

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Utilization of library resources by lecturers in university of cape coast

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Received 30 March, 2017; Accepted 9 May, 2017

This research work was designed to examine the utilization of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast. The objective of the study was to find out the level of availability of library materials in the university, and determine the extent of use of the materials by lecturers. It is also to find out factors that impede lecturer's use of the library and make recommendations for improvement. A descriptive survey was used for the study. In all, 200 lecturers were selected for the study. The lecturers were selected using random sampling. Statistical tools used for the analysis were frequency counts and mean scores. The major finding of the study is that there are many library resources such as textbooks, journals, research monographs, research reports, newspapers, indexes/abstracts, internet services and dictionaries/encyclopedias amongst others, and that lecturers use the library mainly for consultation of reference materials. They also use it for research purposes and borrowing of books. A major finding was also that lecturers utilized books more than any other source of information. A number of recommendations were put forward for improvement of library use but the most prominent suggestion was that more up to date and relevant materials should be acquired by the library, and lecturers should be informed of newly acquired materials.

**Key words:** Library resources, lecturers, university library.

## INTRODUCTION

Lecturers need various kinds of information resources for teaching and research, for the purposes of impacting knowledge to students and self-development. For learning to take place, lecturers and learners must have access and use the necessary and adequate information resources.

Library resources contain information in both print and non-print formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, newspapers and magazines, reports, internet, video

tapes, diskettes, and microforms. Library resources are the raw materials that provide vital services in the teaching and learning process.

Accessibility of library resources creates an enabling environment for the utilization of library resources. It is assumed that if information is accessible to the lecturers in university libraries, it could be used for effective teaching. The main goal of the university library is for users to gain access to its abundant wealth of information

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resources. Information sources are efficient if they provide relevant, useful and accurate information that can help users solve their problems. Accessibility of library resources means the ease of locating and retrieving a piece of information from the storage medium (Akobundu, 2008).

The role of the library therefore is to make available organized materials that will enable the institution to achieve its set objectives. Hence, the university library is the nerve centre, the central and primary place of the institutions academic activities. Nelson (2003) indicates the fact that a university library should be built with vision, ambition knowledge and dedication. Above all, the University of Cape Coast (UCC) library was built with the conditions governing the set-up of its institution that is to provide necessary information to lecturers, students and researchers and community services, without which the whole system will perhaps collapse.

The vision of UCC library is to have a university library that is strongly positioned to provide accurate, reliable, authentic and complete information in a timely manner to support academic activities. Also, its mission is to add value to the university's teaching, learning, research, publication and dissemination activities by providing excellent information services which make available and accessible information materials both in print and electronic formats to its clients (University of Cape Coast Library Strategic Plan 2013-2017).

Lecturers require quality information resources or materials in order to teach effectively; undertake innovative research and use their acquired knowledge and experience to provide expert services to the university in order to turn out professionals and qualified students who will be leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, libraries are expected to provide such resources which when used effectively by lectures, would translate into improved teaching effectiveness and quality products. Inability to access information resources in the library can result in time waste and frustration.

Information utilization is the practical and maximum use of library resources identified and acquired by a user for the purpose of solving a problem or achieving a set goal. The lecturers in universities are expected to use library resources for teaching. Effective lecturing could be achieved if library information resources are correctly utilized to lecturing functions by the lecturers, thus, resources are of no value to the lecturers until they have been utilized.

The university library is meant to serve the undergraduates, post-graduates, lecturers and other members of the university community. The quality of a university is measured largely by the quality of its library because of its unique role in the university system. There can never be the existence of a university without a

library since the university is meant to teach and carry out research.

However, it has been observed that students complain about the quality of lecture notes their lecturers give them. Some of the students also talk about the same format and content being repeated by lecturers over and over again. Is it because those lecturers do not have any means of getting information or do not get the needed resources in searching for information? With this concern, the researchers feel that only an investigation will unravel the mystery, whether the university library have the necessary resources to support lecturing and learning. Henceforth, it is hoped that once the problems are discovered and solutions found, lecturers will begin using the resources available them.

In the light of this therefore, the need for this study becomes very imperative. It has become expedient to ascertain the extent to which lecturers utilize resources in university libraries in promoting research, teaching and learning. It is against this backdrop that this study sets to find out the extent of utilization of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast.

