



Knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians of academic institutions in Ghana

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Abstract

This research study delves into the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians within the academic institutions of Ghana. The primary objectives of this investigation were to identify the knowledge needs of library staff, scrutinize the knowledge seeking processes employed by librarians, and uncover the challenges hindering librarians' knowledge acquisition. A quantitative research methodology was employed to gather and analyze data, providing valuable insights into the knowledge dynamics within the Ghanaian academic library community. The findings of this study unveiled that the knowledge needs of library staff are primarily centered around two key areas: professional development within the library field and the acquisition of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as research skills. These knowledge needs reflect the evolving roles of librarians as they adapt to the digital age and strive to provide enhanced services to their academic communities. Regarding the knowledge seeking processes adopted by librarians, the research revealed a multifaceted approach. Librarians actively pursue knowledge through strategies such as attending workshops, seeking advice from experienced colleagues, engaging in reading materials, and watching instructional videos. Additionally, many librarians choose to pursue further studies to deepen their expertise, indicating a commitment to continuous learning and professional growth. However, the study also brought to light several challenges faced by librarians in their knowledge seeking endeavors. Notable challenges included financial constraints, which hindered access to training opportunities, as well as a lack of motivation among some library staff. Furthermore, the absence of structured Knowledge Management (KM) policies within academic institutions was identified as a substantial impediment to effective knowledge sharing and utilisation. In light of these findings, it was recommended that the management of academic institutions in Ghana take proactive measures to address these challenges. To enhance the knowledge and skills of library staff, appropriate training programmes should be developed and made readily available. Furthermore, the establishment of comprehensive KM policies is essential to guide and facilitate the knowledge activities within libraries, fostering a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Knowledge, Knowledge Needs, Knowledge Seeking Processes, Academic Libraries

Introduction

Academic libraries in Ghana serve as vital components within the higher education system that function as critical pillars that underpin education, research, and academic pursuits. These libraries harbor a treasure trove of knowledge, thereby bestowing upon them a pivotal role in providing access to vital information resources and nurturing information literacy among the academic community (Abah, Asiedu & Dei, 2022). The dedicated professionals responsible for curating and disseminating this wealth of information are none other than librarians.

Librarians, the custodians of knowledge repositories, wield an irreplaceable influence on the education and research domains. Their commitment to fostering an environment of informed scholarship is indispensable. Effectiveness of librarians in discharging their duties hinges upon their ability to continually seek and update their own knowledge. Again, the information landscape is in a constant state of flux, shaped by rapid technological advancements and evolving user behaviours. Librarians in Ghana, much like their global peers, face a rapidly evolving landscape that brings both challenges and opportunities as they strive to meet the diverse information needs of their academic communities. These professionals must navigate the increasing demand for digital literacy and the transition to online platforms, particularly in the wake of disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, which have pushed libraries to adapt their services digitally. This transformative journey is fueled by the digital revolution, fundamentally altering the creation, dissemination, and accessibility of information. In this digital age, digital databases, e-books, and online research tools have emerged as powerful agents of change, equipping librarians with novel resources to fulfill their roles as purveyors of knowledge and enablers of scholarship (Mabunda & Du Plessis, 2022). However, the efficient assimilation and utilisation of these tools require adaptability, proficiency, and an overarching strategy to harness the power of knowledge. This is where the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) steps into the spotlight. According to Mostofa & Mezbah-ul-Islam (2015), KM serves as the bridge connecting library managers and employees to the wealth of knowledge resources they manage and, crucially, the users who seek them. As defined by Agarwal & Ikeda (2014), KM entails a strategic approach to delivering knowledge to the right user at the right time, ensuring that it is both effective and cost-efficient. Through knowledge management (KM),

academic libraries can improve how they work, deliver better information services, and tackle new challenges in today's changing information landscape.

The heart of this transformation resides in understanding how librarians acquire and apply knowledge within this ever-evolving landscape. This comprehension is pivotal for optimizing information literacy instruction (Mahanta & Das, 2019). As librarians act as conduits between information resources and users, their knowledge needs and the processes by which they seek and apply this knowledge are central to their capacity to facilitate effective learning and research.

In light of this context, the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians in academic libraries in Ghana is an endeavor of paramount importance. Such an investigation promises to illuminate the path toward optimized library services and enhanced professional development, in perfect alignment with the core competencies as defined by the American Library Association (ALA). This research aims to enhance library science by exploring how knowledge is managed in academic libraries. By doing so, it helps librarians improve their roles as knowledge keepers and supporters of academic excellence.

Problem Statement

In recent years, the roles and responsibilities of librarians have changed due to the advancement of technology (Mabunda & Du Plessis, 2022). The normal operations of an academic library are disrupted by higher education developments. According to Shropshire, Semenza & Koury (2020) shrinking budgets, technological innovations, and changes in staffing cause libraries to question traditional mores and motivate managers to use new ways of thinking. Moreover, while librarians are traditionally seen as custodians of knowledge, their roles now extend to actively supporting research, teaching, and learning within the academic community. To effectively fulfill these responsibilities, librarians must have up-to-date knowledge and use efficient seeking processes. Studies on knowledge management are based on the following: the application of KM in ALs, perception of librarians about KM, role of Librarians in KM activities in ALs and KM practices in ALs (Agarwal & Ikeda, 2014; Dold, 2013; Mabunda & Du Plessis, 2022 & Shropshire et al., 2020). There is however limited empirical research that focus on the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians. The development

of tailored professional development programmes is hampered by the gap in understanding the unique challenges, preferences, and strategies employed by librarians. This study was designed to investigate the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The study was conducted to investigate:

- i. The knowledge needs of librarians in ALs in Ghana
- ii. The Knowledge Seeking processes of librarians in ALs in Ghana
- iii. Challenges facing librarians in their knowledge seeking processes

