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Prospects and constraints of the University of Cape Coast satellite libraries
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Prospects and constraints of the University of Cape Coast satellite libraries

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to find out the prospects and the factors which militate against the smooth operations of the University of Cape Coast satellite libraries.

Design/methodology/approach – A well-structured questionnaire was used to solicit data from all the staff of the 31 satellite libraries on the Campus of the University of Cape Coast. To ensure reliable findings, the survey approach was used. The first part of the questionnaire looked at the status of staff of the satellite libraries. The second part dealt with the information resources of the libraries, services provided by the libraries and staff developmental issues, while the last part solicited information on the challenges of these libraries. The quantitative data obtained mainly from the questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Findings – Some of the major findings are as follows: staff of the satellite libraries have the opportunity to upgrade themselves academically; the Main Library organised a series of in-service training for the staff of the satellite libraries; majority of the staff of the satellite libraries were non-professional and inadequate; and the majority of the satellite libraries were ill equipped, lack of simple working materials like accession registers and stamps, and lack of recognition of library staff by administrators, lecturers and students.

Research limitations/implications – The major components of a library are the building, staff and information resources; however, the study was limited to the staff and information resources, but excludes the building in which the libraries were housed.

Practical implications – Functional satellite libraries are required to support the activities of the main libraries.

Social implications – Satellite libraries are to support the main library to achieve its vision and mission; hence, their ineffectiveness affects the parent institution.

Originality/value – Satellite libraries support the main libraries in accomplishing their vision and mission, but it can be noted that much has been written on the main libraries, and is it high time the state, management and challenges of satellite libraries were exposed.

Keywords Resources, Motivation, Training, Library, Staff, Satellite

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The University of Cape Coast in Ghana currently operates with 31 satellite libraries of five colleges and six halls, namely, the College of Humanities and Legal Studies, the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, the College of Health and Allied Sciences, the College of Education Studies and the College of Distance Education. The rest are as follows: Adehye Hall, Oguia Hall, Atlantic Hall, Casely Hayford Hall, Kwame Nkrumah Hall and Valco Hall. The collegiate system which was adopted by the University in August 2014 was to create an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching, learning and research activities.

The Main Library of the University of Cape Coast was established in 1962 at a place popularly known as “Old Site”, but was moved to its current location in 1999 ([University of](#)



Cape Coast, Library Strategic Plan, 2013). The Main Library's activities were supposed to be supported by satellite libraries. Satellite libraries, as the name suggests, are libraries that are adjuncts to a principal library of an institution (Tredell, 2012). The main vision of the Satellite Libraries of the University of Cape Coast is "to become modern information centres that will provide informational resources to complement the services of the Main Library of the University of Cape Coast".

To actualise the above-mentioned vision, the Main Library provides staff for the satellite libraries. The staff sent to these libraries could be professionals, para-professionals and non-professionals. Currently, the majority of the staff who manage the satellite libraries is of Senior Staff and Junior Staff by rank. Occasionally, the Main Library organises in-service training for its staff, of which the staff of the satellite libraries are included. Other services provided by the Main Library for the satellite libraries include research, reference and technical services. Periodically, the Main Library donates books to some satellite libraries; however, it is the responsibility of the Faculties, Departments and Halls to acquire library materials for their respective satellite libraries (University of Cape Coast Annual Vice Chancellor's Report, 2015).

Objective of the study

The study seeks to find out the prospects and constraints of satellites libraries in relation to the expected role academic libraries are supposed to play in their parent institutions

Problem statement

Main libraries in academic institutions are tasked to support the teaching, learning and research activities of their parent institutions; consequently, libraries in academic institutions are also inspected during the accreditation process. The genesis of satellite libraries could be traced to the expansion of Faculties and Departments, increase in students enrolment and the demand for more information resources. Satellite libraries were, therefore, established to assist the main library perform their assigned role.

