

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**  
**LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES CENTRE**

**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING:  
A CASE STUDY OF A BASIC PUBLIC SCHOOL IN ACCRA, GHANA.**

**MPHIL IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I Rosekel Omenyo, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work under the supervision of Professor Mary Nassimbeni and Dr. Constance Bitso; and that all sources that have been used or quoted have been duly acknowledged.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my husband Rev. Professor Cephas Omenyo who sponsored me throughout this course and my three children, Cephas Tettey Omenyo, Andrew Tetteh Omenyo and Anna Teteki Omenyo who supported me in diverse ways.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the role of school library in teaching and learning and sought to establish the relationship between the use of school library resources and teaching and learning in basic schools in Ghana. The study was conducted in Achimota Basic School (ABS), using the case study methods of interviews, observation, focus group discussions and document analysis. The findings revealed that students and teachers appreciate the presence and function of the school library acknowledging it as fundamental in every educational system especially at the basic school level. The findings also revealed that students and teachers actually used the library resources in spite of the fact that one of the challenges facing the library was the inadequacy of its stock. It is hoped that the findings of the study will persuade the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ghana to reconsider the role of school libraries in basic schools. Recommendations are made toward improving school libraries in general and the Achimota Basic School Library in particular.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The role of school libraries is increasingly being recognized as essential in education provision as they provide information and ideas that are fundamental to the educational needs of the students. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) School Library Manifesto, the school library offers information and ideas that are important to enable students to function fully in today's knowledge society by providing essential information materials. In this process they will become life-long learners and become responsible citizens (IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto, 1999). The American Association of School Librarians [AASL] notes that school libraries are crucial to the development of educational skills with their provision of physical and intellectual access to the information resources and vital for learning (AASL, 2012).

School libraries provide students with the opportunity to acquire life-long learning skills so they may develop their imagination as well as critical thinking skills. As they use the school library, students acquire the habit of reading and are able to evaluate and use information appropriately (IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto, 1999). School libraries, as learning laboratories, allow students to interact directly with library materials and acquire research skills for future academic pursuits (Unagha, 2008: 3). Moreover, school libraries give students the chance to read about other cultures to broaden their minds, and opportunities for voluntary reading which are crucial for the development of the enjoyment of reading, which has positive benefits on learning (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011: 95). Von Sprecken and Krashen (1998: 12) revealed that there is a link between the availability of books in the classroom, time allotted for reading, and the extent and extensiveness of

reading. Makenzie (2004) commenting on the importance of reading which she promotes through the reading tents in Kenya makes the link with development:

- to achieve sustainable human development requires people who are literate and able to think critically and analytically.
- the developing world is now more than ever aware of the value of universal literacy as a link between culture and development and as an instrument to equip its citizens with skills and knowledge required for development, reading is key to development (Makenzie, 2004:2).

Though school libraries are fundamental to the effective delivery of education, successive governments have done little toward the provision of school libraries in all the public basic schools in Ghana. Alemna's (2002) comprehensive paper on libraries traced the development of school libraries in Ghana. When the Ghana Library Board was established in 1950, it was mandated to provide materials for school children (Alemna, 2002). In 1967 the government of Ghana set up a working committee to see to the implementation of libraries in all the educational institutions (Alemna, 2002). However, Alemna notes that these and other efforts were poorly organized, and that the few libraries in schools are fully functional. He ascribed the lack of action to the absence of school library policy, and an inadequate appreciation of the significance of the school library (Alemna, 2002).

## **1.2 Background**

The ultimate purpose of education is to ensure the development of the individual's social and intellectual abilities and the formation of a knowledgeable society as a requirement for development (Ohene-Agyekum, 2008). This in effect suggests that the purpose of education is to assist a person to manage his or her own affairs and contribute towards the development of the nation. Umar (2004:15) stresses that through the process of education, people are expected to obtain knowledge and hence specialize in specific fields of study. It is this knowledge that allows people to contribute meaningfully to national development.

The development of any nation or community depends largely on the quality of its education.

According to Yara and Otieno (2010:2) education is a fundamental human right. The key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries is the provision of education to the populace of such countries. The presence of school libraries to encourage and facilitate reading is therefore of prime importance.

The educational landscape in Ghana today is a result of major policy documents and reports, which have helped in meeting the educational needs and aspirations of the people. Various governments before and after independence, recognizing the importance of the development of the nation have expended considerable amounts of national resources to promote education at all levels. In all these developments, particular attention was paid to and is now being focused on basic education so that well-educated children may grow up to be good functional adults in society. For instance in 1951, Ghana drew up the Accelerated Development Plan in Education in which the stated aim was to provide education for every child of school-going age. This was followed by the Education Act of 1961 which made basic education compulsory and abolished the payment of tuition (Owusu-Mensah, 2005: 17-18).

The Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) came about as a result of a world conference on education for all which was held in Jomtien, Thailand for the purpose of forging a global consensus and commitment to provide basic education for all (Dike, 2000:2-7). As a first step in the implementation plan of the UBE programme, the Ghana government made basic education a right for all Ghanaians in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Article 25 (1) of the Constitution states that, all persons shall have the right to equal

educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of the right...basic education shall be free, and compulsory and available to all. (Ghana Constitution, 1992: Article 25, Section 1).

Article 38 (2) of the Constitution introduced the „Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education“ (FCUBE) programme which was launched in October 1996. The FCUBE programme has contributed immensely to the structure of basic education that exists in Ghana today. Basic education in Ghana consists of two years of kindergarten, six years of primary education followed by three years of junior high school (JHS) (Akyeampong, 2008). Upon completion of basic education, thus, JHS students take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which is organized by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). In all, students spend a total of eleven years at this level (Akyeampong, 2004).

Education at the basic school level is largely provided by the state educational institutions and, to a lesser extent, by private individuals and bodies. Some of the main objectives of the FCUBE programme were to expand access to good quality basic education, promote efficient teaching and learning and ensure adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials to schools (Akyeampong, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2010).

Akyeampong (2004) notes that the improvement in quality will materialise only once the different education policies are brought into harmony. Osei et al (2009) argued that one of the reasons why children in Ghana do not attend school is that their parents cannot afford to pay the levies charged by the schools. It is in response to this that the government set up various interventions to ensure that all children of school going age attend school. In the year 2000, the government designed interventions such as the capitation grant, free text books, school feeding programmes and free school uniforms at the basic level.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Researchers such as Todd (2002) and Lance (2000) have written widely regarding the relationship between the use of the school library and favourable learning outcomes. They are of the view that with the collaboration of the school librarian, students will be able to access and use appropriate information for effective learning. These and other researchers have found evidence in the USA for the beneficial effects of using the school library on learning outcomes. A typical example is the South Carolina school libraries study that showed how school libraries contribute to students' success. Most of the teachers interviewed in this study mentioned that they involved their students in library activities such as escorting their students to the library, and remaining with them, and allowing groups of their students or individual students to visit the library during class time. The teachers confirm that the use of the school library is beneficial to students' learning (Lance, Schwarz and Rodney, 2014). The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999) identifies three fundamental beliefs that are at the core of the establishment and functioning of libraries in schools as follows:

- The provision of information is essential in today's society as it is becoming more and more information and knowledge based society.
- There is the need for a competent Librarian to equip students to acquire literacy skills enabling them to live as useful and responsible citizens.
- When school librarians and teachers work together students achieve higher level of literacy, reading, learning, and problem -solving.

The foregoing assertions indicate that school libraries are so important that they should be viewed as necessary in every public basic school in the country for students to reap all the benefits.

In 2007, the government of Ghana commissioned a committee to review the entire educational system in the country (Akyeampong, 2008: 12). Among the recommendations of the committee was the establishment of libraries in all the public basic schools in the country (Eshun, 2013). Unfortunately, this recommendation has not been fully implemented as most of the public basic schools in the country still lack this facility. A preliminary assessment by the researcher revealed that there are four hundred and sixteen (416) public basic schools in the Accra Metropolis, and out of this number, only sixty-four (64) schools have libraries. The remaining three hundred and fifty-two (352) are without school libraries (Ghana Education Service, Accra Metro Education Directorate, 2012). Considering the numerous documented benefits that can be derived from the use of the school libraries in education, the researcher chose Achimota Basic School (ABS) which has a school library as a case study in order to study its role in teaching and learning.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the role of the school library in the teaching and learning process in a public basic school.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were:

- To explore the relationship between the use of the school library resources and teaching and learning in the school.
- Recognising the importance of reading in the promotion of literacy, another objective was to explore the effect of voluntary reading of the school library resources in the learning of the students.

## **1.6 The Research Questions**

The main research question in this study is: What is the role of the school library in teaching and learning? The specific sub-questions under consideration are as follows:

- What is the nature of the collections in the school library?
- How are they used by students?
- How are they used by teachers?
- What is the incidence and role of voluntary reading in the learning of the students?
- Does the library make a difference in the lives of the students with respect to their performance at school and in their private lives?

## **1.7 Significance and Scope of the Study**

This research employed a case study design, which provided the researcher with the opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the role of the school library in the life of the school. By studying one school which had a school library, salient findings emerged regarding how teachers and students find and use information from the library for teaching and learning. Findings from the study also enhance understanding of the role that the school library plays in promoting voluntary reading. Such understanding is relevant to education policymakers, as it helps them to appreciate the contributions that a school library can make to the education of young people.

## **1.8 Ethical Considerations**

Participation in the study was purely voluntary. Assurances were made to all participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained. No questions were posed in the questionnaire or the interviews that were deleterious to the participants. Care was taken in dealing with the school children, so that they did not suffer embarrassment or fear. Based

on advice from some teachers, focus group discussions were conducted with some of the pupils instead of one-on-one interviews. Permission to proceed with the study was negotiated with the head teachers and relevant school authorities, who advised on the method to secure permission from the parents or guardians of the pupils participating in the study. The research proposal was sent to the ethics committees of the University of Cape Town which gave approval.

### **1.9 A Brief History of Achimota Basic School**

According to Agbodeka (1997) the Achimota Basic School was established in November 1959 and was originally known as the West Achimota Primary School. The school was founded to provide boarding facilities and to give formal education and care for elementary grade school children from age six to eleven. It specifically made provision for children of Ghanaian Foreign Service personnel serving the nation abroad and who wanted a place where they could educate their children in a Ghanaian environment. Mrs. Grace Williams-Baffoe was appointed the first headmistress of the school and she operated under the directives of a management committee. One hundred and twenty pupils, made up of eighty boarders and forty day pupils, were enrolled in November 1959 when the school was established. Seven teachers were appointed by the Ministry of Education.

Currently the school is run by the management of the Headmistress and Board of Governors who operate within the general policies of the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education. With the introduction of educational reforms in 1987, the Junior Secondary School (J.S.S.) programme was initiated and the school was ushered into a new era with significant changes in staffing and curriculum. An expansion programme was embarked upon and the construction of the J.S.S. building started in 1987. A six classroom block and a library were built for the junior secondary school by the parents of the then students of the

school. The Junior Secondary School Department of the Achimota School was officially opened on October 10, 1988, with forty-eight students made up of 23 boys and 25 girls. Teachers were drawn from the primary section and a few others were posted from other schools to teach twelve subjects at the J.S.S. (Bartlett-Vanderpuye, 1999).

### ***1.9.1 Current Situation***

Currently the Junior Secondary School (JSS) now known as Junior High School (JHS) is under the management of a Headmistress and a Governing Board; but the day-to-day administration of the school is in the hands of the Headmistress and two Assistants called Supervisors, (the Senior Housemaster and the Senior Housemistress). The population of the school now stands at 1200 and has eight streams. There are 46 teachers, made up of 26 females and 20 males which include the supervisors. The headmistress takes charge of both the primary and JHS. There are 50 students in each class giving a total number of 400 students in each stream that is JHS 1, JHS 2 and JHS 3 (Amavi, 2008).

### ***1.9.2 The School Library***

Before the library of the Junior High School (JHS) was opened, the primary school had a children's bookshop for the nursery, primary and the JSS where books were sold to students. Later, a library was built for the primary school alone; and a JHS section was created in the library that was termed a „lending library“. It was housed in a small room at the side of the school. The Ghana Book Trust gave free books to the JHS department to furnish the library. Later the students were charged a library fee which was used to furnish the library. It was after this that the parents of the students built a classroom block to be used as a library for the JHS. The classroom has been maintained as the library ever since. The JHS library had a qualified librarian for two years after which teachers were assigned to take charge and an untrained library assistant was employed for the library till date. The Ghana Book Trust has

stopped giving books to the library citing the reason that the school's Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A) is very well established and strong enough to support the library. The Ghana Education Service, Achimota Old Students' Association, Rotary Club and the PTA are some of the donors and book providers for the library now (Amavi, 2008).

### **1.10 Outline of the Thesis**

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance and the scope of the study. The first chapter also outlines the ethical considerations that guided the study, provides a brief history of the Achimota Basic School and presents information about the state of the school and its library at the time this study was conducted. Chapter two presents a review of literature on themes such as the role and functions of school libraries in education, the school library and reading and the effective school library research. The theoretical framework is based on the constructivist learning theory. Chapter three deals with the research methodology describing the case study methods, while findings and discussion of data are presented in Chapter four. Chapter five contains a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to the role and functions of school libraries in education. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework of the study, which is based on the constructivist learning theory. The literature review is divided into various segments in line with the research objectives. First, an overview of the role of the school library in the teaching and learning processes of schools is provided. Under this first section, the specific role the school library plays in fostering voluntary reading is also examined. Following this is another major section which discusses the effective school library. The final part of the review takes a critical look at school libraries in Africa, and Ghana in particular. The section on theoretical framework delineates the basic tenets of the constructivist learning theory and focuses on how this theory explains the school library's role in teaching and learning in schools.

#### **2.2 The role and functions of school libraries in education**

Generally, a library is a collection of books and other resources organised for use by students and teachers, which should meet the needs of both students and teachers (The American Association of School Librarians, 2012). Fayose (1995) mentioned that school library contains educational materials of all kinds that enhances teaching and learning development in a school. Resources such as books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and filmstrips slides, video tapes, audio recordings of all forms, maps and charts, computers and other information bearing resources. School libraries are essential in the educational process since they provide the needed materials to support the school's curriculum. They are established to be used by both students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. The role and functions played by the school library are well-

documented by a wide array of associations in librarianship. One such association is the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), produced the School Library Policy in conjunction with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The School Library Policy emphasises the centrality of the school library by asserting that it is indispensable to all approaches to literacy, education, information provision and economic, societal and national development (IFLA/UNESCO, 1999). Among the core school library service goals listed in the Manifesto, those of particular relevance to this study are those about inculcating and supporting children to acquire reading habit and also appreciate reading; and allowing them the chance to gain understanding which will be beneficial in diverse intellectual endeavours (IFLA/ UNESCO, 1999).

According to the International Association of School Librarianship [IASL] school library supports learning and creates a conducive environment for reading which enables; students to enjoy reading and other voluntary activities; and adds value to the individual's life. (International Association of School Librarianship, 2012:3). Furthermore, Gretes (2013) also stresses that the real role of the school library is to make available and accessible good reading materials to students to enhance their studies. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the United Kingdom [CILIP] listed roles of school libraries to include: serving as a significant educational resources that backs the school; promoting life-long learning; being the fundamental of information skills growth in the school and providing an important avenue where students gather to have their recreational and leisure needs (CILIP, 2002). All the afore-mentioned associations acknowledge the crucial role that the school library provides in the school. Several individual scholars equally attest to the essence of libraries in general and school libraries in particular.