Literature Review

As one of the different types of libraries, academic libraries are very important parts of universities. Nnedi & Nwafor-Orizu (2022) posit that academic libraries play a key role in knowledge dissemination by supporting teaching, learning and research activities of universities. Fred & Tom (2015) contended that over the past thirty years, there has been a significant transformation in how academic libraries and information services are accessed and utilised due to advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In recent times, libraries, information centers, and various organisations find themselves striving to thrive in a society where knowledge plays a central role (Dimou, 2018). He also indicated that, libraries are now challenged to reconfigure their organisational structure and management practices with the aim of enhancing their competitive edge through the cultivation of learning capabilities and the utilisation of their knowledge resources. He concluded by saying that knowledge has emerged as the pivotal component that actively contributes to the enhancement and refinement of academic library services, primarily through the implementation of KM initiatives focused on the creation, dissemination, and utilisation of knowledge assets. This findings highlight an important transformation in how libraries and information centers operate in a knowledge-driven society. As knowledge becomes more central to societal progress, libraries must evolve not just in terms of services but in organisational structure and management practices. The need for reconfiguration reflects the broader role that knowledge management (KM) plays in enhancing a library's ability to stay competitive and relevant. KM

is again cited as an essential strategy for those seeking to increase value, improve operations and services, and make informed decisions about resource investments (Shropshire et al., 2020).

Before delving into the examination of knowledge management within organisations, it is crucial to elucidate the precise meaning of “knowledge” as a term. According to Dimou (2018), there exists a clear distinction among data, information, and knowledge. Data is characterized as unprocessed “descriptions or observations” related to past, present, or future situations. In contrast, information comprises norms or contextual content embedded within data, thereby enriching it. Knowledge, within this framework, is defined as a construct stemming from “human reflection and experience.” A fundamental aspect of knowledge is its origination, either by an individual or a collective entity, and its integration into daily work or processes. Furthermore, knowledge can manifest in the form of concepts, rules, and tools, playing a pivotal role in the decision-making process aimed at achieving specific objectives (Shropshire et al., 2020). They acknowledge the existence of knowledge within both individuals and organisations. Additionally, they draw attention to the differentiation between explicit knowledge, which is codified and documented, and tacit knowledge, which is the type of knowledge that cannot be easily articulated. In this context, the emphasis lies in enhancing the creation and utilisation of knowledge by individuals and organisations. However, they expound on the categorization of knowledge into three distinct types, aiming to elucidate the distinction between knowledge and knowledge management. For instance, Shropshire et al. (2020) recognize three (3) categories of knowledge:

- a) “Human knowledge,” encompassing individual expertise and skills, which may encompass both tacit and explicit knowledge.
- b) “Social knowledge,” characterizing knowledge shared among individuals or groups, predominantly in the form of tacit knowledge.
- c) “Structured knowledge,” generated by organisational systems, processes, tools, and daily operations, primarily consisting of explicit knowledge.

The history of “knowledge management” has its origins in the 1960s when Peter Drucker introduced the concept of “knowledge workers.” However, it was during the 1970s that the term “knowledge management” began to take shape. The 1990s witnessed a significant development with the widespread use of laptops, enabling employees, especially freelancers,

to engage in telework. This newfound flexibility brought forth various challenges related to knowledge sharing among colleagues. In response, employees started exploring and adopting new approaches to manage knowledge. This period is often referred to as "Generation 1 of Knowledge Management," spanning from 1990 to 1995 (Schuett, 2015).

Over the subsequent five years, "Generation 2" emerged, largely influenced by the work of Ikujiro Nonaka (Schütt, 2015). Nonaka introduced the concept of "knowledge creation" by presenting a model based on "the process of socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internalisation of knowledge" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This period witnessed extensive research on knowledge management models and the exploration of various theories regarding tacit and explicit knowledge.

In the realm of knowledge management, Kordab, Raudeliūnienė & Meidutė-Kavaliauskienė (2020) defined it as a process or practice involving the acquisition, comprehension, sharing, and utilisation of knowledge from diverse sources to enhance organisational learning and performance. Furthermore, Lam, Nguyen, Le & Tran (2021) characterised knowledge management as a deliberate and systematic collaboration among individuals, technology, processes, and organisational structures aimed at creating value through innovation and reinvention. They indicated that collaborative effort, often termed "coordination," involves the construction, sharing, and application of knowledge, as well as the utilisation of accumulated experience to foster organisational learning.

Lam et al. (2021) explored competencies perceived to be essential for library and information science (LIS) professionals considering the needs of knowledge management (KM) applications in Indian academic libraries. Respondents of the study indicated that development of competencies in the field of management by LIS professionals is what is required most for effective application of KM in Indian academic libraries. Another challenge commonly encountered by academic libraries, particularly in financially constrained contexts, is their ability to operate efficiently within limited budgets and staffing. In this context, Knowledge Management (KM) emerges as a potential tool for libraries to deliver the requisite services to their parent institutions and ensure their sustainability in a competitive and demanding environment (Jain, 2020).

Bartlett & Acadia (2019) notes that academic

libraries have generated substantial knowledge and information about their operations for over two decades but have struggled to harness this for the creation or application of "organisational knowledge." In this regard, librarians should focus on utilising knowledge rooted in their expertise to achieve the library's objectives. Knowledge Management (KM) is a policy to provide the right knowledge to the right people at the right time and people share and utilise this knowledge in order that organisational performance can be improved (Olubiyo & Olubiyo, 2023). Within this context, Library & Information Science Education (2024) emphasises the importance of training and education for library staff to enhance their knowledge and capacity to acquire new information. This process not only enables libraries to tap into and preserve the wealth of wisdom, expertise, and experiences possessed by individuals but also fosters a culture of knowledge sharing through simple and cost-effective methods like brainstorming, open discussions, idea sharing, workshops, conferences, mentoring, digital archiving, problem identification, and solution finding (Poonkothai, 2016).

