Attitudes of Sandwich and Postgraduate Students towards the Use of the Sam Jonah Library

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ABSTRACT

While the library serves as an academic hub for academic activities for students and staff, few post-graduate sandwich students patronise it, and those who visit the library encounter challenges. This study examined the attitudes of sandwich students on the use of the Sam Jonah Library of the University of Cape Coast. A quantitative research method embedded with a descriptive survey design was used. A semi-structured questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. A purposive sampling technique with 108 students was used using Yamane's formula. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and pie charts were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that most sandwich students who visit the library are master's students; they mostly use the library for their learning. Most students visit the library as often. In terms of challenges, most students said the internet connection should be enhanced to facilitate their research work, while some were of the view that librarians should take time to educate them and provide them feedback. Although there was adequate seating, most of the seats are not in good shape, especially at the research commons, which needs to be replaced. It was therefore recommended that facilities within the library should be well maintained, the seats, computers and other pieces of equipment should be well managed by both students and staff. It is recommended that the library authority, together with the various departments, should seek to ensure that sandwich students are given the needed orientation early to know the sections and where to go for assistance if the need arises.

Keywords: Attitude; Sam Jonah Library; Sandwich Students Challenges

INTRODUCTION

University libraries are widely regarded as the "central hub" of intellectual society (Zhang et al., 2011, pp. 271-273), serving as a foundation for scholars and researchers to conduct their studies and expand their understanding since they play a significant part in their operation and continuity (Abukari, 2019). Libraries benefit faculty members and students by providing a conducive research setting (Saunders, 2015). In order to enhance their position within the academic community, libraries have adapted to evolving use patterns to provide improved assistance to users in their pursuit of learning and intellectual endeavours (Hanelt, Bohnsack, Marz, & Antunes Marante, 2021).

Research has shown a direct relationship between students' general involvement in learning and their usage of library resources, contact with library workers and frequency of library use. The survey titled "Bridging the Librarian-Faculty Gap in the Academic Library" conducted by Library Journal and Gale Cengage (2015) revealed positive attitudes about the essential role of academic libraries in facilitating the research process. Despite the significance of the library, many university students are not aware of the resources and services the library offers (Ibrahim & Sakiyo, 2015; Yevelson-Shorsher & Bronstein, 2018), which goes against the

library department's purposes and objectives in improving access to information.

Kim (2017) conducted a study of more than 100 library patrons at the University of Maryland. The library is often regarded as a favoured location for both academic and non-academic purposes. The results reveal the common activities of library users, such as individual and group learning, as well as meetings and social interactions. An analysis of the relationship between library use and user activities indicates that people see libraries as a space primarily dedicated to studying and obtaining knowledge.

Deng et al. (2019) established that students exhibited a preference for using the library for academic purposes, whereas the library café was mostly used for leisurely activities. To assess the library's popularity as a preferred location, a common method included presenting respondents with a selection of campus locations and asking them to choose their favourite one. Latfi (2016) compiled and analysed 15 research conducted between 2005 and 2016 that focused on the relationship between library space and user satisfaction in academic libraries. The findings emphasised the importance of academic library spaces in facilitating user activities. Recent research has revealed that users tend to prefer individual study spaces or quiet study areas rather than group study and social areas (Adeyemi, 2017).

Additionally, there is a demand for project and collaboration spaces that are available 24 hours a day (Yip et al., 2019). Users also express a need for territorial markers to establish personal space (Imamoglu & Gürel, 2016). Furthermore, a sense of community, trust, and peer support are identified as important factors in the reservation of desks (Breen et al., 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The library is a crucial part of every educational institution since it has valuable resources that students will need in their studies. Though sandwich and postgraduate students share the library, there are issues arising from the differing requirements, tastes, and habits of these two different student populations. Sandwich and postgraduate students may have different attitudes, behaviours, and views of the resources, facilities, and services provided by libraries (Mong'are, 2014). This duality might lead to possible disputes, problems allocating resources, or inefficiencies in meeting their particular demands inside the library, which would negatively affect both student cohorts' overall happiness and user experience (Amey & Eddy, 2023).

