

Library Resources: College Students' Preferences of Cordillera Career Development College, La Trinidad, Benguet

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Abstract. Despite the availability of library resources and encouragement for students to utilize them, observations indicate a significant underutilization of these materials. It highlights the need to understand the factors influencing students' engagement with library resources. To address this gap, the study examines the extent of students' use of library resources, preferred information sources, and difficulties in using them. The study used a descriptive survey research method, involving 322 Cordillera Career Development College students selected through purposive sampling. The primary data source was a validated survey questionnaire. Results of the study show that, in general, students rarely use the library resources; however, general collection books ranked first as the most frequently utilized. Respondents prefer print resources over non-print resources as information sources. Printed books rank as the most preferred information sources. There is no significant difference in students' preference between print and non-print resources. However, students encounter slight difficulties in utilizing library resources. The three most common challenges they face are difficulty locating needed information resources, insufficient materials available for specific topics, and struggles selecting research topics, making finding relevant resources more challenging. With the results, it can be concluded that while students rely on print, specifically books, and non-print resources for their academic needs, they encounter slight difficulties using them. Therefore, it is recommended that the library improve access to print and digital resources, expand and update its book collection, and strengthen information literacy programs to help students navigate and utilize these resources more effectively.

Keywords: Library resources; Students' preferred information source; Library preference; Print materials.

1.0 Introduction

The library plays a vital role in academic institutions by supporting its users' educational and research pursuits by providing various facilities and a wide range of print and non-print information resources. Okiki (2013) asserts that the library is an essential facility that enhances learning, teaching, and research. The library is widely recognized for its collection of relevant resources, enabling it to serve its users effectively. According to Ternenge and Agipu (2019), many users perceive the library primarily as a place for storing and accessing books and other learning materials. Historically, printed materials have been the primary carriers of information, widely used for teaching, learning, and research. However, the learning environment has evolved with the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), and libraries have expanded their collections to include electronic or online information resources. Dela Peña (2018) emphasized that electronic information resources—or e-resources—are among the most significant developments in 21st-century libraries. These resources facilitate the global dissemination of scholarly information, helping libraries fulfill their core mission of providing up-to-date content to support teaching, learning, and research.

Atanda and Uchendu (2019) posited that the library's primary function is not only to fulfill the academic institution's mission to which it belongs but also to advance its aims and objectives. One of the library's aims is to promote effective utilization of library resources to contribute to the success of academic and research endeavors by its users. To achieve this aim, it is essential to assess and understand how people interact with library resources, rather than relying solely on perceptions and assumptions. As asserted by Ani et al. (2022), it is essential to know the extent of library use because an individual's perception of the use of a library may differ significantly from the actual situation. They further added that the frequency of library use will be influenced by the availability of information sources to the user within the library.

Another library aim is to meet users' particular needs and understand their preferences for information sources. According to Aladeniyi and Owokole (2018), library information resources refer to materials or information sources acquired by the library to meet the information needs of its patrons. Besides, Onghenere et al. (2018) asserted that librarians must understand their users' information needs and preferred formats, rather than solely acquiring information resources based on popular trends. They also emphasized the importance of focusing on meeting the specific requirements of their users to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed. Samzugui (2019) asserted that gathering feedback from library patrons was essential to gain a comprehensive and balanced understanding of library user preferences for print and non-print resources within the academic community. This approach ensures the optimal utilization of institutional financial resources by aligning acquisitions with user preferences.

Library users are among the very important stakeholders in the library. Onye (2016) stated that students require library resources that can be applied practically to their needs and enrich their knowledge. The library's primary goal is to fulfill its users' needs by offering timely and relevant resources. Therefore, if the resources meet the needs of library users, their experience will be beneficial. Given this, the library must have a comprehensive understanding of the resources required and the needs of its users. Abukari (2019) pointed out that for libraries to reach their desired level of usage, it is crucial to provide appropriate information resources and deliver high-quality services to meet the needs of their clientele. Utilizing the library regularly enables students to enhance their expertise in their respective fields of study, thus improving their effectiveness in fulfilling their academic responsibilities. However, they may still encounter difficulties in using these library resources. Based on Ani et al. (2022), several factors influence the use of institutional library collections. They further stated that these include library materials' availability, location, collection age, and user education.