Jain (2020) characterises knowledge sharing as a means to achieve business goals through the transfer of knowledge among employees, customers, and stakeholders. Continual knowledge transfer helps prevent duplication and the unnecessary reinvention of solutions with each new project (Jain, 2020). Successful knowledge sharing relies on both organisational support and individual motivation. Organisational support encompasses well-designed procedures, a defined organisational culture, and technological infrastructure. Personal interest in knowledge sharing is fostered by providing librarians access to both tacit and explicit knowledge through organised knowledge bases and the experiences of colleagues. Regarding employees, motivation and trust serve as catalysts to encourage knowledge sharing. Moreover, informal sharing methods, such as oral advice seeking rather than written documentation or database uploads, can facilitate more spontaneous knowledge sharing among employees. If employees talk to each other directly, they can get immediate help and specific answers that suit their current needs, which is often faster and more practical than searching through formal documents.

Furthermore, academic libraries are well-versed in resource sharing and networking, frequently participating in consortia where cooperative work and resource sharing are common practice. This cooperative approach benefits libraries, as members

willingly cooperate and share knowledge without selfish motives (Hughes & Davis, 2018). The researcher again indicated that academic libraries are integral components of universities, with a mission to provide knowledge access to their users. In this context, libraries should analyze the needs of their users and employ methods to capture both tacit and explicit knowledge relevant to those needs.

Thomson & Zach (2017) research focus on the use of social media and online platforms for knowledge sharing in academic libraries. They emphasize the role of collaborative technologies, such as wikis, blogs, and institutional repositories, in facilitating the exchange of scholarly information and improving access to library services. Saunders et al. (2015) also explore the application of digital repositories and open access platforms to promote collaborative knowledge sharing in libraries. They argue that digital tools like institutional repositories help academic libraries create open access to knowledge and foster greater academic collaboration. Sulaiman & Dewan (2020) highlight the importance of integrating mobile technology, cloud computing, and collaborative platforms for knowledge sharing in academic libraries. These technologies enhance access to information and support the creation of a connected scholarly community.

In the context of academic libraries, knowledge management (KM) presents several challenges that are well-documented in recent. These include: Technological Constraints, Lack of Staff Training and Expertise, Cultural Barriers, Resource Allocation and Financial Constraints and Resistance to Change. According to Singh (2019), the lack of proper technological infrastructure remains a significant barrier to successful KM initiatives. Despite the increasing importance of technology in KM, many academic libraries face limitations in the availability and implementation of advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. Several libraries still struggle with outdated systems that hinder the effective capture, storage, and sharing of knowledge. Igbeka and Igbeka & Olandokun (2021) emphasize that insufficient training in KM tools and strategies results in ineffective knowledge sharing practices, limiting the library's capacity to manage its resources efficiently. While technology is essential, it cannot be fully leveraged without adequately trained staff. The literature highlights a lack of ICT skills and KM expertise among library personnel as a major obstacle. Khasawneh (2020) notes that these cultural issues often lead to knowledge hoarding, preventing

the creation of an open, collaborative environment within libraries. On financial constraints, developing a culture of knowledge sharing within academic institutions is another recurring challenge. Many library staff members are reluctant to share knowledge due to concerns about job security, competition, or the absence of institutional incentives. Adeoye & Popoola (2022) argue that financial limitations directly impact the library's ability to develop and sustain KM frameworks. Implementing KM practices often requires significant financial investment in tools, technologies, and staff development. However, many academic libraries, especially in developing countries, operate with limited budgets, making it difficult to prioritize KM initiatives. According to Howard & Bateman (2021), staff members may be hesitant to adopt KM practices due to fear of increased workloads, changing job roles, or insufficient understanding of the benefits. Academic libraries, like many other institutions, often face resistance when introducing new systems and processes. Mostofa & Mezbah-ul-Islam (2015) also reported from a study on the challenges of KM in academic libraries in Bangladesh that limited expertise and lack of clear guidelines are the major challenges for the implementation of KM in DUL.

The literature reviewed above has shed light on various research endeavours that have explored Knowledge Management (KM) within the context of academic libraries. These studies have delved into a range of subjects, encompassing the examination of librarians' perspectives on KM, the practical application of KM principles within academic libraries, the identification of factors that exert influence on the implementation of KM strategies, and the challenges associated with integrating KM into academic library environments. While these studies have provided valuable insights into KM within academic libraries, it is evident that a critical aspect of this field has been relatively overlooked by researchers in the KM domain. This overlooked area pertains to the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians themselves within the academic library setting. Understanding how librarians acquire, manage, and utilise knowledge is fundamental to optimizing their roles and contributions within the academic institution. It is imperative to comprehend the specific knowledge requirements of librarians, the strategies they employ to fulfill these needs, and the challenges they encounter in this pursuit.

