



NEWSPAPER READING BEHAVIOUR IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A SURVEY OF TWO SATELLITE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore the newspaper reading behaviour of university students of the Kumasi campus of the University of Education Winneba (UEW-K) and the Wa campus of the University for Development Studies (UDS). The study made use of the survey design. A total questionnaire of 730 was self-administered to randomly selected students yielding an overall response rate of 558 (76.4%). Among others, the findings of the study showed that most students have a positive attitude to reading in the library; most students have a positive attitude to reading newspapers in the digital format; and most students believe reading newspapers can improve their current awareness of national issues and vocabulary. In respect of challenges, the study found inadequate copies of newspapers as the main challenge when students are reading newspapers in the library. Recommendations for academic libraries include adjusting newspaper collection development policies to include electronic newspaper subscriptions; conducting needs assessment to drive newspaper collection development; and setting up separate newspaper services unit with reading rooms.

Keywords: *Academic Libraries; Information Behaviour; Newspapers; Satellite Campuses*

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are an important source of knowledge to the student community as it has the potential of improving students' social awareness. Before the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries, newspapers served the current affairs information needs of its users. Despite the emergence of new technologies which has led to the phenomenon of "online newspapers", print newspapers are expected to "regenerate" and perhaps compete or complement online newspapers (Leckner, 2012). Newspapers represent one of the most potent mass media of communication. As a mass media, newspapers perform four primary functions namely information, entertainment, persuasion and transmission of culture (Lodi & Subuhi, 2015).

Altogether, these functions are expected to create awareness and education among newspaper readers.

Academic libraries collect, manage, preserve and make available to their users various newspapers as part of reference services. The ultimate goal of providing newspapers in academic libraries is the realisation that informed minds are capable of making independent choices in their lives to bring about the national vision of prosperity for citizens, a vision which is the foundation of their parent institutions (Cullinam, 2000). Reading is an important activity in the process of teaching and learning, with the potential to mould the personality, ideas, and the thinking capacity of the reader culminating in the creation of positive learning outcomes

among students (Kumar, Singh & Siddiqui, 2011). Reading skills developed could form the basis of good study habits among students in any area of specialisation. Promoting newspaper reading may help to bring about improvement in the reading habits, knowledge, and awareness among students. Academic libraries can effectively promote newspaper reading among students if they are aware of students' perspectives on the value of newspapers for teaching and learning and; students' preferences and attitudes towards newspaper reading, especially in the context of the library.

Even though a number of newspaper use studies are available in the communication and information domain (Kumar, Singh & Siddiqui, 2011; Massis, 2012; Leckner, 2012; Kumar & Burman, 2014; Krishnamurthy & Awari, 2015), few of these have been conducted in the Ghanaian context and particularly on students' specific newspaper reading preferences. This study is therefore designed to determine the newspaper reading behaviour and preferences of students in two academic libraries in Ghana with the aim of suggesting measures for effective newspaper services in academic libraries. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to identify the attitudes of students towards newspaper reading in the library; investigate the availability of preferred newspapers and how this relates to students' interest in newspaper reading in the library; ascertain the preferred times for reading newspapers in the library; identify the subject interests of students when reading newspapers; examine the attitudes of students towards electronic newspaper reading; determine the perceived benefits of newspaper reading in the library; and identify some of the perceived challenges of newspaper reading in the library.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in two academic libraries in Ghana. The first is the Library of the College of Technology Education, a satellite campus of the University of Education, Winneba in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The second library is located at the Wa Campus of the University for Development Studies in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The Library of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi is arguably the second largest in the University of Education, Winneba Library System. The College Library occupies the first and second floors of the Library Block. The Library was inherited from the

erstwhile Advanced Technical Training College when the University was established in September 1992 as a University College under PNDC Law 322. The College Library serves over 10,000 students who may be full-time, distance or part time, reading undergraduate or postgraduate programmes. The University is a centre of excellence for teacher education in Ghana. The Library subscribes to six national daily and weekly newspapers which are received daily and weekly at the Serials Unit of the Library. Copies of the newspapers are also supplied to other Units and Departments within the University. As such, it is commonplace to find newspapers in almost every office. However, students do not have the advantage of reading newspapers in their halls of residence or in their spaces like staff and faculty do. This is a limitation to students' access to and use of newspapers to supplement academic information sources.

