

Information Seeking Behaviour of the Academic Staff and Students

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the results and findings of a survey conducted on library usage and information seeking behaviour of the academic staff and students of the Methodist University College Ghana. It is argued that the user is the most important aspect of the library and therefore studies aimed at understanding the user behaviour should be a continuous activity to help provide better services to the users. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research design. In all 300 questionnaires were administered to the selected population out of which 204 were completed, returned and analyzed. The quantitative approach made use of well structured questionnaires which were administered on the selected population consisting of lecturers and students while the qualitative approach made use of interview instrument in which a total of 30 selected participants were interviewed to seek further clarification on some of the answers provided in the questionnaires. The results and findings show that despite the availability of electronic information resources, books, theses/dissertations, journals and lecture notes are the most consulted information sources. The major source of identifying information needs is through the recommended booklist provided by lecturers and experts. The results and findings of the study confirm the critical role play by the University Library in academic work. The study also shows that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (70%) were effectively using the library for research and academic purposes.

However, library users were still using the traditional method of scanning through titles and pages of books on the book shelves as a means of searching and retrieving information. This method is rather time consuming and not effective in seeking information. In recent time the use of Open Public Access and Online catalogues, indexes/abstracts, internet and librarians assistance have proved to be more effective.

The study also established that, textbooks, reference materials and journals are the most dominant materials that library users consults as information sources. It also confirms that there is a high level of information sharing in the university community.

The study further established that the library collections are not adequate and suggested subject areas that need improvement. The recommendations as well as the challenges encountered by the library users in seeking and use of information are also enumerated.

The study concludes with a discussion of the results and made recommendations on how to improve upon information use in the university community.

Keywords: Information seeking behaviour, Information needs assessment, Academic Staff.

Library of Congress Classification Number: ZA 3075. M26

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The user of a library is the key person in any Library. All the benefits of information revolution and problems of information explosion centre on the user and his convenience. Understanding the user is therefore half the battle in providing library and information services.

The success of any library depends considerably on how best the system design is based on a close and accurate understanding of the users. The user is not only the most important aspect, but also a

dynamic component of the library. As such, understanding the user should be an important activity which should be undertaken continuously.

Know your customer is a cardinal rule of any business enterprise. It is for this reason that, extensive market research, customer behaviour studies and demand forecasting are carried out in businesses. Libraries and information centres also need to carry out studies on the user to determine the information needs, information use, the motives and purposes of seeking information, ways and means of gathering information and the entire user attitudes and practices in relation to information search and use.

Information seeking behavioural studies is therefore one of the most important areas in user studies. The motives and reasons users give to information use often affect the ways and means of accessing and searching sources of information. The users may try to acquire the necessary information in a standard or adhoc way as they find from available sources.

For instance a user may seek information in a number of ways such as reading books, browsing periodicals, consulting abstracts and indexes, contacting colleagues and friends, seeking information from guides and senior co-workers, gathering information from library and information centres as well as from conferences/seminars/workshops.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The library is central to the core business of the University which is teaching, learning and research and contributes greatly to enhance quality academic work.

In order to serve library users more efficiently, librarians need to understand how much users know about finding information, knowledge organization and information use. This knowledge could help in designing effective information literacy skills for the library users.

The Methodist University College Ghana library has been in existence since the inception of the University College about 12 years ago. The University College now has a total student population of 5349, faculty strength of 177 and a total supporting staff of 178. The total number of registered library users now stand at 4550.

It is however not known the extent to which the facilities and resources that are provided by the library meet the needs of users. The information literacy skills and information seeking behaviour of the users are also not known. This study is therefore being undertaken to investigate the above issues and make recommendations on how to improve upon library and information services in future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is design to investigate the relationships between the use of the library and information seeking behaviour of the academic staff and students of the Methodist University College Ghana for teaching, learning and research purposes.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the information needs of the library users.
- To determine the extent to which library users utilize library services and resources.
- To investigate the main sources of literature consulted by the library users.
- To identify the methods used for finding information.
- To determine users' awareness of the library services available to them.

- To determine if there is any relationship between awareness of information resources and the extent to which such resources are used to satisfy users information needs.
- To determine ways and means of gathering information and the users attitudes and practices in relation to information search and use.
- To identify the problems militating against access to information resources.
- To make recommendations on how the situation could be improved.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to information seeking behaviour and information use of library users at Methodist University College Ghana. It applies to academic staff or lecturers and students of all the three campuses of Methodist University College Ghana.

Methodology

The study made use of both qualitative and quantitative research design.

The sample for the study was selected from the population set of academic staff or lecturers and students of the Methodist University College Ghana using a simple random sampling technique.

In all 300 questionnaires were administered to the sample from the target population, out of the total number of questionnaires administered, 204 completed questionnaires were returned for analysis. The qualitative approach involve the use of interview instrument, where 30 selected participants were interviewed to ascertain further clarification on some of the answers provided in the questionnaires.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of data. The analysis was based on frequency count.