Methodology

This study aimed to investigate the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians employed in academic libraries across Ghana. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research approach was employed, allowing for the efficient inclusion of a wide-ranging sample of practicing librarians. Apuke (2017) described quantitative research method as the use and analysis of numerical data using a particular statistical technique to answer questions like who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how. This technique was used to enable the researcher provide numerical explanation of the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians. The study's target population consisted of 220 librarians working within various academic institutions in Ghana. These included University for Development Studies, Tamale Technical University, Bagabaga College of Education and Tamale College of Education Libraries. A sample of 140 respondents was selected using Krejcie and Morgan Sampling Table. Convenient sampling technique was used to obtain the sample. The choice of this technique was guided by the dispersed distribution of the potential respondents across diverse academic institutions. While acknowledging that convenience sampling can introduce some researcher bias, this limitation was deemed manageable given the relatively homogeneous nature of the population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Data collection was accomplished through the administration of a structured questionnaire, encompassing both open and close-ended questions. The questionnaire format was chosen to accommodate respondents irrespective of their geographical locations and provide the opportunity for librarians who may be situated at a distance from the researcher to participate (M. Saunders et al., 2009). The questionnaire featured a range of questions, including multiple response sets and Likert scale items. Respondents were reached via their WhatsApp platforms, which allowed for the efficient distribution of the questionnaire link. This approach facilitated data collection from librarians located at various distances from the researcher, thereby enhancing the study's geographical inclusivity. The collected data was subjected to rigorous analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical tools, such as frequencies and percentages, were employed to present and interpret the findings. These tools were used to gain insights into the patterns of information needs and seeking processes among the librarians. Furthermore, the Chi-Square test was employed to explore the potential

associations between the librarians' qualifications and their information needs and seeking processes. As noted by Mchugh (2013), the Chi-square (χ^2) test not only gauges the significance of observed differences but also elucidates the specific categories contributing to these differences.

This research methodology was meticulously designed to address the research objectives and ensure the collection of comprehensive and valuable insights into the knowledge needs and seeking processes of librarians in Ghana's academic institutions.

Results

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of Gender and Qualification of the Respondents

		Qualification				Total
		BA	DBS/ Diploma	MA	Mphil	
Gender	Male	20	5	45	25	95
	Female	10	0	25	10	45
Total		30	5	70	35	140

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research report presents a comprehensive analysis of the gender and qualifications distribution among participants in the study investigating the knowledge needs and seeking processes of academic librarians in Ghana in table 1 above. A total of 140 participants took part in this research, contributing to a valuable understanding of the demographics within this professional community. The findings from this study reveal a gender distribution in favor of male academic librarians, constituting 68% of the participants, while females account for 32%. It is important to note that while this study provides valuable insights into the gender demographics, it does not delve into the specific roles and responsibilities held by each gender within the academic library context.

The data analysis also unveiled insightful information regarding the qualifications held by the academic librarians in the study. The participants represented a diverse range of educational backgrounds, as summarised below: The largest group of participants held a Master of Arts degree, with a total of 70

individuals (50% of the total participants). The study included 35 participants with a Master of Philosophy degree (25% of the total participants). A significant number of participants, 30 individuals (21%), held a Bachelor's degree. The smallest group consisted of 5 participants (4%) with Diploma qualifications.

Table 2: Frequencies of the Knowledge Needs of Librarians

	N	Count	Column N %
Profession knowledge	140	120	85.7%
ICT knowledge	140	120	85.7%
User needs knowledge	140	40	28.6%
Management and administration	140	95	67.9%
Research knowledge	140	125	89.3%

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings from this study provide critical insights into the knowledge needs of academic librarians in Ghana. The data reveal that the highest percentage of librarians, 89%, expressed a significant need for knowledge and skills related to conducting research. Closely following the need for research skills, 85.7% of librarians expressed a demand for professional knowledge. Similarly, the need for ICT knowledge, also at 85.7%, reflects the growing importance of technology in modern libraries, as librarians seek to adapt to the digital age and provide innovative information services. A considerable portion of librarians, 67.9%, expressed their need for knowledge in management and administration. Lastly, 28.6% of librarians expressed a need to understand the culture of the user community.

Table 3: The Effect of Staff Qualification on the Type of Knowledge Needed

Type of knowledge	Chi-Square value	Df	p-value
Professional Knowledge	33.056 ^a	3	.000
ICT Knowledge	27.222 ^a	3	.000
User culture knowledge	7.583 ^a	3	.055
Management and Administration	11.189 ^a	3	.011
Research Knowledge	61.600 ^a	3	.000

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research report delves into the critical exploration of the relationship between the qualifications of library staff and the specific types of knowledge that they require to excel in their roles. The study aimed to unravel the dynamics between the educational background of library staff and their knowledge needs in the academic library setting. The findings from this investigation are encapsulated in Table 3 above, which provides Chi-Square values reflecting the association between staff qualifications and the types of knowledge they seek. The data analysis revealed substantial insights into the connection between the qualifications of library staff and their specific knowledge needs. The Chi-Square values, degrees of freedom, and p-values for each type of knowledge elucidate the nature of this relationship as summarised as follows: the Chi-Square value of 33.056, with a p-value of .000, indicates a highly significant relationship between the qualifications of library staff and their need for professional knowledge. This suggests that staff qualifications play a crucial role in determining the level and nature of professional knowledge required by librarians. Similarly, ICT knowledge demonstrates a significant connection with staff qualifications, as evidenced by a Chi-Square value of 27.222 and a p-value of .000. This emphasises the importance of educational background in shaping the technology-related knowledge needs of library staff. The data unveil a pronounced relationship between qualifications and research knowledge, with a Chi-Square value of 61.600 and a p-value of .000. This underscores the role of staff qualifications in influencing the extent of research-related knowledge requirements among library staff. Management and administration knowledge also exhibit a notable association with

staff qualifications, reflected in a Chi-Square value of 11.189 and a p-value of .011. This implies that the qualifications of library staff significantly impact the knowledge they require to excel in management and administrative roles. In contrast, the data indicate a less significant relationship between staff qualifications and knowledge about the culture of users. While the Chi-Square value is 33.056, the p-value of .055 suggests a somewhat weaker connection in this specific knowledge category.