The University for Development Studies was established by Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 279 of 1992. The University was mandated to serve the needs of the Four Northern regions namely: Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. In September 1993, the first batch of 39 students for the faculty of Agriculture and for that matter the University for Development studies was admitted. The University now has four campuses in the three Northern regions of the country namely: Tamale, Nyankpala, Navrongo and Wa campuses. All the campuses have libraries that serve the needs of the academic community. The Wa campus of the University for Development Studies was established on 14th September 2002 with a single faculty called Faculty for Integrated Development Studies with very few students. This however grew to have other faculties such as; Faculty of Planning and Land Management (FPLM), School of Business and Law (SBL) and part of Faculty of Education. The Wa campus has two libraries, one at the old campus located at Wa Sombo and the other at the new campus also located at the Bamahu campus. The campus serves over 12,000 students who maybe full time or part time students reading Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

The Campus Library plays a very important role in the delivery of information and services to the University community; it provides a wide range of reading materials which include newspapers, journals,

magazines, long essays, newsletters, books, eBooks, databases and internet access. The library subscribes to five national newspapers such as the *Daily Graphic*, *Weekly Mirror*, *Graphic Business*, *Ghanaian Times*, and the *Weekly Spectator*. These are received daily and weekly at the Serials Unit of the Library and copies are distributed to other units and sections of the Library. It is common to find newspapers in almost all sections of the Library. Newspapers are available only for reading and reference purposes and cannot be borrowed by users. There are well trained staff who are patient, tolerant and kind to assist users with their information needs.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research into students' habits and attitudes towards newspaper reading abound in several academic disciplines. Academic librarians investigate user behaviour to enable them provide effective and efficient newspaper services to the academic community. Again, studies into reading behaviour of various library publications can prompt librarians on the need to integrate reading literacy and guidance into library programming or into the wider educational curriculum. The literature review is organised around themes that help to address the objectives of the study. These themes include, among others, attitudes of students towards newspaper reading in the library; the availability of preferred newspapers in the library and how this affects students' desire to read newspapers in the library; specific preferences such as time to read newspapers, subject interests in newspapers, attitudes towards electronic newspaper reading, as well as benefits and challenges of newspaper reading in the library.

Newspapers are valued by students despite the increasing emergence of digital technologies (Qayyum, Williamson, Ying-Hsang Liu, & Hider, 2010). Reporting on the information needs, information seeking behavior and usage of different information sources by MBA students in Singapore, Majid, Hayat, Patel and Vijayaraghavan (2012) opine that even though electronic information resources were valued more generally than all print resources, newspapers were valued more than other print resources by the students. According to Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015), newspapers are vital information sources in an advanced and civilised society as it provides current information for its readers. It may also serve a diverse audience through the provision of a

variety of information types in the different sections (Krishnamurthy and Awari, 2015).

Several studies report on the relationship between the availability of preferred newspapers and its impact on students' desire to read them. In a study of newspaper reading habits of post-graduate students of Karnatak University in Pakistan, Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) found that 44 (44.90 %) depend on self-subscription, 36 (36.73 %) obtain newspapers from their hostels while just 18 (18.37 %) students find preferred newspapers in their libraries. This finding is possibly indicative of the insufficiency or non-availability of preferred newspapers in the institution's library. Furthermore, regarding students' purposes for reading newspapers, the authors report that majority (79.59 %) of students view newspapers as an important source of information, while 57.14% of them view as a provider of general knowledge, with 51.02% describing its educative value as a factor for reading newspapers.

The problem of availability of preferred newspapers has resulted in users generally turning to electronic or online newspapers as the online platform has the advantages of instant access, quick archiving and higher circulation (Sivankutty & Sudhakaran, 2011). However, despite these advantages, Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) found in their study that fewer students (30.61%) read online newspapers instead of print newspapers. Rather a higher percentage of students (69.39%) indicated that they did not read online newspapers. It is important to note that even though fewer students prefer to read online newspapers presently, changing ICT trends is a sign that more students in the near future may choose online newspaper sources over print ones if the challenges of availability and variety are not solved sooner than later. It is refreshing to note that librarians are aware of this trend and are taking some steps to meet these changing user needs. Kwadzo and Annor (2013) urge libraries to subscribe to digital or electronic newspapers in order to reduce costs of preservation, increase accessibility, and ensure overall effective management of newspaper collections. In a study on the attitude of librarians towards online newspapers, Sivankutty and Sudhakaran (2011) found that the phenomenon is not new to librarians and that they are much aware of its advantages in terms of archiving and circulation. The study suggests that libraries should include online newspapers' education in their teaching

and instruction activities for the benefit of the tech savvy, researchers and librarians themselves.

Students' preferences in reading newspapers in the library context have also been examined in the literature. Some of these preferences include the amount of time dedicated to reading, which time of day to read, preferred place of reading, among others. Concerning the duration of time students dedicate to reading newspapers, a number of studies appear to indicate students' desire to spend considerable time for reading newspapers. Kumar, Singh and Siddiqui (2011) found that university students at the Chaudhary Charan Singh University in India spent between one and two hours daily reading newspapers. This finding had been confirmed earlier in a study in the United Kingdom. In a 2007 survey by the Sunday Times newspaper of the United Kingdom, it was found that most users spent an average of 102 minutes reading the newspaper. The study points out that contrary to mistaken notions that newspaper readers often browsed through newspapers in very short time spans, readers are prepared to spend significant lengths of time reading newspapers. In a related development, other studies also report on the specific times of the day students read newspapers. Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) discovered that majority of the students' respondents (67.35%) in their study preferred reading in the morning. On the other hand, a minority of the students (22.45%) indicated that they enjoyed reading newspapers at anytime of the day. The fact that most of the students read newspapers in the morning is not surprising since it is considered as a quick reference source to current information. Akanda, Hoq and Hasan (2013) note that newspaper reading requires less time and this is a major reason for its popularity among students. It must also be mentioned that since newspaper reading is considered independent reading (Cullinan, 2000), students decisions on when and for how long they read newspapers are entirely their choice.