Literature review

Taylor (1991) defined information behaviour as the product of certain elements of information use environment. The elements are:

- The assumptions, formally learned or not, made by a defined set of people concerning the nature of their work;
- The kinds and structure of the problems deemed important and typical by this set of people;
- The constraints and opportunities of typical environments within which any group or sub group of this set of people operates and work;
- The conscious and perhaps unconscious, assumptions made as to what constitutes a solution, or better said, a resolution of problems and what information is useful and valuable in the contexts.

The work also suggested that information seeking behaviour of groups of people are different (Taylor, 1991).

According to Wilson (1997), a general model of information behaviour should include at least the following three elements:

- An information need and its drivers, ie the factors that give rise to an individual's perception of need;
- The factors that affect the individual's response to the perception of need; and
- The processes or actions involved in that response.

Information need is often understood in information science as evolving from awareness of something missing and that culminate in locating information that contributes to understanding or providing meaning to a situation (Kuhlthau, 1993).

Kuhlthau (1993) conducted a study on students information seeking behaviour in libraries and developed a general model of information seeking process. The Information Seeking Process (ISP) consists of six stages: initiation, selection, explication, formulation, collection and presentation. According to the study, students experience the ISP holistically with an interplay of thought, feelings and action.

Limberg (1998) also studied the interaction between information use and learning outcome, with high school students who worked on an assignment requiring independent use of information. The study established that variation in information seeking and use depend closely on the variation in ways of experiencing and understanding the content of information.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Pelzer and Leysen (1988) evaluated the information seeking behaviour of the Veterinary Medical Students' of Iowa State University, USA to determine whether they sought current information and where they obtained the information. Questions relating to how they satisfied specific information needs and how they found current information for a new topic were asked. According to the responses, library resources such as indexes/abstracts, were used more by students in the clinical curriculum. The study also established that the students used multiple information sources.

Sheppard (1993) carried out a study on the information seeking behaviour of students/teachers engaged in the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) teacher education programme in Sydney, Australia. The results showed that most of the information sources used by the group came from the library.

Holland and Powell (1995) also conducted a longitudinal survey of the information seeking and use habits of some engineers. The findings showed that after years of graduation the engineers surveyed were united in thinking that instruction on how to access information should be incorporated into courses taught at colleges and should be part of the continuing education and on the job training, in order to help them keep abreast with developments in their profession.

Urquhart and Crane (1994) also studied the information seeking skills and perception of information sources used by nurses in the UK. The findings show that a third of the sample studied showed very little evidence of information seeking skills. It also revealed that nurses rely more on informal information sources such as colleagues and Health specialists than formal sources of information.

Osiobe (1988) in a study on information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria observed that the poor use of abstracts/indexes demands that efforts be made to integrate instructions on the use of information and library resources in some compulsory undergraduate courses.

Zondi (1992) carried out a research on library use skills and information seeking patterns of the first year students of the University of Zululand, South Africa. The study concluded that information retrieval tools were rarely used for the completion of independent academic tasks such as assignments. One of the reasons advanced as an explanation for this result is the absence of an effective user education programme.

Fidzani (1998) also studied the information-seeking behaviour of graduate students of the University of Botswana. The study found that: journals, library books and textbooks are the most popular sources of information for course works and research and the study recommends that students need to be taught how to use other available resources and services.

Fiankor (1998) studied the information seeking behaviour and information use of graduate students of the Department of Library and Archival Studies, University of Ghana. The conclusion was that most of the students used the libraries as their major source of information.

Callinan (2005) in a study on information - seeking behaviour of biology students of university college of Dublin highlighted the positive aspects of seeking information from the student perspective as well as the barriers they encountered when seeking course related information. The findings show that there are differences in the extent to which sources of information are used by students in different years of their studies. The study conclude that apart from websites and web-based lecture notes, lack of awareness is the primary reason why undergraduate biology students did not use the library electronic databases.

Ogunrombi and Amadasu (2009) in a study on the information needs and information seeking behaviour of Ekiadolor rural women of Nigeria recommends the provision of relevant information materials and services based on a thorough community analysis, establishment of rural libraries by collaborating with other agencies. The study also suggests regular evaluation of information resources and services to ensure a successful community information programme for the economic empowerment of rural women.

Owolabi, Jimoh and Okpeh (2010) recommends that library staff should be trained so that they can be effective in understanding and meeting the information needs of polytechnic students.

Prabhavathi (2011) states that availability of information on the web has affected information seeking behaviour. According to the author the web now provide a large variety of information from different location at one place.

Madukoma and Opeke (2013) investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of senior non-academic staff in selected universities in Nigeria. The study establishes among others, that senior non-academic staff had varied information needs based on their work roles; they sought information mainly for decision making and availability of information source largely influenced their information source selection. It also established that complexity of job task compelled them to seek information. The study recommends that librarians and information managers should ensure that regular information literacy programmes are organised for them.

