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Users' perspectives on the services of University for Development Studies Library: A case of a multi-campus institution in Ghana.

Angela Achiaa Aikins
University for Development Studies,Tamale, aannor@uds.edu.gh

Nasir Koranteng Asiedu
University for Development Studies, Ghana, nasmo2005@yahoo.com

Deborah Bumbie-Chi Mwinterong
University for Development Studies,Tamale, Ghana, mdebbie@gmail.com

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Abstract

The University for Development Studies operates a multi-campus system whereby its campuses are located in three different northern regions of Ghana. This system operated by the University makes it necessary to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided by library staff in each of the four campuses to establish the performance level of the library based on users' opinions or views.

Using the survey approach, 312 registered users of the library were randomly selected to participate in the study. $\times^2 \leq 0.05$ is also used in the study to test the existence of relationships among variables of interest.

The following results were therefore identified in the study: Users indicated that they use the library daily as part of their day-to-day activities; They also revealed that library staff are very supportive whenever their assistance are sought. The study further indicated that there is a positive correlation between users' level of satisfaction and their opinions on the services of the library.

Keywords: University for Development Studies library, multi-campus institution, users' perspectives, University for Development Studies, Ghana, library evaluation.

Introduction

Considering the pace at which the world is moving with the advent of information and communication technologies, libraries around the globe are left with no choice than to change their ways of providing the needed help or services to users in a manner that will enhance ready access to information. The objective of a university library is to provide the needed support and essential information needed for the effective running of academic programmes of the university as well as research work of the University faculty. That is providing easy access to information that respond to the information demands of users; students and academic staff of the university (Shivakumar, 2017).

The basic tasks of university libraries, and academic libraries for that matter, have experienced a major digression in the 21st century from collection development to provision of information due

to the rapid advancements in the technological world and its implications on the day-to-day activities of libraries. The traditional role of libraries as storehouses for books had faded therefore posing unique challenges of meeting the ever increasing information demands of users of the library. Libraries now have to adjust services and acquire resources that will enable them remain significant to users (Raju, 2014).

However, the question still remains; is the library actually meeting user information needs with its improved resources and services? Evaluation of University Libraries' usage and services therefore becomes a necessity and its frequent practice is the guaranteed way of ensuring that information is obtained so as to determine whether the library is meeting its expected goals or not (Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe, 2014). In view of this, it has become necessary to carry out this study.

This paper therefore seeks to assess the extent to which students and staff of University for Development Studies utilize the resources of the Library and evaluate users' opinions on the services.

University for Development Studies

The University for Development Studies (UDS) is one of the nine public Universities in Ghana. It was established in May 1992 under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 279 as a multi-campus institution and began its academic work in September 1993 with the first batch of thirty-nine (39) students admitted into the Faculty of Agriculture (*Student's Handbook, University for Development Studies, 2014*). Owing to this multi-campus nature, it digresses from the usual practice of having a University with central campus and administration. UDS has campuses in the Northern (Tamale & Nyankpala), Upper East (Navrongo), and Upper West (Wa)

regions of Ghana. With an academic staff population of 618 and student population of 20,421, of which 346 are graduate students (University for Development Studies Statistics, 2015), the UDS currently consists of eight faculties, five schools, two institutes, and one center. Programs offered include Medicine, Allied Health Sciences, Education, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources, Agribusiness and Communication Sciences, Planning, Development Studies, Law, Business Studies, and Mathematical and Computer Sciences. The subject coverage of the University is far-reaching with a strong emphasis on development studies.

In addition to the traditional mission of Universities - teaching, research, and community service, the University for Development Studies has a programme called Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP) as a fourth mission, to ensure that its products are given the community experience. In this programme, group of students are posted to rural communities to stay there for about 8 weeks where they undertake research into the profile of the communities, their challenges and help find solution to these challenges through a detailed research report submitted to the University at the end of each year's field sessions.

Background of the University Library

The University library was established in 1993 to support teaching, learning and research. There are two major departments in the library: Collection Development and Information Services Department. The Collection Development Department consist of four main Sections working under it (Reader Services Section, Periodical Section, Cataloguing Section, Acquisitions Section) whilst the Information Service Department has three main Sections under it (Technical Services Section, Electronic Resources Section, Institutional Repository Section).