Studies on students' preferences on where they read newspapers also provide insight into students' perspectives of newspaper services in libraries. Aggarwal and Akhter (2015) researched into newspaper reading habits of post-graduate students at a Pakistani university and found that relatively, more students read newspapers (48.66%) in their university libraries, while 40.66 percent read in their hostels and with 36.66 percent also reading from their own personal

subscriptions. In another study however, Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) found that most students (65.51%) preferred to read newspapers in their hostels with just 10 percent of respondents indicating the library as their preferred place of reading newspapers. These contrasting findings indicate that students may wish to read newspapers at the library or elsewhere depending on a number of factors. Finally, it must be pointed out that students experience challenges in their attempt to read newspapers in the library. Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) found that students were challenged with time to read newspapers. Students in this study also pointed to non-availability of preferred newspapers as a challenge to reading newspapers in the library.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to explore the newspaper reading behaviour of university students in two satellite university campuses in Ghana. The satellite campuses were the Wa campus of the University for Development Studies (UDS) and the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi (UEW-K). The study adopted a quantitative approach through the use of a survey design. The population of the first satellite campus was 6,090 (UEW Basic Statistics, 2015), while the population of the second satellite campus was 9,507 (UDS Basic Statistics, 2015) making a total population of 15,597. Making use of the 95% confidence level and a 5% confidence interval, the total sample size of 361 for UEW-K and 369 for UDS respectively was considered representative of the population. Through the use of the simple random sampling method, a total questionnaire of 730 was self-administered to students on two satellite campus libraries of the UDS and UEW-K. The response rate was 278 (76.3%) and 280 (75.8%) for UEW-K and UDS respectively, with an overall response rate of 558 (76.4%).

Distribution of the questionnaire covered a period of two weeks in the Second Semester of the 2015/16 academic year, that is, during the month of March 2016. The questionnaire contained 25 items consisting of these sub-sections: demographic background of respondents (1-3); attitudes towards

newspaper reading in the library (4-10); accessibility of newspapers in the library (11-16); information preferences of newspaper readers in the library (17-21); and benefits and challenges of newspaper reading in the library (22-24). The questionnaires were administered directly to respondents by research assistants before their classes. The purpose of the study was explained to selected respondents and if they were willing to participate in the study, copies of the questionnaire

were given to them. Care was taken to identify only students since the intended subjects of the study were students in either undergraduate or postgraduate level. Validly completed questionnaires were retrieved and analysed according to the themes of the study. These were further tested against the hypotheses for the study. The choice of questionnaire as the data collection instrument is consistent with survey approach (Neuman, 2007).

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 Demography of respondents

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Age group			
19 – 25 years	60.5%	61.8%	60.9%
26 – 35 years	34.5%	29.0%	32.7%
36 – 45 years	4.1%	5.9%	4.7%
Over 45	.8%	3.2%	1.6%
Level in the University			
Undergraduate	91.8%	87.9%	90.5%
Graduate	8.2%	12.1%	9.5%
University			
UEW-K	45.8%	57.8%	49.8%
UDS	54.2%	42.2%	50.2%

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 1 presents the demographic features of the respondents. This involves the age distribution of the respondents, level of study, the university attended by the respondents, as well as the gender of respondents. The responses show that more than half (61%) of the respondents were aged between the ages of 19 – 25 years whereas approximately 33% of the respondents were found to be in the ages of 26 – 35 years. Regarding the level of study of respondents, the results show that majority of the respondents were undergraduate students (90.5%) whereas about 9.5% were graduate students. More

so the responses show that about half (50.2%) of the respondents were students registered with the University for Development Studies (UDS) whereas 49.8% were affiliated to the University of Education Winneba-Kumasi (UEW-K).

Table 2: Newspaper reading in the library

	University		Total
	UEW-K	UDS	
Yes	217	116	333
	70.7%	40.4%	56.1%
No	90	171	261
	29.3%	59.6%	43.9%
Total	307	287	594
	51.2%	47.8%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

In Table 2 the respondents were asked whether they read newspapers when they visit the library. The results show that more than half (n=333, 56.1%) of the respondents responded ‘Yes’ to reading newspapers when they visit the library. On the contrary, 261 (43.9%) of respondents indicated that they did not read newspapers whenever they visited the library. The results give the notion that majority of the students read the newspapers when they visit the library. That notwithstanding, further analysis showed that at UEW-K more of the students (n=217, 70.7%) read the newspapers at the library. However, same cannot be said for students at the UDS where 171 (59.6%) stated they do not read newspapers at the library.