Table 4: Type of Professional Knowledge Required by Library Staff

	Freq	%
Reference service knowledge	115	82.1%
Cataloguing classification knowledge	110	78.6%
Sources of information knowledge	95	67.9%
Shelving knowledge	60	42.9%
Basic ICT knowledge	85	60.7%
Basic research knowledge	115	82.1%

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research report delves into an in-depth analysis of the types of professional knowledge sought by academic library staff. The study aimed to uncover the specific areas of expertise required by staff to excel in their roles within academic libraries. The findings presented in Table 4 above provides valuable insights into the diverse and essential knowledge needs of academic library staff as follows: the data indicate a substantial need for knowledge in reference services, with 82.1% of staff members expressing a demand for this expertise. An equal percentage of 82.1% emphasises the essential need for basic research knowledge in librarianship. A significant portion of staff, 78.6%, requires expertise in cataloguing and classification. 67.9% of staff members expressed the need for knowledge about sources of information. A substantial number of staff, 60.0%, require basic knowledge in information and communication technology. Finally, 42.9% of staff members expressed a need for knowledge on shelving.

Table 5: Frequencies of Types ICT Knowledge Needed by Librarians

	Freq	%
Programming skills	70	50.0%
Microsoft office skills	75	53.6%
Databases skills	105	75.0%
Basic knowledge in computer	65	46.4%
Computer hardware skills	35	25.0%
Searching and retrieval skills	80	57.1%

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research delves into the investigation of the specific ICT knowledge requirements among library staff. The study aimed to uncover the critical areas of information and communication technology (ICT) expertise necessary for library professionals to excel in their roles. The findings, as presented in Table 5 above, provides crucial insights into the diverse and essential ICT knowledge needs of library staff. The data indicate a substantial need for skills related to the organisation of databases, with 75.0% of staff members expressing a demand for this expertise. A considerable portion of staff, 57.1%, requires searching and retrieval skills. A significant number of staff, 53.6%, require Microsoft Office skills. A notable 50.0% of staff members express a need for programming skills. A substantial number of staff, 46.4%, requires basic knowledge in computing. 25.0% of staff members express a need for computer hardware skills.

Table 6: Likert scale findings on the type of ICT knowledge needed by Library Staff

	Freq.	%
Workshops	125	89.3%
Asking knowledgeable people	95	67.9%
Reading and watching videos	105	75.0%
Further studies	105	75.0%
Learning-on-the-job	115	82.1%
In-service trainings	105	75.0%

Source: Field Data, 2023

The researcher further wanted to find out about the ICT knowledge needed by staff of academic libraries in Ghana using 3-point Likert scale where 1 represented agree, 2, neutral and 3, disagree. Most of the respondents agreed to the statement that librarians

needed programming skills (65 respondents), 45 respondents were neutral on this statement and 30 disagreed to this statement. All the respondents again agreed to the statements that every librarian need to have reference services skills (140 respondents), librarians must possess good communication skills (140 respondents), librarians must knowledge about sources of information (140 respondents) and finally librarians must have information retrieval skills (140 respondents).

This researcher again tried to explore the ICT knowledge requirements of staff working in academic libraries in Ghana. The study aimed to assess the perspectives of library professionals regarding the ICT skills needed for their roles. To gauge these perspectives, a 3-point Likert scale was employed, with responses representing agreement (1), neutrality (2), and disagreement (3). Data in the table reveals that in response to the statement on the importance of programming skills, 65 respondents agreed, 45 remained neutral, and 30 disagreed. This suggests a significant emphasis on programming skills by a substantial portion of library staff, while others remain neutral or express disagreement regarding the necessity of this knowledge. All 140 respondents agreed that librarians should possess reference services skills. This unanimous agreement underscores the universal recognition of the importance of reference services expertise among academic library staff. All 140 respondents again expressed their agreement with the statement emphasising the need for good communication skills among library staff. This unanimity highlights the consensus on the vital role of effective communication in library services. All 140 respondents also agreed that librarians must have knowledge about sources of information. This unanimous agreement underscores the shared understanding of the importance of familiarity with diverse information sources. All 140 respondents concurred with the statement highlighting the importance of information retrieval skills. This consensus signifies the unanimous recognition of the significance of efficient information access and retrieval in academic library settings.

Table 7: Frequencies of Knowledge Seeking Processes of Librarians

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1. As a librarian, I need to have skills in programming languages	65	30	45
2. Librarians are supposed to have reference and other basic client service skills	140	0	0
3. Librarians must possess good communication skills	140	0	0
4. Librarians must have knowledge about sources of information	140	0	0
5. Librarians must have information retrieval skills	140	0	0

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research report aims to provide insights into the knowledge seeking processes of librarians. Specifically, the study explores how librarians acquire knowledge and the various methods they employ to enhance their professional expertise. The findings, as summarised in Table 6, shed light on the diverse and prevalent knowledge seeking processes employed by library staff. The majority of librarians, 89.3%, gain knowledge through attending workshops. This indicates the high value placed on structured and specialized learning events to acquire new skills and knowledge. The data revealed that On-the-job learning is a prevalent method, with 82.1% of librarians engaging in this form of experiential learning. This highlights the importance of hands-on experiences in building professional expertise. Reading and watching video tutorials are also common practices among 75.0% of librarians. This emphasises the importance of self-directed learning through written and visual resources. An equal percentage of 75.0% of librarians opt for further studies to expand their knowledge and expertise, indicating a commitment to formal education as a means of professional growth. In-service

training is another preferred method among 75.0% of librarians. This indicates the importance of ongoing training and development within their workplace. Approximately 67.9% of librarians seek knowledge by asking knowledgeable individuals. This highlights the value of mentorship and the exchange of expertise within the professional community.