### **Research questions**

This study aims to investigate the utilization of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast. Specifically, the research will investigate into:

- (1) What is the level of availability of library materials in University of Cape Coast?
- (2) What is the purpose of the use of library resources by Lecturers in University of Cape Coast?
- (3) What is the extent of use of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast?
- (4) What factors impede/hinder the use of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The importance of libraries to education generally lies in the fact that they provide necessary information to lecturers, students and researchers and community services. The significance of academic libraries lies in the fact that they are repositories of knowledge that provide the vital underpinning for national development. Earlier studies by Kannappanavar and Manjunatha (2010), and Majid et al. (2000) had observed that professional staffs from different disciplines in some Saudi universities visited their libraries often.

Popoola and Zaid (2008) undertook a study titled faculty awareness and use of library information products

and services in Nigerian Universities. The main purpose of the study was to find out if there is any significant difference in faculty member's awareness of library information products, and services, and also to determine the sources used by faculty members to inform themselves about available information products and services in the library. The study observed that, colleagues, personal experience, signs/notice in the library, library correspondence and librarians were the major sources used by the members to inform themselves about the availability of library information products and services in the studied universities.

Dickenson (2006) in an academic library impact study (ALIS), of academic library usage and outcomes, involving nine colleges and universities, indicated that faculty members use libraries, because of the resources they provide. Faculty members use libraries to fulfill a need, that fulfillment which would enable them perform their duties or achieve various set objectives, and goals. The survey also showed that, the majority of faculty members indicated that, at least some of the time, they included bibliographic instruction or information literacy sessions in their undergraduate courses. The majority of them also indicated that, they frequently or sometimes placed print materials on the traditional reserve services at their institution's library for their students, and also recommended print resources. Again, in the ALIS study, some faculty members said that they have frequently, or sometimes used electronic reserve services through their college or university library. The survey also revealed that, the majority of them search library catalogues other than their own, by utilizing links from their library's website.

Foster and Gibbons (2005) looking at how faculty interact with digital tools, and how they organize their work in physical and virtual work places, stated that, what faculty members and university researchers want was, to do their research, read and write about it, share it with others, and keep up in their fields. They continue that many faculty members are outstanding teachers, and some are skilled administrators.

In a survey conducted by Sharma (2009), to analyse the dependency of teachers and research scholars on e-resources, the perceived impact of the e-resources on their academic efficiency, and problems faced by them whilst using the e-resource, also identified e-resources to include journals, data archives, manuscripts, maps, books, magazines, theses, newspapers, e-mail, research reports, and bibliographic databases. The results showed that the use of e-resources was very common among teachers, and research scholars in India, and that the majority of the teachers, and research scholars were dependent on e-resources to get the desired and relevant information.

Electronic resources are now used more than print resources (Morse and Clintworth, 2000). Their advantages include access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finance, access to more current information, and provision of extensive links to additional resources or related content (Dadzie, 2005). According to electronic information has gradually become a major resource in every university library in recent years, and this has led many to predict the extinction of the printed journal.

Some advances in information communication technologies (ICT), and scholarly use of information services, has changed how lecturers utilize library resources for research practices, and teaching methods. Housewright and Schonfeld (2010), however, observed that since 2000, faculty members have steadily been shifting towards reliance on network-level electronic resources, and a corresponding decline in interest in using locally provided tools for discovery of books, journals, and other materials. The study concluded that, while print journals may continue to play a limited role for faculty with specific needs that are otherwise poorly met, digital versions are clearly the medium of choice for most faculty members.

Madhusudhan (2008) in a study on Internet use, and the use of e-journals in the University of Delhi, indicated that 67.64% of the research scholars of the faculty of science, and 69.23% of research scholars of engineering use e-journals for research work. The studies also found out that, they used e-journals to study and, also to update their knowledge. Swain (2010) in a study of the use of e-services by faculty members of business schools in an Indian state also observed that faculty members preferred using e-articles over electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs). Some online databases like Emerald Management Xtra (EMX), EBSCO, and PROQUEST were fairly in use, while other online databases were not of high demand. The study observed that, the majority of faculty members were in favour of commercial e-services.

