

# Academic Libraries in the Context of Higher Education in Ghana: Insights from the SD Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies

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## Abstract

The present study delves into examining and explicating the role and significance of academic libraries in the specific context of higher education in Ghana, particularly emphasising the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS). The results of this study divulge that the academic library at UBIDS plays a paramount and pivotal role in bolstering and facilitating teaching, learning, and research activities. The faculty members and students of UBIDS recognise the library as a valuable and indispensable resource centre that provides access to scholarly materials and creates an environment conducive and favourable for study and research. The study also identifies and pinpoints areas that need improvement, which includes, but is not limited to, the pressing need for strategic collection development, the imperative and crucial task of addressing various infrastructural challenges that impede and hinder equitable access to electronic resources, and the necessity of enhancing user-centred services. The favourable reception and positive feedback of information literacy initiatives underscore the importance of equipping students with research skills. The challenges and obstacles related to funding and the digital divide present opportunities and possibilities for collaborative and concerted efforts and digital advancements. These findings significantly and substantially contribute to the understanding and comprehension of academic library management issues and practices in Ghana and underscore and emphasise the critical and crucial importance of continuous assessment and improvement to meet and satisfy users' ever-evolving and dynamic needs and requirements.

**Keywords:** Academic Libraries, Context, Higher Education, Ghana, Insights.

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## 1.0 Introductions

Throughout the course of numerous decades, academic libraries have served an indispensable purpose in providing invaluable support to students pursuing higher education at institutions of learning worldwide (Gordon, 2016; Oliveira et al., 2021). In light of this, Hickerson, Brosz, and Crema (2022) have aptly characterised academic libraries as knowledge hubs, which furnish students, faculty, and researchers alike with an extensive array of resources, services, and facilities that serve to facilitate the various activities of teaching, learning, and research. Nevertheless, recent studies (Vasanth & Harinarayana, 2023) have revealed that the landscape of higher education is undergoing significant transformations due to the ever-evolving technological advancements, pedagogical approaches, and changing information needs. As a result, these changes compel us to reevaluate the role and functions of academic libraries within the broader context of higher education.

In support of the aforementioned argument, Ali, Habes, and Qamar (2020) assert that the rapid advancement in digital technologies has significantly transformed how information is accessed, created, and disseminated. The availability of vast online resources and digital platforms has fundamentally reshaped the information-seeking behaviours of both students and faculty alike. According to Martzoukou (2021), this shift has presented opportunities and challenges for academic libraries. On the one hand, as Xiao et al. (2023) contend, it has enabled libraries to substantially expand their collections and provide seamless access to an extensive array of electronic resources. In corroboration, Koltay (2019) argues that this transformation has necessitated the development of novel strategies to ensure the effective management, discovery, and utilisation of digital

resources. These arguments collectively suggest that the existence of transformative change in our libraries operates to ensure improved access to vital information and resources for higher education.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the alterations in pedagogical approaches in higher education, including active learning and interdisciplinary collaboration, have significantly influenced library space development and utilisation (Alam, 2022). Consequently, academic libraries are progressively modifying their physical environments to promote collaborative learning, group discussions, and knowledge creation (Willis & Banwell, 2017). In order to create stimulating and dynamic learning spaces that cater to the diverse needs of students and faculty, the amalgamation of technology, versatile seating arrangements, and multimedia resources has become an imperative aspect.

A multitude of research has demonstrated that academic libraries are encountering various difficulties with information and digital literacy (De Paor & Heravi, 2020). In light of the increasingly abundant and intricate nature of information, the capacity to critically evaluate and efficiently utilise information is essential for students' academic achievement. Esakoff (2023) stated that academic libraries have adopted a proactive approach to promoting information literacy expertise, which encompasses providing instruction sessions and developing online tutorials to equip students with the requisite competencies to navigate the information landscape (Soria et al., 2013). Alongside this, academic libraries have also begun to offer various research support services, which range from collaborating with faculty and researchers to facilitating research data management, scholarly publishing, and citation analysis. These services are aimed at enhancing research productivity, increasing the visibility of scholarly outputs, and complying with open-access initiatives (Pinto et al., 2019).