This study is different from previous studies to the extent that it investigates the use of the library, conducts an assessment of the library collections as well as ascertained the motivation behind users methods of obtaining information and the major information consulted by the library users.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the library usage and information seeking behaviour of academic staff and students of Methodist University College Ghana. The main objective was to ascertain whether the library was being used effectively and to also ascertain the methods used in seeking information as well as the main sources of information consulted by library users.

In all 300 questionnaires were administered to the respondents who were selected based on simple random sampling technique. Out of the total questionnaires distributed, 204 completed questionnaires were returned and collated for analysis. The response rate was therefore (81.6%).

The data analysis and presentation is based on the following indicators: the use of the library, assessment of library collections, information seeking behaviour of users, information sources consulted by users, computer literacy and training received. The findings are discussed in the following sections.

Age, gender and status composition of respondents

The Age composition as illustrated in table 1.1 below shows that, 56 respondents were below 30 years, While 88 were aged between 30-40 years. 35 of them were aged between 40-50 years. In addition, 15 were aged between 50-60 years. Only 10 of the respondents were above 60 years.

With regards to the gender distribution, out of the 204 respondents, 80 of them were males and 124 were females. The result therefore shows that majority of the respondents were young below the age of 40. The female dominance also indicate the high proportion of female students and staff in the university college. It is also an indication that females dominate the use of the library.

Table 1.1: Gender and age group composition

Age Group	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Under 30 yrs	26	30	56
30 - 40 yrs	52	36	88
40 - 50 yrs	27	8	35
50 -60 yrs	12	3	15
Above 60 yrs	7	3	10
Total	124	80	204

Status/Faculty/Departmental composition of the respondents.

Table 1.2 and figure 1.1 and 1.2 below illustrates the status and the faculty composition of the respondents. The students with cumulative percentage of (91%) dominate the respondents followed by lecturers with cumulative percentage of (7%).

With regards to faculty composition of the respondents, again the result as illustrated in table 1.2 and figure 1.1 below shows that majority of the respondents 148 representing (72.5%) were from the

Faculty of Business Administration. While 49 respondents representing (24%) came from the Faculty of Social Studies. The rest can be seen in table 1.2 below.

Furthermore, figures 1.3 – 1.5, below illustrates the departmental composition of respondents. Majority of the respondents came from departments in the Faculty of Business Administration, 42 and 38 respondents came from the departments of Accounting and Banking & Finance respectively. While 15 and 45 respondents came from the departments of Marketing and Human Resource Management respectively. This can be seen in figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.4 below also shows that from the Faculty of Social Studies, 16 and 14 respondents came from the departments of Psychology and Information Technology respectively. The departmental composition of the Faculty of Arts and General Studies can be seen in figure 1.5 below. The faculty of Business administration has the largest number of students and faculty staff, this may be the reason for the variation in the number of respondents from the departments in the faculty of business administration compare to other faculties.

Table 1.2: Status/Faculty composition of respondents

Status	Faculty				Total
	Business Administration	Social Studies	Arts and General Studies	Agriculture	
Senior Lecturers	1	1	0	0	2
Lecturers	3	7	3	0	13
Post graduate Students	19	5	1	0	25
Undergraduate Students	123	36	2	0	161
Other staff	2	0	0	1	3
Total	148	49	6	1	204

Faculty Summary

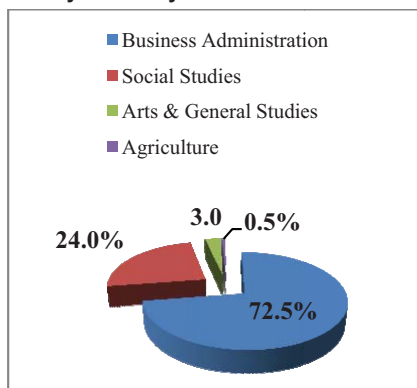


Figure 1.1 Faculty composition

Respondents Status

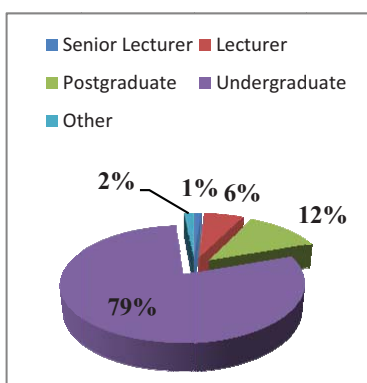


Figure 1.2 Respondents' status

Departmental Composition

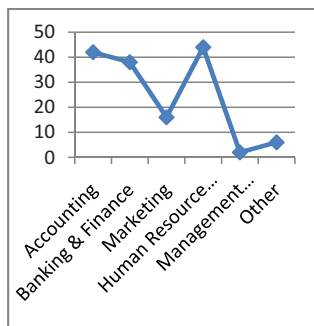


Fig. 1.3 Business Administration

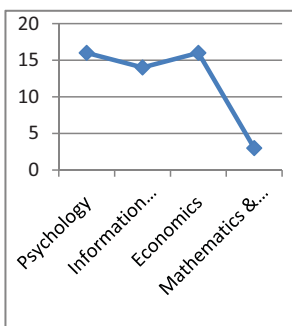


Fig. 1.4 Social Studies

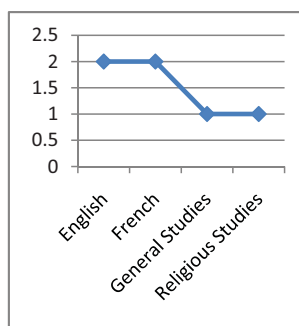


Fig. 1.5 Arts and General Studies

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIBRARY TO USERS.