Satellite libraries, therefore, need greater support from the parent institutions, faculties, departments, halls and the main libraries. However, quite often, such libraries are forgotten and not well managed (Tredell, 2012). These libraries are vulnerable if emerging issues in modern librarianship are compromised. By acknowledging the relationship that exists between the main and the satellite libraries, one cannot be ignored at the expense of the other.

Literature review

Inadequate staff

The main mission of any library is to meet the information needs of its clients; however, this does not come just like that; the library staff behind the scenes need to perform some technical services, such as acquisition, stamping, accessioning, labelling, cataloguing, classifying, indexing, abstracting and shelving to make the available information resources accessible to library users. The nature of the work means that satellite library staff do a lot, that is why Sagini (2001) believes that a lot of competent and devoted people are needed for this category of library.

At the University of Cape Coast, some of the satellite libraries are managed by one staff, this situation according to Mark *et al.* (2005) brings about work fragmentation. They noted that endless distractions one staff experience impede mental acuity, making it more difficult for workers to think deeply and creatively about problem. Their research further highlighted a feeling of constant interruptions of the duties of staff of libraries managed by

one person. They estimated that the average knowledge worker has only three minutes to concentrate on the work he does, so a series of interruptions may put the staff under stress.

Motivation

The library which is an essential part of the university cannot operate without motivated staff; consequently, staff motivation is required. The *Universal English Dictionary of the English Language* defines motivation simply as “provision of inducement”. For this study, the four well-established models of motivation were related to the work; they are as follows: the rational-economic model, the social model, the self-actualising model and the complex model (Chandra *et al.*, 2013).

Carole and Derek’s (2011) views on these models are as follows:

- the rational-economic model emphasis that people are motivated by financial and materials rewards; and
- social model also points to the fact that some people are motivated through friendship and acceptance.

They asserted that self-actualisation is the need a person requires to fulfil his or her desire for growth, and this includes physiological needs. They also indicated that the complex model, on the other hand, points to the fact that people are motivated to work when they believe that they can get what they want from the job they do.

For staff to be motivated, it is necessary to pay attention to safety and health issues; giving staff responsibilities and recognition as well as a say in their work is another way of motivating them. According to Antwi and Bello (1993), there is also the need for the Head of libraries to perform the role of counsellors. The Head of Library should ensure that members of their staff are highly motivated.

Professionalism and training

Professionals are of increasing importance as institutions plan to explore expert knowledge. This assertion as noted by Edekor (2004) points out that lack of professional knowledge and skills may lead to improper management of library resources. A collection development model by Clow *et al.* (1999) also relates to this principle. Maylor (2002) also noted that in knowledge-based organisation, where skilled employees are the basis of a parent institution’s competitive advantage, it is increasingly necessary for professionalism to take a centre stage.

On the contrary, a study conducted by Simpson (2013) with 500 Academic Library Directors and 370 Public Library Directors revealed that Masters in Library Studies is not consistently a requirement in librarian recruitment and that much of the work could be done by the non-professional librarians. Chinery (2001) also believes that in-service training is another form of perfecting the skills of the worker.

Staff development

According to Davis and Lundstrom (2011), staff development is the conscious institutional approach intended to improve the capability for staff to fulfil specified roles. It is the collaborative planning that focuses on personal and institutional improvement vested in significant time and resources, for long-term service maintenance. They deduced staff development skills as the following: personal skills, information technology, management and customer service. The rest are as follows: information resources, professional, organisational and institutional knowledge.

Mapulanga (2013) noted that because of economic constraints most librarians face, designing staff development programmes are real. This has minimised the rate at which libraries send their employees for training, conferences, workshops and seminars. Notwithstanding financial constraints, library staff need to learn new processes and methods to catch up on new trends. Staff development should be seen as sharing expertise and knowledge; for instance, with both existing and newly appointed staff; it is equally possible for staff to study a lot from their colleagues.