The central mission of every educational institution is to develop lifelong learning. Cordillera Career Development College Library aims to support the institution's mission, goals, and objectives. Consequently, the library provides clients with relevant and diverse information resources to support their research and development. New students enroll in the institution with different needs and expectations every year. Additionally, an annual library budget is allocated for the purchase of relevant information resources. These collections are essential for students' learning and research, as well as the library's operation. Additionally, with the rapid progress of information communication technologies, more innovative strategies for accessing library resources are introduced; electronic resources or databases are also encouraged in libraries, which makes them more complex. Despite the cost of electronic resources, the library has included electronic databases to meet the requirements of the digital environment. Students are given the privilege and encouraged to make the most of the library's resources. However, it was observed that the library resources provided were underutilized. Therefore, the library must provide a fair understanding of the use of library resources in the academic community. In response to these challenges, the study assesses the students' use of library resources, their preferred information sources, and the difficulties they encounter with the library resources at the Cordillera Career Development College Library. Moreover, this study's results will benefit the institution's administration and college librarians. This will serve as a basis for them to create adequate resource allocations for print and electronic resources, improve marketing strategies, and develop information literacy programs to help students utilize the library resources effectively.

2.0 Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey research design. It involves describing the data and information. Descriptive research describes what exists and may help uncover new facts and meaning. Descriptive research aims to observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as they naturally occur. (Polit & Hungler, 1999).

The respondents were 322 college students who actively use the library. The sample size was determined based on the library's seating capacity, and purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. This study utilized a validated survey questionnaire as the primary tool to answer the research questions. The researcher developed the questionnaire based on the literature from previous studies related to the topic. The advisory committee assessed its validity. A pre-test was conducted with a small sample of respondents who were not part of the actual study, and Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate its reliability.

This study used specific data collection steps. First, the researcher sought permission from the chief librarian to conduct the study. The chief librarian then recommended that the researcher secure permission through a formal communication letter addressed to the school president. Upon approval, the researcher personally administered the survey questionnaire, explaining the study's purpose and objectives to the respondents. The researcher informed the respondents that their scores would be used for research purposes. The data collected through the questionnaire were tabulated, ranked, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. This study adheres to the standard of ethical conduct in research by prioritizing the rights, welfare, and privacy of all participants. In compliance with R.A. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act, the confidentiality of personal information is strictly observed and protected. All information collected is utilized solely for this study and will not be shared or used beyond the scope of educational objectives.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Extent of Use of the Library Resources

Table 1 presents the extent of use of library resources by college students at Cordillera Career Development College Library, showing a grand mean of 1.96, indicating that the resources are rarely used. This suggests that students do not actively use the library resources as primary tools for their academic needs. While students are aware that the library offers books, many are unfamiliar with the other resources it provides. They consult Google for alternatives when they cannot find the information in the library. Moreover, based on the statistical report, it is evident that many students rely on Wi-Fi coupons to access the Internet. These findings contrast with studies by Ani et al. (2022) and Mesagan and Fufuri (2021), which showed that students highly utilized library resources for academic purposes. The contrasting results may be attributed to awareness and accessibility of library resources.