Thanuskodi (2009) asserts that a well-equipped and well managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. Accessibility and usage of the school library's materials and learning tools enable students to develop learning skills. Specific to the school library, Todd and Heinstrom (2006: 1) posit that the school library should provide information and information technology structures together with a collection of teaching facilities that support teaching and learning; and creates a conducive atmosphere that encourages and boosts students learning outcomes. Hay and Todd (2010: 4) also indicate that the school library offers the academic environment for acquiring knowledge and further argue that school libraries develop advanced thinking skills that students require for deep knowledge and deep understanding. Because the school library is fundamental in an educational system, it should be well established and developed as an essential part of the physical resources of the school; well-resourced to offer quality teaching and learning as well as support the curriculum of the school. It should promote and improve students reading skills and learning achievement (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education and Culture, 2003: 1).

The value of the school library is such that it must be established in every basic school and should be well-resourced in order to be beneficial to teaching and learning of the school. By including the use of school libraries into the school program, facilitate teachers teaching and improve the value of time that students devote in the library as well as enhancing their own teaching notes.

### ***2.2.1 The School library and Reading***

One important role of the school library is the promotion and development of reading among students. The school library can inculcate long term reading interest and habits

among students. The link between school libraries and improvement in reading achievement is noted by Krashen (2004). There is substantial evidence that when children are given the chance to hand-pick from assorted reading resources and read, their reading performance improves and they have greater motivation to read (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011: 98). Moore (2001: 4) also documented that one of the causes that influences children's reading achievement is the availability and accessibility of reading materials in their immediate surroundings; and that such children tend to be poised readers and very assertive later in life. Children who read more frequently tend to read, write, and spell better (Krashen, 2004: 37).

According to Machet (2001) reading is an indispensable skill that every child needs to possess, as it is essential to master every subject in the school curriculum. Reading also allows students to learn about other people's culture (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). This enables students to understand the way of life of other people and to live in harmony with them. Okeke (2000) reiterates that reading is a life activity through which readers experience the lives of other people. In developing and promoting reading habits in children, Fayose (2003) points out that it is essential to provide a wide range of library resources and activities that will make them see reading as a pleasure rather than a boring task.

Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between access to books, daily reading for pleasure and school performance; and that students who read voluntarily are able to read better, write better and acquire better vocabularies (Krashen, 2004: 37). When students make reading a habit, they transfer it to the study of classroom subjects, and students tend to understand issues better and faster because their intellect is opened up (Krashen, 2004: 37). Invariably, their academic performance also improves. In essence, voluntary reading has implications on education as well as personal development (Sanacore, 2002). Moore et al., (1999: 99) point out that teenagers ushering into adult world in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to accomplish their jobs, run their households act as inhabitants and manage their individual lives. They will need literacy to deal with the overflow of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their thoughts and imagination so they can create the world of the future. In a multifaceted and sometimes even unsafe world, their ability to read is crucial. This is an indication that reading among young people in today's world is very critical and that they must use the school library resources to equip themselves to face the world's challenges.

In a study conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], it was established that reading is particularly relevant for children's educational achievement and could be an important means to combat social menace such as truancy and streetism among the youth as well as raise standards of education (OECD, 2002). Another study carried out in thirty countries by OECD (2000) indicated that inspiring students to read for pleasure could eliminate social problems that might usually influence their educational achievement performance. Focusing on voluntary reading Allan, Ellis and Pearson (2005: 29) observed that reading can promote or improve social skills in children. Vannelli (2012) commented that students who read mostly for enjoyment usually performed better than those who did not. Attaining reading success at the basic school level is thus very critical for students' pursuit of their educational career.

### **2.3 The effective school library**

An effective school library is one that is adequately resourced and able to provide educational materials appropriate for teachers, students and the entire school population. In addition, it should be manned by a professional librarian. The effective school library is also

well-stocked, well-staffed, and able to provide a collaboratively designed programme linked to the school curriculum (Mokhtar & Majid, 2005: 4).

The school library is effective when the school management acknowledges the role it plays in the school. A report by the Office for Standards in Education United Kingdom (OFSTED, 2006) confirms that head teachers' commitment to improve libraries and their vision for the library as having a key role in raising standards of literacy is significant to creating effective school libraries. This suggests that when leadership acknowledges the contributions of libraries in teaching and learning process they are able to improve and provide for the library whenever possible.

Other attributes that help to make the school library effective and efficient is where teamwork exist between teachers and the librarian. The teachers and the librarian share the achievements of students together, by openly showing students' works in public; regular current awareness bulletins for teaching staff; and educating students on media and information literacy skills (International Association of School Librarianship, 2012).

Countless studies indicate that well-resourced libraries contribute to excellent academic performance of schools (Lance, 2002; School Libraries Work, 2008). The New York Comprehensive Center for Education indicates that schools that relied on their libraries to support student academic growth in relation to learning have seen vast improvement in their assessment scores (New York Comprehensive Center, 2011:3). Other research shown in the United States have also established that a good school library programme enhances students' performance (Burgin and Bracy, 2003: 5). In 1993 and 1999, the Colorado State Library and the University of Denver Library and Information Services Department studied the effect of school libraries and school librarians on learner achievement and found the impact to be positive (Hoskins, 2006). Howard (2010: 2) also points out that most of the

research conducted about the usefulness of a school library and student achievement established a positive correlation between teaching and learning with the support of the school media specialist. Apart from the involvement of the school management, an effective library should also have a well-qualified librarian to man it. The next section focuses on the school librarian and discusses his/her relevance in increasing the effectiveness of the school library.

### ***2.3.1 The School Librarian***

Todd (2002) notes that the effects of school libraries on teaching and learning depend largely on the professional intervention of the school librarian to equip students with learning skills. The school media specialist according to Todd (2002) should be a skillful and competent librarian in charge of organising and managing the school library. The report by the Office of Standards in Education-United Kingdom [OFSTED] states that the management and organization of the library is the sole prerogative of the librarian; the effectiveness of the library depends on the media specialist whose duty is to make the library more attractive to students and teachers for their academic study and recreational activities (OFSTED, 2006: 9). Since the school library offers information that is vital in the educational process of the student the school librarian should assist students to find the relevant information and use it appropriately; and ensure that this information prepares the student with life-long learning skills.

Among the various duties the school librarian engages in are: analysing information and resource; formulating and implementing policies for service development; cataloguing and classifying materials; providing instructions for library use; assisting students and teachers in using the library; promoting reading programmes and cultural events; and managing and training library staff (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015: 8). In view of the numerous

requirements of the school librarian in the teaching and learning development of the student, Todd suggests that the school librarian should be proficient in organising and teaching information literacy skills to teaching staff and students (Todd, 2002: 3). He adds that the effectiveness of the school library to the learning process and students' learning outcome is largely determined by the importance the school librarian attached to the teaching offered (Todd, 2002: 2). There is thus a challenge to school librarians to continue their professional training and development in order to keep up with modern trends (Todd, 2002). It is also vital for teachers to work collaboratively with school librarians to enhance the efficacy of the school library to both students and teachers.

According to Kuhlthau (2010) school librarians are capable of building schools that allow students to learn from huge resources and numerous communication networks. She further affirms that school librarians are resource specialists who has knowledge of all the varied collection in the library; and has deeper understanding in using the Internet (Kuhlthau, 2010: 19). The librarian can assist students to use the library resources for their project work, individual studies, group research and reading among other things. By so doing, learning becomes more meaningful to students.

### ***2.3.2 Collaboration between Teachers and School Librarian***

The school library contributes significantly to the teaching and learning process of the student particularly when teachers collaborate with school librarians. Collaboration between teachers and the school librarian is critical in exploiting the potential of the library services. Collaboration is a state whereby two or more people work together to incorporate information for the purpose of improving student learning (Montiel-Overall, 2005: 25). It has been established that when teachers and librarians cooperate, students achieve advanced

levels of literacy, problem-solving and information and communication and technology skills (Lai and Wei, 2013).

Teamwork involving teachers and the school librarian is viewed as a means of improving teaching in order to have a positive result on students' learning outcomes (Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell 2001; Lance, Wellburn, and Hamilton-Pennell, 1993; Arko-Cobbah, 2004: 264). Lonsdale (2003: 30) adds that the effective working relationships between classroom teachers and teacher librarians have a major effect on students' learning; particularly in relation to the planning of instructional units, resource collection development, and the provision of professional development for teachers. The IFLA School Library Guidelines mentions that teachers and librarians work together to achieve the following:

- develop, teach and assess pupils' learning according to the curriculum.
- develop and assess students' information literacy skills.
- develop strategies for lesson planning.
- organise and plan for students' special project work to be carried out in an extended learning environment, including the library.
- plan reading activities and cultural programmes.
- incorporate information technology in the curriculum.
- explain to parents the significance of the school library (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015: 26).

Todd (2002: 2) confirms that collaboration between the school librarian and the teacher is key to students' academic performance. Russell (2002) also points out that when teachers and librarians work together they are better able to assist students in their learning; the librarian provides useful information and technology skills for teachers to integrate and

develop resource based teaching notes. In her Guided Inquiry Project, Kuhlthau (2010) found that there is a relationship between the school library and the teaching and learning process based on the intervention of the school librarian and the collaboration with the classroom teacher. Teachers are able to vary their teaching methods when they collaborate with the school librarian. Kuhlthau (2010) notes that cooperation between librarians and teachers in a team can generate the needed atmosphere for students to inquire, contribute, create and learn in an information environment; and argues that this cannot be done by teachers only (Kuhlthau, 2010: 3).

The professional guidelines of the American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology (1998: 6) also contend that collaboration between the teacher and the school librarian is essential because it supports students' learning and improves delivery of curriculum content by expanding the possibilities of instruction. A study conducted by Lance (2000: 7) indicates that one major means of enhancing students' academic performance is partnership between librarians and teachers. Collaboration between teachers and librarian is notably crucial because it creates the necessary environment for students to ask questions, make contributions and learn in an information setting (Lance, 2000).

#### **2.4 School Libraries in Africa**

In order to contextualise her study, the researcher wished to find out about the situation of school libraries in other African countries in order to assess whether their situation is different from school libraries in public basic schools in Ghana. Various African governments are doing their best to offer basic education in their countries. On the other hand, the need for establishing and developing school libraries has not been widely recognized by these leaders. In addition, the significant role of school libraries in teaching

and learning process has been marginalised (Rosenberg, 2001). As at 2008, no African government had issued standards and policies to guide the planning and development of school libraries in Africa (Du Toit, 2008). Saetre and Willars (2002:1) in the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines “urge governments to develop strategies, policies and plans to implement the principles of the manifesto” which state clearly the importance of the school library and the need to establish it in all schools. The manifesto talks about the information and ideas it provides to students learning; and the knowledge acquired may effectively be beneficial to the society and the individuals’ life. The school library offers learners life-long learning skills for future endeavours. This by extension means that the school library is essential in the life of the school and the learners since it provides information for academic work in the school; the information acquired enable learners to become responsible people in society.

Commenting on African libraries, Issak (2000) described libraries in Africa as weak, with several problems concerning financial constraints, lack of human resources, outdated materials and poor use (Issak, 2000: 3). According to Rosenberg (1981:1) school libraries have always been the usual and ideal solution to making available additional reading materials for students. Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011: 1) indicate that given the high illiteracy in Africa, school libraries face a heavy responsibility to provide services that will satisfy the educational and recreational information needs of the society. However, a World Bank Report shows that with few exceptions in elite or private schools, school library provision in the sub-Saharan Africa is very poor (World Bank, 2008).

There is evidence that many African governments are reluctant to establish and develop school libraries in the public basic schools. According to Agwaranze (2004) various African governments have not been serious about school libraries hence their unwillingness to

release funds for establishing and the upkeep of libraries in the basic schools. Researchers such as Endra (2001), Rosenberg (2001), Mswazi (2003), and Khumalo (2006) attest to the fact that school libraries in Africa are woefully neglected. Cramer observes that African governments do not put much premium on libraries as they attached to other sectors such as, health, and securing necessities such as food, water, and electricity. Both public and school libraries are full of mostly irrelevant and poor quality books, frequently acquired through donations (Cramer, 2012: 4).

In 1998 the South African government released a National Policy Framework for the school library which was widely applauded; barely two years later was it realised that the government had not implemented it (Library and Information Association of South Africa, 2000). Hart indicates that after the 1998 policy, there were three other school library „policy discussion documents“ in 2000, 2001 and 2005 which also failed (Hart, 2014: 4).

Boekhorst and Britz (2004) note that most schools in South Africa cannot afford to run libraries; this assertion was confirmed by Hoskins (2006) who found that functional libraries are limited to those schools that have the ability to manage them. The South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) which marked the beginning of South African’s new education system described the governing body as ensuring outstanding education (Hart & Zinn, 2007: 92); however, the Act made no mention of libraries and did not help in developing libraries in schools (Le Roux, 2003). The National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), South Africa report of 2011 mentions that only seven percent of schools have a library with a collection and the most of the schools are deprived of libraries (Hart, 2014:3). Nevertheless, in South Africa there are some positive developments underway (Hart, 2014: 1).

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria (1981, 1986) highlights the importance of libraries in the educational services. Both policies recommend that every state ministry of education should provide funds for the establishment of school libraries, training of librarians and library assistants. The policies emphasise the importance of libraries right from the pre-primary education to the tertiary level and recommend that every state's Ministry of Education should provide funds for the establishment of school libraries in all the basic schools (Ajegbomogun and Salaam 2011: 2). However, neither policies has been able to support the libraries as expected because the Nigerian government has not committed serious financial backing to support these policies. Obayemi (2002) states that libraries in the basic schools are in a deplorable state due to the neglect of the government to provide funds. Adeyemi (2010:1) observed that in Nigeria, most school libraries are run by untrained personnel. According to Fayose (2003) the Nigerian governments have always paid lip service to school library development, and thus many policies remain on paper and are never implemented.

The situation of school libraries in Lesotho does not differ from that of Nigeria. A study conducted by Kakomo (1999: 2) revealed that most schools do not have libraries, and even in the schools where libraries exist they are not treated as an important component of the school curriculum. Many people living in Lesotho do not have access to books and the schools usually only have textbooks for their students. In Uganda, Magara and Batambuze (2009: 142) noted that there have been several legal and policy frameworks, including the 1992 Government White Paper on education; which presents guidelines on the provision of libraries in schools. Nonetheless, school library development in Uganda continues to suffer underfunding, neglect and lack of a specific policy for school libraries (Magara and Batambuze, 2009).

The analysis of the state of school libraries in these selected African countries has given a general view of the situation. Almost all the countries mentioned above are not able to develop school libraries because of financial constraints and the unfavorable attitude of governments toward school libraries. The absence of school libraries has adverse effects on the quality of teaching and learning and on the lack of reading culture among students; these effects have an impact on the future for those students who enter higher education.