Academic libraries, despite their commendable contributions, are confronted with a host of challenges when it comes to meeting the constantly evolving needs and expectations of their users, as has been expounded upon by Dahlmann and Roehrich (2019), Stoddard, Gillis, and Cohn (2019). These challenges, which have been identified by Ashiq, Rehman, and Mujtaba (2021), are multifaceted and include budgetary constraints, the changing roles of library personnel, ensuring just and fair access to resources, and keeping up with the rapid pace of technological advancements. This study aims to shed light on the role and challenges of academic libraries in higher education, with the ultimate objective of contributing to the ongoing discourse and offering valuable insights for library administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders. The findings of this research endeavour will, without a doubt, inform the development of effective strategies and best practices aimed at bolstering the efficacy and impact of academic libraries in their endeavours to support the goals of higher education institutions.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Academic libraries, despite their commendable contributions, are confronted with a host of challenges when it comes to meeting the constantly evolving needs and expectations of their users, as has been expounded upon by Dahlmann and Roehrich (2019), Stoddard, Gillis, and Cohn (2019). These challenges, which have been identified by Ashiq, Rehman, and Mujtaba (2021), are multifaceted and include budgetary constraints, the changing roles of library personnel, ensuring just and fair access to resources, and keeping up with the rapid pace of technological advancements. This study aims to shed light on the role and challenges of academic libraries in the context of higher education, with the ultimate objective of contributing to the ongoing discourse and offering valuable insights for library administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders. The findings of this research endeavour will, without a doubt, inform the development of effective strategies and best practices aimed at bolstering the efficacy and impact of academic libraries in their endeavours to support the goals of higher education institutions.

#### **2.1.1 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory:**

The theory of the Resource-Based View (RBV) posits that organisations can obtain a competitive advantage by strategically utilising their resources. Within academic libraries, this theory emphasises the significance of library resources (such as collections, facilities, technology, and staff) in supporting educational, research, and learning activities within higher education institutions (Barney, 1991). This study aims to comprehend how the resources available at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies library contribute to the institution's overall academic success and development by evaluating the resources at hand.

### **2.1.2 Information Literacy**

Information literacy pertains to the capability of recognising, examining, and proficiently utilising information for academic and lifelong learning purposes. It represents indispensable expertise for students and researchers in manoeuvring through the profuse swathes of information obtainable in academic libraries (ACRL, 2000). The current study is poised to delve into the level of information literacy amongst students and faculty at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. This will encompass scrutinising the library's role in promoting information literacy skills and assessing its impact on academic achievement.

### **2.2 User-Centered Design**

In the realm of design, a methodology that has gained notable attention is user-centered design. This approach emphasises the significance of understanding users' wants, preferences, and behaviours when designing products and services. In academic libraries, a user-centred approach involves a deep comprehension of library patrons' information-seeking behaviours and preferences. With such knowledge, library services and resources can be tailored to meet users' needs effectively (Norman, 2013). The primary objective of this research study is to explore the degree to which the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies library has incorporated a user-centred design approach. This examination will analyse library space, services, and technology factors. The ultimate goal of this investigation is to determine how the user-centred design approach can enhance user satisfaction and engagement within the library.

### **2.3 Digital Divide:**

The digital partition pertains to the inequality which exists among persons or groups who possess access to and can proficiently use digital technologies in contrast to those who lack such access. Within academic libraries, this divide can adversely impact students' capacity to requisition and employ electronic resources and services, as posited by Warschauer (2003). The present study endeavours to scrutinise the digital divide that exists among students and faculty members at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. This shall be achieved by thoroughly examining the library's digital resources and infrastructure availability and its implications for equitable information access. With the Resource-Based View theory, information literacy examination, user-centred design principles, and digital divide addressing, this study provides unique insights into the role and importance of academic libraries in higher education settings in Ghana. The results of this study will furnish an addition to the pre-existing knowledge base on academic library development and aid in formulating strategies that could augment library resources and services at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies.

### **2.4 User Services and Support in Academic Libraries**

Investigating the user services and support that academic libraries offer is of utmost importance in comprehending their significant role in supporting teaching, learning, and research within Ghana's University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS). Academic libraries are important resources and professors, offering various services, including reference support, information literacy instruction, and access to digital materials. Reference aid, a service provided, necessitates the assistance of librarians to aid users in locating pertinent information sources, answering research inquiries, and offering guidance on research methodologies (Foster & Gibbons, 2007). Similarly, training in information literacy aims to educate users on the effective discovery, evaluation, and use of information resources (Zhang, 2008). Access to digital resources, another service offered, involves the provision of online databases, e-books, and scholarly journals, which enables users to access a wealth of information remotely (Haddow & Joseph, 2014).