Table 1. *The Extent of Use of the Library Resources*

Library Resources	Mean	Interpretation
1. Filipiniana Books	2.04	Rarely
2. General Circulation Books	2.27	Rarely
3. General Collection Books	2.62	Often
4. Dictionary	2.41	Rarely
5. Encyclopedia	2.00	Rarely
6. Atlas	1.70	Never
7. Almanac	1.71	Never
8. Handbook	2.16	Rarely
9. Manual	2.06	Rarely
10. Journal	1.98	Rarely
11. Magazine	1.87	Rarely
12. Newspaper	1.92	Rarely
13. Thesis	2.04	Rarely
14. Dissertation	1.62	Never
15. Fiction book	1.87	Rarely
16. E-book	1.84	Rarely
17. E-journal	1.81	Rarely
18. E-magazine	1.72	Never
19. E-newspaper	1.78	Rarely
20. E-thesis/dissertation	1.78	Rarely
Grand Mean	1.96	Rarely

General Collection Books, tailored to specific degree programs, were often used as a library resource, with a weighted mean of 2.62. This suggests that students rely heavily on these books because they are directly relevant to their coursework and serve as primary academic references. The high usage is also attributed to the larger number of these books available in the library, aligning well with the curriculum needs. This result supports previous studies, such as Bernardo (2016), which found that textbooks are the most used resources in libraries,

as students value their quality and authority. Additional studies by Bosilo (2018) and Ani et al. (2022) also found that students prioritize books for academic reference. Students also revealed that they used these books because they observed instructors often referencing them and because their teachers encouraged borrowing them for study purposes.

The dictionary ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.41, but students rarely use it. While dictionaries are consulted for quick and specific information, such as meanings or pronunciations of unfamiliar words, they are not part of students' daily study routines. In informal interviews, respondents mentioned that they only use dictionaries when encountering unfamiliar terms. Additionally, the availability of free dictionary apps has made it easier for students to access this resource offline. This result contrasts with the study by Caroline and Adewale (2018), which found that undergraduate students frequently used dictionaries as an academic resource in libraries.

General circulation books, which include foreign-authored books on subjects like philosophy, psychology, economics, and science, ranked third with a weighted mean of 2.27, indicating they are rarely used. These books provide broad knowledge across multiple disciplines, supporting students' general education and critical thinking skills. Despite their relevance, students rarely use these resources. Respondents mentioned that they were unaware of the range and scope of these books and did not fully understand the subjects they covered. This lack of awareness, combined with the closed-shelf system, may contribute to the low usage. In response, the library introduced a semi-open shelf system at the start of the school year, but students are still adjusting to the new system and learning how to locate and utilize these books.

Dissertations, atlases, and almanacs are the least utilized among library resources. Dissertations ranked last with a weighted mean of 1.62, indicating respondents never used them. This suggests that most students do not currently need most dissertations for their academic work, as they are typically more relevant to graduate students or those involved in in-depth research. Additionally, the limited number of dissertations available in the library may contribute to this low usage. This finding contradicts Ani et al. (2022), who reported that undergraduate students frequently used dissertations than other library materials for research purposes. Similarly, the almanac (1.71) and atlas (1.70) also have low scores, implying that students do not rely on these resources for academic research. The lack of specific courses or subjects requiring these materials, along with the availability of more accessible digital resources, likely contributes to their infrequent use. Some respondents mentioned using Google Maps for location-based needs, while others pointed out that globes and maps in the library serve similar purposes. Furthermore, the atlas and almanac in the library are outdated and no longer provide current information, which further reduces their relevance. This aligns with David-West (2019), who noted that almanacs and atlases are among the least consulted reference materials, a finding supported by Ajani et al. (2021).

3.2 Level of the Preferred Information Source

Table 2 presents the preferred information sources among students. The table shows that the respondents prefer print resources over non-print resources. Print resources are often perceived as more reliable and authoritative, especially books and academic journals that are published and undergo the process of evaluation and peer review, which makes the content accurate and reliable. According to Santini (2018), peer-reviewed articles provide a reliable and established form of exchange for scientific ideas, generally ensuring the quality requirements of scientific publications.