In order to ascertain the relevance of the library to the users, respondents were asked to indicate how important the library was to them. As illustrated in table 1.3 below, 118 respondents representing (57%) indicated that the library was very important to them, While 70 respondents representing (35%) stated that the library was extremely important. 8 respondents representing (4%) each indicated that, the library was moderately and somewhat important respectively.

It is worthy to note that none of the respondents stated that the library was not important to them. The result shows that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (92%) strongly supports the general assertion that the library is very important to academic work.

Table 1.3: Importance of the library to users

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Extremely important	70	35
Very important	118	57
Moderately important	8	4
Somewhat important	8	4
Not important	0	0
Total	204	100.0

Use of the library

In order to determine the extent to which the library was being used, the respondents were asked to indicate how often they use the library. As illustrated in table 1.4 below, the response shows that, 65 respondents representing (32%) used the library very often, while 64 respondents representing (31%) often used the library. 42 respondents representing (21%) and 31 respondents representing (15%) stated that, they occasionally and sometimes respectively use the library. 2 respondents representing

(1%) stated that they never use the library. It is very encouraging to note that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (63%) indicated that they either very often or often use the library.

Table 1.4: How often do you use the library

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very often	65	32
Often	64	31
Occasionally	42	21
Sometimes	31	15
Never	2	1
Total	204	100.0

Purpose for using the library

When respondents were asked to indicate their purpose for using the library, the response as illustrated in table 1.5 below shows that, 64 respondents representing (31%) use the library to consult reference books, While 48 respondents representing (23%) use the library to borrow books/materials. 32 respondents representing (16%) use the library to seek reference assistance. The rest can be seen in table 1.5 below.

The result also indicate that about (30%) of the respondents use the library for multiple purpose.

The result clearly shows that, majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (70%) use the library to consult reference books and to borrow books/materials, as well as seek reference assistance. The main objective of the university library is to provide information to support teaching, learning and research. It is therefore encouraging to note that majority of the library users make use of the library for research purposes, that is to obtain specific information and also consult Reference Librarians for assistance on how to search and retrieve relevant information for academic purposes.

Table 1.5: Purpose for using the library

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Consult journals	18	9
Consult reference books	64	31
Make photocopies	26	13
Borrow books/materials	48	23
Browse the internet	16	8
Seek reference assistance	32	16
Total	204	100

Methods use to access information in the library

The study was interested in ascertaining the methods used by the respondents to access information both within and outside the library. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate the methods used to access and retrieve information. As illustrated in table 1.6 below, 108 respondents representing (52.0%) stated that, they scanned through the book stocks on the shelves to locate and retrieve information, While 32 respondents representing (16%) each stated that they sought assistance from library staff and use indexes/abstracts respectively.

16 respondents representing (8%) each also stated that they consult automated catalogues and electronic databases respectively.

The results shows that majority of the users (52%) still use the traditional method of scanning through the titles and pages of the books on the shelves to obtain their information needs. This process can be time consuming and cumbersome. In recent time, the use of Open Public Access Catalogues, Online catalogues and indexes/abstracts, provide easy and quick access to information both within and outside the library.

Table 1.6: Methods use to access and retrieve information

Methods use to access and retrieve information	Frequency	Percent
Use of indexes and abstracts	32	16
Scan through book stocks	108	52
Use of automated catalogue (OPAC)	16	8
Use of electronic databases	16	8
Assisted by Library Staff	32	16
Total	204	100.0

Success rate of obtaining information from the library

When respondents were asked to indicate the rate at which they succeed in obtaining their information needs from the library. As illustrated in table 1.7 below, 93 respondents representing (45.5%) indicated that they were often successful in obtaining their information needs, While 50 respondents representing (24.5%) indicated that they were very often successful in obtaining their information needs.

32 respondents representing (16%) and 25 respondents representing (12%) indicated that they sometimes and occasionally respectively succeed in obtaining their information needs. In addition, 4 respondents representing (2%) indicated that they never succeed in obtaining their information needs.

It is however, gratifying to note that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (70%) are always successful in obtaining their information needs. The result is an indication of high information literacy rate and availability of sufficient information sources and resources in the university community.