Table 8: Likert Scale Data on Librarians' knowledge Seeking Processes

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1. Workshops and conferences are good ways to develop the knowledge of staff of the library.	135	0	5
2. Identifying knowledgeable staff within the library profession and tasking them to mentor other staff.	125	0	15
3. Reading of books and other information resources can build the knowledge of library staff.	135	0	5
4. Librarians can build their knowledge by asking experienced staff about how to perform certain tasks in the library.	120	0	20
5. Library management should consider organising in-service trainings for staff of the libraries	125	0	15
6. Librarians should consider bearing the cost of their training programmes.	60	25	55

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research report seeks to examine the knowledge seeking processes from the perspective of library staff. The study assessed how library staff perceive various methods for enhancing their

knowledge and professional expertise. Using a Likert scale, respondents were asked to express their agreement, disagreement, or neutrality regarding statements related to knowledge seeking processes. The findings, summarised in Table 8, offer valuable insights into how library staff perceive these processes. The findings reveals an overwhelming majority of library staff, 135 respondents, expressed agreement with the statement that workshops and conferences are effective ways to develop staff knowledge. This demonstrates a strong consensus on the value of structured learning events for professional growth. Similarly, 135 respondents agreed that reading and watching relevant video tutorials are effective methods for knowledge development. This indicates a shared belief in the significance of self-directed learning through various resources. The majority of respondents, 125, agreed that identifying and consulting knowledgeable individuals are good ways to develop staff knowledge. However, 15 respondents disagreed with this statement, indicating a minor difference in perception regarding the effectiveness of seeking guidance from experienced individuals. An equal number of 125 respondents agreed that the organisation of in-service training by management is an effective way to develop staff knowledge. Nevertheless, 15 respondents disagreed with this statement, suggesting a minor variation in perception regarding the role of management-initiated training in knowledge development.

Table 9: Chi-Square values of the effects of Library Staff Qualification on Knowledge Seeking Processes

Type of knowledge	Chi-Square value	Df	p-value
Workshops	46.667 ^a	3	.000
Asking knowledgeable people	9.552 ^a	3	.023
Reading and watching videos	26.349 ^a	3	.000
Further studies	16.825 ^a	3	.001
Learning on the job	4.464 ^a	3	.216
In-service training	13.016 ^a	3	0.05

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research investigated the relationship between the qualifications of library staff and their knowledge seeking processes. The study investigated

whether the educational qualifications of staff members influence the methods they employ to seek and acquire knowledge for professional development. The findings, as summarised in Table 9, provide valuable understanding of the connections between qualifications and knowledge seeking processes among library staff. The Chi-Square test indicates a significant relationship between staff qualifications and their preference for workshops and conferences as a knowledge seeking process (Chi-Square= 46.667, df=3, P-value= .000). This implies that staff with different levels of qualifications may exhibit varying degrees of reliance on workshops and conferences for professional development. The Chi-Square test also reveals a significant relationship between staff qualifications and their propensity to learn from knowledgeable individuals (Chi-Square= 9.552, df=3, P-value= .023). This suggests that staff qualifications can influence their inclination to seek knowledge from experienced individuals. Again, Qualifications of staff are found to be significantly related to their preference for reading and watching video tutorials as a knowledge seeking process (Chi-Square= 26.349, df=3, P-value= .000). This indicates that staff with different educational backgrounds may differ in their use of self-directed learning methods. The Chi-Square test indicates a significant relationship between staff qualifications and their choice to pursue further studies for knowledge enhancement (Chi-Square= 16.825, df=3, P-value= .001). This implies that staff qualifications may influence their decisions to continue formal education. The Chi-Square test also indicates a significant relationship between staff qualifications and their preference for in-service training as a knowledge seeking process (Chi-Square= 13.016, df=3, P-value= .005). This suggests that staff qualifications may impact their reliance on management-organised training. However, staff qualifications were not found to be significantly related to learning on the job as a knowledge seeking process (Chi-Square= 13.016, df=3, P-value= .005). This suggests that staff with various qualifications may equally value on-the-job learning.

Table 10: Frequencies of Challenges facing Staff Knowledge Seeking Processes of the Librarians

	Frequencies	Percentages
Financial problem	120	85.7%
Lack of knowledgeable people	25	17.9%
Time factor	35	25.0%

Age	5	3.6%
Unwillingness to share knowledge	30	21.4%
Difficulty of learning librarianship	10	7.1%
Lack of incentives	55	39.3%
Lack of KM policy	60	42.9%
Lack of trust	50	35.7%
Lack of management support	85	60.7%

Source: Field Data, 2023

This research also tried to examine the challenges that library staff encounter during their knowledge seeking processes. The study aimed to identify and assess the obstacles and difficulties faced by library staff as they strive to enhance their knowledge and professional expertise. The findings, summarised in Table 10, shed light on the primary challenges and issues that affect knowledge acquisition among library staff. The most significant challenge faced by library staff in their knowledge seeking processes is financial problems, as reported by 120 respondents (85.7%). This issue highlights the financial constraints that library staff encounter in accessing resources, attending training, or pursuing further studies. A substantial number of respondents, 85 (60.7%), also identified the lack of support from management as a significant challenge. This suggests that staff may face obstacles in their knowledge seeking processes due to inadequate support and resources from their organisations. 60 respondents (42.9%) reported the lack of knowledge management policies as a challenge. This indicates that the absence of structured policies for knowledge management can hinder staff in seeking and sharing knowledge effectively. 55 respondents (39.3%) cited the lack of incentives as a challenge. This suggests that library staff may require additional motivation or rewards to actively participate in knowledge seeking and sharing processes. 50 respondents (35.7%) reported that a lack of trust among staff members is a challenge. Trust is essential for effective knowledge sharing, and its absence can impede collaborative learning and knowledge transfer. Time constraints were identified as a challenge by 35 respondents (25.0%). This indicates that library staff may struggle to find sufficient time for knowledge seeking processes within their daily responsibilities.