Printed books are students' most highly preferred print resource, ranking first with a weighted mean of 3.29, as shown in the table. This suggests that students still rely on print books for their academic needs due to their reliability, depth, and relevance. Supporting this, Sanches et al. (2021) noted that reading in print is more enjoyable and suitable for leisure activities. Enis (2018) also found that students find print more manageable to read than digital formats. Journals (2.75) and theses/dissertations (2.65) ranked second and third, indicating a preference due to their value in academic research, particularly for students working on related literature or specialized topics. However, while these/dissertations are preferred, students do not frequently use them in practice, possibly because they do not yet see them as necessary for their current coursework. Newspapers and magazines, ranked fourth and fifth, received lower preference scores (2.43 and 2.40), as they are generally viewed as sources of general or current information rather than academic content. This aligns with Cabonero et al. (2017), who found that reading magazines is often not required in the classroom.

Table 2. *Level of the Preferred Information Source*

Information Resource	Mean	Descriptive Equivalence
Print Resources		
Books	3.29	Highly Preferred
Journals	2.75	Preferred
Magazines	2.40	Slightly Preferred
Newspapers	2.43	Slightly Preferred
Thesis/Dissertation	2.65	Preferred
Grand mean	2.70	Preferred
Non-Print Resources		
E-Books	2.47	Slightly Preferred
E-Journals	2.37	Slightly Preferred
E-Magazines	2.23	Slightly Preferred
E-Newspapers	2.26	Slightly Preferred
E-Thesis/Dissertation	2.43	Slightly Preferred
Grand Mean	2.35	Slightly Preferred

On the other hand, non-print resources have a grand mean of 2.35, indicating they are slightly preferred by respondents, though less favored than print resources. Students appreciate digital resources for their accessibility, ease of use, and the ability to store and access them anytime on mobile devices or laptops. E-books ranked highest among non-print materials (2.47), valued for their convenience and practicality, aligning with findings by Sanches et al. (2021) and Enis (2018) for their convenience, practicality, and ease of access. E-theses/dissertations (2.43) and e-journals (2.37) followed, slightly preferred due to their relevance in supporting research projects, echoing the findings of Naik et al. (2019) that the respondents specified that e-journals, e-theses, and dissertations are the most essential e-resources. E-newspapers (2.26) and e-magazines (2.23) were the least preferred, with some students citing a lack of time and focus on academic tasks as reasons for not using them. This contrasts with Roy et al. (2023), where students frequently used e-news for current information. While non-print resources are valued for their practicality, they are still secondary to print materials in preference.

3.3 Difference between the Levels of the Preferred Print and Non-print Information Sources

Table 3 presents the relationship between students' preferences for print and non-print information sources. The results show no significant difference in preference level between the two formats, suggesting that students use print and non-print resources in a complementary manner. This indicates that students value the strengths of each format based on their specific information needs. Some prefer print resources for their familiarity and reliability, while others are drawn to non-print resources for their accessibility, multimedia features, and ease of use on digital devices. This finding supports the studies of Agyeiku and Odie (2022) and Samzugui (2019), highlighting that students consider print and electronic resources necessary. Similarly, Idiegbeyan-Ose et al. (2019) emphasized that electronic and print resources complement each other in fulfilling users' information needs. Therefore, the hypothesis of a significant difference in preference between print and non-print information sources is rejected.

Table 3. *The Significant Difference between the Level of the Preferred Print and Non-Print Information Sources*

Variables	N	Mean	t	p	Interpretation
Print Resources	322	2.70	2.0906 ^{ns}	.070	Not significant
Non-Print resources	322	2.35			

Legend: ns-not significant

3.4 Difficulties Encountered in Using the Library Resources

Table 4 outlines the difficulties encountered when using library resources. The grand mean of 2.10 indicates that students generally find using the library materials slightly tricky, but not extremely hard or unmanageable. This means that students do not encounter significant problems using the library resources. This implies that while students face some difficulties, these are not perceived as significant challenges to their academic work. However, there are some differences in how students experience each specific problem. The top difficulties encountered, with a weighted mean of 2.34, are the inability to find the necessary information resources, insufficient information resources for a specific topic, and difficulty in selecting a research topic, which makes it challenging to find relevant resources.