There is a paucity of academic literature that explicitly examines and contrasts sandwich and postgraduate students' attitudes and use habits about shared library spaces and resources, especially in relation to the Jonah Library. Previous research, such as (Kankam, 2020), looked at sandwich students' mobile information behaviour to ascertain their readiness for M-learning adoption. Ankrah and Atuase's (2018) study paid attention to the use of electronic resources by postgraduate students, while Afful-Arthur's (2016) study looked at library services and user satisfaction for sandwich students of the University of Cape Coast. Most of these studies paid little attention to sandwich postgraduate students attitudes toward the use of the Sam Jonah Library. Due to this, there is a significant research gap that prevents customised strategies and services to maximise sandwich and postgraduate students' satisfaction levels and library usage from being developed. These gaps include understanding their particular needs, preferences, challenges, and user experiences in a shared library environment. Closing this gap would improve the entire library experience and increase the library's ability to accommodate the various demands of both student groups. It is against this backdrop identified in the literature that the current study looked at the attitude of Sandwich students toward the use of the Sam Jonah Library of the University of Cape Coast.

Research Questions

The following research questions underpinned the study.

1. What is the attitude of Sandwich students toward the use of the Sam Jonah library?
2. What are the challenges encountered by sandwich students toward the use of the Sam Jonah library?

Significance of the Study

The idea of sandwich education is here to stay; thus, it is now vital to conduct a scientific investigation into the unique characteristics of these pupils and their information requirements. As a result, in addition to adding significantly to the body of knowledge regarding students' attitudes towards library use and the quality of services provided by academic libraries, this study also helps university and library management understand the actual challenges faced by different student demographics, their expectations, and the most effective ways to resolve them. It is anticipated that the study will assist UCC Library and other academic libraries in providing effective, customised services to support research, teaching, and learning

Literature Review

Non-conventional/Sandwich education

The percentage of potential university applicants who are highly qualified is rising, and Vedder, Denhart, and Robe (2013) suggest that this is a global trend. Roughly one-fourth of candidates to universities are thought to get admission offers. The development of higher education is supported by the expanding shifts in the nature of work, which are reinforced by rising expectations for educational engagement and the academic emphasis of an increasing variety of professions (Becker et al., 2017). Higher education institutions have a responsibility to satisfy the demand for education by providing curricula that go beyond what is considered mainstream (Fitzgerald, Karen, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2020).

For this reason, almost all of Ghana's higher institutions—colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities—offer flexible, part-time, or sandwich programmes to accommodate those who are unable to attend university full-time due to work or family obligations, as well as the backlog of prospective students Such an educational programme, according to Salooja and Vijayakumar (2018), is a way to provide education to a wide range of clients who are unable to profit from the traditional educational system.

Empirical Review

Mahwasane and Mudzielwana's (2016) research evaluated the challenges that students are having in accessing the library. Information retrieval abilities are of crucial necessity for one to be able to access information resources in different forms in the library. The results of the study revealed that challenges such as, for example, lack of proper understanding of how to utilise information retrieval skills, inadequate user education, lack of computer expertise, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) in accessing information in the library exist.

Shehu, Imran, and Ojo (2022) carried out a research to investigate the difficulties faced by students at the Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa State while using the materials available in the polytechnic library. Three research questions served as the study's guiding questions. Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. A questionnaire was the tool employed in this research to gather data. Pie charts, percentages, and frequency counts were used to answer research questions. Additionally, the results show that 58.6% of respondents thought the information resources offered by the libraries were appropriate and that 98% of respondents said that the biggest obstacle was a lack of internet. According to Tang and Tseng's (2014) research, remote learners who visit libraries and ask for assistance more often are more likely to have greater levels of self-efficacy when it comes to learning.

