

**INVESTIGATION ON UTILIZATION OF REFERENCE MATERIALS AND  
SERVICES BY STUDENTS IN SELECTED ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN  
TANZANIA**

**WILSON MSOGOLWA**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (MLIM)  
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND LIBRARY STUDIES  
OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

**2024**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for examination by The Open University of Tanzania a research report entitled: *“Investigation on the Utilization of Reference Materials and Services by Students in Selected Academic Libraries in Tanzania”*, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Library and Information Management (MLIM) of the Open University of Tanzania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liliane', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr. Lilian Isowe

(Supervisor)

.....

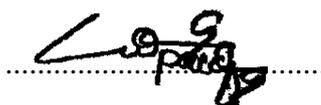
Date

### **COPYRIGHT**

This research report is protected by copyright. No portion of this work may be copied, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any format or by any method without obtaining prior written consent from the author or The Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

### DECLARATION

I, **Wilson Msogolwa**, declare that this research report is my own original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other university for a similar or any other degree award. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Library and Information Management (MLIM) of the Open University of Tanzania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wilson Msogolwa', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Signature

.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very thankful to God for enabling me to carry out this research successfully. “Many hands make light work”. Just like the proverb many people have given their time and contribution towards the completion of this work. Without their support it would have been impossible to accomplish this dissertation. I would therefore, like to take this opportunity to pass my sincere thanks to all those who in one way or another contributed to the successful completion of this work.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Lilian D. Isowe for her encouragement and support throughout this dissertation. Her patience, advice and guidance greatly helped me to accomplish my study. To her I say thank you very much and God bless her abundantly. I would also like to thank the Open University of Tanzania and University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) respondents who participated in this study, I am truly grateful, for without their participation, this study would not have been possible.

Last but not least, My special thanks goes to my loving wife, Fortunata Samwel and our children Juliana, Eunice and Aron for the patience, love, understanding, and support they accorded me during the entire time of this study. May God grant each one of you the desire of your heart for you stood and believed in me against many odds enabling me to accomplish so much.

Finally, my acknowledgment goes to my fellow MLIM students for their encouragement and support throughout my studies. Since it is not possible to

mention every person who participated to the success of this work using this limited space, I would like to thank all other people who are not listed above but in one way or another enabled the success of this study, to all of them I say thank you very much and almighty God bless you abundantly.

**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the utilization of reference materials and services by students at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). The specific objectives include determining students' awareness of the availability of reference materials and services, assessing their perceptions towards these resources, evaluating the extent of utilization, identifying challenges faced in accessing and using reference materials and providing recommendations for improvement. The study employed descriptive research design and adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study population comprised 25100 students and library staff and a sample size of 394. The study data was collected using questionnaire and supplemented by interview guide. The findings revealed a high level of awareness among students, primarily due to orientation and information literacy programs. Various reference materials such as almanacs, dictionaries, and internet facilities were reported available, with overall satisfaction expressed regarding service quality. However, students highlighted challenges such as inadequate internet facilities, limited copies of resources, and technological barriers affecting their utilization of reference materials and services. The study recommends enhancing user education, regularly updating materials, improving digital access, and expanding interlibrary loan services to address these issues and enhance the availability and usability of reference materials and services in academic libraries.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CERTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>COPYRIGHT .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	2
1.3 General objective of the Study .....	3
1.3.1 Specific Objectives.....	3
1.4 Research Questions .....	4
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	4
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	5
1.7 Limitation of the Study .....	6
1.7.1 Poor Cooperation.....	6
1.7.2 Shortage of Funds.....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>8</b>

<b>LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.0 Introduction .....	8
2.1 Definition of Key Terms .....	8
2.1.1 Utilization.....	8
2.1.2 Reference Materials.....	8
2.1.3 Reference Services .....	9
2.1.4 Academic Library.....	9
2.2 Type of Reference Materials and Services.....	9
2.2.1 Reference Materials.....	9
2.2.2 Reference Services .....	11
2.3 The Awareness of Students on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	13
2.4 Perception of Students towards Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	15
2.5 The Students' Level of Utilization of Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	17
2.6 Challenges inhibit Students in Utilizing References Materials and Services.....	19
2.7 Conceptual Framework .....	22
2.7.1 Awareness .....	23
2.7.2 Perception.....	23
2.7.3 Level of Utilization .....	23
2.7.4 Challenges in Utilization.....	24
2.8 Research Gap.....	24

<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.0 Introduction .....	26
3.1 Research Design .....	26
3.2 Research Approach .....	26
3.3 Study Area.....	27
3.4 Population of the Study .....	28
3.5 Sampling Techniques .....	29
3.5.1 Purposive Sampling Technique.....	29
3.5.2 Simple Random Techniques.....	30
3.6 Sample Size .....	30
3.7 Data Collection Methods.....	31
3.7.1 Primary Data .....	31
3.7.2 Secondary Data .....	31
3.8 Data Collection Instruments.....	32
3.8.1 Questionnaire .....	32
3.8.2 Interview Guide.....	33
3.9 Ethical Consideration .....	33
3.10 Data Analysis .....	34
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
4.0 Introduction .....	35
4.1 Responses Rate.....	35
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.....	35