### **2.5 School Libraries in Ghana**

In Ghana the situation with school libraries is not much different from that prevailing in most African countries. Since the beginning of formal learning in the then Gold Coast, now Ghana, the authorities which established the schools did not find it necessary to add libraries to every basic school (Banbil, 2011). The idea of a school library service scheme began as part of Ghana's second development plan after independence. It was in the years 1939, 1949 and 1950 that libraries were established in schools. Expansion of libraries took place when the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan and the Ghana Education Trust Schools in 1954 were established which led to the provision of school libraries (Alemna, 2000: 3).

The government of Ghana in 1967 set up a working committee on school libraries made up of representatives from the Ghana Library Authority, the British Council and Ministry of Education. Its mandate was to examine the state of libraries in the various schools in the country and make recommendations (Alemna, 1994). The reason for the establishment of school libraries was to support teaching and learning in the schools. They were therefore intended to support the curriculum of the various public basic schools to enhance the teaching and learning process.

However, this laudable idea of establishing school libraries in schools particularly at the basic level has not been fully realised due to the numerous challenges associated with the implementation of libraries in all the educational institutions in the country. Ghana, like the other African countries mentioned above, also faces the problems of funding and a lack of government commitment to establishing library policies and guidelines. This inertia has an adverse effect on the role which school libraries should play in the teaching and learning process in the public basic schools.

According to Alemna (1997), the lack of recognition by the institutional and governmental authorities of the importance of school library and information services in the diverse human activities in the society is the most serious challenge to library development in Ghana. In 2007 the government contracted a committee to review the educational situation and make recommendations. Among the recommendations was the establishment of school libraries in all public basic schools in the country (Committee of Inquiry into a Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2007). Alemna (1997) warned that until we orient our minds and make a concerted effort to develop libraries and information resources for our children, the society cannot reap the benefits of the school library.

### ***2.5.1 School libraries in public basic schools in Ghana: earlier studies***

Some findings by earlier researchers on school libraries have shown that there are few schools that have libraries. All the researchers have enumerated problems inhibiting the school library provision and use, problems that still exist today. A study undertaken by Gyebi (1973) on the development of school libraries by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ghana Library Board (now Ghana Library Authority) to provide library services to elementary schools found that the early efforts were successful. This project however could not last due to lack of funds and logistical problems. Donkor (1999)

notes that the few schools that have libraries are confronted with challenges which include: inadequate furniture, inadequate funding, unqualified staff, outmoded books, and books which are not related to the school's curriculum. Further work done on school libraries in the public basic schools concluded that students who patronised the school libraries developed good reading habits (Osei, 1999). However, these libraries also have challenges such as lack of funding, insufficient library space, inadequate resources, unqualified staff and outmoded learning materials.

Amavi (2008) did a comparative study of the use of the school library in two basic schools. The study revealed that in both schools the students and teachers appreciate the school library concept and therefore recognised the school library as an indispensable aspect of the school. Findings from this study revealed that students and teachers in both schools patronised the library and used the resources in their learning and teaching even though there were some drawbacks in using the library. A study conducted by Bentum (2012) on another public basic school on the effect of the use of school libraries in teaching and learning discovered that students do not use the library as the library is too small, too noisy, too warm and congested, poor lighting system inadequate resources. All previous studies done on school libraries in Ghana have uncovered similar issues such as inadequate resources, lack of funding and unqualified librarian and library staff to work in the school library.

Having reviewed the diverse literature on the school library and its role in teaching and learning, the next section focuses on the theory underpinning the entire study. The constructivist learning theory is widely used in educational literature to explain how learners make meaning of the information available to them (Sjøberg, 2007). The subsequent part of

this chapter throws more light on this theory and how it plays out in establishing the role of the school library in teaching and learning.

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

The Constructivist Learning Theory provides a sound theoretical framework for this study. The theory explains how learners construct individually or socially constructed meanings in the process of learning (Hein, 1991). In other words, learners construct knowledge through their interaction or exposure to learning situations in the world around them including their families, friends, media and libraries. This enriches and expands the knowledge base of learners as knowledge is acquired through every act of social interaction. Constructivist learning theory is associated with behavioural and cognitive theorists such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, John Dewey and Jerome Bruner (Lutz and Huitt, 2004).

The constructivist learning theory has broad applications, especially in the education field. For example, Semerci and Batdi (2015: 176) applied the constructive learning theory in a comprehensive meta-analysis and concluded that the application of constructivist learning theory influenced learners' positive academic achievement, retention level and attitude scores. Kenny & Wirth (2009: 36) also stated that interactive teaching and learning methods such as role play and interviews greatly influence constructivism, creating a non-threatening situation relevant for academic success.

This study adopted the constructivist learning theory to investigate the relationship between the use of the school library resources and teaching and learning in the basic schools; which is the aim of the study. From a constructivist perspective, Wilson (1997) asserts that the primary essence of the school is to bring about learning which accentuates meaningful,

realistic programmes that assist the student to construct understandings and cultivate skills pertinent to problem solving (Todd, 2002: 6). He further adds that:

The provision of information does not necessarily mean that our learners become informed. Information is the input; through this input, existing knowledge is transformed, and new knowledge - as understanding, meaning, new perspectives, interpretations, innovations is the outcome. Empowerment, connectivity, engagement, and interactivity define the actions and practices of the school library, and their outcome is knowledge construction: new meanings, new understandings, new perspectives (Todd, 2002: 6).

The existence of an effective school library is vital to the construction of knowledge that is required for meaningful teaching and learning. As discussed previously in section 2.6, an effective school library is one that is adequately resourced, able to meet the academic needs of teachers, students and the school community as a whole, managed by a professional librarian and able to provide a collaboratively designed programme linked to the school curriculum. All these attributes are vital to the learner's ability to search for, and construct knowledge. Sjøberg (2007: 3), borrowing from Taber's (2006) analysis of constructivism, identified various core ideas under the constructivist learning theory. These core ideas include the following:

- Learners play an active role in the construction of knowledge;
- Learners have preexisting ideas (whether unstable or deeply rooted) before they approach a learning situation;
- Learners have their own subjective ideas but might share similarities due to socially and culturally accepted views (Sjøberg, 2007: 3).

Added to the foregoing are other core ideas that: knowledge is presented in the brain as conceptual structures and can be shaped and explained into detail; teachers have to take into serious consideration the existing ideas of learners in order to alter or question them; and learners create knowledge by interacting with their physical world in collaboration with their social, cultural and linguistic environment (Sjøberg, 2007: 3). This would also give

teachers insight into the varying degrees of accommodation and assimilation of new information by learners.

Kuhlthau (1991, 1993, 2010) conducted various studies that provide the field of education with some of the valuable research corroboration of the nature and dynamics of inquiry based learning centering on the information search process, and the nature characteristics of information literacy education (Todd, 2002: 5). For example, Kuhlthau (1991) explained that learners experience anxiety and doubt when they initiate a search process and start to explore new information. However, as learners begin and continue to exercise their cognitive processes in learning situations, they move from a state of uncertainty in which they are anxious and tentative to a state of understanding where they can think clearly, and feel confident in their actions (Kuhlthau, 1993: 352). Also, guidance from teachers and librarians to students in the inquiry process enriches students' curriculum, build literacy competence and social skills in students (Kuhlthau, 2010: 19). This holistic view of the information search process emphasises the usefulness of school libraries in teaching and learning.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed literature from various parts of the world pertaining to the role of the school library in teaching and learning and presented the constructivist learning theory as a framework undergirding the study. The literature analysed points to the fact that reading has a major impact on students and their future in terms of their writing ability both in and out of school. It has also been established that the presence of an effective school library also encourages voluntary reading in students because they get access to a wide array of reading materials. The presence of a professionally trained librarian is also necessary for the school library to function effectively. In addition, teachers and librarians need to collaborate

well so that they can coordinate the available resources for student use. Particularly, strong collaborations between teachers and librarians provide meaningful mediation avenues for students to construct their own meanings from the library resources they access, as emphasised by the Constructivist Learning theory, the theoretical framework guiding this study. Recognising the poor state of school libraries, and their unavailability in most public schools in Africa, including Ghana, this study is timely in drawing stakeholders' attention to the need to focus on providing school libraries and making them effective for students and staff. The next chapter of this thesis outlines the research methods used to conduct the research.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the research processes that were used in conducting the study. Using one public basic school in Ghana as a case for investigation, the study investigated the role of the school library in teaching and learning and sought to establish the relationship between the use of the school library resources in teaching and learning. The study also explored the effect of voluntary reading of the school library resources on the lives of the students. The research work addressed the following questions:

- What is the nature of the collections in the school library?
- How are they used by students?
- How are they used by teachers?
- What is the incidence and role of voluntary reading in the learning of the students?
- Does the library make a difference in the lives of the students with respect to their performance at school and in their private lives?

These research questions guided the researcher throughout the study. In the ensuing sections, the research design, sampling procedures, and the steps taken in collecting and analysing the data are described.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A qualitative research design was employed in this study. A qualitative research design is a form of systematic empirical inquiry to understand how people make sense of their experience (Shank, 2002: 5; Creswell, 2009: 1). Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3) point out that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach; studying the phenomena in their natural setting to make sense of them. It is thus an appropriate approach

to this study as it permits the researcher to go beyond the statistical results usually reported in the quantitative research (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999: 155). According to Maxwell, the strength of a qualitative method is its ability to offer complicated textual accounts of how people understand a given research issue. He stresses that it provides information about the human side of an issue - that is, the often contradictory behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals (Maxwell, 2012). A qualitative research design is based on different philosophical assumptions and uses a variety of strategies of inquiry, methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2009: 173). Since the investigator needed to look at a small group of respondents over a length of time a case study method which falls under the qualitative approach was used (Chetty, 1996).

### ***3.2.1 Case Study***

Case study research allows the researcher to understand a complex issue in a situation and gain insight into a phenomenon under investigation. Yin (1994: 23) defines the case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a current occurrence within its real-life environment. Case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system like a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Stake, 1995). According to Dooley, a case study can employ various data collection processes such as observation, interviews, documents, questionnaire and others (Dooley, 2002: 338). The use of different data collection approaches helps the researcher to validate the data that were collected from the field (Yin, 2003).

Baxter and Jack (2008: 554) argue that the use of several data sources in a case study allows the phenomenon to be revealed and understood and also ensures credibility. A case study approach is used when the focus of the study is to answer „how and why“ questions and that the behaviour of the respondents cannot be manipulated (Yin, 2003:43). The researcher

chose the case study approach because it allowed a direct contact between the researcher and the respondents during interviews and more so respondents were able to express their ideas, opinions and perceptions about the study. The researcher adopted the steps set out by Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) in this study. These steps assisted the researcher in carrying out the case study in order to increase reliability of the research. The steps were:

- Selection of case
- Preparing to collect data
- Collect data in the field
- Evaluate and analyse the data, and finally
- Prepare a report on the findings.

#### *3.2.1.1 Selection of the case*

The researcher investigated the role that school libraries play in teaching and learning, and how the use of the school library resources had influenced students' reading in the Achimota Basic School (ABS). One of the reasons for selecting ABS was that it is a public school with a library considered to be functional, among the number of school libraries in the Accra Metropolis that are not functional (Asamoah-Hassan, 2003). The choice of this school allowed the researcher to investigate the relationship between the use of the school library and the teaching and learning process, and its contribution to voluntary reading.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The second year class of the ABS Junior High was purposively sampled for the study because their curriculum assumes access to information resources and also, they had experience in using the school library. Purposively selecting a case is a deliberate decision of the researcher; thus, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge or

experience (Bernard, 2002; Lewis and Sheppard, 2006). The age of students in the selected class ranged from thirteen to sixteen years (13-16 years).

The second year class had eight (8) streams and each stream had fifty (50) students. Since all the streams could not be studied the researcher used her discretion to select one class. This is because the researcher had already established that the entire Junior High second year class was a homogeneous group. Each stream had boys and girls, had equal number of students (50), were of the same age, and were taught by the same teachers.

The teachers, the school librarian, the deputy headmistress and the headmistress were key informants in the study. The reason for involving the headmistress and the deputy headmistress was that their attitudes toward the school library would have an influence on the effectiveness of the library. As administrators of the school they decide on the library's budget. The researcher elicited information from the librarian because he is the one in charge of the school library. Teachers were included because the researcher needed their views on the use of the school library resources in their teaching.

### ***3.3.1. Sample size***

The total number of respondents for the study was sixty-two (62), with the following breakdown:

- Students - Fifty (50)
- Teachers - Nine (9) responsible for different subjects
- Librarian - One (1)
- Deputy headmistress - One (1)
- Headmistress - One (1)

### **3.4 Data Collection**

In qualitative studies, investigators gather several kinds of data and commit substantial time in gathering information (Creswell, 2009: 175). Guided by Creswell (2009), the researcher collected data from the research participants using the following methods: focus group discussions, interviews, observation and analysis of documents. Yin points out the importance of triangulation in a case study methodology – the use of different data collection methods from multiple sources to strengthen the evidence base (Yin, 2000: 190). The study used both primary and secondary sources of information. The use of different sources helped to validate the data, as data from one source could be checked by data from another source. Details of how data was collected using the different methods are provided in the sub-sections below.

#### ***3.4.1 Focus Group Discussions***

Before collecting data for the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot study using focus group discussions (FGDs) with participants at the research site who were not sampled for the actual study. Focus groups according to Maldonado (2008:1) are small groups (usually about 6-10 members) who meet for about sixty minutes to discuss a specific topic under the direction of trained moderator. According to Krueger (1994) data captured from FGDs have high face validity. The reason for the researcher conducting these preliminary FGDs was to draw ideas and opinions from the participants about the school library's role in teaching and learning. The responses and the information gathered from the groups served as a guide for the researcher in drafting the final set of questions for the actual study. The participants involved in the FGD were purposively selected from the second year students and teachers who were not part of the selected participants for the main study. The first FGD was conducted with eight students from the second year comprising four boys and four girls. The

teachers formed the second FGD group, also consisting of four males and four females. The researcher used open-ended questions for the FGDs (see Appendix i). The FGDs helped the researcher to draft the interview schedule for the actual work. The discussion with the students lasted approximately 45 minutes whilst the teachers' interviews lasted about 60 minutes.

### ***3.4.2 Interviews***

Interviews are particularly useful for getting information about a participant's experiences. Interviewing as indicated by Cohen and Crabtree (2008) involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008). The researcher designed four distinct interview guides consisting of a list of questions to be asked during the interviews; one for students (Appendix ii), one for teachers (Appendix iii), one for the librarian (Appendix iv) and one for both the headmistress and the deputy headmistress (Appendix v) respectively. All the questions were open-ended. A face-to-face interview technique was used with all the participants and the interviews were audio-taped by two research assistants who had been trained by the researcher. The use of interview as a data collection method allowed the researcher to obtain detailed information from participants. Participants had the chance to express their opinions and ideas without restrictions while the researcher also had the opportunity to ask for clarification. This approach according to Kvale (1996) facilitates faster interviews.