Okonoko Vera, Sambo, and Ejiro (2018) conducted a study that explored the difficulties faced by students at

the College of Education, Agbor, in utilising the resources available at their college library. They addressed their research inquiries by employing frequency counts and percentages. The study revealed that 68% of the students were female, while 32% were male. Among the resources accessed, textbooks emerged as the most frequently consulted materials, accounting for 99%, followed by theses/dissertations at 92%, journals at 73%, reference materials at 68%, computers at 67%, and newspapers/magazines at 52%. The primary challenges encountered by the students included the absence of internet facilities, a shortage of qualified librarians, insufficient funding, a lack of photocopying services, a scarcity of pertinent materials, inadequate operational ICT facilities, a deficiency in user education, an unfavourable condition of the library space, limited awareness of available library resources, the inadequate state of the library collections, and an unsatisfactory reading environment.

The findings from Omeluzor, Akibu, and Akinwoye (2016) indicated that how users perceive e-resources significantly influences their utilisation within academic libraries. Moreover, obstacles such as a lack of awareness, inadequate training, unreliable Internet connections, limited availability of e-resources across diverse study disciplines, absence of 24/7 access to resources, and difficulties in identifying pertinent information aligned with users' requirements were identified as challenges impeding the effective utilisation of e-resources. The study's conclusion recommended that librarians expand their collection of e-resources across various fields of study, enhance awareness among library users regarding available e-resources to positively alter their perception, and implement round-the-clock Internet services to improve accessibility.

From the empirical reviews, researchers mostly paid attention to users and regular students using the library with less attention to post-graduate sandwich students, of which the Sam Jonah Library of the University of Cape Coast in the Ghanaian context is no exception. The researcher sought to bridge the gap and add to the body of knowledge regarding sandwich students attitudes and challenges encountered when using the library.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A quantitative research approach embedded with a descriptive survey design design was used. For a cross-sectional study, the data must be acquired all at once. At that time, information collection is carried out. Finding out the nature of a situation as it is at the time of the investigation is the goal of a descriptive survey. This approach focuses on developing generalisations and analysing the connection between variables (George, 2019). The researcher concurrently assessed respondents exposures and outcomes in a cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional design was employed because the study's participants shared certain characteristics but had different interests, such as age, income level, and educational level.

According to Nardi (2018), descriptive surveys provide clarity on the nature of a particular phenomenon and permit the reporting of facts and results exactly as they are. Blair, Czaja, and Blair (2013) estimated that a descriptive survey comprises asking a large population the same set of questions in the form of a questionnaire or ability test via mail, phone, or in person. It is possible to generalise the sample's result as a representation of the population (Stuart & Rhodes, 2017). Generally speaking, sandwich students spend less time on campus than traditional students. Because it can gather data from a large number of respondents in a short amount of time and enable inference from a sample to a larger population, the descriptive survey design was, therefore, suitable for this study's assessment of participants' attitudes regarding the use of the Sam Jonah Library.

Population Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for this research comprised all postgraduate sandwich students who visit various institutional libraries in Ghana. In order to better grasp the concepts underlying their solutions and dispel

certain misunderstandings, thirty postgraduate sandwich students were chosen for a pilot study. The accessible population consisted of all postgraduate sandwich students who visited the Sam Jonah Library. I can easily reach those students because I am a staff of the University of Cape Coast.

The sample is a portion of a population encompassing the whole group (Cherry, 2017). One hundred and eight respondents make up the sample size for this study. The accessible population, as determined by the information taken from the library attendance list, is thought to be around 148 sandwich students; as data was collected within a month, Yamane's formula was used to determine sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population size (estimated)

e = Acceptable sampling error.

Therefore, $= \frac{148}{1+148\,(0.05)^2}$

n= 108

The formula was chosen because of the convenience sampling technique, which involved simple random sampling. The simple random sample gives way to every possible sample of the same size that was chosen.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

A semi-structured questionnaire was used. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data on postgraduate students attitudes toward the Sam Jonah Library. This instrument was used because of its strengths in terms of impartiality and capacity to cover a large number of respondents in a short amount of time. However, there are several disadvantages to using questionnaires as a data collection technique, such as challenges in leaving space for further questioning and explanation. A questionnaire on postgraduate students attitudes toward the library was scored immediately. Those items that were ambiguous were taken out. Cohen et al. (2018) claim that a measurement tool is valid if it captures the intended outcome. Fifty (50) respondents who were not part of the study population piloted the questionnaire to determine its reliability. Koshy (2020) states that a minimum of 30 samples are needed for piloting. This was in line with the data evaluated, and the instrument's reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach alpha, which was estimated to be α = 0.898. There were 29 questionnaires on learners' attitudes, perceptions, and challenges towards the use of the library.