30 respondents (21.4%) mentioned the unwillingness of staff to share knowledge as a challenge. A culture of knowledge sharing is vital for collective learning and development. 25 respondents (17.9%) reported the lack of knowledgeable individuals as a challenge. This implies that the availability of experienced mentors or experts can significantly impact the effectiveness of knowledge seeking processes. 10 respondents (7.1%) mentioned the difficulty of learning the librarianship profession as a challenge. This underscores the complexity and depth of knowledge required in the field and finally, a small number of respondents, 5 (3.6%), identified the age of library staff as a challenge. This suggests that age-related factors may influence knowledge seeking processes.

Discussion

In the preceding sections of this research paper, we embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the knowledge needs and seeking processes of academic librarians in Ghana. Our study was driven by a clear and ambitious set of objectives that aimed to uncover the intricacies of the professional lives of these librarians, with a specific focus on their information requirements, strategies for acquiring knowledge, and the challenges they encounter along this journey. The discussion was done thematically according to the research objectives of the study.

The Information Needs of Librarians of Academic Institutions in Ghana

The findings from the research shed light on the critical knowledge needs of academic librarians in Ghana. It is evident from the data that a significant majority of academic librarians expressed a profound need for knowledge and skills related to conducting research, this is followed by the expressed need for professional knowledge. This finding contradicted the findings of Jain (2020) whose finding revealed administration and management skills as the main knowledge required by academic librarians. The rest of the knowledge needs of the librarians as revealed by the study include: knowledge in Information and Communication Technology, Management and administration skills and understanding library users' culture. These results conformed with the findings of (Lam et al, 2021 ; Jain, 2020).

The study also identified the following professional knowledge needed by librarians in Ghana: reference services skills, basic research knowledge in librarianship, cataloguing and classification skills,

knowledge about sources of information, basic ICT knowledge and shelving skills. A further investigation about the type of ICT knowledge required by the librarians reveals the following: organisation of databases skills, searching and retrieval skills, Microsoft Office skills, programming skills, basic knowledge in ICT and computer hardware skills. The study also indicated the significant association of librarians' qualifications and their knowledge needs with the exception of knowledge of the culture of library users.

This aligns directly with the ALA's emphasis on research and scholarly activity as a core competency. The significant demand for knowledge and skills related to conducting research directly aligns with the ALA's emphasis on research and scholarly activity as a core competency. Librarians are expected to engage in research, contribute to scholarly endeavors, and support the research needs of their academic communities. This competency underscores the importance of librarians as active participants in the research process, helping users access and utilise scholarly resources effectively. Also, the expressed need for professional knowledge encompasses a range of skills, including reference services, cataloging and classification, and basic research knowledge in librarianship. These align with the core competency of professionalism and professional development, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and professional growth. Librarians are expected to maintain high professional standards and expertise to provide effective and efficient library services. The need for knowledge in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as database organisation, searching and retrieval skills, and Microsoft Office skills, is closely related to the technology competency. Librarians must be proficient in technology to manage digital resources, provide online services, and adapt to the changing technological landscape. This competency emphasises the role of technology in library operations and service delivery. Moreover, the need for management and administration skills aligns with the core competency of management and leadership. Librarians are expected to possess skills in managing resources, understanding library users' culture, supervising staff, and strategically leading library operations. This competency emphasises the librarian's role as a leader within the library organisation, responsible for effective management and administration. Finally, understanding library users' culture and meeting their diverse needs aligns with the core competency of user services. Librarians

are expected to have a deep understanding of the needs, preferences, and cultural context of their user community. This competency emphasises the librarian's role in facilitating access to information and resources that meet the diverse needs of library users.

The Knowledge Seeking Processes of Librarians of Academic Institutions in Ghana

The second objective of the study was to investigate the knowledge seeking processes of librarians in academic libraries in Ghana. The findings shed light on the diverse methods and strategies that librarians in Ghana utilise to enhance their expertise and meet the evolving demands of their roles. The data clearly indicates that attending workshops is a highly prevalent knowledge seeking process among librarians. On-the-job learning is another widely adopted method among librarians. Another strategy use by librarians in their knowledge acquisition process is self-directed learning through reading and watching video tutorials. A significant portion of librarians opts for further studies as a means of professional development. The study also identified In-service training within the workplace and learning through mentorship and the exchange of expertise as other ways they acquire relevant knowledge. The findings supported the findings of (Lam et al, 2021; Jain, 2020; Poonkothai, 2016). Poonkothai (2016) identified brainstorming, workshops, conferences and mentoring as major ways to develop staff knowledge. Lam et al. (2021) emphasised development of collaborative culture among staff as a way of developing the knowledge of the staff. The study also discovered strong association between librarian's qualifications and their knowledge seeking processes except on-the job learning which was not dependent on qualification.

Workshops provide an avenue for librarians to stay updated on the latest trends, technologies, and best practices in the field. They offer a platform for networking, sharing experiences, and gaining practical insights. The high percentage of librarians engaging in workshops reflects their commitment to continuous learning and staying current in their profession. Also, librarians value experiential learning and emphasises the significance of hands-on experiences in building professional expertise. It suggests that librarians value real-world experiences and learn from their daily interactions with library users, colleagues, and the challenges they encounter. Learning by reading and watching video tutorials also allows librarians to take control of their learning, explore specific areas

of interest, and access a wealth of resources available in written or visual formats. It demonstrates the autonomy and resourcefulness of librarians in seeking relevant information and expanding their knowledge base. Pursuing formal education is a testament to their dedication to enhancing their expertise. Pursuing advanced degrees or certifications equips librarians with in-depth knowledge and specialized skills, enabling them to better serve their academic communities. This finding also underscores the importance of ongoing training and development programmes offered by library institutions. Librarians are keen on participating in training initiatives provided by their organisations, which ensures that they remain up-to-date with internal policies, technologies, and procedures. It also promotes a culture of organisational learning and improvement and finally, the findings highlights the value of mentorship and the exchange of expertise within the professional community. Librarians seek guidance and insights from experienced colleagues and experts in the field, emphasising the importance of collaborative learning and knowledge sharing. This approach fosters a sense of community and encourages librarians to tap into the wealth of knowledge present within their networks.