To interview 50 students, the researcher interviewed ten (10) students each day for a period of five days and each interview took fifteen minutes. The school time begins at 8 a.m.; the researcher arrived at 6.45 a.m. by 7 a.m. most of the students were in school; thus three students were able to participate in interviews before class at 8 a.m. Two students were interviewed during the first break, that is, 10 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. Another student was

interviewed during the second break which was 12.00 to 12.25 p.m. in the afternoon. Four students were interviewed after close of school at 2.15 p.m. This arrangement was agreed between the headmistress and the researcher in December, 2013 with a view to minimising disruption. It was agreed that the teachers were interviewed as and when they were available. The teachers were interviewed over a period of seven days. This was because most of the time teachers were busy either teaching or marking students' exercises; teachers were available during break time and after school hours. The school librarian was interviewed within a day likewise the headmistress and the deputy headmistress. All the interviews with staff and students were conducted in the English language which is the official language of instruction in the school. The researcher began the interviews in July 2014 and ended in August 2014.

### ***3.4.3 Observation***

The researcher prepared an observation checklist (see Appendix v) to observe the environment of the library, the resources and how students and teachers patronised the school library. The researcher used observation as a means of data collection to ascertain the arrangement of furniture, the setup of the library and how materials were arranged on the shelves; and the general conditions in the library. Additionally, the researcher observed the kind of materials stocked and how students and teachers patronised the school library. The researcher began the observation of ABS's school library in June 2014 which lasted for three weeks.

### ***3.4.4 Analysis of documents***

The researcher searched for documented information on the school library from the Achimota Basic School such as policies, minutes of meetings and reports. These documents were given to the researcher all in one file which was dated 1958. These documents served

as written evidence, although the researcher took into account some of the limitations of using documents, which includes the fact that some of the materials may be incomplete or could be inaccurate.

### **3.5 Data Management and Analysis**

All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and edited. The researcher then read through all the transcripts to familiarise herself with the content, and listened to the audio-recorded interviews over and over again to ensure that the transcripts were an accurate reflection of the participants' voices. The researcher also typed out the field observation notes, and picked information from documents obtained as well. Using O'Connor and Gibson's (2003) guide to qualitative analysis, the researcher analysed the data. The steps involved in the data analysis were as follows:

- Organising the data.
- Finding and organising ideas and concepts.
- Building overarching themes in the data.
- Ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and in the findings.
- Finding possible and plausible explanations for findings.
- Providing an overview of the final steps (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003: 65).

The researcher followed the above procedures to arrive at the findings of the research.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research design employed in the study, the sampling procedures, data collection methods and processes used to manage and analyse the data. A case study approach was adopted so that the researcher could delve into the issues related to how staff and students used the school library and the reasons they used the library or otherwise. Altogether, sixty-two participants, including staff and students, were sampled for the study. Data was collected through interviews, observation and review of documents, and

these were analysed by following the steps provided by O'Connor and Gibson (2003). The next chapter presents and discusses the research findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The goal of this study was to investigate the role of the school library in teaching and learning. The setting for the study was the Achimota Basic School (ABS) in Accra, Ghana. Students, teachers, the school librarian and the headmistress were all study participants. This chapter presents the findings obtained from the data collected. The data was collected through interviews, observations, and review of documents. The researcher adopted the step by step guide to qualitative data analysis provided by O'Connor and Gibson (2003) to analyse the data. These steps were described in chapter three of this thesis. The themes emerging from the data are presented in alignment with the research questions posed in the study which are:

- What is the nature of the collections in the school library?
- How are they used by students?
- How are they used by teachers?
- Does the library help students in voluntary reading?
- Does the library make a difference in the lives of the students with respect to their performance at school and in their private lives?

Under each theme or sub-theme, selected quotes obtained from the various participants through interviews which pertain to the respective themes are presented. Observation notes and information obtained from the review of documents are also used to support the quotes where applicable. The findings are discussed using relevant literature and application of the constructivist learning theory. First, an overview of the ABS library and the nature of the collections there are presented. Following this, findings related to the purpose of the school library, particularly its role in reading and the benefits of the school library in teaching and

learning. Next, findings on the challenges in the use of the school library are delineated, and finally, suggestions and general comments given by research participants are presented.

## **4.2 Overview of the ABS Library and the Nature of collections in the library**

This section presents an overview of the ABS library and the nature of the collections made as well as the findings in relation to the purpose of the school library, particularly its role in reading and the benefits of the school library in teaching and learning.

### ***4.2.1 Location***

The library block was located in the middle of the school compound; not far from the classrooms and the school canteen. The position of the library block made it easy for the students to go to the library when they had free periods on their time table. This was confirmed by one of the student participants who said that:

The library is closer to my class; if there is no teacher in the class I usually go to the library.

This is in line with the IFLA School Library Guidelines which notes that the school library should be nearer and available to the teaching areas (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015).

### ***4.2.2 Environment, Accommodation and Furniture***

The surrounding of the library was very clean. However, due to its proximity to the school canteen, the environment tended to get noisy, particularly during break periods. The library was not well used during the break periods with not more than five to ten students per day. In addition, considering that the school had a population of 1200 students, averagely 50 learners in a class and the library seating capacity being forty was considered relatively small. The library was contained in a room with six large tables and forty chairs. The

participants pointed out that the library was always congested when it was being used. A student noted that:

The library space is too small and congested that is why I do not spend much time in there.

Although the IFLA School Library Guidelines does not stipulate any standard capacity for all libraries, the guidelines indicate that preferably, the library should be spacious enough to house a considerable number of users without much constraint (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015: 32). According to the Guidelines there must be adequate and appropriate room to stock collections for easy accessibility; there must be enough space to house a full class of students at a time with a teacher and extra accommodation for students wishing to study without distraction (2015: 32).

The library had six tables and forty chairs which were not enough to accommodate users numbering over 40 at the same time. Due to inadequate space, the librarian commented that students normally borrowed books to read outside the library. There were twelve shelves on which the books were arranged. There were two wall racks for exhibiting periodicals and magazines. There was also a chalk board which was sometimes used during library skills classes. In addition, there was a big desk and two chairs that were used by the library staff. The librarian indicated that some books were kept in boxes at the headmistress's office, because of limited space. This means that access to those books would be limited. The librarian added that due to limited space, the library was able to take about thirty-five to forty (35 - 40) out of 50 learners in class at a time.

#### ***4.2.3 Staffing and Collaboration***

The library was staffed by one person who was supervised by an English teacher in the school. This member of staff had no professional qualification in librarianship, although he

had some practical knowledge about how to manage the school library. He had been in charge of the library for five years. It was revealed during the interview that when the library was first established in 1991 there was a trained librarian for the first two years. Since then all the library staff employed had been unqualified. However, IFLA School Library Guidelines states that the role of the school library is to facilitate teaching and learning therefore the services and activities of the school library should be under the directions of a professional staff with the same level of education as the classroom teacher (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015: 6) The ABS school librarian affirmed that he had been in charge of the school library for the past five years, but was not a professional librarian. He however had previous experience in working in other school libraries prior to assuming duty at the ABS.

The librarian is in charge of the library and manages it to be used by clients without constraints. The benefits of the school library will only be realised depending on how efficiently the librarian runs the library. Asked what the functions of the librarian were, the librarian replied that as and when library materials were brought to the library, he received them, stamped and recorded the details in the accession register. He then organised the books according to subjects taught in the school and shelved them. He also re-shelved the books after they have been used by students and teachers. The librarian asserted that he assists students who have difficulty in reading and helps them in pronouncing new words.

Apart from this he directs students to search for information to do their assignments. The librarian was asked if he plans activities in the library to enhance students learning. According to the librarian once a term he organizes „word building“ in English language; an activity that helps students to build their vocabulary in English language; this is important because English language is the official language in Ghana and it is expected that students

speak it fluently and correctly. According to Saetre and Willars (2002: 15) in the IFLA School Library Guidelines, state that the librarians are obliged to assist students and teachers in information literacy skills, in order to utilise the resources appropriately; organising reading programmes and other educational activities. Todd (2002) commends that periodically the school librarian should go through professional training to become competent and developed in order to keep up with current developments. The lack of professional training of the ABS librarian might limit his competency in planning and teaching different information handling skills. As posited by Kuhlthau (2010), a professional librarian (at the ABS library in this case) would influence guided enquiry as students would be able to learn through vast resources.

Furthermore, collaboration between the librarian and the teaching staff of a school is a crucial element in fostering guided inquiry (Kuhlthau, 2010). Schultz-Jones & Oberg (2015:6) in the IFLA School Library Guidelines point out that if the librarian is at the same level of education as the classroom teachers it fosters collaboration between the librarian and the teachers. To attain the full benefits of the school library therefore, there is the need for teachers to collaborate with the school librarian to plan useful programmes for students. The researcher asked teachers how they collaborate with the librarian. Four (4) teachers admitted that they did not collaborate with the librarian in their teaching while five (5) teachers indicated that they collaborated with the librarian.

The researcher wanted to find out how the teachers and the librarian collaborated, and participants gave various responses. The social studies teacher asserted that sometimes the librarian is invited to participate in the class. The teacher narrated an instance where the librarian was invited to take a topic in social studies:

Sanitation is a topic in social studies; the librarian was invited to talk to students on the need to keep their surroundings clean during sanitation week. After that the librarian and the class teacher planned activities with the students; such as drawings and paintings of tidy and untidy environment, these were pasted on the notice board in the class room.

The English teacher remarked that she collaborates with the librarian a lot. The librarian is deeply involved in the reading competition organised in her class once every term. This is to assist students to increase their reading habits.

At the beginning of the term I and the librarian select story books to be read by students for the competition.

The researcher sought to corroborate what the teachers said with the remarks of the school librarian concerning collaboration. The librarian confirmed that he collaborated with only a few teachers namely: the English language teacher, the social studies teacher and the music and dance teacher. When asked about instances of collaboration, the librarian answered that at the beginning of the term the English teacher comes to the library and both of them select story books for students to read and prepare quizzes at the end of the term. With Social Studies, the librarian helps the teacher to get information for students' project works. The librarian also noted that he helped the Music and Dance teacher with various activities throughout the week. For example, sorting out books on cultural dance as well as teaching students traditional dances such as „Adowa“, „Kete“ and „Agbaza“. Occasionally a teacher would ask him to help students search for particular information in an encyclopaedia to support their classwork. Todd (2002) is of the view that the effect of the school library on teaching and learning largely depends on the librarian and the collaboration between the classroom teacher and the librarian.

In the information search process, Kuhlthau (1991) notes that students become apprehensive and nervous and hesitant as they ascertain new information at the experimental stage. This anxiety can be reduced when teachers, in collaboration with the school librarian, are able to

vary their teaching methods. Collaborations with teachers create the necessary climate for students to question, participate, generate and learn in an information setting (Kuhlthau, 2010: 3). This collaboration further influences learners understanding of information as doubts are cleared, confidence is restored, and interest is intensified. Also, direction from teachers and librarians to learners in the inquiry process develops students' programme of study, shape literacy competence and social skills in students (Kuhlthau, 2010: 19). The low level of collaboration between the school librarian and some of the teachers in the ABS can restrict students' grasp of information, which can have negative implications on students' curriculum and literacy competence.

#### ***4.2.4 The nature of library resources***

It was observed that the library contained text books covering the subjects taught in the school. This was confirmed by all the participants. One of the students said:

Our school library is stocked with text books on the subjects we do in the school.

According to the accession register the library collection stocked 8,450 items. These include 3,400 novels and about 3000 works of non-fiction. The fiction collection included the African Writers' Series, the lady bird series and fairy tales. The non-fiction collection comprised textbooks on some of the subjects studied in the school, reference books, magazines and periodicals. The researcher observed that the textbooks which relate to the school's curriculum covered Mathematics, Social Studies, English Language and Science. In addition, there were other books on areas such as history, local languages, French, home economics, Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

To check if students actually used the library resources, they were asked if there were other library materials apart from text books. The responses are shown on Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4. 1: Materials available in the library apart from textbooks**

<b>Reference Materials</b>
Britannica Science Exploration, dictionaries, Maps and Charts
<b>Periodicals and Magazines</b>
Playpen, Junior Graphic, Surprise, NKO-a magazine on wildlife, World Soccer, Reader’s Digest, West Africa magazine, Time magazine, Cartoons, Adventures and The World and the Refugees.
<b>Resource Materials for Teachers</b>
Handbooks on teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, Teachers Resource Books and Guides.

Most of the materials were in good condition. The librarian confirmed the presence of the various collections listed and added that there were audio-visual resources as well.

Forty students mentioned materials like the encyclopaedia, dictionary, story books, and magazines. Ten students listed encyclopaedia, dictionary, story books, and newspapers. Four participants also mentioned encyclopaedia, dictionary and novels. According to the students, the above mentioned materials helped them in their learning. The various ways in which the library helped students in their learning are explored under the theme, Purpose of the school library.

From the researcher’s observation and also from the students’ responses it can be concluded that the nature of the books in the library was useful to its users and that the collection is in

support of the school's curriculum. This is in line with recommendations by the American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AASL & AECT, 1998:91) that the resources of the School Library must be in support of the school curriculum and the various learning needs of students. For the school library to be useful and well patronised, much depends on the nature of the collection stocked. According to IFLA School Library Guidelines it is vital that the school library resources continue to be developed on constant basis to guarantee that there would always be new resources available for learners to select from (Saetre & Willars, 2002).

#### ***4.2.5 Computers***

The librarian mentioned that there were computers with Internet connection for students' use, but because the library was not spacious enough to contain the computers they had been set up in a separate room. Students usually went there to search for information and sometimes to type their assignments. However, the computer laboratory is looked after by the ICT teacher even though it is part of the library. In a modern library, computer use in accessing information is very important and beneficial to both students and teachers.

The ABS computer laboratory had 60 personal computers installed. The students visited the laboratory to search for information not found in the library. Research participants were asked if they visited the computer laboratory, 35 students answered in affirmative. Eleven of these students noted that they used the computers to search for information and type their class assignments.

I always type my assignments with the computer.

I go to the computer laboratory after school to have ample time to work on my project.

The use of computers enhances students' learning; by giving them the opportunity to get additional information to enrich their assignments. Apart from using the computers to search for information, ten of the students pointed out that they went to the computer laboratory occasionally to play games on the computer. ICT is one of the subjects taught in the school and has a period on the class timetable. The availability of a computer laboratory in the ABS, exposes students to vast information from the Internet needed to enrich their knowledge base. The ICT teacher of the school served as a guide through the information search process to enable students to gain more understanding of information from the Internet. However, only 11 out of 50 students interviewed used the computer laboratory to search for information and type class assignments. This indicates that most students in the ABS might be experiencing some challenges that restrict information search process. Kuhlthau, (2010: 19) explains that school librarians are "resource specialists with great knowledge of the numerous educational resources in the school library, on the Internet and in the community as well". However, collaboration between the school librarian and the ICT teacher would still be required if students of ABS are to learn through the vast resources and multiple channels presented by the Internet.

#### ***4.2.6 Acquisition of library materials and documentation***

In response to the questions asked about the method of selection and acquisition of library materials, the librarian indicated that the school library depends on donations for its stock, and thus, there was no acquisition policy. He also revealed that the library had no budget to purchase learning materials. Donations came from organizations such as Book Aid International, Ghana Book Trust, Essenco Professional Publications (EPP) Book Services, Read wide Agency, and World Vision International. Other sponsors were the Ghana Education Service, District Assembly, the Rotary Club, past students and parents of the

students. The librarian added that the textbooks on subjects taught in the school were provided by the Ghana Education Services.