Table 4. *Difficulties Encountered by Students in Using the Library Resources*

	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1.	Information resources needed cannot be found.	2.34	Slightly Difficult
2.	The information resources are insufficient for a specific topic.	2.34	Slightly Difficult
3.	The information resources are outdated.	2.18	Slightly Difficult
4.	Not familiar with the library resources.	2.16	Slightly Difficult
5.	Unfamiliar with electronic databases such as ProQuest and Britannica Academic.	2.18	Slightly Difficult
6.	Electronic databases are challenging to navigate and utilize.	2.11	Slightly Difficult
7.	The number of computer units is inadequate, so I cannot access the library resources.	2.17	Slightly Difficult
8.	Limited knowledge and understanding of using the library resources.	2.07	Slightly Difficult
9.	Difficulty in choosing research topics makes it hard to find relevant resources.	2.34	Slightly Difficult
10.	Anxious about using the library resources.	2.00	Slightly Difficult
11.	Information overload--too many results.	2.02	Slightly Difficult
12.	I do not know how to identify credible sources.	1.97	Slightly Difficult
13.	The complicated user interface of the electronic database.	2.00	Slightly Difficult
14.	The library resources cannot be freely browsed.	2.02	Slightly Difficult
15.	The library resource has mismatched titles and content	1.78	Slightly Difficult
16.	Library resources lack illustrations and examples.	1.84	Slightly Difficult
	Grand Mean	2.10	Slightly Difficult

The respondents encounter slight difficulty in finding library resources, with the highest challenge being the struggle to find needed resources due to the continued use of a manual card catalog system. Many students are unfamiliar with how to use the card catalog and are unaware of the different library sections and the resources available in each. This aligns with the findings of Beneyat-Dulagan and Cabonero (2023) and Heriyanto and Hariyati (2020), which highlight the difficulties in navigating library systems and accessing necessary materials. The second major challenge identified was the insufficiency of library resources in certain academic areas such as social work, office management, and midwifery. Students noted that available materials often lack depth, are outdated, or are too few in print and digital formats. This issue is supported by studies from Vera et al. (2018) and Faga et al. (2024), which found that inadequate relevant resources hinder effective library use. The third challenge was difficulty choosing appropriate research topics, which affects the ability to find relevant sources. This highlights the need for enhanced information literacy skills, as emphasized by Mahwasane and Mudzielwana (2016).

Meanwhile, respondents ranked identifying credible resources, mismatched titles and content, and a lack of illustrations in library resources as the lowest, interpreting these as slightly difficult. The difficulty in identifying credible resources, with a weighted mean of 1.97 and ranked fourteenth, suggests that most students feel confident in evaluating the credibility of sources. They also recognize that library materials are pre-evaluated by faculty and librarians. Additionally, many are aware of trusted domains such as .edu and .gov, which align with StudyCorgi (2025), indicating that URLs with these domain extensions are credible sources because they signify that the website belongs to a government or educational institution that can be trusted. Library resources lacking illustrations and having mismatched titles and content were ranked fifteenth and sixteenth, indicating that these issues are rarely encountered. Respondents generally find that library materials contain relevant visuals and that the titles accurately reflect the content. The low concern over these issues suggests that the library resources have well-matched titles and content and have illustration features. Additionally, since many students are visual learners, as shown in Cabual's (2021) study on the VARK learning model, the presence of illustrations is valued, further affirming that this is not seen as a widespread problem among respondents.

4.0 Conclusions

In conclusion, the study reveals that although library resources are generally underutilized, students strongly prefer general collection books and printed materials, while still demonstrating flexibility in using print and non-print resources. Several challenges, such as difficulty locating materials, limited resources for specific topics, and uncertainty in choosing research topics, slightly hinder their library experience. While these issues are not severe, they highlight areas for improvement. Therefore, to better support students' academic needs, libraries should enhance resource accessibility, continue to offer print and non-print resources, update their collections, and enhance literacy programs to help students navigate and utilize available resources effectively.

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The author declares sole authorship of this study.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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