Challenges Facing Librarians in their Knowledge Seeking Processes

The study intended to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by library staff in their knowledge seeking processes. The finding reveals the following challenges faced by librarians: Financial constraints emerged as the most significant challenge faced by library staff, followed by lack of management support, lack of knowledge management policy, lack of incentives, lack of trust among staff, time constraint, no-willingness to share knowledge among librarians, difficulty of learning librarianship profession and the age of some of librarians serve as barriers to librarians knowledge seeking. This findings confirmed the findings of Mostofa & Mezbah-ul-Islam (2015) whose study identified limited expertise and lack of clear guideline as challenges to KM in academic libraries.

Financial challenges may hinder staff from accessing necessary resources, attending training programmes, or pursuing advanced studies. This issue underscores the importance of allocating budgets for staff development and access to learning opportunities. Also, it is essential for library management to recognize the importance of fostering a culture of

continuous learning and professional development, and to provide the necessary backing for staff to thrive in their roles. The absence of structured knowledge management policies implies that organisations may lack clear guidelines and strategies for knowledge sharing and retention. Implementing robust knowledge management policies can help create a conducive environment for staff to seek, share, and utilise knowledge effectively. Again, Trust among staff is crucial for effective knowledge sharing. The reported lack of trust suggests that staff may hesitate to share their knowledge, hindering collaborative learning and knowledge transfer. Fostering a culture of trust and openness within the library community is vital to address this challenge. Equally important is the culture of knowledge sharing. It is essential for collective learning and development. Addressing this challenge may require initiatives to promote a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange within the library community and finally, the reported lack of knowledgeable individuals as a challenge highlights the importance of having experienced mentors or experts within the organisation. Access to knowledgeable individuals can significantly impact the effectiveness of knowledge seeking processes. Encouraging mentorship and knowledge transfer programmes can help address this challenge.

Conclusion

This research paper set out to explore the multifaceted world of academic librarians in Ghana, with a specific focus on their knowledge needs, seeking processes, and the challenges they face. In line with our objectives, we have unearthed invaluable insights into the professional lives of these librarians, revealing a tapestry of information requirements, learning methods, and the hurdles they encounter along the way. The findings from this study reveal a multifaceted landscape of knowledge needs among librarians in academic libraries in Ghana. The emphasis on research skills, professional knowledge, ICT competency, management and administration knowledge, and understanding the user community underscores the diverse and evolving roles that librarians play within their institutions. The findings from this research also provide valuable insights into the prevalent knowledge seeking processes among librarians. The data reveals that librarians employ a diverse array of methods to enhance their professional expertise, reflecting their commitment to continuous learning and development. Finally, the findings from

this research provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by library staff in their knowledge seeking processes. Financial problems emerge as the most significant obstacle, highlighting the importance of financial support and resources for knowledge acquisition. Additionally, challenges such as the lack of management support, knowledge management policies, incentives, trust among staff, and time constraints affect the effectiveness of knowledge seeking processes within libraries.

Recommendations

Libraries play a crucial role in supporting knowledge acquisition and dissemination. However, the findings of this study reveal that library staff face several significant challenges in their knowledge-seeking processes, which in turn affect their ability to perform effectively in their roles. These challenges include financial constraints, lack of management support, the absence of a knowledge management policy, lack of incentives, distrust among staff, time constraints, reluctance to share knowledge, difficulties in learning the librarianship profession, and age-related barriers. To ensure that library staff can overcome these challenges and contribute meaningfully to the institution's success, the following recommendations were given.

Firstly, one of the primary challenges highlighted by the study is financial constraints. The lack of adequate financial support limits library staff's access to necessary resources, training programs, and opportunities for further education. It was recommended that specific budget is allocated for staff development. By providing funding for professional training, advanced studies, and access to resources, libraries can ensure that their staff remain up-to-date with current trends and practices.

A lack of management support often leads to a disengaged workforce, where professional growth is stifled due to insufficient backing from leadership. It is imperative for library management to recognise the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development. To remedy this, management should play an active role in encouraging staff to pursue further education, participate in knowledge-sharing platforms, and attend professional forums. Developing clear policies that outline management's commitment to staff development would also ensure that the library environment becomes more supportive of knowledge-seeking activities.

Also, without a KM policy, libraries often lack clear guidelines and strategies for knowledge sharing and retention. This issue can be addressed by developing and implementing a comprehensive KM policy that promotes knowledge sharing, retention, and utilization within the library.

Moreover, library and university management should introduce incentive programs that recognise and reward staff who engage in knowledge-sharing activities. Such incentives could include awards, public recognition, or career advancements tied to knowledge-sharing initiatives. This approach would not only motivate staff to share their expertise but also foster a culture where knowledge sharing is valued and integrated into performance assessments.

Equally important to the success of knowledge-seeking processes is the development of trust among staff members. Building a culture of trust and openness within the library community is critical to addressing this challenge. By promoting transparency in decision-making, recognizing individual contributions, and establishing open communication channels, management can foster an environment where staff feel comfortable sharing their expertise. Team-building activities and peer collaboration could further enhance trust, enabling library staff to work together more effectively.

Last but not least, management of academic libraries should establish formal mentorship programs where seasoned librarians mentor junior staff. This would facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise, ensuring that newer staff are well-equipped to navigate the profession. Additionally, offering regular training programs that cover emerging trends and practices in librarianship would help bridge the knowledge gap and promote professional development.

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