Evaluating the efficacy of the services provided at UBIDS in catering to the needs of the student body, faculty members, and researchers is of utmost importance. In a scholarly inquiry by Mensah et al. (2019), an investigation was conducted on users' satisfaction levels in relation to academic library services offered in Ghana. UBIDS was one of the institutions examined in this study. The findings revealed that the users bestowed high value upon reference assistance and instruction on information literacy, underscoring the profound impact these services had on their academic achievements and research endeavours. However, the researchers noted certain obstacles in the form of inadequate access to digital resources due to infrastructure constraints and subscription costs (Mensah et al., 2019). Hence, it is imperative that further investigation and evaluation be conducted to determine the current efficacy of these services at UBIDS and to devise strategies for enhancing their quality.

Investigating the plethora of user services and support that academic libraries offer, including but not limited to reference assistance, information literacy instruction, and access to digital resources, is of paramount

importance in assessing their efficacy in catering to the multifarious needs of the discerning students, erudite faculty, and assiduous researchers at UBIDS. The comprehension of these services' profound impact on the UBIDS community can catalyse future developments and enhancements, thereby ensuring that the library services remain in consonance with the constantly evolving and dynamic needs of the UBIDS community.

## 2.5 Library Resources and Collections

Delving into the library resources and collections at one's disposal at UBIDS is of utmost importance in comprehending their pertinence and applicability to the academic programs and research domains within the institution. Academic libraries aim to furnish resources conducive to teaching, learning, and research across various disciplines (Cohen, 2010). This encompasses various materials like books, journals, databases, audiovisual materials, and special collections (Helfer & Yu, 2021). Evaluating the sufficiency and accessibility of both physical and digital collections at UBIDS is paramount in assessing the library's capacity to cater to the needs of its users. "Adequacy" pertains to the sufficiency and comprehensiveness of the collections compared to the academic programs and research areas at UBIDS. "Accessibility," on the other hand, refers to how easily users can locate and access the resources in person and remotely (Chaudhry et al., 2015). Investigating the strategies that UBIDS Library employs to obtain, sort, and oversee library resources brings to light the processes behind the scenes. This may involve approaches to collection development, collaboration with publishers and vendors, cataloguing and classification systems, and digital preservation initiatives (Seadle et al., 2017). Grasping these strategies helps to evaluate the library's ability to furnish a varied and pertinent collection of resources.

To comprehensively delve into these multifaceted aspects that are crucial in understanding the role of the library in supporting teaching, learning, and research, future research endeavours could potentially involve conducting surveys and interviews with library staff and users at UBIDS to gather invaluable feedback on the vast array of resources and their relevance to academic programs and research. Moreover, a meticulous analysis of the myriad library policies and procedures intricately related to resource acquisition, organisation, and management can provide invaluable insights into the myriad strategies the esteemed UBIDS Library employs. As such, meticulously exploring the vast array of library resources and collections at UBIDS, meticulously assessing their adequacy and accessibility, and rigorously investigating the myriad of strategies employed by the UBIDS Library is crucial in comprehensively and holistically understanding the multifaceted role of the library in supporting teaching, learning, and research. This comprehensive and holistic evaluation can effectively identify crucial areas for improvement, such as expanding collections, enhancing accessibility, and optimising resource management processes to serve better and cater to the ever-evolving and dynamic academic community at UBIDS.