Permission was sought from the Sam Jonah Library administration, and sandwich students who visited the library were informed of the purpose of the study.

Data Processing and Analyses

In the context of this study, the data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data were presented using tables, charts, and graphs in addition to basic frequency and percentage counts. This made it simpler for the researcher to present the replies' frequency distribution.

Ethical Consideration

Participants in the study had their rights protected by a consent form from the researcher and were assured

confidentiality; therefore, the data were coded anonymously and could not be linked to specific individuals.

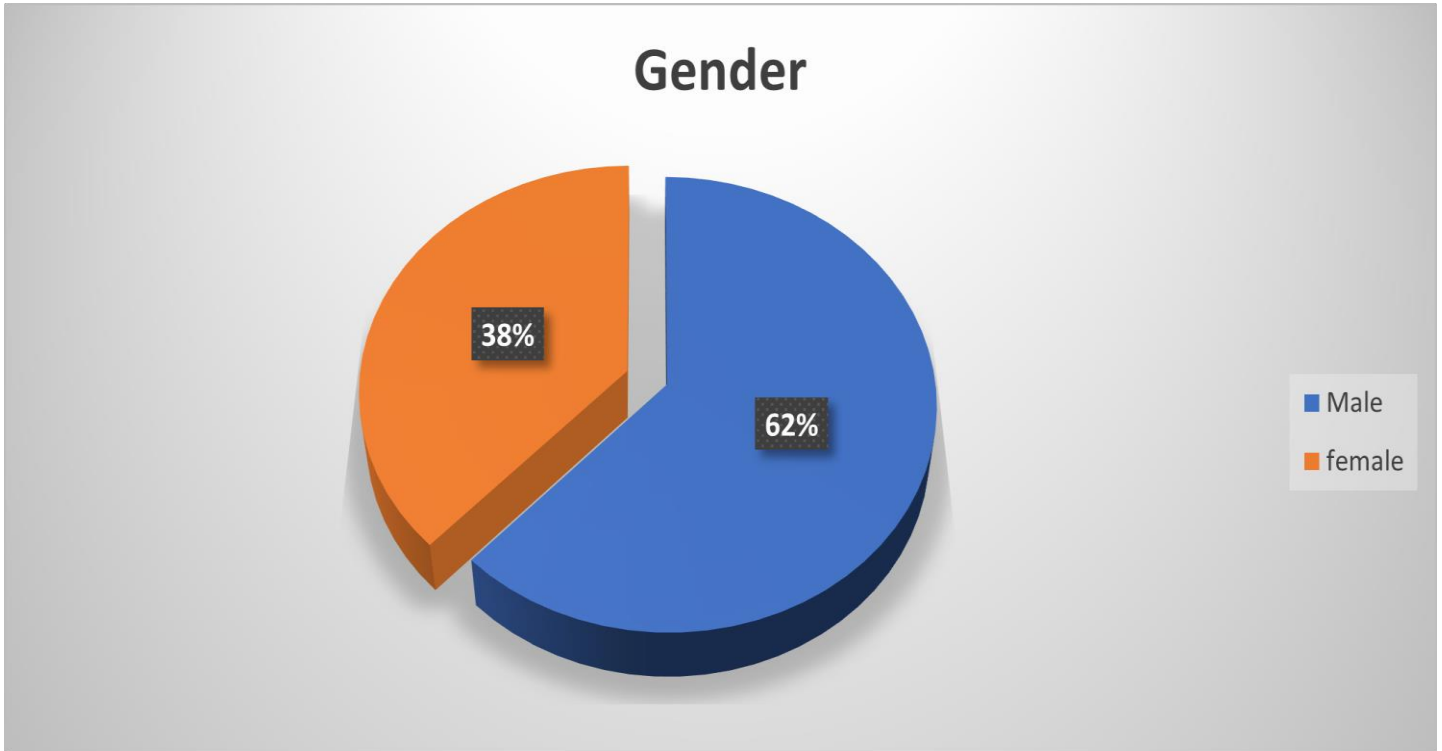# RESULTS

Background of respondents

Figure 1: Age respondents

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

Out of the 108 respondents engaged in the study, 62% were males, and 38% were females. This means that sandwich students who visit the Sam Jonah Library are mostly male-dominant.