Conceptual framework

Improving staff performance-logic model

The diagram in Figure 1 shows that to improve upon the performance of library staff, there is the need for the availability of the following: professional staff and well-structured organisational capacity and employee policy. The existence of these factors will in the short term bring about an increase in knowledge, skills and competencies; improved organisational supports for staff; and improved employment policy to sustain a stable workforce, while the long-term outcome will improve library services. Essentially, the model indicates that the initial inputs have a contextual influence on the short-, intermediate- and long-term outcomes of staff performance at their workplaces.

Research questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

- RQ1. What is the level of professionalism of staff of the satellite libraries?
- RQ2. How relevant and adequate are the information resources of the satellite libraries?
- RQ3. What are the staff development programmes for satellite libraries?
- RQ4. What are the challenges of satellite libraries of the University of Cape Coast?

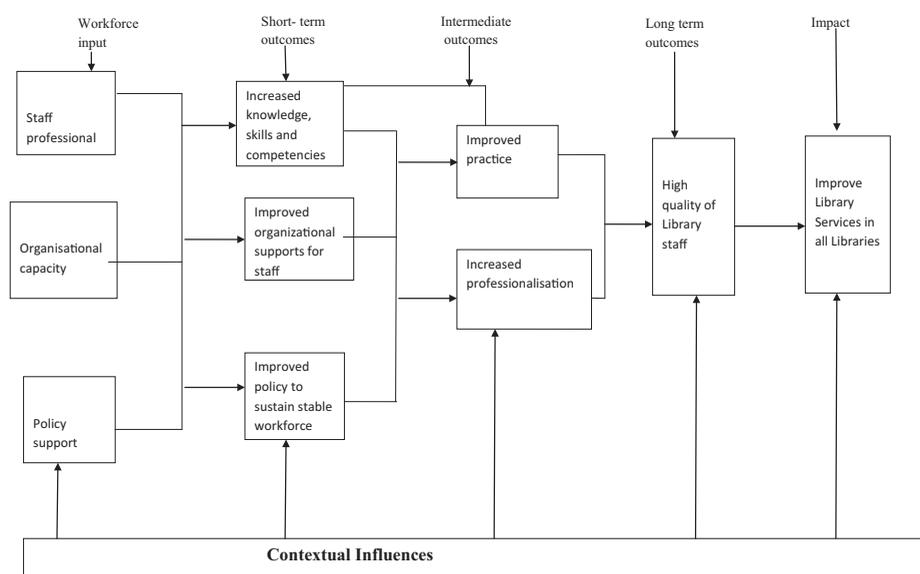


Figure 1.
Improving staff performance – logic model

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30,2*Methodology*

A well-structured questionnaire was used to conduct a test at the satellite libraries of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, and all errors detected were corrected. The first section of the questionnaire looked at the background information about the respondents. The second section assessed the collections, services and staff development. The third part of the questions, on the other hand, dealt with the challenges of the satellite libraries.

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An alphabetical list of all the satellite libraries in the University was done and the corrected questionnaire was distributed to all staff (72) working in these libraries. The survey approach was adopted because the researchers wanted to involve all staff of the 31 libraries. To make the results reliable, the quantitative data obtained mainly from the questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were represented with tables, graphs and pie and bar charts.

Analysis of data

Sixty-nine completed questionnaires were received from the targeted population of 72, making the response rate 95.8 per cent. The male respondents were 55.2 per cent (38), while the female respondents were 44.8 per cent (31). The study indicated that there were 25 (80.7 per cent) Departmental libraries, while the remaining 6 (19.3 per cent) were Hall libraries.

Rank of staff in charge of satellite libraries

Figure 2 indicates that 39 (57 per cent) of the staff were Junior Library Assistants. Twenty of them (29.0 per cent) were Senior Library Assistants, while 10 of them representing (14 per cent) were overseers.