4.2.1	Distribution of Respondents by Gender .....	36
4.2.2	Distribution of Respondents by Age .....	37
4.2.3	Distribution of Respondents by Education Level .....	38
4.3	The Awareness of Students on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	39
4.3.1	Awareness about Availability of Reference Materials and Services .....	39
4.3.2	How Students become Aware on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services .....	41
4.3.3	Reference Materials and Services Available in the Library.....	43
4.3.3.1	Reference Services Available at UDSM & OUT .....	45
4.4	The Perceptions of Students towards Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	48
4.5	Reference Materials and Services most utilized by Students while Accessing Information in the Libraries .....	52
4.5.1	How often Respondents use Available Reference Materials and Services in their Library .....	52
4.5.2	Purpose on the Use of Available Reference Materials and Services .....	53
4.6	The Challenges inhibiting Students in Utilizing Reference Materials and Services in the Library .....	55
4.6.1	Whether there is any Challenge when using References Materials and Services in Library .....	55
4.6.2	Challenges when using References Materials and Services in the Library .....	56
4.6.3	Suggestions for Improving Availability and Usage/Utilization	

of References Materials and Services .....	59
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.0 Overview .....	62
5.1 Summary of Key Findings .....	62
5.1.1 Awareness of Reference Materials and Services .....	62
5.1.2 Perceptions towards Reference Materials and Services.....	62
5.1.3 Utilization of Reference Materials and Services.....	62
5.1.4 Challenges Inhibiting Utilization of Reference Materials and Services .....	63
5.1.5 Suggestions for Improvement .....	63
5.2 Conclusion.....	63
5.3 Recommendations .....	64
5.4 Areas for Further Research .....	65
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>72</b>

### LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Distribution of Respondents by Age at UDSM & OUT (n=184).....	37
Table 4.2:	Distribution of Respondents by Education level at UDSM & OUT ..	38
Table 4.3:	How Respondents became aware about the Availability of Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184).....	41
Table 4.4:	Reference Materials Available at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	43
Table 4.5:	Reference Services Available at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	45
Table 4.6:	Perception towards the reference services in library at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	49
Table 4.7:	How Often respondents use Available Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	52
Table 4.8:	Whether there is any Challenge when Using References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	56
Table 4.9:	Challenges when using References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=106) .....	57
Table 4.10:	Suggestions for Improving Availability of References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184) .....	59

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 2.1:	Conceptual Framework .....	22
Figure 4.1:	Distribution of Respondents by Gender at UDSM & OUT (n=184)..	36
Figure 4.2:	Awareness of the Availability of Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184).....	39
Figure 4.3:	Purpose on the Use of Available Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n-184).....	53

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ACRL	Association of College and Research Libraries
MLIM	Master Degree of Library and Information Management
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, Limitations of the study and the definitions of important key terms.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Reference service is one of the important patterns of serving readers in modern libraries. It was put forward the first time by Samuel Swett Green who was the curator of Worcester Public Library of Massachusetts in 1876. Then Reference Service was accepted by the libraries all over the world. In 1928, the reference service of the National Library of China was set up under the auspices of the Council for Intellectual Education Assistance of the League of Nations. At the beginning, the reference service was scattered in the Reading Department, Index Department and Research Department. The mission of the reference service was to provide reference service domestically and internationally, compile bibliographies, collect materials for clients and guide reading directly and indirectly. These bibliographies, replies and materials would be collected and cataloged in a reading room and then could be used by readers. The Research Department also compiled many useful reference materials (Makinde, Aba & Ugah, 2017).

Lots have been said by various researchers like Martins (2009) and Mohamed (2012) on references services and utilization of reference materials in Academic Libraries

and most of which gave declining statements on the users of reference services. The extent of utilization of library and reference materials depends on the relevance, comprehensiveness and scope of the library collection. Poor quality of reference materials has negative effects on reference service to users and most Academic libraries have limited access to modern Information and Communication Technology facilities and this makes it difficult for teachers and students to keep abreast with current developments in their academic lines. It is obvious that, there is the need to induce high staff morale, reasonable workplace and user friendly environment as a matter of urgency to enhance quality reference services without which there will be no proper utilization of the reference materials. This is because; decrease in utilization of reference resources was as a result of non-availability of the required books, library catalogue and, outdated materials (Makinde, Aba & Ugah, 2017).

Early in 21st century, it is difficult to imagine a library without reference service. From the Library of Congress to the smallest one-room, one-person school library, reference service and reference materials are ingrained as an expected part of what reference department provide. With the increasing complexity and quantity of information available in and through libraries, users need ever more assistance in identifying, retrieving, and evaluating the specific information that fits their needs. In other words, they need help. This is what reference librarians do (Bopp, 2011).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A reference service is essential for assisting users in locating the information they need. As noted by Elmer (2018), these services can vary significantly between

libraries, but most include a dedicated Information or Reference Desk where librarians offer assistance. Libraries today extend their reference services beyond the physical desk, utilizing telephone, email, text, and chat platforms to connect users with reference librarians. Despite the importance of these services, many libraries face challenges in providing adequate reference materials and support to their users. Research, such as that by Onifade and Sowole (2011), indicates that a significant number of students are unaware of the reference materials and services available to them.

Similarly, studies conducted by Ademodi (2004), as referenced by Ogunniyi, Efosa, and Sheji (2013), found that many library users are not informed about the offerings of the reference section, leading to underutilization of these valuable resources. In Tanzania, there has been limited research on how students engage with reference materials and services in academic libraries. That's why this study seeks to investigate the Utilization of Reference Materials and Services in Selected academic libraries in Tanzania.

### **1.3 General objective of the Study**

The General objective of this Study was to investigate the Utilization of Reference Materials and Services in Selected academic libraries in Tanzania.

#### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To determine the awareness of student's on the availability of reference materials and services in the library

- ii. To determine the perception of students towards reference materials and services in the library
- iii. To ascertain Students' Level of Utilization of Reference materials and services.
- iv. To Identify Challenges inhibit Students in Utilizing References materials and services.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

To address the stated objectives, the study was guided by following research questions:

- i. What was the degree of awareness of students on the availability of reference materials and services in the library?
- ii. What were the perceptions of students towards reference materials and services in the library?
- iii. What is the level of utilization of reference materials and services by students?
- iv. What Challenges inhibit Students from Utilizing reference materials and services in the library?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study investigates the utilization of reference materials and services in selected academic libraries in Tanzania, focusing on its significance to students, library management, and national stakeholders. To students, this study aims to raise awareness about the abundance of reference materials in libraries and the importance of utilizing these resources for academic pursuits. The recommendations derived from the study are expected to enhance students' utilization of library resources, thereby improving their academic outcomes. To library staff and librarians, the

recommendations made are expected to guide them on how best they can improve access and utilization of reference materials and services by students.