Table 1: Age distribution of respondents   N=108

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
17-20	23	21.3
21-25	15	13.9
26-30	46	43
31-35	10	9.3
36+	14	12.5
Total	108	100%

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 1 indicates that the age of the majority of sandwich students who visit the Sam Jonah library ranges from 26-30(43%), and 23 respondents were between the age of 17-20(21.3%). It was revealed that 15, representing 13.9%, were between 21 and 25 years old. The lowest age was 36+, with only 14 students, indicating 12.5%.

Table 2: Year of Study   N=108

Item	Frequency	Percentage %
First-year	21	19.4
Second year	15	13.9
Third year	18	16.7
Fourth-year	16	14.8
Masters	36	33.3
PhD	2	1.9
Total	108	100%

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 2 looks at the year of the study group that mostly visits the library. It was observed from the findings that 36(33.3%) sandwich students who offer master programmes visit the Sam Jonah library the most. Twenty-one students were in their first year. It was quite surprising that the first years were not mostly visiting the library, and it was indicated that, due to inadequate orientation, most were not familiar with the library. It was revealed that 18(16.7%) were third-year students, while 15(13.9%) were second-year students. The least number of students were offering Ph.D.

Research Question One: what are the attitudes of postgraduate students towards the use of the Sam Jonah library?

The research questions intended to explore the attitudes of students in using the library.
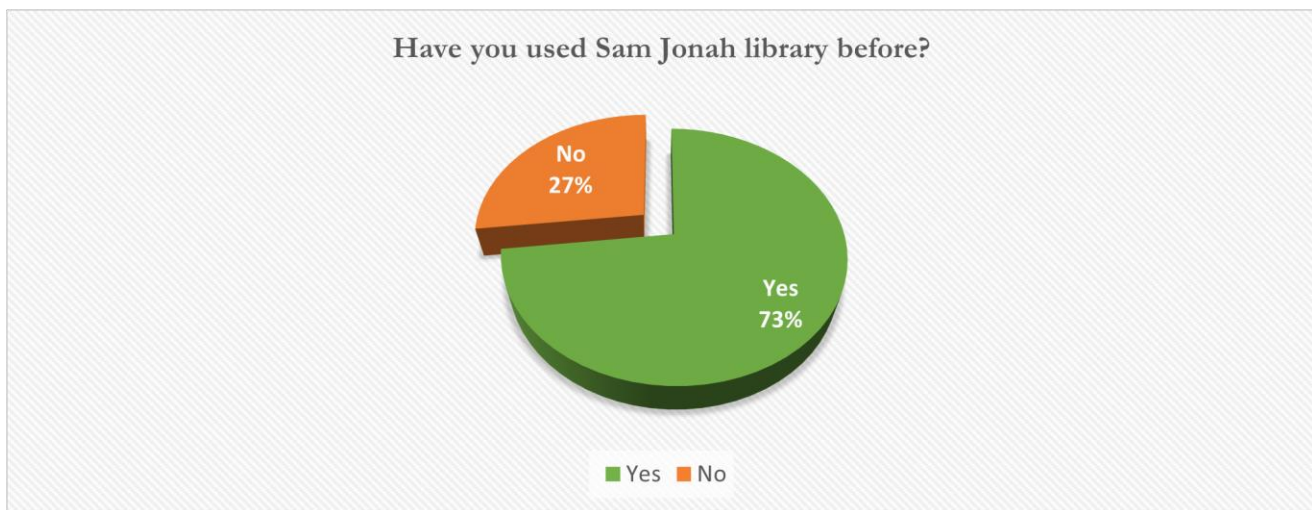

Figure 2: Have you used the Sam Jonah Library before?