The library has about 40,000 volumes covering all aspects of agricultural science, social science and allied fields; 5,000 volumes of reference materials, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories, and research reports of student research projects, including theses and dissertations. The university has the 2005 version of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) with a collection of 130 major agricultural journals. The library is connected to the Internet, and subscribes to more than 500 print journal titles, local and foreign, as well as national newspapers and magazines. The library has a very huge seating capacity for all readers across the various campuses. It has also automated its processes and services. This development resulted in the mounting of several computers in the four campuses of the university. These computers and other equipment are there to ensure easy access to information and its retrieval (Thompson, Akeriwe & Aikins, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

Evaluating the use of the library is one of the steps used to determine whether the performance level of staff and the library management as a whole is above average or below average. This also gives management a fair idea of how much work or effort they need to put in, in order to reach the expectations of their customers or patrons. There are several ways and different reasons or objectives for evaluating libraries. For the purpose of this study, evaluation would be considered as the process of testing or looking out for the effectiveness and efficiency of the services a library has put in place based on direct responses from library patrons and other users of the library.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to assess students' and staff's use of University for Development Studies Library. The following are the sub-objectives of the study:

- seek the views of users on library services

- examine the frequency of library use

- investigate reasons for using the library

- assess the availability of materials

- assess the helpfulness of library staff

- determine the relationship between frequency of library use and reasons for using the library

- determine the relationship between level of satisfaction for answers to queries and opinion on the library's services.

Literature review

Libraries are established in academic institutions purposely to provide the needed academic support and backing for both students and faculty. Their importance in the academia cannot be over-emphasized looking at the active role they play in making the necessary information available to users. Taking into context the modern and traditional ways of libraries operations, it is always in the right direction to evaluate not only the services rendered to users but also to evaluate the use of the library and its resources. Evaluation as a concept in the broader perspective deals with the steps involved in assessing and determining the value of a particular entity or system. With regards to library evaluation, the whole process of the exercise to a larger extent is to "render accountability to funding powers or authorities, patrons and any other user of the library'' (Alemna, 1999). Although the library is not a profit oriented organization or institution, it is still incumbent on it to get customers or patrons' opinions or views on the services it provides to them. This would inform the library about the genuine thoughts of the patrons on the services it offers. Alemna (1999) further argues that "library evaluation is not

limited to only staff/patron relationship, whether materials or books in the library are being used or not, whether electronic resources are utilized by patrons at the required pace or not but rather a very critical attention should be paid to the physical facilities (building, furniture, lighting, proper ventilation and cooling)''. In our part of the world where internet and power are major challenges hindering on smooth provision of services, assessing the library must include all these since the patronage and the usage of the library have connections with them. Nuut (2006), shares similar view and reiterates that library evaluation goes beyond utilization of available academic resources and all those factors already indicated in the study.

It should be noted that there are several approaches in dealing with evaluation. Tools like LibQual, ServQual and WebQual are all used in the area of assessment but preferably LibQual and ServQual are mostly used by libraries or some libraries to evaluate their performance level. This era has presented the world with so many technologies ranging from sophisticated to less sophisticated ones. These technologies have the ability to make information available to users at any given time without necessarily entering the library to look for information. The ability of users to access information at any time and at any place with simple technologies like these hand-held devices, require critical evaluation of our libraries to find out whether the library is being under-utilized or not. A study conducted by Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe (2014) which employed the survey approach indicated that, students from Paul University in Nigeria fairly use the library. They further revealed that, the library is mostly used in the examination period.

Ugah (2007) on the other hand argued that the library is not used to the fullest by students and faculty in a research conducted at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The

researcher went ahead to attribute this to lack of awareness. That is, students and faculty at times are not aware of the kind of assistance the library can provide them and are also not aware of the kind of resources or materials the library is housing and whether they are old materials, new or updated. This view is also shared by Onaolapo (2016) who indicated in a study that much awareness should be created about the resources in the library to users. This, the researcher believes will attract more users to the library thereby increasing the use of the library and its resources.

In the view of Onaolapo (2016), users visit the library for several reasons. Among such reasons are; to prepare for exams, to borrow books, to read books, to conduct research and for recreational purposes. Past studies on the use of academic libraries also suggest that academic staff are satisfied with the quality of service provided by library staff. This according to them brings out the necessary motivation to visit the library to seek for assistance (Kaur, 2010; Gunasekera, 2010). Students and staff visit the library for several reasons as earlier shown in this literature review. Some of these reasons include accessing the internet, borrowing and reading books, for leisure and among others. With these practices of library users, a study conducted by Gunasekera (2010) revealed that library patrons visit the library every day. Kumar et. al (2010) also conducted a study on the use of collections and services at IIT Delhi Library. The study confirmed that users of the library frequently visit the library as part of their usual activities.