Table 1.7: Success rate of obtaining information from the library

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very Often	50	24.5
Often	93	45.5
Occasionally	25	12
Sometimes	32	16
Never	4	2
Total	204	100.0

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The study was also interested in assessing the relevance and adequacy of library collections. The respondents were therefore asked to indicate whether the library collections were adequate in their various subject areas of interest. As illustrated in table 1.8 below, 88 respondents representing (43%) indicated that the library is moderately stocked in their subject areas.

72 respondents representing (35%) were of the view that the library is adequately stocked in their subject areas. While 18 respondents representing (9%) and 12 respondents representing (6%) were of the view that the library is very adequately stocked and inadequately stocked respectively. The rest can be seen in table 1.8 below.

The results clearly shows that, majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (56%) were not satisfied with the level of library collections in their subject areas. Considering the high number of respondents who felt that the library was either moderately or inadequately stocked, the library must do more to ascertain the individual and group information needs of the users through information needs assessment and acquire materials to satisfy the needs of library users.

Table 1.8: Adequacy of stock/collection of the library

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very adequately stocked	18	9
Adequately Stocked	72	35
Moderately stocked	88	43
Inadequately stocked	12	6
Very inadequately stocked	6	3
Don't know	8	4
Total	204	100.0

Library collections/materials that need improvement.

The respondents were further asked to suggest specific subject areas that requires improvement. The responses as illustrated in table 1.9 below shows that, 68 respondents representing (33%) indicated textbooks, While 50 respondents representing (25%) indicated reference materials. 32 respondents representing (16%) stated Journals. 28 respondents representing (13%) stated online databases. The rest can be seen in table 1.9 below.

It is obvious from the results that the library materials that need special attention are textbooks, reference materials, journals and online databases. The library must therefore use scientific processes to develop its collections in the above suggested areas

Table 1.9: Suggested library materials that need to be strengthen.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Reference materials	50	25
Text books	68	33
Journals	32	16
Magazines/newsletters/Newspapers	10	5
Bulletins/reports	8	4
Government publications	8	4
On-line databases	28	13
Total	204	100.0

The respondent were further asked to indicate the specific subject areas that requires attention. The following subject areas were listed;

- Psychology – neuro psychology, consumer psychology, educational psychology, sports psychology, clinical psychology, industrial psychology and environmental psychology, experimental psychology.
- Guidance and Counseling,
- Accounting - auditing, taxation, public finance.
- Management - corporate governance, corporate administration, organizational change and development, human relations.
- Religion - christian ethics, old and new testaments, church history
- Business Ethics and Business Law
- Entrepreneurship
- Contemporary issues
- Environmental studies/ management
- Project management
- Novels and Fictions
- Political and social history of Ghana, west africa and africa.
- Pure and applied mathematics, statistics.
- Economics - public policy analysis, cost benefit analysis, industrial economics.
- Research methods
- English, french, german, chinese languages
- Information Technology- programming, network administration, artificial intelligence.
- Marketing – health services marketing, public relations, financial service marketing.
- Strategic human resource management, international human resource management, human resource development.
- Music.
- Agriculture.
- Nursing.
- Social work.
- Reference materials- encyclopaedias, language and subjects dictionaries, directories, yearbooks, almanacs etc.

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LIBRARY USERS.

The study also aimed at ascertaining the information seeking behaviour of library users. As illustrated in table 1.10 below, 118 respondents representing (57%) indicated that they consult books/ materials on the shelves to find their specific information needs, While 60 respondents representing (30%) stated that, they consult library staff for assistance to obtain their information needs.

10 respondents representing (5%) and 8 respondents representing (4%) each indicated that they use the internet, indexes/abstracts and OPAC respectively to obtain their information needs.

The result indicate that majority (57%) of the library users are able to find their information needs on their own through scanning of books/materials on the shelves. This process is not the most efficient way of obtaining information.

Table 1.10: How do you go about seeking information

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Consult library staff for assistance	60	30
Consult library catalogue (OPAC)	8	4
Consult books/materials on the shelves	118	57
Consult library indexes and abstracts	8	4
Use the internet	10	5
Total	204	100.0

Activities that motivates users to seek information

The respondents were further asked to indicate the activities that motivate them to seek information. As illustrated in table 1.11 below, 112 respondents representing (55%) stated that they seek information for their project works and assignments, While 72 respondents representing (35%) stated that they are motivated to seek information for research purposes.

Another 12 respondents representing (6%) and 8 respondents representing (4%) indicated that they seek information for reference citation and entertainment purposes respectively.

The results confirm that majority of respondents with cumulative percentage of (90%) are motivated to seek information for academic and research purposes.

Table 1.11: Activities that motivate users to seek information.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Research purposes	72	35
Project works and assignments	112	55
Entertainment and leisure	8	4
Reference citation	12	6
Total	204	100.0

How often do you become in need of information

As illustrated in table 1.12 below, the respondents were asked to indicate how often they become in need of information. The response shows that, 81 respondents representing (39.5%) indicated that they often have need for information, While 68 respondents representing (33%) stated that they sometimes have need for information. 42 respondents representing (21%) and 10 respondents representing (5%) said, they very often and seldomly respectively have need for information. However 3 respondents representing (1.5%) stated that they never have any need for information.