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

It was indicated in Figure 2 that out of 108 respondents, the majority, 79(73%), used the library, while the least 29(27%) did not use the library. The researcher asked why students do not use the library, and the most prevalent reasons were. Some respondents believe that "they prefer studying in more casual places, hostels or communal places." Some were of the view that "they have hectic schedules since most sandwich students said they attend their part-time jobs, leaving limited or no time for library visits. The responses are displayed below to show how often students use the Sam Jonah library services and facilities.

Table 3: how often do you use the Sam Jonah Library services and facilities   N=108

Item	Frequency	Percentage %
Once a week	19	17.6
Twice a week	22	20.4
Once a month	17	15.7
Twice a month	11	10.2
As often as possible	39	36.1
Total	108	100%

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

It was observed in Table 3 that approximately 39 respondents, representing 36.1%, mostly visit the library as often as possible. Twenty-two of the respondents said they visit the library twice a week, while 19(17.8%) visit the library once a week. At least 11(10.2%) respondents visit the library twice a month. This result demonstrates that sandwich students often patronise the services and facilities offered by the Sam Jonah Library. It implies that the more students visit the library, it enhances their research competency since the facility provides a conducive environment in terms of internet and computers for students who do not have personal laptops.

The final item on students attitudes using the library explored what activities students do most when they visit the library. The result is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Which activities do you do most when you visit the library?   N=108

Item	Frequency	Percentage %
Group discussion	9	8.3
To use the library materials within the building	13	12
To read personal study notes	81	75
To use library services like computers, watch TV, play oware, and the internet	4	3.7
Others	1	0.9
Total	108	100%

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

It was discovered from the study that 81(75%) of sandwich students visit the library for personal study notes. This was due to the time examination, where most of these students were preparing for their end-of-semester exams. Thirteen students, representing 12%, said they visit the library to use the materials within the building. It was also revealed that 9(8.3%) said they visit to discuss a course they find difficult. Their place of meeting for these discussions was mostly the open space, where the researcher observed that few of the students were aware that within the Research Commons (which is meant for graduate students), a section is created for discussion and seminars. The study discovered that 4 (3.7%) also visit the library to watch television and use the computers at the Knowledge Commons for relaxation.

In order to know the challenges faced by sandwich students in using the library, I present the last research question below.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges encountered by sandwich students toward the use of the

Sam Jonah library?

This research question looked at the challenges students face in using library services.

Table 5: Challenges encountered by Sandwich Students

Statement	SA%	A%	SD%	D%
The library's operating hours are convenient for sandwich students.	25 23.1%	18 16.7%	54 50%	11 10.2%
The library's resources, such as books and e-resources, cater to the needs of sandwich students.	26 24.1%	34 31.5%	28 26%	20 18.5%
Finding a quiet and conducive study space in the library is challenging during peak hours.	41 38%	21 19.4%	16 14.8%	30 27.8%
Access to library staff for assistance or guidance is readily available when needed.	21 19.4%	39 36.1%	29 26.8%	19 17.6%
There is sufficient access to computers and other technology in the library.	57 52.8%	21 19.4%	27 25%	3 2.8%
I perceive the library as a place for socialisation. The library's collection of course-related materials is up-to-date and comprehensive.	55 50.9%	31 28.7%	12 11.1%	10 9.2%
The library's organisation and signage make it easy to locate materials.	32 29.6%	43 39.8%	28 25.9%	5 4.6%
Adequate seating and workspace are available to accommodate sandwich students during their study sessions.	42 38.9%	29 26.8%	28 25.9%	9 8.3%
The library's policies, such as no eating and sleeping, are fair and reasonable.	12 11.1%	34 31.5%	51 47.2%	11 10.2%
The library staff is responsive to feedback and suggestions from sandwich students.	25 23.1%	29 26.8%	41 38%	13 12.1%