Table 3: Visiting the library purposely to read newspapers

	University		Total
	UEW-K	UDS	
Yes	164	39	203
	53.4%	13.6%	34.2%
No	143	248	391
	46.6%	86.4%	65.8%

Total	307	287	594
	51.7%	48.3%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

In Table 3 the respondents were asked to indicate whether they ever visit the library purposely to read newspapers. The outcome shows that majority (n=391, 65.8%) of the respondents responded ‘No’ to the effect that they do not purposely visit the library to read newspapers whereas, 203 (34.2%) responded ‘Yes’ to visiting the library purposely to read newspapers. Further analysis by the two universities showed that most of the students (n=164, 53.4%) at UEW-K visit the library to read newspapers whereas at UDS most of the students (n=248, 86.4%) do not visit the library to read newspapers. This shows that the enthusiasm of visiting the library to read newspapers amongst UEW-K students is higher than those of UDS.

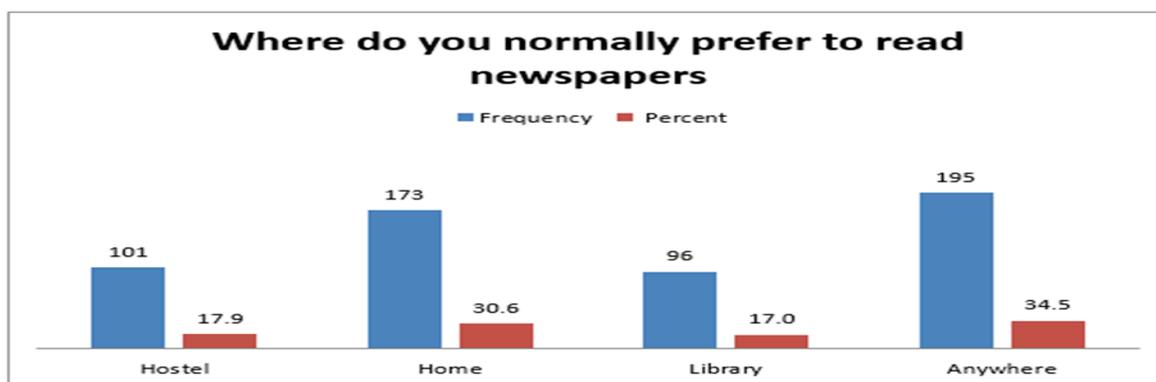


Figure 1: Preferred places for reading newspapers

Figure 1 presents the responses on where respondents normally prefer to read newspapers. The responses show that the respondents prefer to read newspapers anywhere as the majority (n=195, 34.5%) of the respondents pointed out. Also, the next preferred place respondents would want to read newspapers is their home (n=173, 30.6%). Again, a high number (n=101, 17.9%) indicated their desire to read newspapers at their hall of residence or the hostel. However, it is worthy of note that there was the least number of respondents (n=96, 17%) of the respondents who wish to read newspapers at the library. The findings give the impression that the library is the least of a place students would want to sit and read newspapers.

Table 4: Frequency and Mean Ranking of respondents' preference for newspapers

Preferred Newspaper	University				Total	%	M	Rank
	UEW-K	%	UDS	%				
Daily Graphic	122	21.9	30	17.1	152	20.79	3.24	1 st
Ghanaian Times	95	17.1	15	8.6	110	15.05	2.83	2 nd
Graphic Showbiz	42	7.6	29	16.6	71	9.71	2.77	3 rd
BF&T	71	12.8	19	10.9	90	12.31	2.65	4 th
Graphic Sports	22	4	14	8	36	4.92	2.30	5 th

Junior Graphic	23	4.1	18	10.3	41	5.61	2.27	6 th
Weekly Mirror	35	6.3	8	4.6	43	5.88	2.16	7 th
The Finder	57	10.3	7	4	64	8.76	2.15	9 th
Weekly Spectator	22	4	9	5.1	31	4.24	2.03	10 th
Ghanaian Lens	39	7	5	2.9	44	6.02	1.96	11 th
Daily Guide	11	2	5	2.9	16	2.19	1.9	12 th
The Statesman	12	2.2	9	5.1	21	2.87	1.78	13 th
Catholic Standard	0	0	1	0.6	1	0.14	1.67	14 th
The Insight	5	0.9	6	3.4	11	1.5	1.57	15 th
	556	100	175	100	731	100		

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 4 presents the frequency and mean ranking of respondent's preference for newspapers at their respective libraries. From the mean rank, it could be observed that respondents have a high preference for *Daily Graphic* more than any other newspaper. The *Daily Graphic* newspaper obtained a mean score of 3.24 hence ranked first. Also, *Daily Graphic* also came as the newspaper with the highest ratings of (n=152, 20.79%) of the respondents opting for the newspaper. *Ghanaian Times* obtained the second largest mean rank (m=2.83) thus also ranked second. *Ghanaian Times* obtained the second largest ratings (n=110, 15.05%) from the respondents. Proving to be the second most preferred newspaper of the respondents, *Graphic Showbiz* is the third in that order. However, *The Insight* obtained the least ratings (n=11, 1.5%) from the respondents hence the least most preferred newspaper. By the universities surveyed, the responses show that at both UEW-K and UDS again, *Daily Graphic* came up on top as the most preferred newspaper.