The result show that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (60.5%) either very often or often have need for information. It is a confirmation of very active library users and effective academic work in the University College.

Table 1.12: Frequency of being in need of information

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very often	42	21
Often	81	39.5
Sometimes	68	33
Seldom	10	5
Never	3	1.5
Total	204	100.0

How often do you seek assistance from library staff

The study also aimed at establishing the extent to which library users depends on library staff for assistance. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate how often they seek assistance from library staff. 110 respondents representing (54%) indicated that they sometimes ask for assistance from library staff, While 42 respondents representing (21%) stated they seldomly ask for help from library staff. 25 respondents representing (12%) and 15 respondents representing (7%) indicated that they often and very often respectively ask for help from library staff. However, 12 respondents representing (6%) stated they have never asked for help from the library staff. From the response above, one can conclude that very few respondents with cumulative percentage of (19%) regularly ask for assistance from library staff. Majority (54%) sometimes ask for assistance. However, the percentage of respondents who either seldomly or never ask for help is quite low.

Table 1.13: Frequency of seeking assistance from library staff

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very often	15	7
Often	25	12
Sometimes	110	54
Seldom	42	21
Never	12	6
Total	204	100

Persons who provide assistance to library users.

A follow up question was asked to ascertain the specific staff both within and outside the library/institution who assist the users to find their information needs. As illustrated in table 1.14 below, 92 respondents representing (46%) indicated that they ask for assistance from the Reference Librarian, While 52 respondents representing (25%) indicated that they get help from their friends and colleagues in obtaining their information needs. 45 respondents representing (22%) were of the opinion that it was their lecturers who assist them to obtain information. However, 5 respondents representing (7%) stated that, they obtain assistance from Subject Specialists/Experts.

The results confirm the critical role play by Reference Librarians in the provision of library services. It is also important to note from the result that, academic staff, apart from performing the core work of teaching and research make time to assist students to obtain information. The result also confirm that, there is high level of information sharing in the university community

Table 1.14: Staff who assist the library users to obtain information

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Reference Librarians	92	46
Subject Specialists/Experts	15	7
Lecturers	45	22
Friends colleagues	52	25
Total	204	100

When respondents were further asked to list the other libraries / information centres, that they sometimes visited for additional information resources, apart from MUCG library. The following libraries/information centres were listed with the highest coming first;

- Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon
- Ghana Library Authority, Accra
- George Padmore Library, Accra
- Alliance Francias Library, Accra
- University of Cape Coast Library, Cape Coast
- University of Education Library, Winneba
- Zenith College Library, Accra
- Central University College Library, Accra
- Wilson Library, Valley View University, Accra
- Psychology Department Library, University of Ghana
- University of Ghana Business School Library, Legon
- Accra City Campus Library, University of Ghana
- University of Ghana Medical School Library, Korle-bu, Accra.
- GIMPA Library, Accra
- CSIR Libraries, Accra

INFORMATION SOURCES THAT ARE CONSULTED BY LIBRARY USERS.

The study also aimed at establishing the information sources that are consulted by the library users. As illustrated in table 1.15 below, the result shows that, 62 respondents representing (31%) consults Books as a major source of information; this was followed by 32 respondents representing (16%) who indicated that, they consult theses/dissertations. In addition, 25 respondents representing (12%) and 20 respondents representing (9%) stated that they consult lecture notes and journals respectively.

The rest can be seen in table 1.15 below. The result clearly shows that Books, theses/dissertations, lecture notes and journals are the most consulted materials by the library users. The findings also confirm that about (50%) respondents consult multiple information sources

Table 1.15: Information sources consulted by library users.

Sources on information	Frequency	Percent
Books	62	31
Journals	20	9
Magazines and newsletters	6	3
Reports and bulletins	8	4
Theses and dissertations	32	16
Conference proceedings / papers	6	3
Online databases	15	7
Government publications (colleagues/experts)	10	5
Lecture notes	25	12
Reference materials	16	8
Total	204	100.00

How often do you consult information sources

When a follow up question was asked the respondents to indicate how often they consult information sources for their information needs. The result as illustrated in table 1.16 below shows that 85 respondents representing (42%) and 45 respondents representing (22%) indicated that they often and very often respectively make use of information sources. While another 45 respondents representing (22%) and 25 respondents representing (12%) indicated that they occasionally and sometimes respectively make use of information sources. However 4 respondents representing (2.0%) stated that they never make use of information sources.

It is important to state that the more you are familiar with information sources the easier and quicker you can search and retrieve information. It is also encouraging to note that majority of the respondents with cumulative percentage of (64%) either very often or often make use of information sources.

Table 1.16: Frequency of using of information sources.