Furthermore; it is expected to enable them to draw conclusions about how they could assist students to make more use of the library services available. Also the study helps them in identifying challenges in the provision of library services to students, facilitating the development of effective solutions to enhance service delivery. It also creates awareness among library management regarding the specific challenges students encounter while utilizing reference materials, thereby informing strategic improvements in library services. To researchers; the study enriches the existing literature and knowledge base on reference materials and service in academic libraries in Tanzania. Policy-makers can benefit from the findings by using them to inform policies related to the acquisition and management of library resources, ensuring that libraries are adequately equipped to support educational goals effectively.

Lastly, the findings can guide the acquisition units of libraries in determining which resources to prioritize based on student needs and usage patterns, thus optimizing resource allocation and enhancing overall library effectiveness.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study explores the utilization of reference materials and services in academic libraries in Tanzania, focusing on two distinct educational settings: the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). UDSM

represents a traditional, campus-based university environment, while OUT specializes in distance learning, catering to students who primarily study remotely without physical attendance on campus. By comparing utilization patterns between UDSM and OUT, the study aims to provide insights into how different educational settings influence the use of library resources. It seeks to uncover factors such as access to physical facilities, technological infrastructure, and support services that impact students' ability to utilize reference materials effectively.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The researcher faced the following limitations:

#### **1.7.1 Poor Cooperation**

Poor cooperation from some respondents, who was unwilling or hesitant to participate in interviews, poses a potential challenge to the study. This reluctance stem from various reasons, such as time constraints or lack of interest. To address this limitation, the researcher implemented proactive measures to encourage participation and cooperation. Firstly, a close follow-up was conducted with respondents who have not yet completed their questionnaires, provided gentle reminders and clarified the importance of their input to the study. Additionally, the researcher took time to personally explain the purpose and significance of the study to each respondent, emphasizing the value of their contribution and addressing any concerns or reservations they may have. By fostering open communication and building rapport with respondents, the researcher aims to enhance cooperation and maximize participation rates.

### **1.7.2 Shortage of Funds**

The study faced a shortage of funds, as the budget initially estimated not accurately reflect the actual costs required to effectively and efficiently conduct the research. This discrepancy between the budget and actual expenses posed a challenge to the implementation of the study. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher carefully reassessed the research schedule and proposed budget, identifying areas where unnecessary expenditures can be reduced or eliminated. By prioritizing essential expenses and optimizing resource allocation, the researcher made the most efficient use of available funds without compromising the quality or integrity of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter contains the reviewed literatures from other scholars about reference materials and services, and is also based in the specific objectives of this study; which are the Awareness and perceptions of students towards reference materials and services, Level of Utilization of Reference Materials and Services, Challenges hindering Students in Utilizing reference materials and services; Conceptual Framework and research gap.

#### **2.1 Definition of Key Terms**

##### **2.1.1 Utilization**

Utilization is the degree whereby people use a system or a product to successful completion of the task for which was employed (Auman & Laspinas, 2015). In context of this study utilization is the use of reference materials and library services to students.

##### **2.1.2 Reference Materials**

References are a variety of sources that provide background information and brief facts about a particular topic. However, they are not meant to be read from cover to cover. There are different types of reference materials such as Almanac, Atlas, Bibliography, Biographical Resources, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias (General and Subject), Handbooks, Indexes, Statistics, Citation Guide (Luban, 2007).

### **2.1.3 Reference Services**

Reference Services are services that are offered by the reference unit of the library. The services that are rendered to the users normally depend on the type of library and the objectives of the parent organization (Nwalo, 2003). common reference services include; Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Current Awareness Service (CAS), Referrals (Rr), Interlibrary Loan (ILL), Documentary Delivery (DD), Electronic Delivery (e.g. Use of Internet, Telex etc).

### **2.1.4 Academic Library**

An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution and serves two complementary purposes: to support the curriculum, and to support the research of the university faculty and students.

## **2.2 Type of Reference Materials and Services**

### **2.2.1 Reference Materials**

According to Nwaigwe & Onwuama (2007), every book in the library can be consulted or referred to from time to time but the reference materials are not like monographs because they cannot be read through, rather they are consulted for specific pieces of facts or information. Reference materials are organised and kept in the reference section of the library for easier access to them and convenience. Reference materials always contain relevant, genuine, accurate, authentic, and reliable information compared to other library materials (Makinde, Aba & Ugah, 2017). Specifically, reference materials are library information materials irrespective formats that can be used to provide relevant answers to queries and different

information needs of library patrons (Aboyade & Aboyade, 2017). Ogbuiyi (2015) considered reference materials as any kind of publication from which authoritative, reliable, and trustworthy information can be obtained. These materials include encyclopaedia, dictionaries, directories, abstract and indexes, handbooks, manuals, biographies, bibliographies, atlases & maps, catalogue records and the likes. On the other hand, reference services are conceptualized as direct and indirect assistance rendered by reference librarian and library personnel to library patron seeking for any kind of meaningful information for personal consumption (Qobose & Mologanyi, 2015).

According to Okunade (2016) reference materials are specially compiled to provide answers to any type of queries that might be raised by the use of the library. This however will help in improving the academic performance of the user, are designed for the treatment of its subject matters to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively. Chukwuemeka and Oriogu-Ogunbiyi (2020) assessed faculty awareness, perception and use of information materials and services in a private university in Nigeria and reported a higher degree of awareness and utilization among the respondents.