Table 5: Availability of preferred newspaper in the library

	University		
	UEW-K	UDS	Total
Yes	200	83	283
	69.0%	30.9%	50.6%
No	90	186	276
	31.0%	69.1%	49.4%
Total	290	269	559
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

The respondents were quizzed on whether they get their preferred newspaper to read at the library. The responses in Table 8 show that just about half (n=283, 50.6%) of the respondents responded ‘Yes’ to the effect that they do get their preferred newspapers to read at the library. On the contrary, 276 (49.4%) of the respondents stated ‘No’ suggesting that they do not get their preferred newspapers to read at the library. Considering situations at the two universities, the results show that the situation at UEW-K is better than that of UDS because at UEW-K 200 (69%) of the respondents get their preferred newspapers to read. That compared to the 186 (69.1%) of the students at UDS, who do not get their preferred papers to read at their library.

Table 6: Availability of alternative newspapers to preferred newspapers at the library

	University		Total
	UEW-K	UDS	
Yes	211	122	333
	73.5%	45.7%	60.1%
No	76	145	221
	26.5%	54.3%	39.9%
Total	287	267	554
	51.8%	41.2%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

Again, the respondents were asked whether they find other papers of interest when they are reading their preferred newspapers at the library. The results as presented in Table 9 shows that majority (n=333, 60.1%) of the respondents answered ‘Yes’ meaning they find other papers of interest when reading their preferred newspapers at the library. On the contrary, 221 (39.9%) of the respondents stated ‘No’ to the effect that they do not find other papers of interest when reading other preferred newspapers at the library. Also, conducting a university-based analysis indicated that most of the students at UEW-K do find other papers of interest while reading their preferred newspapers than students at UDS do.

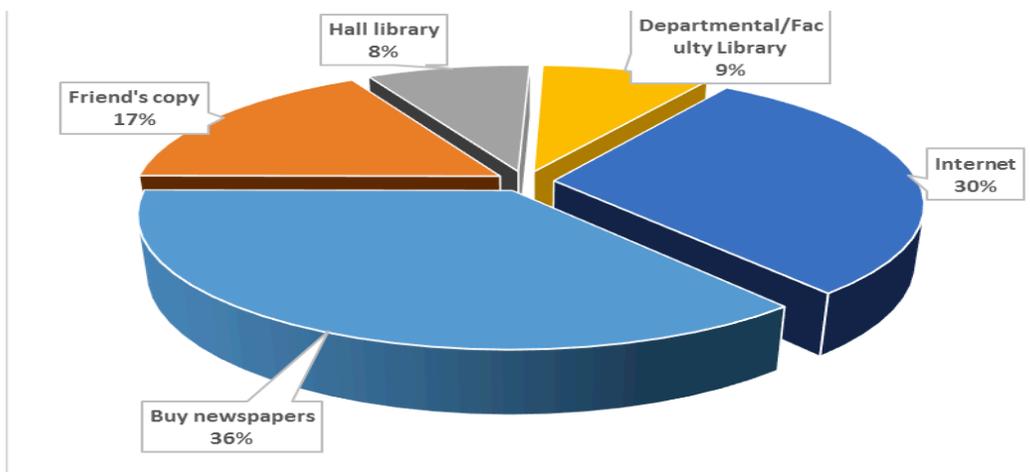


Figure 2: Alternative places respondents find newspapers

From Figure 2, it could be observed that majority (36%) of the respondents pointed out they “Buy newspapers” rather than visit the library to read newspapers. Furthermore, the results show that the respondents turn to the Internet when they need to find daily news. Others representing 17% also get their ‘Friend’s copy’ to be read the newspapers. There was minimal utilization of the library in this case where 8% and 9% of the respondents said they refer to the Hall and Departmental/Faculty libraries when they want to read newspapers.

Table 7: Preferred times for reading newspapers in the library

	University		Total
	UEW-K	UDS	
Morning	86	67	153
	30.2%	27.7%	29.0%
Afternoon	74	40	114
	26.0%	16.5%	21.6%
Evening	37	14	51
	13.0%	5.8%	9.7%
Any time of day	88	121	209
	30.9%	50.0%	39.7%
Total	285	242	527
	54.1%	45.9%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

In Table 7 the respondents were requested to indicate their preferred time for reading newspapers in the library. From the table, it could be observed that majority (n=209, 39.7%) of the respondents stated they prefer to read newspapers 'any time of day.' Moreover, 153 (29%) of the respondents indicated their preferred time to read newspapers is in the morning whereas 114 (21.6%) asserted they prefer to read newspapers in the afternoon. Meanwhile, 51 (9.7%) stated the evening is their preferred time to read newspapers. Analysing the results regarding the two universities shows that majority of the UDS students prefer to read the papers 'Any time of day' whereas 88 (30.9%) of the students at UEW-K prefer to read 'any time of day.'

