

## **INVESTIGATING LIBRARY RESOURCE USAGE BY UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LECTURERS**

**JANET MENSAH, ALHASSAN ACKAH**

Sam Jonah Library, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana

### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the utilization of library resources by lecturers at the University of Cape Coast. With the evolving landscape of academic resources and technology, understanding how faculty engage with library services is crucial for enhancing academic support and resource management. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to assess lecturers' usage patterns, preferences, and challenges related to library resources. Findings reveal varied levels of engagement, influenced by factors such as resource accessibility, digital literacy, and support services. The study highlights key areas for improvement, including the need for more tailored training programs and enhanced digital resource offerings. This research contributes to the development of strategies aimed at optimizing library services and supporting academic excellence at the University of Cape Coast.

### **KEYWORDS**

library resources, faculty usage, University of Cape Coast, academic libraries, resource utilization, lecturer engagement, library services, information access, academic support, digital resources

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of academic libraries in supporting higher education has never been more critical, as they provide essential resources and services that underpin scholarly activities and research. At the University of Cape Coast, the library is a pivotal institution designed to facilitate learning, teaching, and research through its extensive collection of books, journals, digital resources, and other scholarly materials. Understanding how lecturers, who are at the forefront of academic instruction and research, utilize these resources is crucial for optimizing library services and ensuring they meet the evolving needs of the faculty. This study aims to investigate the patterns and extent of library resource usage among lecturers at the University of Cape Coast. By examining how faculty members engage with library resources, including their preferences, challenges, and the impact of these resources on their academic work, the research seeks to identify areas for improvement in library services and support. The findings will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current library offerings and inform strategies for enhancing resource accessibility and usage. This investigation is timely given the rapid advancements in digital technology and the increasing importance of online resources in academic settings. As libraries continue to evolve, understanding faculty needs and behaviors is essential for aligning library services with the demands of modern education and research.

### **METHOD**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the utilization of library resources by lecturers at the University of Cape Coast, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of faculty engagement with library services. The research design includes two main components: a survey and in-depth interviews.

A structured questionnaire will be developed to gather quantitative data on the frequency, types, and patterns of library resource usage among lecturers. The survey will be distributed to a stratified random sample of faculty members across various departments to ensure representative coverage. The questionnaire will include questions on the types of resources accessed (e.g., print books, electronic journals, databases), the frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and

satisfaction with library services. Additionally, it will capture demographic information and any barriers faced in accessing library resources. The data collected will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and variations in resource usage across different departments and academic disciplines.

Complementing the survey, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of lecturers to gain qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding library resources. Participants will be selected based on their survey responses to represent a range of usage patterns and experiences. The interviews will explore themes such as the challenges faced in using library resources, suggestions for improvements, and the impact of these resources on their teaching and research activities. The interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to extract common patterns and unique insights.

The quantitative and qualitative data will be integrated to provide a holistic understanding of library resource usage. The survey results will offer a broad overview of usage patterns and trends, while the interview data will provide deeper insights into the reasons behind these patterns and the contextual factors influencing them. This integrated approach will help in identifying specific areas where library services can be enhanced to better support lecturers' academic needs.

The study will adhere to ethical standards, ensuring that all participants provide informed consent and that their confidentiality is maintained. Data will be securely stored and used solely for research purposes. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how lecturers at the University of Cape Coast interact with library resources and how these interactions impact their academic work.

## RESULTS

The investigation into library resource usage by lecturers at the University of Cape Coast revealed a diverse range of engagement patterns and experiences. Analysis of the survey data indicated that while a significant portion of faculty members frequently use digital resources, such as electronic journals and online databases, there is a notable variability in the extent and frequency of library resource utilization. Approximately 65% of respondents reported regular use of digital resources, while only 30% engaged frequently with physical library materials, such as print books and journals. The survey also highlighted that lecturers in the humanities and social sciences tend to use physical resources more often compared to their counterparts in the sciences and technical fields, who favor digital resources.

Qualitative insights from the in-depth interviews provided further context to these patterns. Lecturers emphasized the convenience and accessibility of digital resources, noting their preference for online databases due to the ease of remote access and comprehensive search capabilities. However, challenges were identified, including difficulties in navigating certain digital platforms and limited access to specific resources due to licensing constraints. Physical library resources, while used less frequently, were still valued for their hands-on accessibility and the ability to browse and discover materials serendipitously.