Asked whether teachers were involved in selecting books for the library, the librarian responded that he involved the teachers in instances where donors requested a list of books needed in the library. Three (3) of the teachers attested to the fact that the librarian approached them to recommend books on their subject areas, while six (6) of them intimated they had never been consulted. In cases of random donations, the librarian commented:

I invite the subject teachers to select relevant materials when I receive the books from the donors; this is because not all the books donated are relevant to the school curriculum.

I use my discretion to select some of the books especially the novels.

The researcher's observation of the stock of the library materials showed that there was an imbalance in numbers available for the various subjects. Some of the subjects had more books while others had few. According to the accession register, the following was the breakdown of numbers of textbook titles by subjects indicated on table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2 Number of text books titles by subjects.**

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Number</b>
English language	1200
Mathematics	800
Social Studies	1800
Science	1500
Home Economics	70
French	50
Local languages	60

It was also observed that there were no books on religious and moral education, vocational skills and visual arts, subjects taught in the school. The collection showed a bias towards English language books, social studies, mathematics and science. This is a defect as there

should be coverage of all subjects in the curriculum. The librarian explained in the interview that:

Since the library's collection depends on donations, it is not possible to base the collection on any policy. The books are stocked as and when donors bring them.

This situation is contrary to the American Library Association's selection guidelines which note that it is necessary for all schools to have a comprehensive policy on the selection of library resources, the policy must include all forms of materials (American Library Association, 2015). The reasons why it is important for a school library to have a written policy for selecting library materials is to avoid waste and be able to regulate the resources. Also, the existence of a library materials selection policy would enable libraries to have adequate and resourceful books linked to school curriculum. Students would also be exposed to resources on other areas of interest relevant to knowledge acquisition, and thereby contributing excellently to the academic performance of learners (Lance, 2002; School Library Work, 2008).

Upon request by the researcher about documentation on the library collection, the librarian provided two documents - the accession register and acquisition register. In the accession register, the librarian captures all the information on materials in the library such as authors, titles, publishers and dates. The use of the accession register enables staff to know the exact materials the library has acquired and keep track of missing ones. The acquisition register contains the list of all donated materials with the names and addresses of all the donors. It indicates the kind of materials and the quantity provided by donors. There was also a notebook that contained the rules and regulations on the use of the library.

#### ***4.2.7 Arrangement of library collection***

The researcher observed that the books were arranged in subjects and labelled accordingly. When the researcher asked the students whether they experienced any difficulty in finding the materials they need, twenty-five (25) participants reported that they did not find any difficulty. One of the student participants commented that:

I do not have any problem retrieving books from the library since all the books are arranged according to subjects and are well labelled.

Twelve (12) participants asserted that they sometimes had problems finding books at the library. When asked whether they sought help, eight (8) of the participants intimated that they asked the librarian for assistance while the other five (5) students said they consult their friends for help when they are unable to locate what they want. Inquiring why students sometimes could not find the books in the library, it was revealed that some of the students intentionally hid the books they wanted to use at a later time, especially books that are limited in number. The researcher observed that even though the collections were easily accessible, the arrangement was not based on any formal classification scheme. Among the important duties performed by the librarian is to organize and arrange the library resources in a specified arrangement of the library; classifying materials by issuing special numbers to all the items this is done to make retrieving of materials less cumbersome; the items are shelved according to numbers assigned to them (Library as Learning Resource Center, 2013: 34).

The librarian confirmed that the books were arranged according to subjects and level of class, and that arrangement was not based on any classification scheme. He commented that:

I arrange the books according to subjects and class; ... [for example] Mathematics/ JHS2. This way, students are able to locate books easily.

When asked why the library resources were not arranged using a particular classification scheme, he responded:

The library materials have been arranged without any classification scheme, arrangements have always been by subjects and class.

#### ***4.2.8 Library rules and regulations***

For easy retrieval of materials by students in particular, the librarian indicated that he organizes orientation sessions every academic year for new students to teach them how to retrieve and use the library resources. During the orientation the librarian reads to students the rules and regulations governing the use of the library.

When students were asked if they have been taught how to use the library and by whom, all the participants answered in affirmative that they had been taught by the librarian. They reported that the librarian took them through an orientation programme showing them how to use the library. Five (5) students noted that the librarian read the rules and regulations of the library to them. To probe further the researcher asked students about the content of the programme. Thirteen (13) students mentioned some of the rules of the library such as:

- Students are not allowed to enter the library with their bags.
- Students are not allowed to carry their own story books into the library.
- Students should not make noise whilst in the library.
- Students are to leave books that they have used on the tables to avoid misarranging them on the shelves.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the library because of the risk of damage to the books.

Twenty (20) students noted the librarian took them round all the shelves to show them where they can find books, while ten (10) of them said the librarian taught them how to use the reference books to search for information.

I know where to find story books because the shelves have been labelled.

I was taught how to use the library by the librarian.

I can find meanings of words from the dictionary which helps me to spell words correctly.

#### ***4.2.9 Opening and closing hours***

The researcher sought to find out when students get access to the library. The librarian noted that the library opened at 8 a.m. and closed at 4p.m. During these periods teachers and students could visit the library at will. Teachers visited with their students when it was time for library period on the class timetable. Students went in to read story books during break time or spare time. The librarian also indicated that when school closes at 3p.m. students come to the library to do their class assignments or home work. Others come there to search for information on their project works or to borrow books.

The foregoing sections have provided an overview of the ABS library, with reference to the nature of the collections within the library, usage, staffing and collaboration between the school librarian and teachers toward student learning. One of the major questions posed in this study pertained to the relevance of the school library in teaching and learning. The next theme and sub-themes reflect findings from research participants on the role that the school library played in their educational endeavours.

#### **4.3 Importance of the school library**

It was noted that the library was well patronised by both students and teachers. At every point in time during the research, it was observed that about thirty -five (35) students were in the library either reading or doing research on their projects and others were borrowing books home to read or to do their homework. The headmistress affirmed the importance of the school library, saying that it is important to make library materials available to the students. She affirmed that the collection in the library was relevant because it contained books prescribed by the Ghana Education Service to be used by all public basic schools in the country. The school library is essential and it supposed to support teaching and learning process; it is fundamental in the educational development (IFLA/UNESCO School Library

Manifesto, 1999). When asked whether it was necessary to have a library in their school, all the students interviewed unanimously responded in the affirmative. The participants mentioned that the school library was necessary because it supplies them with books and other materials to enhance their learning. This assertion of the students agree with the views of Fakomogbon et al (2012: 486) that the library resources help learners to develop their literacy skills by reading different reading materials in the library. Thirty (30) of the participants mentioned that those students who do not have books at home are able to get access to the books in the library. The following are some representative responses:

I mostly do my homework at school using the books in the library, because I do not have books at home.

I get the opportunity to read a lot of story books from the library.

The school library is significant because I get access to the library resources when am doing research for my class assignment.

This is a clear indication that the school library is a necessity to these students' education. The researcher wanted to know the views of teachers on the importance of the school library, the responses of all the teachers were positive; and in their views the school library is important for teaching and learning process of students. Soliciting the opinion of teachers on the significance of the school library, the participants responded as follows: six (6) teachers stated that the school library provides several books to be used by both teachers and students; students go to the library to read, do research, and acquire knowledge. Three (3) teachers asserted that the school library gives opportunity for students to learn independently. The importance of the school library according to the responses of two (2) teachers was that it serves as the center of academic works and encourages students to learn; it also provides space for students to study. The serene atmosphere of the library encourages students to read.

However, five (5) student participants noted that even though the school library was helpful, they did not see the need for it because they used their community libraries after school and at weekends. The following comment is representative of the sentiment:

I use the community library in my community where I get all the books I need for my homework so I do not use the school library.

Community libraries are however not common and not every student has one in their vicinity. Accordingly the school library is used by the majority of students who do not have easy access to a community library. Two (2) of them also said they have all the textbooks at home for their homework and storybooks to read so they do not need the library. The ensuing sub-themes highlight the importance of the school library to the research participants and the various activities they carried out in the school library.

#### ***4.3.1 Use of the School library***

The students mentioned that the librarian taught them how to find books and also search for information to support their work. This is in line with the IFLA School Library Guidelines that indicate that the duty of the librarian is to assist students in the use of library resources (Schultz-Jones & Oberg, 2015). The librarian testified that the majority of teachers use the library resources in their teaching lessons. Occasionally, the Headmistress also came to the library. Teachers consult reference books when they are searching for information to support their teaching notes and also use maps and charts for illustrations. Teachers come to the library with their class to select books for students to read. To encourage students to use the school library the Music and Dance teacher explained:

I share my experience of how the use of school library helped me when I was a student and the effect it has had on me.

I select words from music and dance books and asked students to find their meanings from the reference books in the library.

Any time I have lessons with the students I asked them to mention the titles of books they have read in the past week before I start my lesson, this is compelling them to read.

However, some of the teachers did not use the school library. There were two (2) teachers who indicated that they do not use the library resources as they prefer using their personal books which are more current than those in the library. Besides, the resources in the library are not relevant to their teaching areas. Ideally, the school library resources should be current and make available all kinds of materials to support teaching and learning. According to Rocks, the school library should contain resources to support every aspect of school life: every project, books to support sport, dancing, art and music (Rocks, 2009). A teacher declared that:

I have textbooks that correspond with the subject I teach so I read in the house or in the staff room and so there is no need to go to the library.

The few teachers who do not use the library complained that the books were outmoded and not relevant to their subjects.

#### ***4.3.2 Frequency of library use by participants***

From the interviews and observations, it was discovered that most of the students visit the school library every day. When asked how often they visit the library they gave different frequencies. Fifteen (30%) of them indicated they visit the library every day. Twenty (40%) said three times a week while ten (20%) of them visit occasionally, not specifying the frequency. These are some of the responses:

I visit the library three times a week.

I go to the library every day that I come to school.

I visit the library once a term during examination week.

The librarian confirmed that students use the library very often and said that:

On average, sixty students visit the library a day. On the occasion when students are preparing for a competition I record more than eighty students a day. The same thing applies to examination period; some times during

examination week I extend the closing time by an hour to allow students use the library to their satisfaction.

Three (3) students did not find the need to visit the library but mentioned that they go to the library only during library period on the timetable. The researcher sought to find out how often teachers visited the library. The teachers who use the library indicated the number of times they visit the school library. The English Language teacher commented:

I go to the library every day of the week.

Three (3) of the participants said they use the library thrice a week. Four (4) teachers mentioned that they go to the library as and when they have the need. They could not give any specific periods they use the library whilst one (1) teacher said he goes to the library occasionally. Teachers' frequent visits to the library was confirmed by librarian. According to him, some teachers came to the library every day, while others came there thrice or twice a week. Some also visit occasionally while others do not use the library at all. Those who do not use the library only come there when teachers have a meeting in the library.

#### ***4.3.3 Purpose of using the Library***

Students in the focus group discussion pointed out that they go to the library to search for information to do their class work and project work. They also said that they go to the library and read. According to the students, they used the encyclopaedias and dictionaries especially for assignments and project works. The students also indicated that reading of storybooks and magazines improves their reading habits as well as acquiring new vocabularies. The researcher also observed that at least three to four teachers came to the library to mark students' exercise books every day after teaching, read newspapers or do research for their next lessons. This observation was confirmed when the researcher interviewed teachers. Varied uses of the library were enumerated by the teachers such as:

- for research,
- to find references,
- borrow books,
- to read lesson notes,
- do further reading on class lessons,
- read storybooks
- newspapers,
- and prepare for examinations

The librarian confirmed that students come most often to the library to read storybooks, search for information to do their class assignments, homework and project works.

Teachers stated more than one reason why they use the school library. Three (3) teachers indicated that they used the library for research, reading novels or newspapers and do their private studies as well as marking students' exercises. Four (4) others also mentioned that they occasionally go there to borrow books for preparing teaching notes and sometimes use the reference books. Two (2) teachers commented that they used the library resources when they were preparing for school programmes such as the „Spelling Bee“, debates and drama for school competition. According to the librarian, some teachers also come to the library to relax and read newspapers. The following are typical responses from the teachers:

I use the reference books a lot when preparing my lesson notes.

I take students to the library during library period on the time table.

When I feel tired after teaching, I go to the library to relax.

I go to the library to read the daily newspapers.

I sometimes visit the library to see how students read.

Some of the specific purposes for which participants used the library are outlined as follows:

#### *4.3.3.1 Research*

It was observed by the researcher that sometimes students did group work in the library. Thirty-eight students (38) intimated that they visited the library to search for information to supplement their classroom lessons. The following is a comment exemplifying this purpose:

I search for extra information to add to the teachers notes.

Fifteen participants stated that they did research in preparation for debates, which is an extracurricular activity carried out by the school. As a follow up it was revealed that the school has extracurricular activities every Friday; students are supposed to belong to at least one club. Some of these clubs are “Debating Club”, “Young Writers” Association” and “Drama Troupe”.

I was selected in my club to speak on teenage pregnancy; I went to the library to read on it since there were a lot of books on the topic.

I use the library throughout the week to prepare for our drama group.

#### *4.3.3.2 Project work*

When students were asked if they use the library resources to do their project work, forty (40) responded in the affirmative. Twenty-eight (28) students claimed they used the reference books such as the Encyclopaedia and the Dictionary. Twelve (12) used textbooks and supplementary books, whilst four (4) indicated that they used the Internet at home to do their project work. Six (6) responded that they have textbooks at home therefore do not use the library resources. One of the participants commented that:

Our social studies teacher asked us to work on a project on a „community living“, I went to the library and searched for information on it; it was really helpful.

#### *4.3.3.3 Class assignments and examinations*

Students were asked if they use the library for their class work. Their responses were unanimous but different participants gave varied instances. Forty-five (45) responded during

the library period the English teacher takes them to the library to do their class assignment. Eighteen (18) of the students asserted that when a teacher is absent he/ she gives classwork for them; they are instructed to go to the library to use specific books for the classwork. One of the students explained that teachers do this to prevent students from making excessive noise in their absence. Ten (10) declared that the social studies teacher sometimes directed them to use a particular book in the library for their class work. Eleven (11) intimated that they go to the library to complete their class work when they are unable to finish during class.

Thirty (30) students stated that they visited the library to do further reading on topics treated in class. They explained that teachers encouraged them always to do further reading after the day's class. A student said:

I go to the library to read more on a topic treated in class for better understanding.

When am preparing for examination I do a lot of research.

Teachers were asked whether they referred students to the library for further reading in their respective subject areas. Seven (7) teachers claimed they referred their students to the school library for further reading. Four (4) teachers referred students to read on their subject areas ahead of time. Some responses given by teachers:

Yes, whenever I have lessons with them I refer them to read on the topic in the library.

I also direct students to use a specific book in the library for the work I give just to ensure that they go to the library.

I refer students to search for information on a topic to be treated beforehand, it makes lessons easier and lively; students who do that make contributions to the lesson.

Two (2) teachers did not refer students to the library with the reason that there are no books on their subject areas.