Hussain & Abalkhail (2013) conducted a study on the determinants of library use, collections and services among engineering students in King Saud University. This study employed the survey approach in collecting data for the study. The study found out that 89.33 percent of library patrons were regular visitors of the library. It also found out that users rated the satisfaction level of their interactions with library staff as very good.

Research Methodology

This study employed the survey methodology. This approach was used because it helps researchers to be able to deal with phenomenon that cannot be directly observed. It is also useful in the situation where one seeks to collect data from a large number of respondents (Babbie, 2005 & Wyse, 2012).

As asserted by Neuman (2007), with a population below 1000, a researcher needs to get a large sampling ratio of 30%. Neuman (2007) further asserts that for a moderately large population around 1000, a sampling ratio of 10% is sufficient to achieve a real representation of a population.

For the purpose of this study, the researchers selected 10 per cent of the total registered library users (3,124) from all the four campuses of the University (Wa, Navrongo, Tamale and Nyankpala campus) and this gave a result of 312. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to ensure fair representation of respondents from each of the campuses. The following formula was therefore used to get the right sample size for all the four campuses:

P.S. S = Number of registered users of the library in each campus × 312
Total number of registered users of the library in the whole university

Table 1: Sample Sizes

Campus	Population	Sample Size
Tamale	502	502/3124 × 312 = 50
Wa	373	373/3124 ×312 = 37
Nyankpala	982	982/3124×312 = 98
Navrongo	1267	1267/3124 ×312 =127
Total	**3124**	**312**

Data Collection

Paper-based closed ended questionnaires were sent out to seek for users' opinions on the services of the library. Structured questionnaire in this case was the main instrument for data collection. Respondents were given time and opportunity to complete the questionnaire in the library. The list of registered users of the Library was asked from the Technical Services Department of the Library. This list then guided and served as the sampling frame based on which the respondents were randomly selected in each of the campuses for the study. The researcher therefore used eight weeks to administer the questionnaires on all the campuses. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of all the information they had provided. Out of the 312 questionnaires that were distributed to subjects in the various campuses, 289 were recovered representing a response rate of 93 percent and as observed by Babbie (2010), a response rate of 50% is good for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents were subjected to an in-depth analysis with the assistance of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Additionally, the collected data were analyzed under the various themes of the objectives of the study and the results generated from the analysis were presented across cases.

Respondents at this point were asked to indicate how frequent they use the Library in their various campuses. The results across cases indicate that majority of the library users on the four campuses visit the library daily as part of their normal activities. **Table 2** present the results

Table 2: Frequent Usage of the Library

As clearly shown in the table below, users from Nyankpala, Tamale, Navrongo and Wa campuses responded with high percentages of 67.2%, 57.8%, 57.7% and 33.3% respectively. This therefore implies that the libraries are well patronized by the users.

Level of cooperation of library staff when you visit the library or need their services?

Subjects were asked to indicate from their own point of view the level of cooperation of library staff whenever they visit the library or require their services. This was done to find out how committed and serious library staff are with regards to their interactions with users. The results are shown in **Table 3.**

Campus of respondent	Nyankpala Campus		Tamale Campus		Navrongo Campus		Wa Campus	
Frequency	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
Daily	41	67.2	37	57.8	41	57.7	31	33.3
Once a week	11	18.0	9	14.1	18	25.4	21	22.6
Once a while	9	14.8	15	23.4	11	15.5	29	31.2
Monthly	0	0	3	4.7	1	1.4	5	5.4
Never	0	0	0	0	1	1.4	7	7.5
Total	61	100.0	64	100.0	71	100.0	93	100.0

Campus of Respondent	Nyankpala Campus		Tamale Campus		Navrongo Campus		Wa Campus	
Frequency	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**
Very cooperative	30	50.0	38	59.4	21	30.0	41	46.6

	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
Cooperative	28	46.7	25	39.1	49	70.0	47	53.4
Not cooperative	2	3.3	1	1.6	0	0	0	0
Total	60	100.0	64	100.0	70	100.0	88	100.0

Table 3: Level of cooperation of library staff

The results across cases show that library staff from Nyankpala and Tamale Campuses are "very" cooperative with a percentage score of 50% and 59.4% respectively whilst results on Navrongo and Wa campuses produced a sharp contrast with 70% and 53.4% of the respondents indicating that the library staff are cooperative. Overall, the results show that library staff in all the campuses are supportive and provide users with the needed assistance.