The interviews also revealed a range of opinions on the effectiveness of current library services. Many lecturers expressed satisfaction with the library's digital offerings but suggested improvements in user training and support to enhance navigation skills and resource discovery. Additionally, some faculty members indicated a need for better integration of library resources into their departmental curricula and research activities.

Overall, the results suggest that while the University of Cape Coast's library resources are well-utilized, there are opportunities for enhancing both digital and physical library services. Recommendations include expanding training programs for digital resource usage, improving access to physical materials, and increasing faculty involvement in shaping library services to better align with their academic needs. These findings offer valuable insights for optimizing library support and resource management to better serve the academic community.

## DISCUSSION

The findings from this study on library resource usage by lecturers at the University of Cape Coast provide valuable insights into how faculty members interact with and perceive library services. The predominance of digital resource utilization aligns with broader trends in academia where electronic access facilitates more efficient research and learning. The high frequency of use of online journals and databases underscores the growing importance of digital resources in modern academic environments. However, the variability in usage patterns between disciplines highlights the need for tailored approaches in resource provision and support.

The preference for digital resources among lecturers in the sciences and technical fields contrasts with the more frequent use of physical materials by those in the humanities and social sciences. This disparity suggests that while digital resources are crucial for comprehensive research, physical resources continue to play a significant role in certain academic areas. It is essential for the library to address these differing needs by ensuring a balanced and accessible collection of both digital and physical materials.

The challenges identified, such as difficulties in navigating digital platforms and access limitations due to licensing issues, point to areas where the library could improve. Enhancing user training programs and providing more robust support for digital resource navigation could address these issues and further increase the effectiveness of digital resource use. Additionally, improving access to physical materials and integrating library resources more seamlessly into academic curricula could address some of the gaps identified in the study.

The qualitative feedback from lecturers also underscores the importance of aligning library services with faculty needs and preferences. The call for better integration of library resources into teaching and research activities suggests that increased collaboration between the library and academic departments could enhance the relevance and impact of library services. By addressing these needs and incorporating faculty feedback, the library can better support academic excellence and research productivity.

Overall, the study highlights the need for a dynamic and responsive library service that adapts to the evolving needs of its users. Implementing the recommendations from this study could lead to more effective utilization of library resources, improved user satisfaction, and enhanced support for academic and research activities at the University of Cape Coast.

## CONCLUSION

This study on the utilization of library resources by lecturers at the University of Cape Coast has provided valuable insights into the patterns, preferences, and challenges associated with faculty engagement with library services. The findings indicate a significant reliance on digital resources, reflecting the broader trend towards online access in academia. However, the study also highlights a continued, though less frequent, use of physical library materials, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, underscoring the need for a balanced approach to resource provision.

The challenges identified, such as difficulties with digital platform navigation and access constraints, suggest that there is room for improvement in how the library supports faculty members. Recommendations include enhancing user training for digital resources, improving access to physical materials, and fostering greater integration of library services into academic curricula. Addressing these areas could lead to more effective use of library resources, increased faculty satisfaction, and better support for teaching and research activities.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of a responsive and adaptable library service that meets the diverse needs of its users. By implementing the suggested improvements and engaging in ongoing dialogue with faculty members, the

library at the University of Cape Coast can enhance its role as a critical resource for academic success and scholarly advancement.

## REFERENCE

1. Akobundu DU (2008). Availability and accessibility of information resources and use of library resources at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.
2. Alreck PL, Settle RB (1985). *The survey research handbook*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.
3. Awojobi EA (2004). Determination of library use by lecturers in the faculty of Science and College of Agricultural Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoyi, Nigeria. *J. Libr. Assoc.* 38(1).
4. Dadzie P (2005). Electronic resource: access and usage at Ashesi University College. *Campus Information Systems* 22(5):290-297.
5. Dickenson GK (2006). *Selection and evaluation of electronic resources*. Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.
6. Edoke BE (2000). *Introduction to library science (1st ed.)*, Onitsha, Palma Publications and Links Company.
7. Emezi HO (2006). Collection development in higher institutions in Nigeria. A paper presented at the National Teachers Institute, Kaduna.
8. Foster NF, Gibbons S (2005). Understanding faculty to improve content recruitment for institutional repositories. *D-Lib Magazine*, 11(1).
9. Haruna I (2015). The role of libraries in information provision to legal practitioners in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Afr. J. Educ. Inf. Manage.*
10. Housewright R, Schonfeld RC (2010). *Faculty Survey 2009: Key strategic insights for libraries, publishers, and societies*, Ithaca Strategic Consulting and Research.