Education qualification of respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their qualifications; Figure 3 shows that 31 (44.8 per cent) of them had first degree in subjects not related to librarianship. In addition, 27.6 per cent (19) of them also had Senior High School Leaving Certificate (SSSCE), while 10.3 per cent (7) of them had a diploma and master's degree in subjects not related to Library Studies. On the whole, only 6.9 per cent (6) of the respondents had a First and Master of Arts Degrees (MA) in Information Studies.

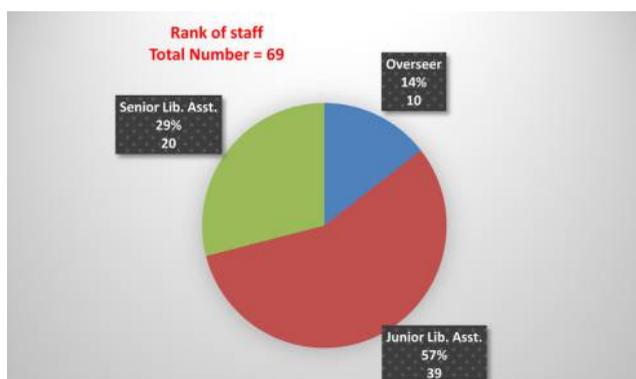
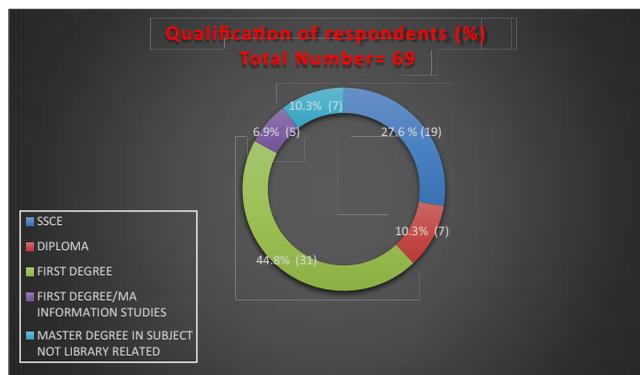


Figure 2.
Rank of staff of
satellite libraries

Source: Field data (2016)



Source: Field data (2016)

Figure 3.
Academic
qualification of staff

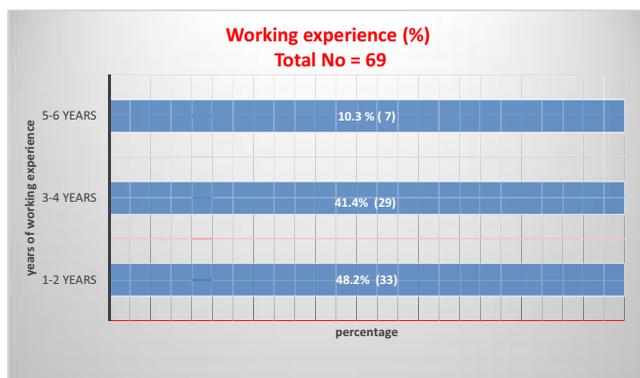
In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to indicate whether they have any intention of furthering their education, of which all the respondents answered in affirmative.

Number of years of working at the present library

Considering the number of years respondents have been working at their respective libraries, the study indicates in Figure 4 that 48.2 per cent (33) of the respondents had worked in their respective libraries between one and two years and 41 per cent (29) have also been working at their current libraries for the period between three and four years. Only seven (10.3 per cent) claimed that they have been working in the same library for the past five years. This means that the majority of them have been working for less than five years in their current libraries.