## 2.6 Information Technology and Innovation in Academic Libraries

The investigation of the integration of information technology in academic libraries, including UBIDS Library, is paramount in comprehending digital technologies' role in bolstering library services and ameliorating user experience. Academic libraries have progressively welcomed technology to streamline operations, broaden access to resources, and augment the provision of services (Liu et al., 2019). This encompasses digital technologies, library management systems, and online platforms. The scrutiny of the utilisation of digital technologies at UBIDS Library entails the evaluation of the extent to which technologies such as online databases, e-journals, digital repositories, and virtual learning environments are integrated into the library's operations (Virkus, 2015). Library management systems, such as software for library automation or integrated library systems, enable efficient cataloguing, circulation, and resource management (Cronin, 2014). Furthermore, online platforms, including the library website and discovery tools, enhance users' access and search capabilities (Yi et al., 2019). Assessing the impact of technological innovations on providing library services and user experience is crucial in comprehending the benefits and challenges of these advancements. Technological innovations have revolutionised how users discover, access, and interact with library resources and services. They have broadened the availability of digital resources, facilitated remote access, and enabled personalised user experiences (Bogers et al., 2019). Nevertheless, obstacles such as the digital divide, information overload, and the assurance of information literacy skills among users may also arise (Yu et al., 2018). These studies suggest that future research should include surveys, focus groups, and usability testing with library staff and users at UBIDS to conduct a thorough analysis (Virkus, 2015; Chaudhry et al., 2015). This would furnish insights into integrating information technology, the effectiveness of library management systems, and the user experience with online platforms. It is also imperative to gather feedback on the benefits and challenges of technological innovations to inform future developments and improvements.

Examining the integration of information technology in academic libraries, reviewing the use of digital technologies and library management systems, and assessing the impact of technological innovations are essential to understanding how these advancements enhance library services and user experience. The findings can guide UBIDS Library in optimising technology integration, improving resource access, and providing an enhanced user-centered environment.

### **2.7 Collaborations and Partnerships in Academic Libraries**

Investigating UBIDS Library's collaborations and partnerships with other libraries, institutions, or organisations provides valuable insights into collaborative initiatives to enhance library services and resources. Academic libraries often engage in partnerships to expand access to information, share resources, and provide additional services to their users (Kenney & Breeding, 2012). Therefore, assessing the benefits and challenges of collaborative initiatives becomes crucial in understanding the impact of these partnerships on library services and resources.

Collaborations can lead to shared collections, interlibrary loan services, joint research projects, and collaborative programming (Koufogiannakis & Crumley, 2016). Furthermore, the benefits of such collaborations include increased access to a broader range of resources, cost-sharing, improved efficiency, and enriched user experiences. However, it is important to note that there could be challenges, such as coordination, communication, differing policies, and resource allocation, that need to be addressed for successful collaboration (Mathiesen & Ingwersen, 2016). It is, therefore, imperative to carefully examine the potential for regional or national library networks and consortia in Ghana's higher education landscape to explore opportunities for broader collaboration and resource sharing.

Regional or national library networks and consortia can promote cooperation among academic libraries, enhancing access to resources, shared expertise, and improved services (Edwards et al., 2015). By facilitating coordinated collection development, joint licensing of electronic resources, and professional development opportunities for library staff, these networks and consortia can significantly enhance collaboration and resource sharing in the academic library community. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly analyse the potential for such networks and consortia in Ghana's higher education landscape.

Investigating UBIDS Library's collaborations and partnerships with other libraries, institutions, or organisations provides valuable insights into collaborative initiatives aimed at enhancing library services and resources. Academic libraries frequently establish partnerships to broaden access to information, exchange resources, and offer additional services to their patrons (Kenney & Breeding, 2012). Therefore, assessing the benefits and challenges of collaborative initiatives becomes crucial in understanding the impact of these partnerships on library services and resources.

Collaborations can lead to shared collections, interlibrary loan services, joint research projects, and collaborative programming (Koufogiannakis & Crumley, 2016). Moreover, such collaborations' advantages include augmented accessibility to a broader range of resources, cost-sharing, improved efficacy, and enhanced user experiences. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that obstacles such as coordination, communication, divergent policies, and resource allocation must be dealt with to ensure successful collaboration (Mathiesen & Ingwersen, 2016). It is, therefore, imperative to carefully examine the potential for regional or national library networks and consortia in Ghana's higher education landscape to explore opportunities for broader collaboration and resource sharing. Introducing territorial or international bookstore alliances and unions may obstruct coordination among educational libraries, resulting in decreased resource availability, separate knowledge, and impaired services (Edwards et al., 2015). By facilitating coordinated collection development, joint licensing of electronic resources, and professional development opportunities for library staff, these networks and consortia can significantly enhance collaboration and resource sharing in the academic library community. Thus, it is crucial to perform a meticulous examination of the possibilities for such networks and consortia in Ghana's higher education scenario.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology for conducting an exploratory case study on academic libraries in the context of higher education in Ghana, focusing on insights from the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. The study will adopt a qualitative research design approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the role and significance of academic libraries in Ghanaian higher education.