Table 8: Information preferences in newspapers

Type of Information	University				Total	%
	UEW-K	%	UDS	%		
Health	106	14.6	64	8.0	170	11.14
Political	34	4.7	40	5.0	74	4.85
Current Affairs	33	4.5	48	6.0	81	5.31
Educational	114	15.7	88	11.0	202	13.24
Employment	88	12.1	72	9.0	160	10.48
Religious	42	5.8	49	6.1	91	5.96
International	57	7.9	59	7.4	116	7.60
Business	44	6.1	57	7.1	101	6.62
Cultural	32	4.4	60	7.5	92	6.03
Entertainment	74	10.2	72	9.0	146	9.57
Sports	82	11.3	159	19.9	241	15.79
Sensational	20	2.8	32	4.0	52	3.41
Total	726	100	800	100	1526	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

From Table 8, respondents were asked to select from a list of types of information which they normally sought when they read newspapers. It is worth noting that the question permitted respondents to select multiple responses that best fit what kind of information they looked for. The responses show that on the whole majority (n=241, 15.79%) of the respondents normally seek 'Sports information'. Furthermore, the results found that 'Educational Information' is the next most sought after information by the students when they read the newspapers which received a total rating of (n=202, 13.24%). Moreover, the next set of information the respondents consider is 'Health Information' which also received 170 (11.14%) of the ratings. That was followed up by 'Employment Information' which also received a rating of 160 (10.48%).

That notwithstanding, further analysis by the two universities revealed that at UEW-K majority (n=114, 15.7%) of the students were much concerned about obtaining 'Educational Information' from the newspapers than their UDS

counterparts. Meanwhile, at UDS, the most set of information sought after was related to ‘Sports’ where (n=159, 19.9%) of the respondents selected ‘Sports Information.’

Table 8: Preferences for internet-based newspaper reading

	University		Total
	UEW-K	UDS	
Yes	218	239	457
	77.0%	86.9%	81.9%
No	65	36	101
	23.0%	13.1%	18.1%
Total	283	275	558
	50.7%	49.3%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2016

The responses in Table 8 show that more than two-thirds of the respondents (81%) indicated that they consult the internet to read electronic newspapers whereas, 101 (18.1%) of the respondents responded ‘No’ to consulting the internet for electronic newspapers. Regarding the universities, the outcome shows that in both universities majority of the students do consult the internet to read online newspapers.

Table 9: Benefits of reading newspapers

Benefits	University				Total	%
	UEW-K	%	UDS	%		
Keeps me informed on current affairs	201	30.5	202	35.9	403	33.0
Helps in research work	147	22.3	127	22.6	274	22.4
Improve my vocabulary	149	22.6	121	21.5	270	22.1
Improves my writing	109	16.6	84	14.9	193	15.8
Enriches my learning	52	7.9	29	5.2	81	6.6
Total	658	100.0	563	100.0	1221	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

The respondents were asked to express the benefits they get from reading newspapers. The responses in Table 9 show that majority (n=403, 33%) of the respondents maintained that it keeps them informed of current affairs. Meanwhile, 274 (22.4%) of the respondents stated it helps them in their research work whereas, 270 (22.1%) maintained it improves their vocabulary.

Table 10: Challenges of newspaper reading in the library

Challenges	University				Total	%
	UEW-K	%	UDS	%		
Inability to borrow	132	29.1	70	19.3	202	24.7
Inadequate copies of newspapers	131	28.9	118	32.5	249	30.5
Problem locating newspapers	102	22.5	68	18.7	170	20.8
Non-availability of preferred newspapers	89	19.6	107	29.5	196	24.0
Total	454	100.0	363	100.0	817	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 10 presents the results about the challenges respondents encounter when they want to read newspapers at the library. The responses show that majority (n=249, 30.5%) of the respondents pointed to the inadequacy of newspapers at the library, whereas 202 representing 24.7% of the respondents stated the inability to borrow as their main challenge at the library when it comes to accessing newspapers. The non-availability of preferred newspapers was also a challenge for respondents (n=196, 24%). On the basis of analyzing the result about the two universities, the result shows that at UEW-K majority had issues with their inability to read newspapers which were also apparent at UDS as well.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the newspaper reading behaviour and preferences of students in two satellite campuses of two public universities in Ghana. Among others, the specific objectives of the study were to identify the attitudes of students towards newspaper reading in the library; investigate the availability of preferred newspapers and how this relates to students' interest in newspaper reading in the library; examine the attitudes of students towards electronic newspaper reading; and identify some of the perceived challenges of newspaper reading in the library.