### **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was the Theory of Human Attitude. The theory was developed by Allport and Osgood (1936). The theory stipulates that attitudes are psychological "predispositions", because they predispose people to act in a certain way towards the object of the attitude. The attitude comes before behaviour and affects the way the person will act. The theory was deemed appropriate for the study because the use of libraries by lecturers is greatly affected by their perception of them. The knowledge component indicates that, the feelings

and actions of lecturers are based on their knowledge of a particular object or subject. What people know or perceive about a particular subject is very important because it affects how they behave or act towards it. The feelings and actions of lecturers towards the utilization of library resources would be evaluated based on their interests and availability of resources. Lecturers' knowledge on the importance of the library resources, purpose of library resources in their research and teaching processes would be evaluated to get an insight into what factors information play in their use or otherwise of these resources.

## METHODOLOGY

The research method or design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey method involves a study of a population through the use of sample. The findings obtained from studying the sample can be applied to the entire population (Nwana, 2001). The choice of this design was considered most appropriate because a large population is involved in the study. Descriptive survey method aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population.

The population of this study comprise of all lecturers in University of Cape Coast. The lecturer's population is put around 400. The lecturers were drawn from the College of Education (110), College of Agriculture and Natural Science (157), College of Health and Allied Sciences (37) and College of Humanities and Legal Studies (96). The College of Distance Education (CODE) is the fifth College in the University of Cape Coast. This College was not considered because most of their lecturers are not staff of UCC.

From a population of 400 lecturers, a sample size of 200 representing 50% of the population was determined as recommended by Nwana (2001), that if a population is in few hundreds, a 50% of the population could be determined as a sample size from a given population. Nwana (2001) recommendation is widely used by researchers. The lecturers were selected using random sampling. The stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation from each College. Copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents at the circulation desk as they entered the library. The questionnaires were collected from them as they were leaving the library.

Questionnaire was administered by the researchers themselves and Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21.0 was used for the analysis. The data gathered through questionnaire were presented in tables 1-4 while mean scores were used in the data analysis. A four point scale was used. The mid-point of 2.5 criterion mean is accepted as positive response. The formula for this is  $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$

$\bar{x}$  = mean

$\Sigma$  = summation

X = raw score

N = number of observations

Any mean score that is above 2.5 is considered as positive and accepted. And any mean score below 2.5 is considered as negative and rejected. For the percentage 50% is regarded as positive and accepted while any below 50% is regarded as negative and not accepted.

## DISCUSSIONS

The result of the study showed that 70 (35.0%) of the respondents were female while 130 (65.0%) were male, 20 (10.0%) of the respondents were professors, 105 (52.5%) were senior lecturers and 75 (37.5%) were Assistant lecturers. In terms of teaching experience, 56 (28.0%) and 75 (37.5%) of the lecturers have spent 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years respectively in teaching. Thirty-seven (18.5%) of the respondents have spent 11 to 15 years of teaching. The remaining 32 (16.0%) have taught well over 16 years. An inference from the above is that majority of the respondents have spent more than 5 years as lecturers.

Again, 16 (8.0%) and 37 (18.5%) fell in the 26 to 30 and 31 to 35 age brackets. Forty-four (22.0%) and 42 (21.0%) of them respectively fell in the 36 to 40 and 41 to 45 age brackets. Another 34 (17.0%) of them fell in the 46 to 50 age bracket while 11 (5.5%) of them fell in 51 to 55 age bracket. The remaining 27 (13.5%) fell in the 56 to 60 age bracket.

The results of this analysis shows that lecturers used for the study spread across all categories of age group, that is young, middle age and those preparing to retire from active teaching service. They therefore cater for all the age interest needed for this study.

**Research question 1:** What is the level of availability of library materials in University of Cape Coast?

The findings in Table 1 shows that out of the 13 library materials listed, With the exception of three, bulletin(s), biographies and periodicals which were rejected because they recorded a mean score below 2.5. However, the other ten library materials recorded a mean score of above 2.5 which were positively rated and accepted. Hence, for a university to serve all in society, its information sources must be diverse and varied in nature in order to serve the library clientele in general. All these are indication that relevant materials are available in UCC library.