In another vein, Otonekwu et al (2019) evaluated usage of reference sources and services among students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria and revealed high level of utilization of reference materials and services. Findings also revealed that dictionaries, bibliographies, yearbooks, handbooks, geographical sources, biographical sources, index and abstracts, current awareness services,

selective dissemination of information, reprographic services are the major reference materials and services available to the students. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents do not have access to bibliographies, manuals, handbooks, encyclopedias, and directories.

### **2.2.2 Reference Services**

The mission and goals of academic institutions can partly be achieved through provisions of effective and efficient reference materials and services of libraries. This is because reference services of libraries serve to educate and assist patrons in sourcing for accurate reference information that are needed for teaching, learning and research without much delay (Quadri & Abiodun, 2017; IFLA, 2019).

Reference service is an integral part of any library aimed at educating users on the use of reference materials to help them get factual information at the possible best way and at the right time. Awodoyin and Aina (2018) defined reference services as precise services personalized towards the information. Reference services are also regarded as seen as the personal assistance rendered by the reference librarian to library users in pursuit of information (Otonekwu et al, 2019). He referred to reference services as ongoing processes that involve assisting people in filling gaps in knowledge and solving problems. In essence, it is considered as the process of assisting library patrons to solve desired information needs and problems. Thus, Tofi, Agada and Okafor (2020) indicated that the benefit of reference resources and services is that it provides personalized assistance to library users in accessing suitable information resources to meet their needs.

Reference service also involves “determining information needs and understanding their context. Additionally, this involves working with individuals that “have difficulty articulating or even understanding their own information needs. Reference librarians then use a variety of search techniques and their skill in identifying sources to assist the users with the aim of ultimately empowering them to be able to do more themselves later (Otonekwu, Oyedokun, Komolafe & Adewara, 2019).

Reference services are all the functions performed by a trained librarian employed in the reference section of a library to meet the information needs of patrons (in person, by telephone, or electronically), including but not limited to answering substantive questions, instructing users in the selection and use of appropriate tools and techniques for finding information, conducting searches on behalf of the patron, directing users to the library resources, assisting in evaluation of information, referring patrons to resources outside the library when appropriate, keeping reference statistics, and participating in the development of reference collection Ogbuiyi (2015).

Ankrah and Atuase (2018) add that, reference services include various forms of current awareness and selective dissemination of information services aimed at keeping the users abreast of the latest developments in their areas of interest. The primary aim of the library is to offer a variety of services to its clientele to meet their specific information requirements. Several techniques of the library such as classification, cataloguing, shelving lists, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), open access to its readers and similar other types of services are all indirect form of

assistance to users to find their document in the library. One of the basic objectives of every library and information centre is to save the time of the user as well as to provide specific information as quickly as possible.

### **2.3 The Awareness of Students on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services in the Library**

Awareness means the ability to know or realize the existence of a thing. Awareness is knowledge about something that exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience. When users become aware of library services that is when they can make use of it. This implies that if there is no awareness of library services, there will be no use as well (Suleiman, Rajeev, & Hassana, 2018).

Ogbuiyi (2015) examine a study on availability and use of reference sources and services in Babcock University Library. The study revealed that reference sources are highly available, accessible and adequate, except year books, bibliographies and biographies that are not available, accessible and adequate. Ademodi (2015) conducted a study on awareness and use of reference sources by undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University Library. The findings revealed that majority of the undergraduate students are aware of reference sources, however the rate of use of reference sources, is significantly low.

Ankrah and Atuase (2018) assert that, awareness of information resources in libraries by users is an issue of much concern, though availability may not be a guarantee to

complete usage. Therefore, optimum utilization of information resources by users depends on the awareness of the resources. The implication of this is that every living library should have patronage at least through the reference section since a unit in the reference section, all things being equal, takes library services to the potential users. Gone are the days when reference librarians were said to be polymath by the library users. Library users' behavior is shifting from a passive learning pattern to an active one in which customers want simple, helpful self-service and personal help only at times of greatest need.

Ademodi (2015) examined level of awareness and utilisation of reference sources among students in Adekunle Ajasin University Library, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria. The author concluded that the high level of awareness positively influenced the level of utilization of the library reference materials. Ogbuiyi (2015) examine a study on availability and use of reference sources and services in Babcock University Library. The study revealed that reference sources are highly available, accessible and adequate, except year books, bibliographies and biographies that are not available, accessible and adequate. Ademodi (2015) conducted a study on awareness and use of reference sources by undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University Library. The findings revealed that majority of the undergraduate students are aware of reference sources, however the rate of use of reference sources, is significantly low.

Okorafor et al (2017) utilization of reference materials and services within the library environment depend on a lot of factors and of which student's level of awareness take paramount position. Equally, findings were in line with that of Ademodi (2015)

which found that the level of awareness of reference materials and services among undergraduates influences their level of utilization of reference materials and services.

Tofi et al, 2020) Similarly, studies that made use of more than one or two institutions Awareness and Utilization of Reference Materials and Services Among Undergraduates. To justify the need for further procurement and acquisition of more reference materials required to assist students in performing well academically, there is the need for an improved level of awareness among undergraduates towards effective utilization of reference materials and services.

#### **2.4 Perception of Students towards Reference Materials and Services in the Library**

The essential role 21st -century academic library plays, specifically university libraries to hold up research, teaching, and learning in the higher institutions cannot be overlooked. To realize this, university libraries provide modern infrastructure, information resources, and services to enhance students' academic activities and pursuit in this technology age. Kiriri (2018) suggested that libraries as service providers need to anticipate the needs of their users and demonstrate results to present library users, for continuity as reliable service providers.

Karim (2018) opined that effective library service will be ensured by knowing users 'demand and their satisfaction to library performance and serving them as their demand. It is the duty of the library professional to conduct periodic study of library

users to know the users' needs, satisfaction with library available resources and services. The researcher assessed the reference services in the colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria through the perception of the students in the two colleges. The study also found out if the perception determines whether the students would use the library or not.