Level of satisfaction for answers to queries by library staff

The study asked the subjects to indicate their level of satisfaction for answers given to their queries. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Level of satisfaction for answers to queries

Campus of Respondent	Nyankpala		Tamale		Navrongo		Wa	
Frequency	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
Very satisfied	9	14.5	19	29.7	8	11.8	17	19.5
Satisfied	39	62.9	32	50.0	51	75.0	44	50.6
Fairly satisfied	12	19.4	12	18.8	7	10.3	24	27.6
Not satisfied	2	3.2	0	0	2	2.9	2	2.3
Total	62	100.0	64	100.0	68	100.0	87	100.0

The views of the respondents as clearly shown in **Table 4** suggest that users from all the four campuses are pleased with the manner in which their queries are attended to by library staff. This view is supported by a high response rate of 62.9%, 50.0%, 75.0% and 50.6% from respondents in Nyankpala, Tamale, Navrongo and Wa respectively.

What should be done to improve the services of the Library?

Subjects were asked to suggest ways in which the library can improve upon its services. This question received varied responses. Table 5 present the results

Table 5: What should be done to improve the services of the Library?

Campus of Respondent	Nyankpala		Tamale		Navrongo		Wa	
Frequency	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
Ensuring Silence in the library	5	11.9	4	10.3	2	2.9	10	11.8
Staff should have good customer relationship	4	9.5	3	7.7	7	10.0	11	12.9
Introduce information Literacy	4	9.5	4	10.3	1	1.4	10	11.8
Update the library's catalogue with new books and new editions	7	16.7	9	23.1	21	30.0	11	12.9
Extend library operating hours especially during exams period	9	21.4	16	41.0	12	17.1	11	12.9
Reduce library charges	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improve on Internet connectivity and expand computer rooms	2	4.8	2	5.1	8	11.4	9	10.6
Provide more and comfortable furniture	3	7.1	1	2.6	4	5.7	7	8.2
Introduce inter-campus lending	3	7.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provide shelve guide to direct users	2	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provide security for students' items and	1	2.4	0	0	2	2.9	3	3.5

library materials							
Improve on general library services	1	2.4	0	0	5	7.1	5	5.9
Provide E-library services	0	0	0	0	3	4.3	1	1.2
Improve on sanitation facilities	0	0	0	0	5	7.1	7	8.2
Total	42	100.0	39	100.0	70	100.0	85	100.0

The results from Table 5 show that, the most pressing of all the suggestions across the campuses based on the highest frequency and percentage was the need for the library to update its catalogue with new books and new editions and also the need for the library to extend its operating hours especially during exams period.

Reason for using the library

Subjects were also asked to indicate their reasons for using the library. This question was asked to help the library know the motivation behind respondents use of the library so that the library can improve upon such services. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Reason for using the library

Campus of Respondent	Nyankpala		Tamale		Navrongo		Wa	
Frequency	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**	**Freq.**	**Percent.**
To borrow library books	4	6.5	5	7.8	4	5.9	12	13.6
Read library books	17	27.4	16	25.0	11	16.2	26	29.5
Consult Reference Materials	13	21.0	9	14.1	12	17.6	26	29.5
Read Newspapers/magazines	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	2	2.3
Do class assignment	4	6.5	8	12.5	12	17.6	5	5.7
Use Electronic Resource	6	9.7	14	21.9	5	7.4	2	2.3
All of the above	18	29.0	12	18.8	23	33.8	15	17.0

	62	100.0	64	100.0	68	100.0	88	100.0
Total	**62**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**68**	**100.0**	**88**	**100.0**

From **Table 6,** the responses across cases suggest that respondents main reason for coming to the library has always been to read library books and to consult reference materials. However, respondents indicated that all the reasons outlined in the table motivates them to use the library.

Level of satisfaction for answers to queries by users' opinion on library services

In order to find out whether there is relationship between users' level of satisfaction to answers by library staff and their opinions on library services, level of satisfaction was cross tabulated by opinion on library services. This was done to find out if users level of satisfaction to queries by library staff will translate into genuine opinions shared by them on the services of the library. Table 7 present the results

Table 7: Level of satisfaction for answers to queries by users' opinion on library services

Level of satisfaction	What is your opinion on the library services?					Total
	Very good	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**	**Very poor**	
Very satisfied	31	19	2	0	0	**52**
Satisfied	13	117	28	5	0	**163**
Fairly satisfied	1	22	30	0	2	**55**
Not satisfied	0	1	3	1	1	**6**
Total	**45**	**160**	**63**	**6**	**3**	**277**
	$X = 154.829$ df=16 Asymp. Sig. = 0.000 $X \leq 0.005$					

As indicated in **Table 7**, a significance level of 0.000 was achieved which implies that users level of satisfaction to queries by library staff is positively correlated with users' opinion on the library's services.