Frequency of using sources	Frequency	Percent
Very often	45	22
Often	85	42
Occasionally	45	22
Sometimes	25	12
Never	4	2
Total	204	100.0

Methods used to identify and locate information sources

The respondents were also asked to indicate the methods used to identify and locate their information sources. The response as illustrated in table 1.17 below shows that, 76 respondents representing (36%) indicated that they identify and locate their information sources through the recommended booklist given to them by Lecturers. While 50 respondents representing (25%) stated that they identify their information sources by scanning through titles and pages of books on the shelves. 42 respondents representing (21%) indicated they identify and locate information sources through colleagues and friends. The rest can be seen in table 1.17 below. The findings also confirm that the respondents use multiple methods to identify and locate information sources.

The result clearly shows that the respondents rely on the recommended booklist as a major method of identifying information sources. It is however important for respondents to go beyond the recommended booklist. The use of other sources such as bibliographic databases, indexes/abstracts and internet as methods for indentifying information sources is highly recommended.

Table 1.17: Methods use to identify and locate information sources

Means of identifying information sources	Frequency	Percent
Colleagues/Friends	42	21
Scanning book/materials in the library	50	25
Review articles	8	4
Literature searches	10	5
Bibliographic databases	4	2
Recommended booklist	76	36
Indexes and abstracts	6	3
Internet	8	4
Total	204	100

DO YOU ENCOUNTER ANY PROBLEM(S) IN ACCESSING AND USING INFORMATION SOURCES.

Majority of the respondents, 152 representing (74.5%) answered Yes and 52 respondents representing (25.5%) answered No to the question on whether they encounter any problem(s) in accessing and using information sources.

Table 1.18: Do you encounter any problem in accessing information

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	152	74.5
No	52	25.5
Total	204	100.0

Nature of the problems

A follow up question was asked the respondents to state the nature of the problems encountered. As illustrated in table 1.19 below, as many as 68 respondents representing (33%) indicated difficulties in identifying information sources, While 50 respondents representing (25%) indicated the problem of determining their specific information needs.

29 respondents representing (15%) and 18 respondents representing (9%) stated the problem of not being sure of where to look for information and the long and complex search processes respectively. The rest can be seen in table 1.19 below.

The results confirm that the respondents face the normal challenges that library users encounters in information search and use. However, the management of the library has to deal with the problem of some library staff not cooperating with the users.

Table 1.19: Nature of problems encountered by library users.

Type of problem	Frequency	Percent
	68	33
Problem of obtaining specific information needs	50	25
Library staff do not cooperate with users	14	6
Lack of time to conduct searches	15	7
Search process is too long and complex	18	9
Not sure of where to look for information	29	15
Too much published information available	10	5
Total	204	100.00

COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCESS

As illustrated in table 1.20 below, 162 respondents representing (79.5%) indicated that they have access to computers at home, While 135 respondents representing (66%) indicated that they have access to computers only at the work place.

With regards to internet access, 83 respondents representing (41%) stated that they have internet access at home; While 135 respondents representing (66%) stated that they have internet access only at the work place.

It is very encouraging to note that some respondents have access to computers and internet both at work and home. This means that library users can now access information both at home and work. The library can therefore provide remote access to its electronic resources now that there is an indication that, some users have computers and internet access both at home and work place.

Table 1.20: Computer and Internet access

Use of computer	Home		Work	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Computer access	162	79.5	135	66
Internet connectivity	83	41	135	66

TRAINING RECEIVED IN INFORMATION LITERACY

On the question of whether respondents have received any training in information literacy, Majority of the respondents 134 representing (66) said Yes, While 70 respondents representing (34%) said No. Even though majority of the respondents stated that they have received some form of training. Considering the high response rate of those who said No. It is important for the library to work towards the provision of information literacy training for the entire user community to empower library users to make effective use of the library and internet resources on their own.

Table 1.21: Have you received any training in information literacy skills

Training/instruction	Frequency	Percent
Yes	134	66
No	70	34
Total	204	100

Type of training/ instruction received

A follow up question was asked those who indicated that they have received training to state the type of training received from the library. As illustrated in table 1.22 below, 102 respondents representing

(75%) stated Library orientation, While 15 respondents representing (12%) each stated workshops/seminars and information retrieval respectively. 2 respondents representing (1%) indicated awareness creation.

It is obvious from the result that majority (75%) of the respondents have only benefited from library orientation. There is the need for the library to intensify information literacy training programmes for users.

Table 1.22: Type of training/instruction received

Type of training/instructions	Frequency	Percent
Library Orientation	102	75
Training on information retrieval	15	12
Awareness creation	2	1
Workshops/Seminars	15	12
Total	134	100

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY RESPONDENTS (LIBRARY USERS)

The recommendations made by the respondents are summarized as follows;

Collection development and management

- The library should continuously acquire books/materials on the courses that are taught at the university college.
- There should be conscious efforts to regularly update the book/material collections with new editions.
- The library collections should be largely based on the recommendations of lecturers.
- The library should begin to acquire electronic on-line databases (ebooks /journals) which should be made accessible via the university website.
- The library should augment the foreign books with locally published books.
- There are too many reference books i.e books that cannot be borrowed out of the library. There should be periodic review of reference books.
- Students should be allowed to borrow more than two books at a time.
- Books should be acquired on new programmes before the courses commence.
- The Journals collection is woefully inadequate. There should be a print journal for each department.
- Recommended books should be acquired to prevent lecturers from extorting money from students through selling their handouts to students.