A study conducted by David-West and Owate (2019) reference services and survey of user's satisfaction in academic libraries. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between reference services and users' satisfaction. Razaq and Olaleye (2017) conducted a study on availability and use of reference sources and services. The study revealed that majority of the respondents indicate that reference sources are highly available, accessible and adequate, except geographical sources and biographical sources that are not available, accessible and adequate.

Karim (2018) posited that libraries should often conduct surveys of their users to determine their satisfaction with library services, either overall system or with specific types of interactions (interlibrary loan, reference service etc). This is important because if a library user was frustrated the last time he or she used the library, such user may not want to use the library again. More so, that there is another option that offers the same service with relative ease and efficiency. Non satisfaction of library services might be responsible for the nature of library patronage observed in this part of the world.

A study by Ankrah and Atuase (2018) also revealed that most postgraduate students rather preferred to access information from Google scholar, and other web-based

databases more frequently than the databases in the library or through posing queries to the reference librarian. This could be an indication that they are not satisfied with the reference services for whatever reason. According to Nyantakyi (2016), “If the service provided in university libraries meets users’ information needs or expectations, it can be considered that there is quality service when the information meets users’ needs and expectations and used by them”. In this regard, quality service (QS) is the standard of library services as measured against users’ needs or expectations.

### **2.5 The Students’ Level of Utilization of Reference Materials and Services in the Library**

An institution may have the best stocked libraries; the utilization of the libraries by the students nonetheless need not simply depend on the number of books and journals in the library. Many factors like personal preferences, the general environment in the library, inconveniences of the working hours, distance from the place of residence etc may influence the use of the library. The effectiveness of a library as an instrument of learning is determined by the success with which it is able to provide the user with the information that he/she seeks (Ayan, Jhilli, Vidyabrat, & Ram, 2015).

Ogbuiyi (2015) assessed the availability and use of reference sources and services among undergraduates in Babcock University. The author reported that dictionaries, encyclopaedia, indexes and abstract, yearbook amongst other were available for usage among undergraduates. Findings further report high level of utilization of

reference sources and services among undergraduates. Okorafor et al. (2017) assessed knowledge and use of reference and information services among library users in university libraries in two states in Nigeria. The study revealed that the undergraduates exhibited high levels of knowledge of and utilisation of reference and information services.

Doo and Aliyu (2015) assessed public library patron's utilization of reference resources and services in Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the descriptive statistics revealed that the library users made use of reference materials to a high extent for courses and research work. The respondents signified high level of satisfaction with the services provided to them by the library. Ademodi (2015) examined level of awareness and utilization of reference sources among students in Adekunle Ajasin University Library, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria. The author concluded that the high level of awareness positively influenced the level of utilization of the library reference materials. Ogbuiyi (2015) assessed the availability and use of reference sources and services among undergraduates in Babcock University. The author reported that dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes and abstract, yearbook amongst other were available for usage among undergraduates. Findings further report high level of utilization of reference sources and services among undergraduates.

Okorafor, Ariole and Anyalebechi (2017) examined awareness and perception of reference services by undergraduates of University of Agriculture Abeokuta. Findings reported that reference material and services were available for usage among undergraduates. Findings further showed that encyclopedias, dictionaries are

the most useful reference materials among undergraduates. Olajide and Otunla (2015) investigated reference sources and services use among students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the students demonstrated high level of knowledge and utilization of what reference materials and services are all about.

### **2.6 Challenges inhibit Students in Utilizing References Materials and Services**

Makinde et al (2017) investigated references resources accessibility and utilization among fisheries undergraduates in university libraries in North Central, Nigeria and discovered low level of utilization of reference material among undergraduates. Inadequate trained reference staff, obsolete reference materials and time spent in the library searching for relevant reference materials constituted major challenges towards utilization of reference materials and services. Similarly, Oriogu, Findings further indicated that non-participation of students in orientation programmes, inadequacy of reference information sources, lack of space/location of reference unit and poor communication skills of library staff constituted challenges to the undergraduates' level of awareness and utilization of reference and information services.

Furthermore, Tofi et al (2020) assessed digital reference resources and services utilization among postgraduates in Benue State University, Nigeria and reported low level of utilization of digital reference services in the state university libraries. In the other studies done by Mamo and Amidu (2016) found that lack of current information resources and improper shelving of information resources is the major

factors hindering the effective use of library resources. Olajide and Otunla (2015) findings show that the major challenge faced by respondents is lack of time. The study of Barfi, Afful-Arthur and Agyupong (2018) indicated that, non-involvement of lecturers in book collection development exercise, few current titles and poor library instruction.

Buhari, (2016) noted inadequacy of facilities for use by users, research library inability to stay connected to the Internet, poor computer communication systems and poor bandwidth leading to poor utilization of these resources were some of the constraints to library information resources and services utilization. From the reviewed literatures, it observed that many challenges were postgraduate students in the course of their research activities confront many challenges which include: lack of current and up-to-date books and journals, poor infrastructure (electricity), lack of recent versions of the journal, lack of ineffective Inter-library loan system. In spite of the importance associated with reference materials coupled with the huge cost of purchase and the amount of time and effort required in delivering qualitative reference services, most library patrons still do not make adequate use of these resources and services.