#### *4.3.3.4 Borrowing of books*

Students are allowed to borrow library resources to take home. They are allowed to borrow textbooks only over the weekend, while novels and supplementary books can be kept by the student for one week. However, students are not allowed to borrow magazines and newspapers from the library for their home reading. The reason given by librarian was that there were not enough in the library and giving them out could get them destroyed. Records of books given out are kept in an exercise book which is kept strictly by the librarian for that purpose. If a book gets lost, the student either replaces it or is made to pay twice the market price of the book. Thirty (30) students mentioned that they go to the library to borrow books when they are preparing for a competition. Ten (10) of the students said they borrow books to take home to complete their classwork if they are not able to finish work at school.

#### *4.3.3.5 Other uses of the library*

For the students, the school library also serves as a recreational centre; students go to the library to play games such as „Ludo, „Oware“ and „Draughts“. Twenty (20) of the students mentioned that they sometimes go to the library to play games as a leisure pursuit. This is in line with the IFLA School Library Guidelines which recommends that the school library must include in its collection materials purposely for recreation and relaxation; such as popular novels, music, computer games, video cassettes, video laser disks, magazines and posters (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 9). These games are beneficial to students“ learning as they sharpen their attention and observation. These features, when acquired, will help students to concentrate on their studies. As Smith (2006: 5) points out, students using the library benefit greatly from the wide range of resources the library provides. The librarian confirmed what the students said about playing games like “Oware” and “Ludo” in the library. The headmistress also indicated that she used the library for various purposes:

I usually use the school library when writing a letter to the education office.

I am involved in organizing reading clinics for students and usually select a number of books and help them in reading.

I visit the library to read newspapers.

#### **4.4 Contribution of the School Library to Teaching and Learning**

The essence of the school library is to support teaching and learning; providing the opportunity for students to be independent in their studies. Arua and Chinaka (2011) mention that library materials are perceived as all the resources used in the library for the purpose of providing good learning environment for students and teachers to enable them attain academic success.

It was not surprising that all the participants affirmed that the school library is beneficial to both teaching and learning in their school. They all agreed that the school library provides resources for teaching and learning. This is in accordance with the views of Hay and Todd that “school libraries provide a common information ground for supporting learning across the school and fostering the development of deep knowledge through the provision of accessible resources, and the development of sophisticated information and technology understandings and skills” (Hay and Todd, 2010: 30).

Responses from teachers during the interviews revealed that the school library contributes greatly to teaching and learning in the school. Five (5) of the teachers emphasized that the school library makes available all kinds of educational materials to be used by both teachers and students. Three (3) teachers intimated that the school library is very useful in teaching and learning because it helps teachers when preparing their lessons. Some of the responses given by the teachers were:

When we give assignments students use the library resources to do the work.

The school library provides books for students to read and as such they gain knowledge which helps them in their learning.

It gives students the opportunity to search for more information on what they learnt in class.

I use the library resources very often in my teaching, apart from referring students to do further reading; I do research anytime am preparing my teaching notes.

Teachers stressed that they consulted library resources when preparing for their lessons. In addition, when teachers gave assignments, they directed students to use the library resources. According to the teachers, tasking the students to use the library offers an avenue for them to vary their teaching methods. For instance, they give project works to students to do on their own using the library materials. One of the teachers mentioned that:

The use of the library by students allows them to be independent learners.

This is in agreement with the views of Williams, Wavell and Coles (2001:3) that school libraries can help teachers to broaden their teaching strategies using methods such as project work, individual study, group research, reading and the teaching of ICT, among other things.

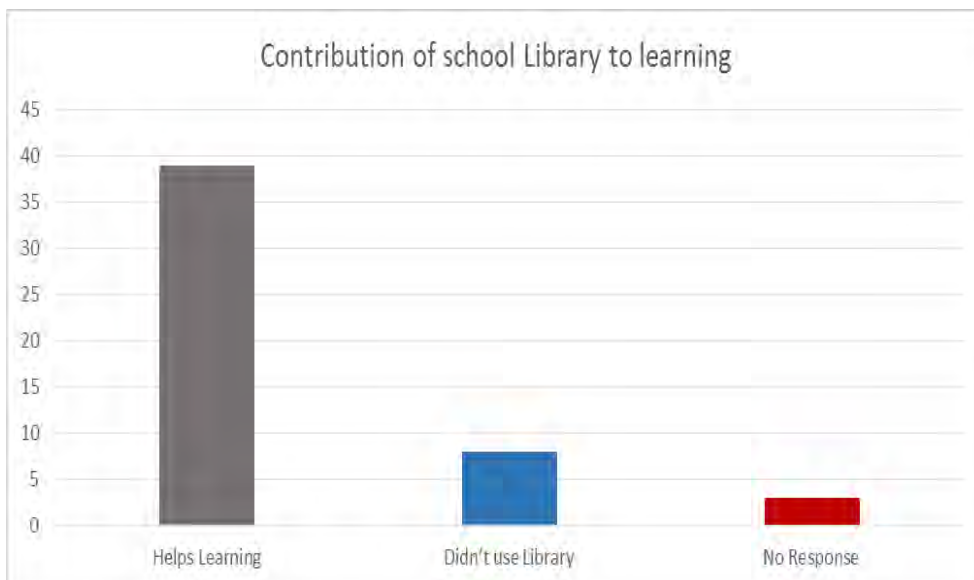
When asked about the usefulness of the library material to the teachers, the librarian said that the library provides books that cover most of the subjects taught in the school. These books are relevant to students learning; students read and do research to do their assignments as well as their project work. Teachers also use the school library resources in their teaching. Despite the fact that there are some problems with the library it is able to provide majority of basic textbooks to be used by students.

The researcher also asked the headmistress whether, and how, the school library plays a role in teaching and learning. The headmistress replied that it does have a major role to play in that it gives students the opportunity to read which broadened their minds; enabling them to

understand other subjects better. Students have access to reference materials to do their homework or project works, all of these enhance their academic work. Again because of the library teachers assigned students to do further reading whenever possible on topics treated in class or yet to be treated. The headmistress stressed that most of the teachers used the library resources in their teaching. She reiterated the essence of the school library is to support teaching and learning by way of providing relevant learning materials and mention that:

Apart from using the textbooks both students and teachers are able to access information on the internet from the computer laboratory.

Thirty-nine (39) student participants were of the view that the school library helps in their learning, while eight (8) of the participants declared that they did not use the school library because they have their personal books which they use at home. Three (3) were silent on this question. The students' views on the school library's contribution to learning is presented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Contribution of the school library to students' learning*

Students who used the school library and found it beneficial commented as follows:

I get access to books I don't have at home to read in the library.

The school library has helped me to have a better understanding in science because I do further reading on topics treated in class.

I used the library when I was preparing for an essay competition.

I use the reference books whenever I need extra information for my work.

I can search for information from the library to add to the notes that teachers give in class, I am able to this because of the school library resources.

The foregoing findings attest to the critical role that the school library plays in teaching and learning. In a study conducted by Hay (2006: 32) the majority of students had similar views to those of the students of ABS: that the school library resources supported them with their assignments, projects, research and homework. According to Hay (2006) the students valued the library resources and also the intervention of the librarian which actually helped them in their assignments.

#### **4.5 The school library and reading**

Apart from students using the library for research, project works and assignments, the researcher observed that most of the students chose storybooks to read when they came to the library. The school library provides a variety of story books to be read by students. When asked about when they read books from the school library, all the participants noted that they mostly did their reading when they were in the library; either during their spare time or during the library period on the class time table.

##### ***4.5.1 Voluntary reading and its benefits***

Students were asked how reading benefited them. Forty-five (45) of the participants intimated that reading helps them to acquire vocabulary and use it appropriately and that it helps with their spelling and their appropriate use of vocabulary. This assertion confirms Krashen's view that children read to acquire vocabularies, and become good spellers

(Krashen, 1993: 85). When questioned whether they are usually instructed by the teachers to go to the library to read a book, forty (40) students revealed that in most cases they visited the library on their own accord when possible. One student commented that:

The school library has helped me develop the love for reading; I read a lot after school and on weekends.

Fifteen (15) students indicated that sometimes their teachers asked them to read specific books in the library and write a summary of them. Five (5) students mentioned that they only go to the library under teachers' instructions. One of the students commented that:

I only read in the library during library period when our teacher takes us there to read.

To find out how the school library is involved in the students' reading behavior they were asked this question, "Do you like reading in the library and if so, why?" Twenty-five (50%) of the participants answered in the affirmative explaining that the serene atmosphere in the library allows them to concentrate on their books without distractions. Ten (20%) of the students also said they like reading in the library because the librarian helped them in the pronunciation and use of new words. Six (12%) of the participants also mentioned that they like reading in the library because they are able to choose the book they want. Two representative comments were:

There are some story books in the library that cannot be borrowed because there are limited copies therefore they must be read in the library.

I usually read the old story books that I cannot get elsewhere, and such books cannot be given out unless you read them in the library.

Twenty (40%) participants on the other hand did not like reading in the library because of limited time, they preferred to borrow the books and read outside the library. One of them commented:

I do not like reading in the library because I will be in the middle of the story and have to stop reading to attend classes.

Five (10%) students did not like reading in the library but offered no reasons. All the teacher participants recounted varied ways in which they encouraged students to read books in the library. The English teacher has this to say:

I encouraged students to go to the library to read story books of their choice and summarized what they have read; at the end of the school term I motivate those who were able to read more books by giving them parcels such as pens, pencils, and exercise books.

I sometimes read an interesting book half way to whet their appetite and ask students to go to the library and continue with the story.

Other teachers mentioned:

I encourage students to write summary of the books they have read.

I make students understand that the use of the library can help them acquire good reading skills.

I recommend that they go to the library to read to improve their vocabulary.

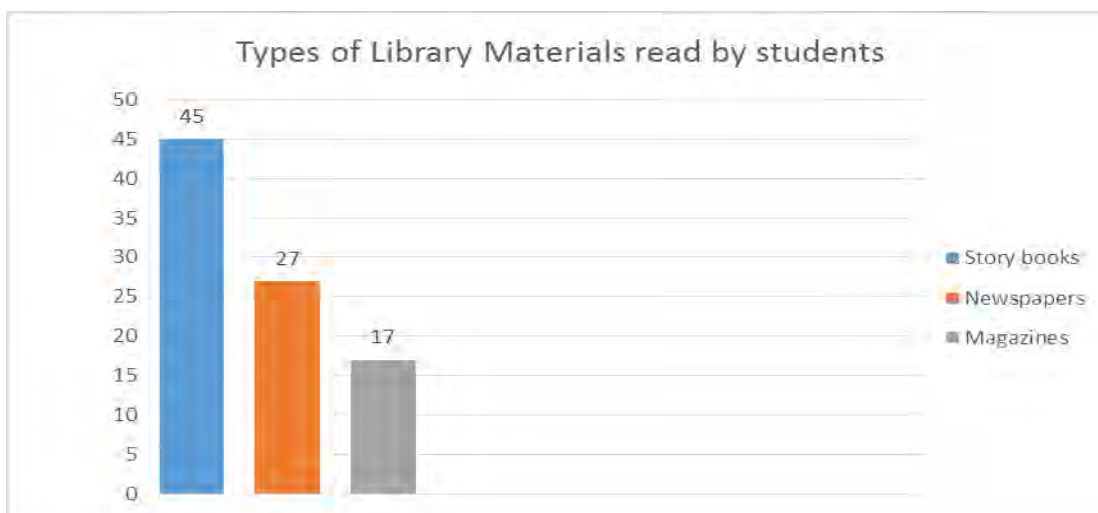
I encourage them to borrow books from the library to read.

The researcher wanted to know what motivated students to use the library; the participants affirmed that their teachers encouraged them to read many storybooks. Some of them said that their parents and friends also advised them to use the library resources to enhance their learning. They said they were interested in the storybooks in the library so they go there on their free time to read such books. The participants asserted that they enjoyed reading novels so they visited the library every day to read. According to research from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD, 2002)], reading for enjoyment is essential for children's educational success.

#### ***4.5.2 Types of library materials read most frequently by students***

The researcher wanted to know the kind of materials students normally read in the library. Thirty (30) of the participants read story books, newspapers and magazines. Fifteen (15) read storybooks and newspapers while five (5) indicated they read story books. Altogether, forty-five (45) students reported reading story books, twenty-seven (27) read newspapers,

and seventeen (17) read magazines. The types of library materials read by students are depicted in figure 2:

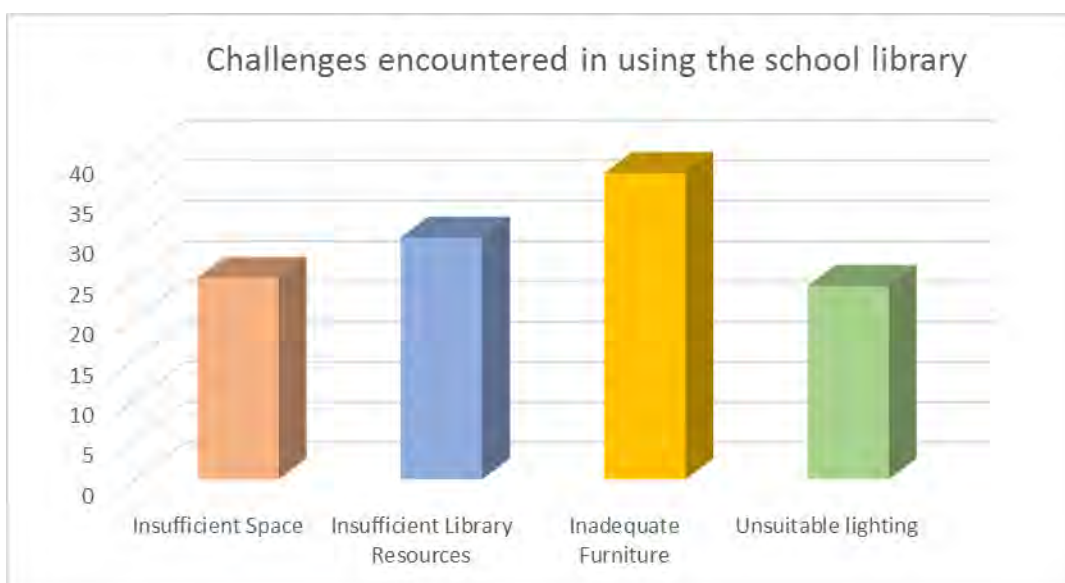


*Figure 2: Types of Library materials read most by students*

The researcher further asked student participants to list some of the story books they have read from the school library. The majority of the books read by the students were written by African authors (Ghanaian authors especially), with a few of them mentioning story books by foreign authors. All the fifty (50) participants listed books written by local writers, such as Peggy Opong, Afua Gyamfua, Ama Ata Aidoo, Amma Darko and Bediako series of adventures just to mention a few. Thirty-five (35) indicated they have read both foreign and African authors, whilst eighteen (18) have read only books written by Ghanaian writers like Bediako series adventures, Peggy Opong, Amartefio and others. The variety of books and the opportunity to select from the relatively wide range motivates students to read non-curriculum-related books from the school library. In view of this the school library promotes voluntary reading. Krashen (2004) notes that voluntary reading involves personal choice, reading widely from a variety of sources, and choosing what one reads. The students at ABS made their personal choices of story books to read from a broad array of options (albeit insufficient), and thus, there was a clear manifestation of the library's contribution to their voluntary reading habits.

