	10	15.38	35	9.86
Distractions from other Users	7	10.77	18	5.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Report 2021

### VII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that books were available for the use by students in GCTU library. That majority of library users were male.

It was also discovered that consulting electronic resources and reading for examination accounted for most students' visit to the library, 41.19% and 46.87% respectively. That majority of the respondents know how to locate library information resources on their own in the university library.

The perception of the students about the hardcopy books in the library revealed that they were not current. Students are more conversant with the use of online catalogue than faculty.

Faculty read more reference materials and newspapers while students read text books and past students project as well as students visiting the library more than faculty.

Most of the reading materials needed by both faculty and students were usually available. In general, both faculty and students were satisfied with the library services rendered and the resources available.

The study however, revealed that more students visit the library on weekly and during examination period than on daily basis. From the results it can be concluded that the university library, no doubt is still relevant even in the face of technological advancement.

The library therefore has the obligation to meet the information needs of its user community by ensuring the provision of relevant and current information resources and offering personal assistance to users in order to ensure optimal use of library materials and services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made for improvements on the use of the GCTU library and its information resources:

- The GCTU library should endeavor to provide relevant and up-to date books to attract and retain more users in the library. This is particularly important considering that books were found to be highly used and at the same time the greatest area of challenge for library users.
- There is need to evaluate the importance of some poorly used library resources to ascertain if there is need to create more awareness or re-package the services/resources to attract more users
- While using the internet may not be the most important reason for using the library, there is need for libraries to maintain internet facilities to serve those who do come to the library to use it considering its strength in information provision.
- The GCTU library should also ensure that adequate training is given to students on the use of the library catalogue to ensure optimal use of library resources.
- There should be improvement in the power supply to the library to aid the access to the e-resources.



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