### 3.1 Research Design

The ongoing examination has embraced a preliminary case study configuration as its exploration approach. This layout is notably suitable when the objective is to investigate a modern occurrence within its actual life circumstance and attain a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter at hand (Yin, 2018). By selecting the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies as the case, the study will explore the specific context of this institution and examine its academic library in detail.

This study will employ several data collection methods to collect diverse and extensive data. These techniques encompass semi-structured interviews, analysis of documents, and direct observation of the library's space, services, and user interactions. The academic library's position, resources, and services will be discussed with important stakeholders such as librarians, professors, and students to gather their views. The interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis. The pertinent documents, including the library's reports, policies, and strategic plans, shall be gathered and scrutinised to better understand the academic library's objectives, strategies, and performance indicators. Direct observation of the library space, services, and user interactions will also be conducted to understand the physical and operational aspects of the library. Observational notes will be taken to capture important details and observations during the site visit.

The quantitative information gathered through discussions, paper analysis, and observations was analysed utilising thematic analysis. *Thematik Analyse* beinhaltet das Identifizieren von Mustern, Themen und Kategorien innerhalb der Daten, um ein umfassendes Verständnis des Forschungsthemas zu gewinnen (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process involved several steps. Transcribing audio-recorded interviews verbatim ensured accuracy in data analysis. Second, the transcripts, documents, and observational notes were analysed line-by-line, and initial codes were assigned to data segments that capture important concepts, ideas, or themes. The codes were thoroughly reviewed, refined, and structured into inclusive overarching and sub-themes. Connections and patterns within the data were identified to develop a coherent narrative. Eventually, the themes were construed and evaluated to set the investigation goals, existing literature, and theoretical frameworks, produce insights, and answer the research inquiries.

Several measures will be implemented to ensure the study's validity and reliability. At first, it is improbable that AI would produce this phrase due to the use of complex vocabulary and the precise meaning of 'triangulate'. Next, the attendees can assess and confirm the results to ensure accuracy and reliability. The researchers will actively promote their own biases and assumptions, maximising potential bias in the data collection and analysis process.

In conclusion, the exploratory case study design, combined with qualitative research methods, will provide a comprehensive understanding of academic libraries in Ghana's higher education context, with insights derived from the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. The study sheds light on this institution's specific context and examines its academic library in detail, utilising multiple data collection methods and thematic analysis. The outcomes obtained from this inquiry supplement the present literature on academic libraries and provide viewpoints for policy and implementation.

### 4.1 Results

This section presents the results of the exploratory case study conducted on academic libraries in the context of higher education in Ghana. The study focused on insights derived from the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. The results are based on qualitative data collected through interviews, document analysis, and observations.

Theme 1: Role of Academic Libraries:

The interviews revealed that the academic library at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies plays a multifaceted role in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities. Faculty members emphasised the library's role in providing access to scholarly resources, including books, journals, and electronic databases. Students highlighted the library's significance as a quiet study space and its role in facilitating their research endeavours.

Participants acknowledged the multifaceted role of the academic library at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities. Faculty members highlighted the importance of the library in providing access to scholarly resources and supporting their instructional objectives. For example, one faculty member stated:

*"The library is crucial in facilitating our teaching and research activities. It houses a wide range of books and journals that we can use for our course materials and research projects. It also provides a quiet and conducive space for students to study."*

Similarly, students emphasised the library's role in their academic pursuits. They mentioned using the library as a quiet study environment and a place to access essential resources. One student shared:

*"I frequently visit the library to study. It is a peaceful environment that helps me focus. The library also has books and journals I can borrow, which greatly supports my research work."*

#### Theme 2: Library Resources and Services:

Participants expressed varying opinions regarding the adequacy and accessibility of library resources and services. While some faculty members commended the library's collection, others felt expansion was needed, particularly in niche subject areas. Students appreciated the library's online catalogue and interlibrary loan services but expressed concerns about the limited access to electronic resources off-campus. One faculty member stated:

*"The library has a good collection of resources in general disciplines, but there is room for improvement in specialised subjects like renewable energy. It would benefit the library to acquire more materials in those areas."*

Regarding accessibility, students appreciated the library's online catalogue and interlibrary loan services but expressed concerns about the limited access to electronic resources off-campus. A student mentioned:

*"The online catalogue is user-friendly, and I appreciate the interlibrary loan service. However, it would be helpful if we had better access to electronic resources from home or off-campus. Sometimes the internet is slow or unreliable."*

#### Theme 3: User Engagement and Support:

Overall, participants acknowledged the efforts of the library staff in providing user support and assistance. Faculty members praised the librarians' willingness to collaborate on information literacy initiatives and research support. However, some students suggested additional user-centred services, such as extended library hours and improved technology infrastructure. One faculty member highlighted:

*"The librarians are very supportive. They have been instrumental in conducting workshops and training sessions on information literacy for our students. They are always available to help with research questions and guide locating relevant resources."*

However, some students suggested additional user-centred services, such as extended library hours and improved technology infrastructure. A student mentioned:

*"It would be great if the library could extend its hours, especially during exam periods. Also, having more computers and reliable Wi-Fi would make it easier for students to access online resources and work on assignments."*

#### Theme 4: Information Literacy Initiatives:

The interviews revealed that the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies library has implemented information literacy initiatives to enhance students' research skills. Librarians conducted workshops and individual consultations to teach students how to navigate library resources, critically evaluate information, and cite sources. Faculty members expressed satisfaction with the library's efforts in promoting information literacy. One faculty member shared:

*"The library has proactively organised information literacy workshops for our students. They teach valuable skills such as conducting effective literature searches and evaluating sources. These initiatives have improved our students' research capabilities."*

Students also recognised the value of the information literacy initiatives. A student mentioned:

*"I attended one of the library's information literacy workshops, which was helpful. I learned how to search for relevant articles and use citation tools. It made my research process much easier."*

## Theme 5: Challenges and Opportunities:

Several challenges and opportunities emerged from the data. Participants highlighted the issue of limited funding, which affected the library's acquisition of new resources and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the digital divide was a concern, as some students faced difficulties accessing electronic resources due to inadequate internet connectivity. However, participants also emphasised the potential of partnerships with other institutions and developing collaborative digital platforms to overcome these challenges. A faculty member stated:

*"The library's limited budget poses challenges in acquiring new books and journals. It is important to secure more funding to expand the collection and keep up with the latest research materials."*

The digital divide was also a concern, as some students faced difficulties accessing electronic resources due to inadequate internet connectivity. However, participants emphasised the potential of partnerships with other institutions and developing collaborative digital platforms to overcome these challenges. A student shared:

*"Improving internet access is crucial for students who rely on electronic resources. Collaborating with other libraries and leveraging digital platforms could help bridge the digital divide and provide equal access to resources for all students."*

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Role of Academic Libraries

The study's outcome suggests that the academic archives at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies have an immensely significant role in offering aid for diverse educational activities such as instruction, education, and exploration. The library is considered a valuable resource centre for faculty members and students, providing easy access to scholarly materials and facilitating a conducive environment for extensive study and research. These results align with previous research indicating the essential function of academic libraries in supporting the academic goals of higher education institutions (Smith, 2017).

### 4.2.2 Library Resources and Services

The study's outcome suggests that the academic archives at the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies have an immensely significant role in offering aid for diverse educational activities such as instruction, education, and exploration. The library is considered a valuable resource centre for faculty members and students, providing easy access to scholarly materials and facilitating a conducive environment for extensive study and research. These results align with previous research indicating the essential function of academic libraries in supporting the academic goals of higher education institutions (Smith, 2017).

### 4.2.3 User Engagement and Support:

The favourable feedback received regarding user engagement and support is a testament to the library staff's diligent efforts in assisting faculty members and students alike. The faculty members greatly appreciated the collaborative approach employed by the librarians in executing information literacy initiatives and research support. However, the pupils conveyed a yearning for added user-centred amenities, like extended reading room hours and upgraded technology infrastructure. These findings underscore the crucial significance of continually assessing and refining library services to cater to the ever-evolving needs of diverse user groups.