Organization of the library

- The difficulties of locating and retrieving books/materials within the library should be addressed.
- Both students/staff should stop wearing high - heel shoes, which makes too much noise in the library.

- The opening hours should be extended to give Evening and Weekend students the opportunity to use the library.
- Students should be discouraged from hiding books within the library, especially during the examination period.
- The wall clocks should be set to keep the original time.
- Sometimes students make too much noise.

Computing and electronic facilities

- The computers in the library are woefully inadequate. Additional computers should be provided for the library users.
- Internet access should be free for students.
- Provision should be made for wireless connection, that will enable students have free internet access in and around the library.
- Students need training in Information literacy skills (how to access scholarly information especially on the internet).
- The library facilities should be radically developed.
- Sometimes the photocopying service is too slow.

Physical development facilities

- The library should as a matter of urgency be relocated to the main campus. Many people are not able to use the library because of the location.
- The library should be centrally located for easy access.
- The Electronic Support Section should be expanded to take more computers.
- The seating capacity of the library is too small, there is too much congestion during examination period.
- The library main doors make too much noise. The doors should be changed immediately.
- The conducive learning environment should be maintained. The air-conditioners should be used when the weather is hot, and be regulated when the weather is cold.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion critically examines the results of the study against the objectives. One of the objectives of the study was to identify the information needs of library users, this is to enable the library focus its attention on acquiring relevant information resources that will meet the needs of the users. The study clearly established that textbooks, reference materials, journals and online databases on relevant subject areas that are taught at the university college are the most desired information resources by majority of library users. Table 1.9 illustrates the above needs of library users. This therefore means that the library must concentrate its efforts in acquiring books/materials to strengthen the collections in these subject areas.

With regards to the objective of the study to determine the extent to which library users make use of library services, the study established that majority with cumulative percentage of (63%) as illustrated in table 1.3, either very often or often make use of the university library, this is quite encouraging.

However, there is the need to promote library services to the other group of users who do not regularly use the library, as effective use of the library contributes greatly to quality academic work.

The study also ascertained the main sources of information consulted by library users and the methods used for finding information. The results as illustrated in table 1.15 clearly revealed that majority of the library users obtain their information from textbooks, follow by theses/dissertations, lecture notes and journals, this confirm the reason why majority of the users require information resources in the form of textbooks, theses / dissertations and journals.

It is however important to emphasise that library users should be encouraged to make use of other information sources such as, bibliographic and on-line databases, government publications and internet resources which contains very current and relevant literature useful for research purposes.

On the methods used to seek information, the results of the study as illustrated in table 1.5 shows that majority of the users still make use of the traditional method of scanning through titles and pages of books on the shelves to locate and retrieve information. In recent time the ideal methods used to search for information in libraries and information centres is the use of Open Public Access Catalogues or Online catalogues, indexes/abstracts or seek assistance from librarians or information specialists. These methods make information search more effective and efficient and saves time. However, the users have to be given proper orientation on how to use these search tools effectively to access and retrieve information from libraries and information centres.

The result of the study also established that there is a relationship between awareness of the existence of information resources and services in a library/information centres and the extent to which these resources/services are used to meet the information needs of users. The results as illustrated in table 1.4 provides the various reasons for which the users visit the library. Majority of the respondents indicated that they visit the library to consult reference materials, borrow books/materials or seek reference assistance.

The above three services remain the most largely used library services, because majority of the users are not aware of the other services provided by the library such as photocopy / internet and literature search services. The library must therefore do well to publicise these other services as much as the highly patronised services.

Again the results of the study as illustrated in table 1.10 also established the ways and means by which users go about gathering information and users attitudes and practices in relation to information search and use. Majority of library users go through the traditional method of searching for information by scanning through titles and pages of books on the shelves. The recommended methods for seeking information is the use of the library catalogues, indexes and abstracts as well as consulting Reference Librarians. These methods do not only make information search effective and efficient, but it also saves time.

The study further established that the motivation behind the users' choice of the method for seeking information is to use the information for research and academic purposes.

The challenges encountered by the library users in the process of seeking information were also revealed in the study, paramount among these challenges was the difficulties of identifying information sources and lack of cooperation from the library staff. The management of the University library need to take up and address the issue on library staff attitudes towards users.

In conclusion it is recommended that this periodic survey and assessment of the University library operations and users behaviour should be sustained as it provides the necessary feedback from the user's point of view. This will certainly help to ensure high quality standards in the provision of library services.

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