Availability of library resources creates an enabling environment for the utilization of library resources and this will promote teaching and learning. This means that learning will take place because they have the available resources. The study support to work of Mbashir and Adeoti (2015) who found out that material in terms of books and journals were adequate for faculty staff in the study carried out in Kogi State University, Nigeria. This finding is in line with Emezi (2006) that a university library should endeavour to provide extensive materials (books and non-book materials alike) for study, teaching, learning and research for the benefit of the students and teaching and non-teaching staff of the university and others. However, this finding perhaps contradicts the

**Table 1.** Mean responses on the level of availability of library materials.

| Library resources           | AA  | A   | FA | NA  | X    | Decision |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----------|
| Journals                    | 75  | 95  | 20 | -   | 3.59 | Accepted |
| Bulletin(s)                 | 14  | -   | 16 | 134 | 2.00 | Rejected |
| Research monographs         | 96  | 54  | 20 | -   | 3.48 | Accepted |
| Research reports            | 111 | 50  | 15 | -   | 3.47 | Accepted |
| Indexes/abstracts           | 65  | 100 | 13 | -   | 3.42 | Accepted |
| Biographies                 | 12  | 11  | -  | 140 | 2.00 | Rejected |
| Internet services           | 110 | 80  | -  | -   | 3.83 | Accepted |
| Newspapers                  | 120 | 65  | 10 | -   | 3.62 | Accepted |
| Atlases, maps and globes    | 90  | 60  | 9  | -   | 3.40 | Accepted |
| Encyclopedias/Dictionaries  | 140 | 50  | -  | -   | 3.61 | Accepted |
| Textbooks                   | 193 | -   | -  | -   | 4.00 | Accepted |
| Periodicals                 | -   | -   | -  | 153 | 0    | Rejected |
| Gazettes (where applicable) | 89  | 100 | 2  | 0   | 3.24 | Accepted |

Key: AA = Adequately Available, A = Available, FA = Fairly Available, NA = Not Available. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Above 2.5 is considered as positive and accepted whilst 2.5 or below is considered as negative and rejected (Source: Field data, 2017).

**Table 2.** Mean responses on why lecturers use library resources.

| Purpose                               | VA  | A  | FA | NA  | X    | Decision |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|------|----------|
| To consult reference materials        | 180 | -  | -  | -   | 3.85 | Accepted |
| To prepare lecture notes              | 85  | 40 | 30 | -   | 3.10 | Accepted |
| To read newspapers                    | 24  | 12 | -  | 110 | 2.00 | Rejected |
| To borrow books                       | 65  | 52 | 38 | -   | 3.20 | Accepted |
| For research purposes                 | 88  | 90 | 14 | -   | 3.40 | Accepted |
| To check for newly received materials | 67  | 89 | 10 | -   | 3.30 | Accepted |

Key = VA = Very Appropriate, A = Appropriate, FA = Fairly Appropriate, NA = Not Appropriate. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Above 2.5 is considered as positive and accepted whilst 2.5 or below is considered as negative and rejected (Source: Field data, 2017).

studies of Haruna (2015) and Ijirigho (2014).

**Research Question 2:** What is the purpose of the use of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast?

The data in Table 2 reveals that majority of the lecturers recorded a mean scores rate between 3.10 to 3.85, which were all considered positive and accepted. There was just one response which recorded a mean score rate below 2.5 and this was considered negative. This implies that all the lecturers in UCC consult the library resources to use reference materials, to prepare lecture notes, to borrow books and for research purposes except to read newspapers.

This is expected because books constitute the dominant information source available in the library and lecturers

need them to keep abreast with current happenings just as reference materials are used. This assertion further reinforced the reason that the resources at UCC library are fully utilized by lecturers. Information availability, accessibility, and use are essential to the teaching, research, and service activities of lectures.

This means that the library should embark on massive acquisition of more relevant materials (both print and non-print) so that's the collection could measure up with the University status. This is in agreement with Edoka (2000) who revealed that one of the fundamental functions of libraries in support of research, teaching and learning.

The findings also revealed that a number of lecturers go to the library to prepare lecture notes. This is quite expected since the library has books and materials that cover virtually all the topics taught by the lecturers. A

**Table 3.** Mean responses on the extent of use of library resources by lecturers.

| Purpose                                  | VHE | HE  | ME | LE  | X    | Decision |
|--|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----------|
| Books                                    | 90  | 104 | -  | -   | 3.95 | Accepted |
| Journals                                 | 35  | 40  | 30 | 15  | 2.90 | Accepted |
| Newspapers                               | -   | -   | -  | 137 | 2.40 | Rejected |
| Research monographs abstracts or indexes | 65  | 52  | 38 | -   | 3.20 | Accepted |
| Research reports                         | 88  | 90  | 14 | -   | 3.40 | Accepted |
| Electronic resources                     | 67  | 89  | 10 | -   | 3.30 | Accepted |

Key = VHE = Very High Extent, HE = High Extent, ME = Moderate Extent, LE = Low Extent. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Above 2.5 is considered as positive and accepted whilst 2.5 or below is considered as negative and rejected (Source: Field data, 2017).