Further analysis also indicates that as high as 117 respondents are satisfied with answers given by library staff to their queries and therefore rate the library's services as good.

Frequent usage of the library by Reading Materials used most

The study also decided to determine if there is a correlation between frequent usage of the library and reading materials used most. This was done to find out if users frequent usage of the library is motivated by the availability of a particular reading material or not. The results are shown in Table 8

Table 8: Frequent usage of the library by Reading materials used most

| Frequent usage of the library | Materials Used Most | | | | | | | Total |
	Text Books	Reference Materials	Journals /Indexes	Project Reports	Newspapers/ Magazines	All of the above	Electronic Resources	
Daily	94	18	1	4	1	24	5	**147**
Once a week	29	15	0	0	1	10	2	**57**
Once a while	29	21	3	1	1	4	2	**61**
Monthly	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	**8**
Never	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	157	54	4	6	3	38	12	274
X =95.208 df=24 Asymp. Sig. = 0.000 X $\leq$ 0.005								

The results presented in **Table 8** indicate that there is a positive correlation between frequent usage of the library and reading materials used most at a significance level of 0.000. The results also show that a clear majority of the respondents visit the library daily to consult the available textbooks.

Discussion

The main aim of this study was to assess students and staff use of University for Development Studies' Library. The survey approach used by this study has resulted in several revelations by the library users from which this section intends to discuss.

With the advent of several information and communication technologies coupled with the era in which we find ourselves, whereby information is easily accessed on hand held devices, one would have thought that students and even faculty would not patronize the library as often as possible but the results of this study has indicated that the University Library is being visited everyday by users as part of their daily activities. Users frequent visit to the library could be attributed to the availability of the needed resources that helps in solving their information needs. This results of the study therefore corroborates a study conducted by Kumar (2010) which indicated clearly that users of IIT Delhi Library regularly visit the library. However, the results of this study contradicts a recent study conducted by Onaolopo (2016) on Federal Polytechnic Offa Library which indicated that students and faculty do not patronize the library. The researcher further added that this is as a result of lack of awareness of the kind of resources the library has and so, much awareness should be created about the resources in the library to users.

The results of this study also revealed that library staff of the university library are cooperative and therefore attend to users with the utmost affection and the willingness to see to it that their information needs are attended to. The results also disclosed that users as a result of the positive attitude exhibited by library staff always bring satisfaction to them whenever answers are given to their queries. The results are therefore in agreement with past studies such as (Kaur, 2010; Gunasekera, 2010 and Hussain & Abalkhail, 2013). These authors shared similar views in their

various studies and indicated that the quality of service provided by library staff to users leave them in a very satisfactory mood.

Additionally, users of the library suggested that the library should make it a point to purchase new textbooks as frequently as possible and also extend its operating hours especially during examination period. This revelation goes to support a study conducted by Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe (2014) which brought to the fore that students of Paul University in Nigeria mostly use the library in the exams period.

As part of the objectives of the study, there was the need to find out users' reasons for using the library. The reasons on the other hand were seen to be the factors that motivate them to use the library. Reading books and consulting reference materials emerged as the main reason for using the library. This conforms to Onaolopo's study in (2016) which revealed that students use the library for several reasons and among them is to go there and read books.

Another objective of the study was to find out if users level of satisfaction construes a real representation of their opinions on the services of the library. This objective meant that the study had to test for the existence of any relationship between the two variables. Chi-square test ($\times^2 \leq$ 0.05) was used and the result indicated a positive correlation between level of satisfaction and opinions on services of the library. This result therefore goes to affirm that an honest opinion was shared by the library users.

Additionally, there was the need for another test to be carried out by the study. The study sought to find out and confirm if users' frequent usage of the library has a connection with the type of material used most. The chi-square test ($\times^2 \leq 0.05$) was applied in this situation and the result

indicated a positive correlation which also meant that users frequent visit to the library is motivated by the availability of reading materials particularly textbooks on their courses.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study has showed and given every indication that the University Library is doing its best to serve the university community with prompt and accurate information. The level of satisfaction of users on the services of the library also indicate the level of appreciation of staff's work. The researchers at this point wish to recommend that the university library should try as much as possible to furnish the library with more current textbooks since the users are more interested in that and feel those would always complement the electronic information or resources made available to them.

The study would also recommend that libraries around the world specifically academic libraries should always make it a point to assess their services as frequently as possible to ensure that library patrons receive the best of services at all times.

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