The findings revealed that an overall majority of students read newspapers when they visit the library, even though they do not visit the library purposely to read newspapers. It is important to note that the majority

of respondents were young adults between the ages of 19-25. These people have already experienced the social news environment and may have limited contact with print-based news sources (Qayyum, Williamson, Ying-Hsang Liu, & Hider, 2010). Furthermore, students in the study also indicated that the most preferred place to read newspapers are "anywhere". This finding is confirmatory of the notion that in the youthful online environment, news is free, dynamic and ubiquitous (Qayyum, et al, 2010). The authors further opine that young news users are mostly drawn to the online interactive social environments where reading of news is as and when needed. The Booktrust Reading Habits Survey (2013) found that people under the age of 30 prefer technology to reading books.

One interesting finding from the study is the fact that the library is the least preferred place for reading newspapers, among a host of other places of interest to students. This finding is confirmed by Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) who found the library to be the least desirable place for reading newspapers among students. Even though libraries consider newspapers as supplementary sources of information (Kwadzo & Annor, 2013) and have maintained their newspaper collections, changing reader behaviour in the macro environment (Massis, 2012) has resulted in a consistent dwindling of interest in newspaper collections across the spectrum (Qayyum, et al, 2010). It is important for libraries to demonstrate the value of newspaper reading among students to justify the increasing cost of continued subscription. According to Qayyum et al (2010), a digital delivery model for online newsreaders is an important option for readers whose reading

preferences are away from the physical library. This further implies acquisition of electronic newspapers in the library to serve the needs of remote users. For those readers who may not be tech-savvy, Kwadzo and Annor (2013) believe that newspapers must be organized properly to enhance access and use. They propose the practice of newspaper clipping which is an easy method of making access to research information in newspapers by bringing together pieces of specific subjects from different newspapers. In any case, libraries must continue to improve their newspaper accessibility and circulation as students generally trust them as quality news sources (Williamson, Qayyum, Hider, & Liu, 2012).

The study also provides empirical basis to the hypothesis that the availability of preferred newspaper in the library is a source of motivation for students to read newspapers in the library. Students indicated that three public national newspapers were their preferred newspapers namely; the *Daily Graphic*, the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Graphic Showbiz*. These newspapers are national newspapers and have gained the trust and credibility of people nationally over the years. Hammond (2000) (cited in Kwadzo and Annor, 2012) claims that 100% of Members of Ghana's Parliament read the *Daily Graphic* while 81.3% read the *Ghanaian Times*. These two newspapers predate Ghana's independence in 1957 and are household names in the newspaper industry in Ghana. This may explain why these two newspapers are popular among students whose ages attest to the fact that they grew up seeing their parents read these newspapers. The implication of this finding is that academic libraries must necessarily include much acclaimed newspapers with wider appeal in order to attract readers from different backgrounds.

As a follow-up to the question of the availability of preferred newspapers, the study found that just about a half of all respondents indicated that their preferred newspapers were available in their libraries. Considering the fact that most of the participants indicated that they did not visit the library purposely to read newspapers, it is plausible to suggest that they did not find their preferred newspapers in the library. Williamson et al (2012) found that the availability of newspapers in the home environment was a source of motivation for young people to read print newspapers. When readers often do not find newspapers they are interested in, they may decide against reading what is available even though

they may not doubt the authenticity of the news sources and the value of the information in the newspaper (Williamson et al, 2012). Furthermore, previous studies confirm no significant relationship between reading interest and the location of the reading material (Capps & Huang, 2015).

The results of the study also demonstrate that students' desire to read newspapers are determined by specific interests. The study finds that student readers prefer mostly sports information, with educational, health-related and employment information, being mostly sought after by these readers. This finding is not unique as previous reports confirm it. Williamson et al (2012) point out that young adult readers prefer sports, world news, local news, and entertainment news, in that order. Considering the fact that most newspaper readers consider it as pleasure reading, it is important for academic libraries to make available newspapers that conform to their notions of pleasure (Ro & Cheng-ling, 2014). The implication of the finding here is that for libraries to re-ignite younger readers' interests in newspaper reading, they need to re-direct their collection development efforts to the interests of the youth (Qayyum, et al, 2010; Williamson et al (2012). However, it is a little surprising that information related to current affairs and politics ranked relatively low on students' preferences for news. As pointed out by Qayyum, et al (2010), these types of information help one to be "informed citizens" to be able to participate effectively in national affairs. This finding is supported by the results of the Pew Reading Survey (2012) which found that younger Americans read sparsely in order to "keep up" as against older adults who prefer to keep current through daily reading.

In relation to students' time preferences for reading newspapers in their libraries, the study also found that students prefer to read at any time of the day, even though the morning was also an important time for reading newspapers. This finding again confirms the notion of ubiquity which has been ushered into the student space by advances in ICT. Students prefer to have information when they need it and as a result libraries must make their newspaper collections accessible at any time of the day, a goal which may be accomplished through the adoption of digital technology (Qayyum, et al, 2010). In spite of these findings, Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) found that for print newspapers, most users prefer to read in the morning. It

may, therefore be concluded that academic libraries must ensure that their newspapers are delivered on a timely manner so as to ensure that every reader may have an opportunity to read them.