Number of staff working at the satellite libraries

The study sought to find out the number of staff working in each satellite library. Figure 5 reveals that 72.5 per cent (22) of the libraries were managed by one staff. Thirteen per cent



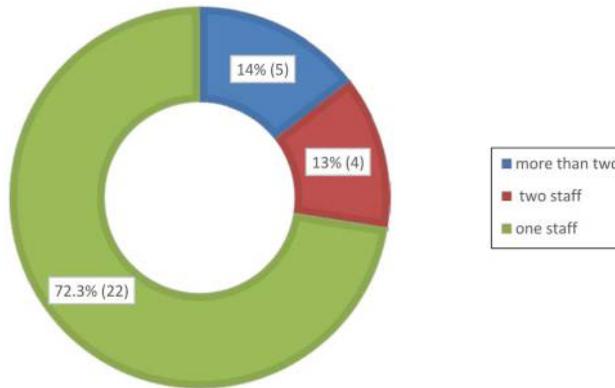
Source: Field data (2016)

Figure 4.
Working experience
of staff

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Number of staff working in the individual satellite libraries (%).
Total NUMBER= 31



Source: Field data (2016)

(4) of the satellite libraries were managed by two staff, while the remaining 14 per cent (5) were being taken care of by three or more staff.

Provider of the majority of the library materials

In a declining order, Figure 6 indicates the provider of the majority of their library materials. Twenty-five libraries (79.3 per cent) stated that the bulk of their materials were acquired by the Faculties, Departments and Halls of the libraries. Five (17.2 per cent) of the satellite libraries had a majority of their library materials from the Main Library, while 3.4 per cent (1) of the library had the bulk of its information resources from philanthropists.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to indicate the major method by which these materials were acquired and the breakdown was as follows: donation 90.0 per cent (28)

WHO PROVIDES THE MAJORITY OF LIBRARY MATERIALS?.
TOTAL NUMBER= 31

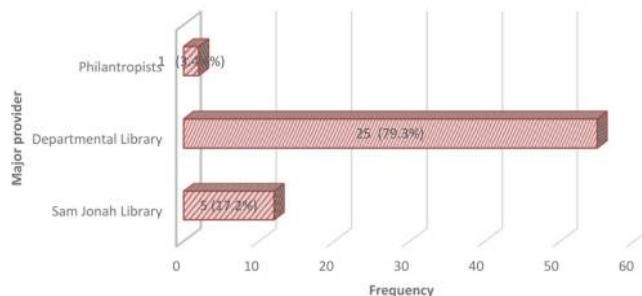


Figure 6.
Providers of library materials

Source: Field data (2016)

and purchase 10.0 per cent (3). This means that the bulk of information sources in the libraries were donations.

Services rendered by staff of satellite libraries

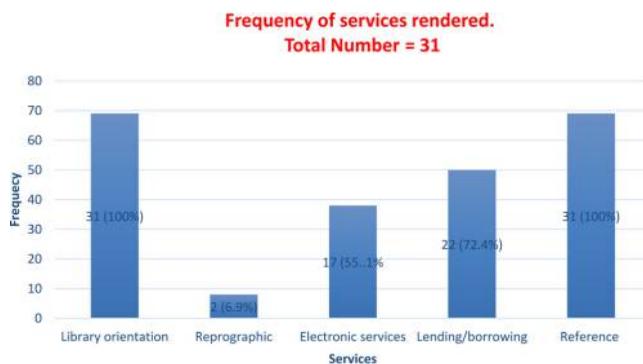
Libraries services are activities performed by libraries to make information sources available to users. Figure 7 revealed that all the satellite libraries render library orientation and reference services to their users. Twenty-two (72.4 per cent) of them render lending services. Seventeen of them claimed that they render electronic services. The least service rendered, as indicated in Figure 7, was reprographic service (6.9 per cent; 2).

A follow-up to this question revealed that only 3 (17.7 per cent) of the satellite libraries who stated that they offer electronic services really perform this function satisfactory because the remaining 14 (82.3 per cent) libraries have only one computer stationed on the desk of the library staff.

In-service training

The study revealed that all the respondents had undergone refresher courses organised by the Main Library. In Table I, 69 per cent (48) of the respondents indicated that they had participated in four or more refresher courses. Of the respondents, 17.3 per cent (12) had undergone three refresher courses, while 13.7 per cent (9) have had two in-service training.