**Tables 4.** Mean responses on factors that hinder or impede the use of library material by lecturers in UCC.

| Factors that impede/ Hinder                            | AH  | H  | PH | DH | X    | Decision |
|--|-----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| Non-involvement of lecturers in book selection         | 94  | 39 | 22 | 9  | 3.44 | Accepted |
| Few up to date materials                               | 160 | 15 | 6  | -  | 3.90 | Accepted |
| Users not informed of new arrivals                     | 93  | 87 | 8  | -  | 3.20 | Accepted |
| Inadequate instruction on library use                  | 79  | 64 | 18 | -  | 3.40 | Accepted |
| Unavailability of automatic generator to power sockets | 91  | 52 | 34 | -  | 3.41 | Accepted |
| Inadequate trained library staff                       | 88  | 77 | 19 | -  | 3.41 | Accepted |

Key = AH = Actually Hinders, H = Hinders, PH = Partially Hinder, DH = Do not Hinder. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Above 2.5 is considered as positive and accepted whilst 2.5 or below is considered as negative and rejected (Source: Field data, 2017).

number of lecturers do not go to the library to read newspapers. The reading of the newspapers is meant to inform the lecturers with current happenings and information around the globe. This may be as a result of lecturers being able to purchase newspapers themselves or use their smartphones or tablets in accessing this service with ease.

**Research question 3:** What is the extent of use of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast?

The data in Table 3 shows that all the library materials have a mean score of 2.90 and above except for newspapers which had a mean score of 2.40. This means the library materials are rated positively and accepted, implying that majority of the listed library material such as books, journals, research monographs, indexes, abstracts, research reports and electronic resources are being utilized to a large extent. Based on the findings as revealed by the study, majority of the lecturers said they used books more frequently than other information sources. One reason for this is that books are more in number than any other information source. A second reason is that the lecturers relied heavily on books

essentially for their lecturing responsibilities. The books contain the kind of information required for teaching and learning. This is in line with Awojobi (2004) who recommended that lecturers should make use of as many information sources as possible.

**Research question 4:** What factors hinder/impede the use of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast?

The findings in Table 4 indicated that all the factors listed scored a mean score between 3.20 to 3.90 mean scores. By this, it means all the factors are rated positively and are accepted. They include non-involvement of lectures in book selection, few up to date materials, users not informed of new arrivals, poor library instruction, unavailability of automatic generator to power sockets, and inadequate library staff are factors that actually hinder or impede the use of library materials by lecturers. This is suggesting that the available materials at UCC library are not constantly updated and weed its outdated and non-useful collections. This means that the available information products and services at UCC library should endeavour to make personal contact with them and

provide useful information to them about the library and the materials available. The impediments to library use by lecturers confirms the works of Ochogwu (2007) who catalogued problems of library use by lecturers to include lack of funds to purchase current books, facilities, inadequate staff and lack of proactive librarians.

## Conclusions

The results of the study showed that University of Cape Coast library have adequate library resources or materials for use by lecturers. It was also concluded that, the major purposes of lecturers using the library are for personal studies, research and checkout for new books. On the contrary, majority of lecturers do not go there to read newspapers, probably because they have laptops or tablets that have these access. Again, the study indicated that lecturers used more of books than other materials because of their high availability. The study also revealed few up to date materials, lecturers not involved in selection of books, users not informed of new arrivals and unavailability of automatic generator to power sockets as their major hindrance or impediments to use library materials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Current or new editions and relevant materials particularly books should be acquired.
- (2) Lecturers should be regularly informed of newly acquired materials. This could be done by sending lists of current received publications to each Head/Dean of department or Provost of each College. Lecturers should equally be involved in the book selection policy of the university.
- (3) An automatic generator should be acquired for the library to be providing power in case of failure from the public supply to power sockets.
- (4) The university management should plan and develop strategies for effective and efficient use of Information and Communication Technology infrastructure for the utilization of library resources by lecturers to support academic study in UCC.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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