In terms of students' attitude towards newspaper reading in the digital format, the study discovered that most students from the two institutions surveyed have positive attitudes to reading from online newspaper sources. This result is corroborated by many other studies internationally. According to a Pew Report (2012) on younger (ages 16-29) Americans' reading behaviour, 47% of younger Americans read e-content version of a book, magazine or newspaper in the previous year. Despite its convenience, it may not be taken that students may adopt digital reading of newspapers overnight due to several factors such as trust (Qayyum, et al, 2010). Academic libraries must therefore balance their acquisition policies in print newspaper collection with online content in an effort to reduce costs and ensure effective management of newspaper collections (Kwadzo & Annor, 2012).

The study also investigated into the perception of students regarding the benefits of newspaper reading in the library. The results suggest that students believe newspaper reading may improve their awareness of current affairs. This finding seems to be at variance with an earlier finding which pointed to students' preferred interests in sports, education, employment and health information. Nevertheless, other responses from this question demonstrate students' awareness of the role of newspapers in their lives. Other students indicated how newspapers may be used to improve their research activities and their vocabulary. Students may read newspapers for several reasons. This may include reading for academic work, pleasure, keeping current or for enriching knowledge in topics of interest (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, Madden, & Brenner, 2012). Students' desire to improve on their vocabulary represents an intrinsic motivation for embarking on newspaper reading while the need to keep current is an extrinsic motivation for reading newspapers. Ro and Cheng-ling (2014) found that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors were responsible for students' desire to read in the English language. The authors aver that both of these factors are crucial for driving students' desire to read. The implication of this finding for academic libraries is that policies in newspaper collection development must be driven by students' intrinsic and extrinsic needs. It is

also important for academic libraries to align user needs with their own goals in collection development of newspapers. Kwadzo and Annor (2012) found in their study that all six participating libraries of public universities in Ghana indicated newspapers were important information sources for current affairs information, educational, occupational, social and business information. When the goals of the library are aligned with that of users, it is easy to meet their information needs.

Finally, the study also found that students encounter several challenges in their attempt to read newspapers in the library. Among these, students identified the inadequate number of copies of newspapers as their biggest challenge. In addition they also found their inability to borrow these materials as worrisome, just as they could not also find or locate their preferred newspapers in the library. These findings have been reported in the literature. The problem of inadequate copies is related to the increasingly huge subscription costs of print newspapers (Massis, 2012). As a result of this phenomenon, some academic libraries have cut back on their print subscriptions and in some cases resorted to electronic subscriptions which facilitate both in-house and remote reading (Qayyum, et al, 2010). In cases where there are adequate copies, it may be important for libraries to consider lending their newspapers to students as this is already the practice in some public libraries (Zickuhr et al, 2012). Again, to ensure accessibility and management of available newspapers in the library, Kwadzo and Annor (2012) suggest that academic libraries must set up newspaper reading rooms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed at investigating the newspaper reading behaviour of students in two satellite campuses of two public universities in Ghana. Among others, the study found a positive attitude to reading in the library; the library is not the preferred place for reading newspapers; national newspapers are the most preferred newspapers among students; most students do not find their preferred newspapers in the library; students desire sports information above other sections in newspapers; students have no specific preferences in respect of what time of day to read newspapers even though the morning is important to them; students have a positive attitude to

reading newspapers in the digital format; students believe reading newspapers may improve their current awareness of national issues and their vocabulary; and finally students report inadequate copies of newspapers as their main challenge for reading newspapers in the library.

Based on the findings of the study and the subsequent discussions, we propose the following recommendations:

Academic libraries must adjust their newspaper collection development policies to include electronic newspaper subscriptions. This will go a long way in widening access and therefore improve students' attitude to reading newspapers.

Newspaper collection development must be driven by constant user needs assessment to ensure that newspapers that are provided for users meet their information preferences and needs. Even though libraries may wish to diversify their collections, they also need to maintain newspapers that have broad societal appeal in order to attract readers from different backgrounds.

Newspapers must be available in the library from the morning to ensure that readers who come in early may be able to read them. Also to ensure that newspapers may be accessible by users from anywhere and anytime, the adoption of electronic newspapers is critical.

It is also important for academic libraries to align their newspaper collection development goals with that of their students and other users. Furthermore, the goals of the library must be both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature to meet the dynamic information needs of their users.

It is proposed that academic libraries consider decentralising newspaper reading away from the library. Measures to achieve this include allowing borrowing of newspapers by students when there are enough copies; and developing newspaper clipping services.

Finally, academic libraries may consider setting up newspaper services units with their reading rooms away from other serial resources to ensure that newspapers may easily be located by potential readers and this will also ensure the effective management of outdated newspapers.

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