In a follow-up question, the study sought to find out whether the in-service training programmes that the respondents have undergone had any positive impact on the work



Source: Field data (2016)

Figure 7.
Services rendered

Total No. = 69		
No. of In-service training attended	Frequency	(%)
More than four	48	69.0
Three	12	17.3
Two	9	13.7
One	0	0.0
Total	69	100

Source: Field data 2016

Table I.
Number of in-service
training attended by
respondents

they do. In response, 93.1 per cent (64) of the respondents answered in the affirmative, while the remaining respondents (6.9 per cent; 5) were undecided.

Staff development

To know whether refresher courses or in-service training organised by the Main Library should be used for promotions, [Table II](#) reveals that the majority (89.5 per cent; 62) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, while 6.8 per cent (9) also agreed. About 3 per cent (2) of them were undecided. This finding revealed that the majority of the staff of the satellite libraries would have wished that the series of refresher courses organised by the Main Library could have formed part of the requirements for promotions.

The University of Cape Coast is one of the Universities where Distance and Sandwich courses are organised; in view of this, respondents were asked whether allowing staff of satellite libraries to pursue distance learning and sandwich programmes should be another effective ways of providing staff development; 68.9 per cent (48) of the respondents strongly agreed to this statement, 20.7 per cent (14) of them also agreed to the same statement, while 3.4 per cent (2) disagreed. However, 6.9 per cent (5) of them were not sure of themselves.

Some workers learn on the job, so the researchers asked whether it was beneficial for colleagues from other satellite libraries to share their experiences with other colleagues; the response to this statement were as follows: strongly agree 34.4 per cent (24); agree 37.9 per cent (26); undecided 10.3 per cent (7); disagree 6.9 per cent (5); and strongly disagree 10.3 per cent (7). From the finding, it is obvious that experienced staff should share their experiences with non-experienced ones.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Refresher courses organised by the Main Library should be used for promotions	89.5% (62)	6.9% (8)	3.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Allowing staff to pursue distance learning and sandwich courses are effective ways of providing staff development	68.9% (48)	20.7% (14)	6.9% (5)	3.4% (2)	0.0% (0)
The opportunity to share the experience of colleagues from other libraries is more valuable than short courses attended during conferences	34.4% (24)	37.9% (26)	10.3% (7)	6.9% (5)	10.3% (7)
Going to library school for further studies is the best way of staff development in librarianship	65.5% (45)	27.6% (19)	6.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Long term service is the effective way of staff development	58.6% (40)	34.4% (24)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (2)	3.4% (2)
The trend of promotion of library staff in Sam Jonah Library is satisfactory	13.8% (10)	13.8% (10)	13.8% (10)	31.0% (20)	27.6% (19)

Source: Field data (2016)

Table II.
How do you agree to the statements below?

Currently, the only Library School in Ghana is at the University of Ghana, Legon, so respondents were asked whether going to this School should be the only way library professionals could develop academically; in response, 65.5 per cent (45) of the respondents claimed that at the time the research was conducted, that was the only way; however, 6.9 per cent (5) of the respondents were undecided.

On the issue of long-term service, 58.6 per cent (40) of the respondents strongly agreed and 34.4 per cent (24) also agreed to the view that long-term service was the effective way of staff development. However, 3.4 per cent (2) strongly disagreed to this statement. This presupposes that respondents wished that the number of years one worked at a place should be considered when staff apply for promotion.

Respondents were asked whether the trend of promotion of library staff in the University of Cape Coast was satisfactory; in response, 31.0 per cent (20) disagreed and 27.6 per cent (19) strongly disagree, while 13.8 per cent (10) each of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed. However, 13.8 per cent of the respondents were undecided.