#### 4.6 Challenges facing the school library

In as much as participants confirmed that the school library was beneficial to teaching and learning, they recounted various problems they encountered in their use of the library. These challenges prevented the ABS library from functioning according to the acceptable guidelines and standards (previously discussed in chapter 2). All the participants (students and staff alike) highlighted some common challenges namely: inadequate library space, insufficient furniture, insufficient library resources, and unsuitable lighting. In addition, the headmistress, librarian and teachers added budgeting constraints and staffing to the challenges. It was obvious from the study that budgeting for the library and staffing were not challenges that students had insights into. Before getting into the details, the challenges pointed out by the students have been depicted in a graph (figure 3) according to the frequency of mention.



*Figure 3: Challenges encountered by students in their use of the school library*

Details of the findings regarding the afore-mentioned challenges are presented in the sections which follow.

#### ***4.6.1 Library Space***

Twenty-five (25) of the students complained that the library was not spacious enough and that it was always overcrowded. Because of this situation, the students preferred to borrow books to read at home. The researcher's observation confirmed this situation; as it was observed that many students usually queued to borrow books which they read outside the library. Atmodiwirjo, Paramitan and Yatmo (2011: 30) note that a good library space is one of the important aspects that need to be considered in promoting library utilization. Students also mentioned that the shelves were crowded and that some books were kept in boxes which they could not access. Limited library space was commonly mentioned by teachers as well as the librarian. The librarian made mention of space as his major problem and commented that:

There are several interesting books that are useful to students but due to space they cannot be displayed on the shelves.

I wish the authorities employ at least one library staff and also appoint a student librarian to assist in the library.

The headmistress also appreciated the problem of limited space in the library, and disclosed that an organization (whose name she didn't want to mention) had promised to build a bigger library block for the school. The drawing on the proposed library block was shown to the researcher.

#### ***4.6.2 Library Resources***

Another challenge that participants mentioned was that of limited library resources. Ten (10) of the students said that they came in with their own story books to read in the library, because they had read all the interesting story books in the library. This was an indication that the provision of story books in the library was inadequate. The inadequacy of both the non-fiction and the fiction collections was pointed out by a number of students as follows:

I sometimes find it difficult to get useful information for my assignments.

I go to the library to read my personal books or lesson notes...because I hardly get books of my choice.

I do not go to the library because most of the books I want to read are kept in the headmistress's office. These books are not displayed in the library for us to use.

The books are not well organized; some of the books are torn and worn out making them unattractive to use.

Teachers also lamented that the school library is not the priority of the school's management and that that was why the library lacked current materials. They complained that there was an over-reliance on donations. Meanwhile, the donors give what they have irrespective of the school's curriculum. Three (3) of the teachers noted that some of the books were torn and not well kept. They added that sometimes, books were not properly arranged which made retrieving books a bit difficult. A teacher also complained that:

I want all the students to read a story from the same title for comprehension but cannot be possible because the books are sufficient for the class.

Some of the teachers claimed that there were not enough books on their subject areas. For instance, the French teacher intimated that there were no supplementary books for students to do further reading on topics treated in class or reference books for their project work. This is a worry to the French teacher. Thirty (30) students confirmed the insufficient stock of required readings in the library. They stated that they frequently had to wait for a book that was out to another student. They noted that this situation was aggravated during the times when they had to work on their projects. Apart from resources being limited, some of the books were outmoded and are not relevant to the school's curriculum.

This situation is contrary to the view of the IFLA School Library Guidelines, the guidelines makes it clear that it is mandatory for every school library collection to cover a wide range

of resources that users can choose from (Saetre and Willars, 2002). The collections should be suitable, current and relevant. The guidelines state that the library collections must be continuously developed to ensure that the users have constant choice of current materials (Saetre and Willars, 2002). Five (5) teachers raised the problem of textbooks not accompanied by a teacher's guide. The teacher's guide explains into details how a topic should be taught. For students to understand any topic treated in class depends largely on good teaching methods.

#### ***4.6.3 Library furniture***

The furniture in the library was woefully inadequate. Seven (7) teachers commented on the inadequacy of tables and chairs in the library. Four (4) of these teachers mentioned that they were not able to send all the class to the library at the same time during the library period on the time table because the tables and chairs were not sufficient to take all the students at a time. The students were therefore put in groups so that they could go to the library in turns. Thirty-eight (38) students confirmed inadequate furniture and unsuitable seating arrangements as problems they faced in the library (as seen in figure 3). Due to the limited seats, students said they have to pack themselves around one table which according to them is not very comfortable.

#### ***4.6.4 Environmental features of the library***

As shown in Figure 3, twenty-four (24) students complained of unsuitable lighting system for reading in the library. A good lighting system in a library is essential. The IFLA School library Guidelines suggest that there should be appropriate and sufficient light, both through windows and artificial light (Schultz-Jones and Oberg, 2015). The researcher noted that the library was congested and had poor ventilation. This situation, according to some students, deterred them from using the library.

#### **4.6.5 Budget**

The headmistress revealed that the major challenge facing the school library is funding; as there was no budget to run the library as it should be. The IFLA School Library Guidelines notes that finance and budget is one of the components which contributes to the effective and successful running of the school library (Saetre and Willars, 2002:3). Truett and Lowe (2003:1) are also of the opinion that lack of budget for school libraries always create shortage of current library resources. The school management should therefore find the means of funding the school library to meet the needs of teachers and students. The headmistress further lamented that this challenge had resulted in the library having inadequate resources and lacking some current and useful books. Probing further the researcher inquired from the headmistress what can be done about getting funding for the library. The headmistress responded:

I have sent an appeal to the local Assembly where the school is situated to sponsor the school library annually to improve on the standard; yet to hear from them.

The school library must have adequate and sustained funding to purchase current and relevant learning materials and other facilities that will be needed in the library (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 7; Lonsdale, 2003: 1) shares this view and comments that when school library is well resourced and funded it raises the academic standards of learners. This suggests that it is essential that ABS gets a budget for the library for the school community to have the full benefit of the school library.

#### **4.6.6 Library Staff**

Five (5) teachers complained that the library lacked permanent library staff and that the incumbent was unqualified. According to the teachers, the library staff is not able to plan

programmes for students who are therefore not getting the maximum benefits of the library. It is the duty of the librarian to plan programmes for students; and help both students and teachers in information literacy (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 11). Information literacy enables students to search for relevant information and evaluate this for their school work. Mertes (2014) is of the view that the development of information literacy is crucial for students; they need it for their life at school, and beyond, in their private and working lives.

#### **4.7 Participants' recommendations for improving the school library**

The following are recommendations from research participants on how the school library and its use could be made more effective. Suggestions from students included:

##### Opening hours:

- The library should open during weekends to be used by its patrons, and also, the opening and closing hours of the library during the school week must be extended for use by students and teachers.

##### Use of the school library:

- Teachers should encourage and sensitize students to use the library as soon as they are admitted in the school.
- Parents should allow their children to visit the community libraries during vacations.
- During vacation students should be allowed to borrow books home to read.

##### Library Space and Materials:

- The library needs expansion to provide enough space to display all the books on the shelves; books were kept in boxes in the headmistress's office due to limited space in the library. The school management should build a bigger library for the school to accommodate a lot of students during library period. The library resources must be increased to cater for the needs of students.

- Stock the library with interesting storybooks to sustain students' reading.
- There must be adequate textbooks on all the subjects especially in the local languages.
- All outdated and worn out books must be replaced by current ones.

Library Period:

- Teachers must observe the library period on the timetable to encourage students to use the library.
- The time allotted for library period on the timetable is not enough - it will be beneficial if the time is extended to ensure its usefulness.
- The computers should be in the library not in a separate building to enable us to use it frequently.

Suggestions from staff (Teachers, Librarian, and headmistress) included:

Use of the school library:

- Students need to be sensitized to use the library as soon as they are admitted in the school
- Students should be allowed to borrow books over weekends and the vacations
- Parents must be encouraged to ensure their children visit the school library during the school term; parents must encourage their children to read at home rather than watch television in their free time.

Library Materials:

- The Ghana Education Service should provide enough books to stock the library

- The school management should appeal to the old students of the school to provide books for the library.
- The library resources must be increased to cater for the needs of both teachers and students
- All outdated books must be replaced by current ones;
- The library should be stocked with interesting story books to sustain students' reading
- There should be more computers connected to the internet so that during the ICT class each student can get access.

#### Funding of the library

- Every student must be charged a levy at the beginning of every academic year to support the library
- The school library should be at the centre of discussions during the school board's annual meeting. The Board should send a petition to the Ghana Education Service to allocate the library a budget to be able to run the library efficiently.
- The Ministry of Education should appeal to individuals and non-governmental organizations and other corporations to assist in building school libraries in the country, especially for public basic schools.

#### Accommodation:

- There is the need to build a completely new library meeting the modern standards with sufficient space to accommodate a number of users at a time

#### Staffing:

- A permanent and a professional librarian must be employed to manage the library. There should be other library staff to assist the librarian.

#### Opening hours:

- The library should be opened during weekends to be used by students.

- Opening and closing hours of the library must be extended to encourage more use by students and teachers.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented findings of the study. The voices of the participants, namely students, teachers, the librarian and the headmistress have been presented under the various themes emerging from the data. Findings have been presented and discussed under the following main themes:

- overview of the ABS library;
- the nature of collections in the library;
- the importance of the school library;
- the school library and reading;
- the contribution of the school library to teaching and learning;
- challenges facing the school library;
- recommendations for improving the school library.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role the school library plays in teaching and learning in the Achimota Basic School. The study also explored the relationship between the use of the school library resources and teaching and learning in the school; and the effect of the school library resources on voluntary reading in the lives of the students. The researcher was able to do this by looking at the nature of the collection of the school library, how the school library was used by both the teachers and the students, and the challenges in using the school library. The aim of the researcher in conducting this study was to bring to the fore the significance of the school library especially in the basic school education. This chapter summarises the main findings, draws conclusions and provides some recommendations which may help to improve the school library service in general. The summary, conclusions and recommendations are aligned to the objectives of the study. The study was designed to explore the relationship between the use of the school library resources and teaching and learning in the ABS school; and also to ascertain the effect of voluntary reading of the school library resources in the lives of the students.

#### **5.2 Summary of findings**

The school library is required to support the teaching and learning process, as it is an integral part of the education (IFLA/UNESCO, 1999). Regarding the significance of the school library, the study revealed that both teachers and students appreciate the existence of the school library and the resources available; and think that the library is essential in the school set up. The International Association of School Librarianship (2012) states that school library acts as an indispensable tool in the educational process that involves in teaching and learning process of the school . According to the findings, most of the students

used the library for several reasons, such as making notes, doing research, borrowing books and reading in general.

### ***5.2.1 Library resources***

Arua and Chinaka (2011: 5) note that information resources are the basics for any school library which is to be considered appropriate and efficient in service delivery, and thus, the library must contain current and well-chosen materials to meet the academic needs of the school. The findings revealed that the library collection included textbooks provided by the Ghana Education Service that relate to the curriculum of the school. This is aligned with the IFLA School Library Guidelines which states that books stock in the school library must relate to the school curriculum; and ensure to meet the educational needs of the school (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 9). However the textbooks provided by the Ghana Education Service to ABS do not cover all the subjects taught in the school such as Religious and Morals Education. The library also contains supplementary books, storybooks, dictionary and encyclopedia, maps and charts, magazines and newspapers. Kuhlthau (1999: 80) points out that library resources are a major contribution to students' learning.

### ***5.2.2 Arrangement of resources***

Resources were well organised though not according to any specific classification scheme. Arrangement of books was done according to subjects and labelled boldly thus making it easy for the researcher to note subject gaps in the collection. Supplementary books were arranged according to sections and levels, e.g. by class in the primary and in the junior high school. The pupils found this arrangement easy – walking straight to the section and selecting their books. Cabonero and Dolendo (2013:5) note that it is essential to keep all the collection in the library well organize. They claim this ensures efficiency and high quality service to students and also be able to identify and retrieve appropriate materials needed.

Majority of the students always found the books they wanted. There were few others who did not always find the books they sought for from the library; such students approached the librarian for assistance. Probably the books they wanted might be in the boxes either in the library or the headmistress's office.

### ***5.2.3 Accommodation and furniture***

The library is conveniently located close to the classrooms thus making it easy for students to visit the library with little effort. It was found that the library is not spacious enough to accommodate many shelves for the books; some of the books were in boxes and others kept in the headmistress's office. According to Arua and Chinaka (2011:5) adequate accommodation is a necessary pre-requisite for effective library; space is needed for the library stock, for processing and for users' services. Sixty seating capacity was not enough; there was always congestion when most of the students use the library; the room was too small considering the large population of the school. In addition, ventilation was very poor coupled with poor lighting system.

### ***5.2.4 Usage of the School Library***

Findings of the study indicate that majority of the students used the library very often, with some students visiting the library almost every day. However there were a few students who did not use the library with the reason that they had their personal books. Others also noted that because the conditions in the library were uncomfortable they did not visit the library unless during the library period at which time it was mandatory. Some teachers visited the library every day and others visited as and when the need arose. It was discovered that most of the teachers utilized the library resources in their teaching. Teachers used the school library mainly to do research to augment their teaching notes and reading.

They also used the library when preparing for activities such „Spelling Bee“ „Debates“ and „Reading Clinics“ for students. Some of the teachers however did not use the library at all because there were no books on the subjects they taught. Others also claimed that they used their own books and read them in their homes or the staff common room.

Students admitted that some of the teachers encouraged them to use the library often to enhance their academic work. Teachers did this in various ways; for example, by asking students to do further reading on the topics treated in class, and giving them particular books to read and write summary of the books. The most utilised library materials by students were the story books and reference books such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. The Headmistress recounted that she usually go to the library to use the references books whenever she was attending a meeting or an event to prepare her speech. Regarding the opening hours of the library, most of the participants indicated that the time of opening the library, which was 9 a.m. was too late because students would be in class by that time. Students suggested that the library should be opened at 7a.m. since most of them went to school early.

#### ***5.2.5 The School library's role in teaching and learning***

Participants revealed that the school library supports teaching and learning in the school. This is because it provides relevant materials for students to use in their studies. For instance, students searched for references for their class assignments, project works as well as homework. The presence of the school library facilitates the information search process (Kuhlthau, 1999). Countless studies indicate that well-resourced libraries contribute to excellent academic performance of schools (Lance, 2002; School libraries Work, 2008). Majority of the teachers also made use of the library resources in their teaching, by using

them for research to augment their teaching notes. Teachers also instructed students to use the library to search for information on topics treated in class.

It was revealed that the use of the library resources allowed teachers to vary their teaching methods such as assigning students' group projects. This method of teaching instills in students the willingness of working in teams, the ability to discuss and share ideas freely with others. The students added that, with the help of the librarian, they found the information they needed from the school library to complete their assignments which invariably enhance their learning. This finding is confirmed by Hay's (2006) study in which students indicated that the school library resources supported them with their assignments, projects, research and homework. According to Hay (2006: 32) the students valued the library resources and also the intervention of the librarian which actually helped them in their assignments.