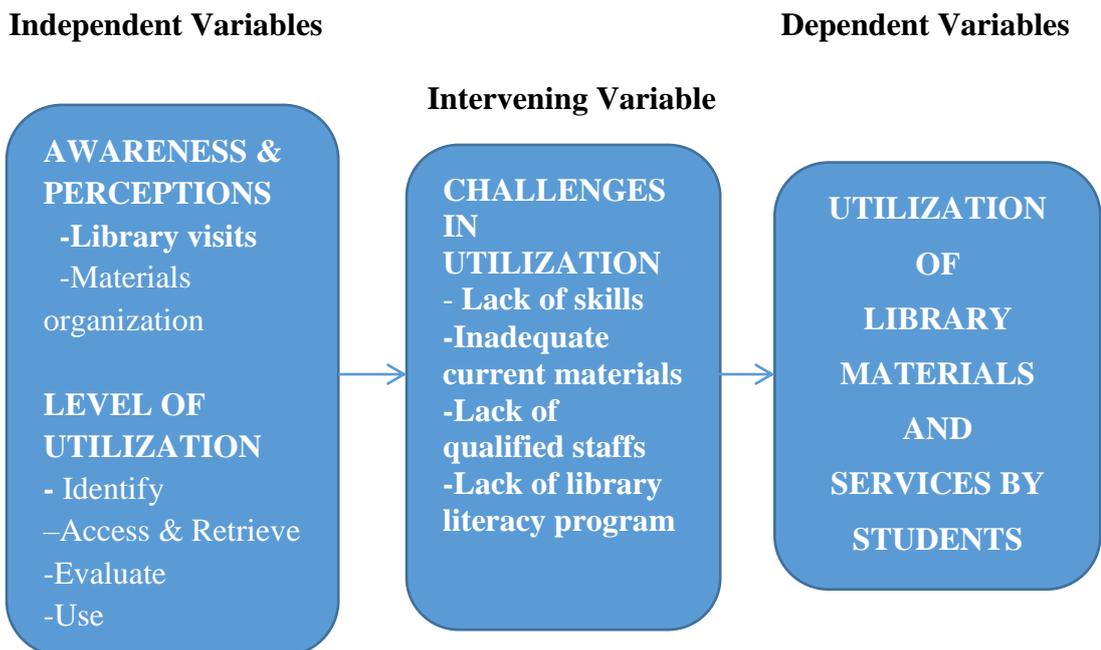
Okorafor, Ariole and Anyalebechi (2017) attributed poor use of reference collections and services to poor or low level of awareness about the existence and poor knowledge about the importance of the collections to users, identified obsolescence and irrelevancy of the reference collections in meeting information demands of patron and concluded that most library patrons are ignorant of the fact that reference materials and services are readily available for their consumption.

Okorafor et al. (2017) also assessed in knowledge and use of reference and information services among library users in university libraries in two states in Nigeria. The study revealed that the undergraduates exhibited high levels of knowledge of and utilization of reference and information services. Findings further indicated that non-participation of students in orientation programmes, inadequacy of reference information sources, lack of space/location of reference unit and poor communication skills of library staff constituted challenges to the undergraduates' level of awareness and utilization of reference and information services.

In another vein, Otonekwu et al (2019) evaluated usage of reference sources and services among students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria and revealed high level of utilization of reference sources and services. Findings also revealed that dictionaries, bibliographies, yearbooks, handbooks, geographical sources, biographical sources, index and abstracts, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, reprographic services are the major reference sources and services available to the students. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents do not have access to bibliographies, manuals, handbooks, encyclopedias, and directories. Findings further revealed that inadequate and obsolete reference materials, lack of reference librarian, poor infrastructural facilities, and absent of internet facilities amongst others constituted challenges to students while seeking reference sources. Tofi et al (2020) assessed digital reference resources and services utilization among postgraduates in Benue State University, Nigeria and reported low level of utilization of digital reference services in the state university libraries.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

The use of library materials in academic libraries is a process of initiation, selection, formulation, collection, and preservation (Kulthau (1991)). During this process, information seekers range from hope and satisfaction to confusion and disappointment. Observations show that college students have different backgrounds, and their understanding of information services, resources, and sources influences the search and use of information. The figure 1 illustrates the various components of information environment that contribute to utilization of library reference materials and services.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Researcher 2023

This is a Modified model done by a researcher; it illustrates the various components of information environment that contribute to utilization of reference materials and

services among students; The model idea derived from Kuhlthau's ISP Model (2015) revised edition. In this model, the users' abilities to utilize reference materials and services are cumulative from the lowest-Awareness of the library as a place to support learning activities, to the highest level-Information Literacy where students are able to integrate the various information sources and resources to their learning activities. Information seekers approaching an information system are embedded with the following characteristics:

### **2.7.1 Awareness**

Awareness is to know that something exists or to understand a situation or a subject at current moment found on information/experience. This is a degree in personal characteristics of knowing what a library has in terms of information materials and other reference services available in the library.

### **2.7.2 Perception**

Such personal characteristics of inquirer are explained by the information seeker's familiarity with the library; level of study; relationship of inquiry with what he knows; level of critical awareness. Answers to these questions will determine the urgency of the search, strategy of negotiation, the level of any dialogue, and the critical acceptance of searching results.

### **2.7.3 Level of Utilization**

Libraries are impacted by the ways in which individuals engage with technology; how they seek, access, contribute, and use information; The concept of students'

utilization level can include their choice of an information source, their satisfaction and ease of use with the source, and their allocation of time for information seeking.

#### **2.7.4 Challenges in Utilization**

Challenges in utilization" within the context of academic libraries refer to various obstacles that hinder effective use of resources and services. These challenges encompass issues such as limited access due to restricted availability or inadequate infrastructure, lack of awareness among users about available resources, technological barriers affecting access to digital materials, physical constraints like insufficient copies of books, and delays in service delivery. Additionally, challenges may arise from inadequate user education on resource utilization, institutional policies restricting access, financial constraints impacting resource acquisition, and user preferences influencing utilization patterns. Identifying and addressing these challenges are crucial for enhancing the accessibility, usability, and overall effectiveness of library resources and services to better support academic learning and research needs.