Challenges of staff of satellite libraries

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to state their challenges; some of the respondents indicated that their libraries were ill equipped and that it takes longer time for their demands to be met; as a result, some of the libraries stated that they do not have accession registers and ownership stamps. The majority of the respondents stated lack of recognition of library staff by administrators, lecturers and students. Other challenges enumerated were as follows: interruption of work, lack of structured channel of communication, promotion takes longer time, difficulty of going on leave when the university is in session and lack of relevant information resources.

Discussions of findings

The study revealed that only 6.9 per cent (6) of the respondents had a First Degree and Master Degree in Information Studies. About 45 per cent of the respondents had their First and Second Degrees in subjects not related to librarianship. Also, 27 per cent of them had SSSCE, while 10.3 per cent (7) each of them had a Diploma and a Master's Degree in subjects not related to Library Studies. This might have explained why the Main Library organised a series of refresher courses for them. Also, this finding explains why the majority of them thought that going to the Library School for further studies was the best way of professional staff development.

According to the logic model used, the level of professionalism influences the quality of services provided; hence, low number of professionals in these libraries could be an affront to the dignity of staff in the satellite libraries. As noted by Edekor (2004), professionals are of increasing importance in this competitive world; hence, lack of professional knowledge and skills may lead to improper management of the few library resources these libraries have. In addition, a study conducted by Tachie-Donkor *et al.* (2016) revealed that 78 per cent of the respondents had benefited from refresher courses organised by the Main Library.

One of the findings of the study was that the Faculties, Departments and Halls provide the library resources; however, the materials provided were inadequate and irrelevant; this attests to the fact the bulk of the books acquired were donations, and some donations could be discarded materials of the donors.

More so, the study revealed that staff had to present a series of memos and requests before library materials were provided. As a result, some of the libraries could best be described as reading rooms. This finding can be buttressed with Figure 7, which points out the services staff of satellite libraries render. Some of the libraries do not render

reprographic and electronic services because the electronic gadgets meant for these services have not been provided by the Faculties, Departments or Halls concerned.

The study also revealed that apart from a series of in-service training organised by the Main Library, some of the respondents wanted to further their education; this finding buttressed a study conducted at the Main Library of the University of Cape Coast by [Tachie-Donkor et al. \(2016\)](#) where the staff were satisfied with the career opportunities of their Main Library. This finding they noted is encouraging and may help to retain staff in the same library for years.

How does the findings relate to the models

Apart from the high level of social motivation, the study revealed that staff hope to self-actualise their ambitions, but this will be possible if issues concerning rational and complex motivation models were considered because they catalyse an enabling environment for progression.

Though the university had an employee policy that supports the ethical and legal operations of staff of the university and the Main Library organised a series of in-service training for the library staff to increase efficiency, the satellite libraries lack inputs like professionalism and organisational capacity. This situation may negatively affect the knowledge, competencies and skills of the staff in satellite libraries. The situation prevailing at the satellite libraries currently partly failed to relate to the models, thereby making the majority of the satellite libraries non-functional.

Conclusion

The collegiate system in academic environment needs the support of the satellite libraries, but the nature and the calibre of staff of these libraries matters a lot. The study revealed that prospects of capacity building are available; however, the constraints with some of the motivational concepts much need to be done by all stakeholders of the satellite libraries to minimise the setbacks of satellite libraries.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend the following:

- Staff of higher ranks should be transferred to the satellite libraries.
- The University Management should make it mandatory for all departments and halls to be fully responsible for the management of their libraries because some stakeholders assume that it is the responsibility of the Main Library to cater for such libraries.
- The dignity of individual library staff can be ensured if the respective libraries are made functional; so such libraries should be well equipped to augment their image.
- To minimise interruption of work, more staff should be allocated to the satellite libraries.
- The administrators of the departments and halls should make it known to staff of satellite libraries the channel of communication so that disgruntled staff would know how their grievances could be addressed.
- Sandwich programme in librarianship can be introduced at the diploma level at the University of Cape Coast.
- The University should introduce Library Studies as one of the programmes and scholarship should be given to staff who pursue this programme.

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