According to the librarian the library materials used most frequently by students were the story books and reference books such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. It was discovered that most of the teachers utilized the library resources in their teaching. Teachers used the school library mainly to do research to augment their teaching notes and reading. They also used the library when preparing for activities such as "Spelling Bee", Debates and "Reading Clinics" for students. Some of the teachers however do not use the library at all because there were no books on their teaching subjects. Others also claimed that they used their own books and read them in their homes or the staff common room. The study also revealed that there was collaboration between some teachers and the librarian in the areas of reading and providing information for students' projects. It was observed that teachers use different approaches in their teaching such as giving students project work for students to do using the school library materials. Students admitted that some of the teachers encouraged them to

use the library often to improve their academic work. Teachers did this through various ways such as asking students to do further reading on the topics treated in class and giving them particular books to read and write summary of the books.

The school library, according Kuhlthau (1999: 81) becomes an indispensable avenue for learning when there is guided inquiry approach. Harste (1994: 518) pointed out that an inquiry approach to learning is where students learn from different sources of information to develop their own questions. This approach of learning enables students to construct their understanding through the use of variety of resources. Unfortunately the teacher-librarian collaboration is not as effective in the ABS as to provide guidance for students to enjoy the full benefits of the library resources. The effectiveness of the inquiry approach to learning demands the collaboration between teachers and the school librarian. “Through the collaborative planning and teaching, opportunities are provided for students to use library resources for a deeper understanding into the content of the curriculum” (Kuhlthau 1999: 81). This implies that for students to have the full benefit of the library resources a close partnership between teachers and librarians is very crucial.

#### ***5.2.6 The School library and Reading***

The study revealed that with the presence of the library students were able to read other books to broaden their horizon and read on topics treated in class for more understanding. Students also got access to books in the library which they did not personally have. When students understand what is being taught in class they are able to perform better in their studies.

The majority of the students declared that they usually visit the library on their own to read story books. They stated that there were interesting story books in the library that inspired

them to visit the library often. Moore (2001: 4) indicates that one of the factors that influences children's reading achievement is the accessibility to books in their immediate environment. According to the students the variety of books and the opportunity to select from the range of them motivates them to read in the school library; this in a way meant that the school library promotes voluntary reading. Krashen (2004) notes that people choose to read out of free will where there are different resources that they can select from. The findings also revealed that most of the students enjoy reading in the school library because of the serene atmosphere in the library. It was discovered also that teachers use the library resources to organise reading activities such as reading competitions among students to improve their reading habits.

#### ***5.2.7 Challenges pertaining to the school library***

Students complained of not getting enough books to read and that books on some of the subjects were not represented in the library collection. Sometimes they did not get what they really needed due to inadequacy of the library resources. However school libraries are supposed to provide materials to meet the various needs of students (Undoh-IIomechine, 2008: 1). Apart from inadequacy of the book collection the librarian intimated that most of the books are old and a number of them are foreign authors; according to the librarian students hardly read books written by foreign authors. They claim those books are not very interesting for reading. An observation by the researcher indicated that the library accommodation was not spacious enough as some of the students were seen standing whilst reading. Tables and chairs were inadequate and uncomfortable. Some of the challenges the respondents mentioned were poor ventilation, noise around the library, and poor lightening systems. Lack of funds for financing the library was another major problem. This challenge was mentioned by both the teachers and the headmistress.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study has established that the ABS school library is an essential tool to enhance students' learning and teachers' teaching. Though there were some drawbacks in the usage of the school library, in totality, majority of the participants admitted that the school library was useful in their learning. Students used the library's resources to do their homework and project works by so doing have gained the skills of searching for relevant information and used it appropriately. It was found that inadequacy of library materials discouraged some of the participants from using the library. This situation prevented some teachers from making use of the school library resources in their teaching, meaning that such teachers could not testify to the role of the school library in teaching and learning. On the other hand, teachers who used the library resources in their teaching affirmed the positive role of the school library use in teaching and learning process in the school.

The views of participants on the role of the school library in teaching and learning were positive. They all endorsed that the school library is beneficial to teaching and learning. However, participants enumerated some challenges they faced as they used the library. The four major problems highlighted by participants were inadequate library resources, inadequate library space, unqualified library staff, and lack of funding for the library. The headmistress argued that if there was a budget to maintain the library, the library collection could be kept current, and that most of the problems of the library could be solved. The lack of funding was affecting the contribution the school library was supposed to be making in terms of supporting teaching and learning in the school. The challenges notwithstanding, the school library and its resources were being utilised by both teachers and students as the findings portrayed.

In the light of the findings of this study, some recommendations are made toward enhancing the ABS library to make it effective.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the researcher proposed that the following recommendations are made:

##### ***Accommodation and furniture***

It was observed that the library space was too restricted hence the seating capacity was not enough. There is the need to provide more comfortable and appropriate tables and chairs to cater for the increasing number of users the library is expected to accommodate. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should support schools like the ABS to build a bigger library and provide enough furniture to suit the school population.

##### ***Staffing***

The researcher recommends that a qualified librarian should be in charge of the library to collaborate with classroom teachers for students to use the library resources effectively; the library resources facilitate the academic work in the school, and encourage inquiry-based learning. Therefore the school librarian should understand the school curriculum to be able to support teaching and learning of the school. For the school librarian to collaborate effectively with the classroom teachers Fullerton-Rawlins (2002:1) notes that the school librarian should be familiar and keep abreast with the school curriculum and courses offered in the school. It is on this note that Schultz-Jones and Oberg (2015: 6) in the IFLA School Library Guidelines suggest that the librarian and the classroom teachers should have the same level of education. The researcher therefore suggests that if the ABS cannot afford to hire professionally qualified librarian, the Headmistress should allow the librarian to attend

in-service training. The IFLA Saetre and Willars note that the quality of library provision depends on the library staff (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 12). This means that it is essential to have a professional librarian to be in charge of the school library. The professional librarian plans programmes and liaise with teachers to ensure the programmes are aligned with the school curriculum. When teaching staff collaborate with the librarian to plan programmes and provide services for students. The librarian collaborates with classroom teachers for students to reap the full benefit of the library resources. The collaboration between classroom teachers and the school librarian is crucial since students turn to take full advantage of the library services (Saetre and Willars, 2002: 13).

The researcher suggests that library studies be introduced in the teacher training colleges so that every professional teacher will appreciate the importance of the library and be able to inculcate in their students the use of the library. Training of teachers in this way will raise a lot of teacher librarians to take charge of the library when the need arises.

### ***Acquisitions and stocking of the school library***

The researcher also recommends that a library committee be established to see to the acquisition and stocking of library materials, as well as proper maintenance of the library. The editors of the IFLA School Library Guidelines mention that the school library committee promotes learning by proposing relevant books and other information sources to the school; it recommends means by which these learning materials can be used to enhance teaching and learning process in the school (Saetre and Willars, 2002). There should be a selection policy to ensure balance in the distribution of the library materials. In purchasing books the subject teachers should be involved to suggest relevant books in their subject areas. Since one of the essential features of any effective library is the content and quality of its stock; it is recommended that the school library be stocked with relevant books to reflect

the school curriculum; and as much as possible to cover all the subjects taught in the school. The library would be more useful to students if the school library provided materials relevant to their studies. William et al. (2002) identify factors that makes an effective school library among them is library resources which they argue make a significant impact on students learning. The researcher recommends also that booklists relevant to the curriculum should be given to donors who wish to purchase books for the library. This will ensure that books donated will be useful and well utilised by teachers and students.

### ***Finances***

The researcher suggests that a percentage of the school fees be ring-fenced for a library budget thus ensuring that the collection can be maintained and the library and it furniture and facilities be kept in good repair. Past students of the school should be encouraged to contribute to the library fund. There should be a fund-raising committee to solicit funds from companies, institutions, both local and international organizations such as Rotary clubs and embassies to support the school library. The committee can write to these organizations outlining the needs of the school library, for example appealing for a new library block, books, and computers. The library cannot function well without a budget. Schultz-Jones and Oberg (2015: 23) in the IFLA School Library Guidelines comment that it is necessary for a school library to have an appreciable budget to effectively maintain the library.

### ***Creating awareness***

There should be public education on the importance of libraries in general and school libraries in particular. Public education can be done by organizing seminars, symposia and television and radio programs and the writing of feature articles in the newspapers. Exhibitions are also avenues to create public awareness. These activities can be organized by the Ghana Library Authority in conjunction with the Ghana Library Association. The

public may be willing to give financial support to develop school libraries when they become aware of the importance of libraries. The library committee should write letters to the local governments and all stakeholders to appeal for assistance for school libraries in their localities.

### ***The use of the school library***

It is suggested that teachers should encourage and promote the use of libraries among students. This can be achieved by the school instituting a library week celebration where teachers give talks on the importance of using libraries and sharing their experiences in the use of the school libraries in their school days and now. In a research conducted by Schroeder on developing a culture of reading in middle school, she indicated the importance of literacy skills on students' academic performance and how as a classroom teacher, she has inculcated reading in the students by willingly sharing her experiences as well as introducing a variety of interesting books to them (Schroeder, 2010: 1). Schroeder notes that most of the students became excited and hooked to reading. During the library week teachers should organize „reading clinics“ for those who cannot read well. The school should have reading clubs and organize other library events such as story reading from interesting books, students can be asked to narrate the story.

According to Baird (1994: 67) library events such as story hour where the teacher reads portions of an interesting book or a chapter to students for them to continue reading the entire book; or a short passage from a local newspaper or magazine be read to students for them to discuss and draw lessons from the passage they have read encourage students to read. New books should be displayed at the entrance of the library to attract teachers and students to the library. This will create the awareness of types of materials available in the library. In addition, a new book list must be compiled from time to time and displayed on

notice boards, staff common room and in the library. Periodically the school should organize book fairs where publishers display their books thus attracting students wanting to search for these books in the library to read. Furthermore, during parent teacher association meetings parents must be encouraged to ensure their children use the library extensively to enhance their academic work.

### ***Library rules and regulations***

Occasionally rules and regulations of the library must be read to students to remind them of what they should or should not do; for example, handling of books should be the greatest concern. Measures must be put in place to prevent students stealing, mutilating or handling library materials recklessly. This will ensure the longevity of these materials for others to use and enjoy.

### ***Lending services***

It is highly recommended that students be encouraged to borrow books at the end of the week and that students should be allowed to borrow books over the vacation to read and develop their reading skills which invariably will enhance their academic performance.

It is the hope of the researcher that the above recommendations would help to promote the use of libraries in schools to foster better learning.

## **5.5 Recommendations for further research**

This study was restricted to just one school library, Achimota Basic School (ABS) and since there are other schools in the Accra metropolis that have libraries further research can be conducted to find out the situation concerning the role of libraries in the academic life of students. The researcher again recommends that another study be done on perceptions of

teachers in other schools with libraries; about the influence that the school library resources have on their teaching. Finally the researcher suggests that further work could be done on two public basic schools - one with library and one without library and compare the findings between the two schools; Conclusions that will be made can serve as evidence for the school authorities, Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to take decisions on libraries in basic schools.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### ***STUDENTS***

1. Could you mention the name of your school?
2. What is your name?
3. In which class are you?
4. How often do you visit the school library?
5. What do you do when you go to the library?
6. What benefit do you derived from using the school library resources?
7. Does your teacher normally direct you to the library for further reading?
8. Any comments?

#### ***TEACHERS***

1. Why do you think it is necessary to have a school library in this school?
2. Do you use the school library? How often?
3. Does the school library help in your work? Please explain your answer.
4. Do you collaborate with the school librarian in your teaching?
5. Does the school library support teaching and learning of your school? If so, how?
6. What else do you use the library for?

## **APPENDIX II**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS**

1. Do you think it is necessary to have a library? If yes why do you think so?
2. Do you use the school library? If yes how often?
3. Why do you use the library?
4. Have you ever been taught how to use the library? If so, who taught you?
5. What do you do if you are not able to find the book you want?
6. What type of books do you usually look for in the library?
7. Do you like reading in the library? If so, why?
8. Can you mention some of the books you have read from the school library?
9. Does your teacher normally direct you to the library for further reading?
10. Do you use the school library resources to do your project work?
11. Do your teacher and the librarian support you in your project work?
12. Does the librarian help you to read?
13. Do you have any challenges in using the library?
14. What else do you do at the library?
15. Any other comments?

## **APPENDIX III**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

1. What subject do you teach?
2. What in your opinion is the role of the school library?
3. Do you visit the library? If yes how often?
4. What are the types of collections are in the library?
5. Do you refer students to use materials in the library for further reading in your subject?
6. Does the library have the necessary materials to facilitate your work?
7. Are you involved in the selection of books in the library?
8. Are you allowed to borrow books from the library?
9. Do you use the school library when preparing your lessons?
10. Do you see any improvement in students learning as they use the school library resources?
11. In your own assessment is the school library playing any role in teaching and learning of this school?
- 12.** Any other comment?

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADMISTRESS**

1. Do you think it is important to have a library in this school?
2. Can you tell me the genesis of this Library
3. How are books acquired for the library?
4. Is there a budget for the school library?
5. Who does the selection of the library collections?
6. Do you visit the library? If yes how often?
7. Do you use the library materials?
8. What kinds of materials are stocked in the library?
9. Which of the library resources do you use?
10. Does the library have the necessary materials to facilitate academic work in the school?
11. Do you think students can improve their learning through the use of the school library?
12. In your own assessment is the school library playing a role in teaching and learning of this school?
13. Are you satisfied with the state of the library? If No how would you want it to be?
- 14. Any other comment?**

## **APPENDIX V**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARIAN**

Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Qualification:

1. How many years have you been in charge of the school library?
2. Have you had any previous experience in running a school library? Yes [ ] No [ ]
3. If yes, how many years?
4. What are your functions as a librarian?
5. How do you help students when they visit the library?
6. How many students can the library accommodate at a time?
7. What types of books are stocked in the library?
8. Apart from books what other learning materials can be found in the library?
9. How are library resources acquired?
10. Do you have an acquisition policy?
11. If so, are library materials acquired according to the acquisition policy?
12. Do you have an accession register?
13. How often do you purchase books for the library?
14. Are there other means by which the library is stocked?
15. How many computers are in the library? Are they connected to the internet?
16. What classification scheme do you use?

17. What are the opening and closing hours of the library?
18. How often do the students use the library?
19. What do students mostly do when they visit the library?
20. Is the library meeting the educational needs of students?
21. Do you plan programs for students? Yes [  ] No [  ]
22. If yes, what programs do you plan for the students?
23. Is there any collaboration between you and the class teachers?
24. If yes, what do you collaborate on?
25. Do teachers use the library?
26. For what purpose do teachers use the library?
27. In your opinion do you think the library plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process in this school?
28. What challenges do you face as a librarian in this school?
29. Any comments?

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **OBSERVATION CHECK LIST**

The check list was used on ABS school library based on the objectives of the study.

#### A. Infrastructure/ Environment

- Location of the library block
- Arrangement of furniture
- Condition of the furniture
- Adequacy of furniture
- The nature of the room
- The environment

#### B. Staffing

- Number of staff
- Staff qualification
- Attitude of staff

#### C. The library collections

##### General outlook of the library

- Arrangement of books on the shelves
- Types of books
- Ratio between fiction/non fiction
- Are books appropriate for their age?
- Does the resource cover all the subjects taught in the class?

- Reference materials
- Currency of the books
- Organization of collection
- Computers
- How many computers?
- Audio visuals materials
  - Journals, magazines, news papers