Sources: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 5 revealed that 54(50%) respondents strongly disagree with the statement "library's operating hours are convenient for sandwich students." This means the allotted time for sandwich students was less as

compared to regular students; in terms of whether library resources, such as books and e-resources, centre on the needs of sandwich students, it was revealed that the majority, 34(31.5%), agreed, while 28(26%) strongly disagreed with the notion. Most respondents, 41(38%), believed that finding a quiet and conducive study space in the library is challenging during peak hours. This implies that most sandwich students, especially the first years, were not properly oriented, which made most unaware of the facilities available. Most respondents, 29(26.8%), indicated that they do not have assistance or guidance that is readily available from the library staff. In terms of access to computers and other technological equipment in the library, it was observed from the respondents that they were satisfied, but some were of the view that the Wi-Fi services were very slow, which delayed their downloads and other activities that needed fast internet connectivity. In addition, it was indicated that 55(50.9%) strongly agreed that "they perceive the library as a place for socialisation. The library's collection of course-related materials is up-to-date and comprehensive." Also, most respondents, 43(39.8%), agreed with the statement that "the library's organisation and signage make it easy to locate materials." It was further added that most 42(38.9%) said they have "adequate seating and workspace available to accommodate sandwich students during their study sessions." In terms of library policies such as no eating, and no sleeping, most 51(47.2%) said it is not fair and reasonable to them. Most were not aware that there was a cafeteria on the down floor of the library that provides snacks. Lastly, it was indicated that most respondents, 41(38%) strongly disagreed and mentioned that the library staff is not responsive and feedback and suggestions are not adequate. It was indicated from the study that most sandwich students were having challenges in using the library computers; most were observed calling the library staff on different occasions in using the computers, which could be accounted for digital literacy.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study support the findings from Alokluk (2020) who reported that most students visit the library to read their notes and use library material available. The findings are in line with Janet, Adebimpe, and Titilayo (2014) study in Nigeria, which reported that since library resources were available, most students prefer to visit the library to read their notes. The findings in terms of respondents gender are in support of Shehu, Imran, and Ojo (2022) finding, which shows that 36.3% of the participants are male while 63.6% are female. In terms of reference services, the result was rated adequate, while other items were rated averagely adequate and outrightly inadequate. This implies that places such as discussion and seminar rooms were not well known by sandwich students. Therefore, orientations should be provided to ensure that most services are provided to introduce and provide positive attitudes to these students toward the library.

The results of this research are consistent with Aasheim's (2018) findings, which indicate that users often experience information overload and find it challenging to navigate and filter through the vast variety of materials accessible in the library's databases or catalogues. This problem makes it difficult to locate relevant and trustworthy information quickly. Research has identified the digital divide as a major issue wherein some users encounter challenges due to insufficient digital literacy, insufficient technical infrastructure, or differences in the availability of electronic resources (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019). The results of this research are in contrast to those of Ntombela (2019), who found that factors such as noise levels, crowded environments, poor sitting or study areas, and a lack of privacy affect people's ability to focus and feel comfortable. The findings of this research corroborate the recommendations made by Knapp et al. (2023), who said that librarians need to assist students by providing effective staff assistance and services. Shehu et al. (2022) study aligns with this study, which reveals that internet connection was a challenge during library visits. Issues might be brought about by poor support, a shortage of librarians, or a lack of customised instructions to help users make the most use of available resources.

CONCLUSIONS

It was revealed from the study that sandwich students often visit the Sam Jonah library to read their notes

and use the computers available to them. It implies that the library environment was a serene place for the students. Most students who visited the library were master students, while the first years were not well-oriented and, therefore, found it difficult to navigate through the library sections. In terms of challenges, most students said the internet connection should be enhanced to facilitate their research work, while some were of the view that librarians should take time to educate them and provide them feedback. Although there was adequate seating, most of the seats are not in good shape, especially at the research commons, which needs to be replaced. It was therefore recommended that facilities within the library should be well maintained, the seats, computers and other pieces of equipment should be well managed by both students and staff. It is recommended that the library authority, together with the various departments should seek to it that sandwich students are given the needed orientation early to know the sections and where to go for assistance if the need be.

DECLARATIONS

Study Limitations

The study was limited to only sandwich postgraduate students of the University of Cape Coast. It is possible that the questionnaires would be interpreted differently due to respondents inconsistency and unfairness. The study also looked into the attitudes and challenges in using the Sam Jonah Library; nevertheless, replicating the study in other tertiary institutions would add to the study's conclusion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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