#### **2.8 Research Gap**

Existing studies such as those conducted by David-West & Owate (2019) and Awodoyin & Aina (2018) have explored various aspects of reference services and user satisfaction in academic libraries, primarily within Nigerian contexts. However, there is a notable gap in research focused on the utilization of reference materials and services in Tanzanian academic libraries. These previous studies have largely overlooked the specific dynamics and challenges faced by Tanzanian institutions in

providing and accessing reference materials. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that comprehensively investigates the utilization of reference materials and services by students in academic libraries in Tanzania. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding how different educational settings influence the availability, accessibility, and utilization of library resources. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the utilization of reference materials and services by students in selected academic libraries in Tanzania, aiming to provide insights that can enhance the effectiveness of library services and support academic success in Tanzanian higher education settings.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter includes the study design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection tools, ethical considerations, data processing and analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Kothari (2019) defined descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group, whereas diagnostic research studies determine the frequency with which something occurs or its association with something else.

The study type is descriptive in nature using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A descriptive study involves describing the characteristics of one or limited number of cases, situation or event in terms of respondents' frequency and percentage. Descriptive design allows the researcher to observe measure and analyze data in a systematic manner that lead to a better understanding of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

This study was used quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach to research focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, or trends.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was conducted at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) Library. The selection of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) libraries for this study is based on several reasons:

**Diversity of Student Demographics:** UDSM and OUT cater to diverse student demographics. UDSM attracts a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students across various disciplines, providing insights into the needs and preferences of traditional, campus-based learners. Meanwhile, OUT serves a predominantly mature and working student population engaged in distance learning, offering perspectives on the information-seeking behaviors and challenges of non-traditional students.

**Variety of Learning Environments:** By studying both UDSM and OUT, the research captures a wide spectrum of learning environments. UDSM represents a conventional brick-and-mortar university where students physically attend classes and utilize campus facilities, including libraries. In contrast, OUT operates in a flexible learning model that relies heavily on online and remote access to academic resources, reflecting the evolving landscape of higher education delivery methods.

**Resource Allocation and Management:** Understanding how UDSM and OUT allocate and manage their library resources provide insights into institutional priorities and resource utilization strategies. Differences in resource allocation between the two institutions can shed light on challenges and best practices in library management, influencing future resource acquisition and allocation decisions.

Geographical Proximity: both UDSM and OUT are located in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city and commercial hub. The proximity facilitates efficient data collection and comparison between the two institutions, minimizing logistical challenges and enabling comprehensive analysis of library services within the Tanzanian academic landscape.

### **3.4 Population of the Study**

According to Creswell (2014), the population refers to the entire group from which the researcher selects a sample and to which they wish to generalize study results. For this study, the population comprises students and library staff from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). This selection is significant for several reasons.

Firstly, students and library staff are directly involved in utilizing and managing library resources. Students depend on library services to support their academic endeavors, while library staff plays a crucial role in facilitating access to these resources. By examining both groups, the study gains comprehensive insights from diverse perspectives.

Secondly, UDSM and OUT are prominent educational institutions in Tanzania, encompassing a wide range of student demographics and library workforce. This diversity enables a thorough exploration of effective practices and areas for improvement within library services. The findings from this study expect to inform strategies aimed at enhancing library effectiveness and service delivery across Tanzania, benefiting all users of academic libraries in the country.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling is concerned with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a defined population to estimate characteristics of the entire population. Each individual variable measures one or more properties (such as weight, location, color) of observable bodies distinguished as independent objects or individuals (Kothari, 2019). In this study simple random and purposive technique were employed in selecting study population.

#### **3.5.1 Purposive Sampling Technique**

Non-probability sampling, also referred to as deliberate sampling, purposive sampling, or judgment sampling, does not provide a basis for estimating the probability of each item in the population being included in the sample (Kothari, 2019). Instead, the researcher intentionally selects sample items based on specific criteria deemed relevant to the research objectives. In this study, purposive sampling was employed to select librarians from both University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

Librarians were chosen deliberately because they possess specialized knowledge and expertise in library operations, services, and resource management. Their insights are crucial for understanding the challenges and best practices in providing reference materials and services within academic libraries. By purposively selecting librarians, the study aims to capture informed perspectives contributing to a comprehensive analysis of library practices and improvements.

### 3.5.2 Simple Random Techniques

A simple random sample is a randomly selected subset of a population. In this sampling technique, each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected. This technique is the most straightforward of all the probability sampling methods, since it only involves a single random selection and requires little advance knowledge about the population. Because it uses randomization, any research performed on this sample should have high internal and external validity, and be at a lower risk for research biases like sampling bias and selection bias (Shukla, 2020). This technique was used to select students who are users of the library.

### 3.6 Sample Size

The sample size is the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. It should neither be excessively large, nor too small (Kothari, 2019). According to the Institutes official data from websites, there are more than 25,000 students and around 100 librarians at both UDSM and OUT; which make approximation of 25,100 respondents as population of this study.

Yamane formula was used on computation of sample size in this study: that is.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

Whereby;

N is total population n is sample size  $e$  is error term (0.05) Therefore;

$$n = 25,100 / (1 + 25,100 \times 0.05 \times 0.05) =$$

$$n=25,100/63.75= 393.7$$

Thus; sample size for this study comprised 394 respondents from both University of Dar Es Salaam and The Open University of Tanzania.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Shukla, 2020). The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, etc. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same (Kennedy and Thornberg 2018). There are two types of data which are primary and secondary data that was used in this study as described below;

#### **3.7.1 Primary Data**

The primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. Primary data was collected directly by the researcher through questionnaires and interview (Kennedy and Thornberg 2018).