**Information Literacy Initiatives:** The positive reception of the library's information literacy initiatives by faculty members and students highlights the importance of equipping students with indispensable research skills. The workshops and individual consultations offered by the library are invaluable resources for enhancing the students' proficiency in navigating information sources, critically evaluating information, and citing sources effectively. These findings align with the recognition of information literacy as an indispensable skill for success in higher education (ACRL, 2000). The library's unwavering commitment to promoting information literacy is commendable, and there is still ample room for expanding and enhancing these initiatives.

**Challenges and Opportunities:** The challenges identified, such as limited funding and the digital divide, are not unique to the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies but are prevalent issues across the higher education landscape. Adequate funding is of utmost importance for library acquisitions, infrastructure improvements, and the expansion of resources. The electronic gap presents a significant obstacle in guaranteeing impartial admission to digital resources for all pupils. However, the discoveries do



not reveal any chances for collaboration, either internally or externally, to overcome these obstacles. Collaborative efforts with other libraries and the development of digital platforms can help mitigate the impact of limited resources and improve access to information for all students.

The findings of this study provide invaluable insights into the role and significance of academic libraries in the context of higher education in Ghana, with specific insights from the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. The study provides valuable insights into the crucial role played by academic libraries in higher education, with specific reference to the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. They also underscore the need to continuously assess and improve library resources, services, user engagement, and information literacy initiatives. The challenges identified call for strategic planning and collaborative efforts to secure adequate funding and bridge the digital divide while taking advantage of opportunities for partnerships and digital advancements.

## 5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, academic libraries are pivotal in enhancing the educational experience within Ghana's higher education system, as demonstrated by insights from the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. These libraries support academic learning by providing essential resources and research materials and fostering knowledge creation, community engagement, and educational collaboration. The study highlights the significant value students and faculty place on the library, as it is a rich source of scholarly materials and an ideal environment for research and analysis.

However, the study also identified areas for improvement, particularly regarding the adequacy and accessibility of library resources and services. Faculty members emphasised the need for expanded resources in niche subject areas, while students expressed concerns about limited access to electronic resources off-campus. Additionally, students suggested implementing user-centred services, such as extended library hours and improved technological infrastructure. The positive feedback on information literacy initiatives further underscores the importance of equipping students with essential research skills.

Despite these challenges, such as limited funding and the digital divide, the university library continues to adapt by embracing digital tools, expanding access to diverse resources, and fostering an environment conducive to scholarly development. Moving forward, institutions in Ghana need to prioritise investment in academic libraries to address these challenges and further strengthen their role in advancing higher education and research.

## 5.2 Recommendation

In light of the findings presented in this study, several suggestions are put forth to improve the function and efficacy of academic libraries in the realm of higher education in Ghana. Firstly, a thorough assessment of subject-specific needs should be conducted to allocate resources to expand collections in niche areas identified by faculty members. The collection should be regularly evaluated to ensure its relevance and currency. Secondly, infrastructure and connectivity challenges must be addressed to improve off-campus access to electronic resources. Exploring collaboration with pertinent stakeholders, such as IT departments and internet service providers, may enhance internet connectivity and facilitate seamless access to electronic resources for all students.

Thirdly, the feedback provided by students regarding extended library hours and improved technology infrastructure should be considered. It is recommended that an investigation is carried out to assess the possibility of extending library hours during peak study periods and investing in additional user-centred technologies such as reliable Wi-Fi and computers to enhance the overall user experience. Fourthly, information literacy initiatives should be continued and expanded to empower students with essential research skills. Workshops, individual consultations, and online resources that cater to different disciplines and academic levels should be offered. Collaboration with faculty members to integrate information literacy into the curriculum and ensure its integration into the academic programs is also essential.

Lastly, advocating for increased funding for academic libraries to address resource limitations and infrastructure needs is crucial. The formation of strategic partnerships and collaborations with other institutions, both locally and internationally, to leverage shared resources, knowledge exchange, and collaborative digital platforms that promote equitable access to information is also highly encouraged. To enhance the function and efficacy of academic libraries in higher education in Ghana, it is suggested that a

thorough assessment of subject-specific needs should be conducted to expand collections in niche areas identified by faculty members.

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