#### **3.7.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data are those data that has already been collected by someone body for some reason other than the current study. The secondary source of data consists of readily available compiled statistical statements and report whose data may be used by the researches for their studies. Secondary sources of data consist of not only

published records and reports but also unpublished records are books, newspapers, special reports and statistics (Kothari, 2019). This study included secondary data from various documents and sources such as previous research reports, brochures, journals, pamphlets, manuals and books related to this study to add some facts to the study.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection instruments also known as data collection tools refer to the devices/instruments used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or computer-assisted interviewing system. Case Studies, Checklists, Interviews, Observation sometimes, and Surveys or Questionnaires are all tools used to collect data (Shukla, 2020). In case of this study questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data as follows;

#### **3.8.1 Questionnaire**

The main data collection tool was questionnaire which was preferred as it provided relatively valid and reliable information (See Appendix I). The researcher developed semi-structured questionnaires with open and close ended questions. The researcher distributed the self-administered and easy questionnaires to 394 selected respondents which included 296 students from UDSM and 98 students from OUT. The Questionnaire was contained closed and open-ended questions and was used to collect data from Students. Using a questionnaire was a good idea for a few reasons. The questionnaire had both closed questions, where people choose from options, and open-ended ones, where they can write their thoughts. This way, we could gather different types of information from the students.

### **3.8.2 Interview Guide**

In this study interview guide was administered to library staff of the concerned department that deal with reference services, and had been chosen to participate in the interview because of their experiences and skills. The interview guide was developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study and included both structured and semi structured questions (appendix II). In this study, the researcher made appointment with interviewees' convenient day, time and place of the interview. The researcher explained the aim of the study, created a friendly environment of trust and asked questions properly. The information from the interview was recorded using tape recorder and a notebook after getting the permission from the interviewee. The interviews complemented information collected through questionnaires.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical issues in research are a set of principles that guide research designs and practices. These principles include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication (Douglas, 2015). Thus, the application of ethical procedures to research activities should be primarily designed to protect the rights of participants from harmful or adverse consequences. The researcher assured the respondents that whatever they answer will be treated with much confidentiality, thus respondents were not allowed to write their names to the questionnaire and were informed and assured that their answers will be used for academic purpose only. Institutional ethical issues were observed which includes obtaining authority letter to conduct research. The administration of the

instruments was preceded by securing the required research permit from the responsible organization (the University of Dar es Salaam and the Open University of Tanzania).

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Data from the field survey were coded and analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques such as frequencies and percentages. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized for data analysis. This process ensured that the collected data were examined thoroughly to ensure relevance and accuracy aligned with the study's themes. The findings are presented in a manner that allows for clear interpretation and understanding of the utilization patterns, challenges, and recommendations regarding reference materials and services in academic libraries at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Data analysis, presentation, and discussion of findings are crucial components of the research process, enabling researchers to interpret collected data effectively, present results clearly, and draw meaningful conclusions. This chapter presents and discusses the findings obtained from the field survey. The data collected are summarized according to the specific objectives of the study, complemented by demographic characteristics of respondents presented in tables and figures. This structured approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how students and library staff at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) perceive and utilize reference materials and services.

#### **4.1 Responses Rate**

A total of 184(47%) questionnaires out of 394 were received for this study where, 131(33%) responses received from participants at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and 53(14%) responses from the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). Additionally, two library staff members were interviewed. The response rate was lower than anticipated, attributed to difficulties in getting all intended respondents and some choosing not to participate for personal reasons. These challenges resulted in a lower overall response rate than expected for the study.

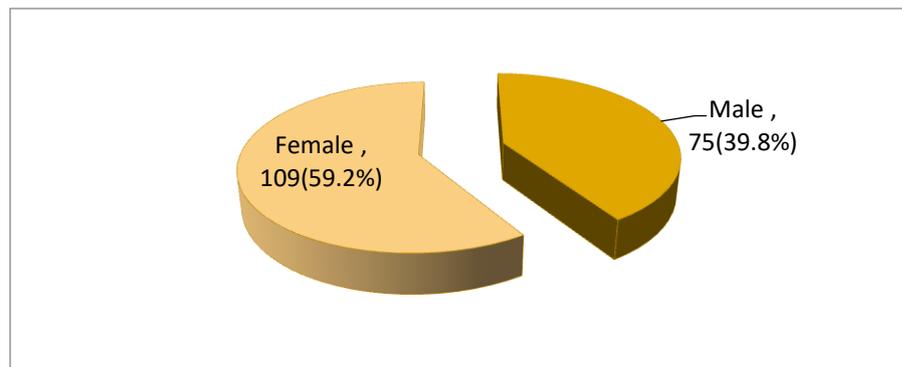
#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Demographic information provides data regarding research participants and is necessary for the determination of whether the individuals in a particular study are a

representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes. The following socio-demographic characteristics were studied; age, gender and educational level of the respondents.

#### 4.2.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Respondents were requested to mention their gender and the findings presented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Figure 4.1 reveal that the majority of respondents were female 109(59.2%), while only 75(39.8%) respondents were males. The findings in Figure 4.1 illustrate the demographic distribution of respondents, revealing that the majority were female (109 respondents/59.2%), while male respondents constituted 75 (39.8%) of the total sample. This gender distribution show a higher participation of females in utilizing reference materials and services compared to males within the study population.

#### 4.2.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

Respondents were requested to mention their age, and the findings are as presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Distribution of Respondents by Age at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

No.	Responses	Frequency	Percent (%)
1.	15- 20	4	2.7
2.	21-24	72	39.1
3.	25-29	41	22.3
4.	30-34	52	28.2
5.	35 and above	15	8.2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.1 reveal that the majority of respondents 72(39.1%) fell in the age group of 21-24, followed by 52(28.2%) respondents who were in the age group of 30-34, 41(22.3%) respondents were in the age group of 25-29 years, 16 ( %) respondents were in the age group of more than 35, while only 4(2.7%) respondents were in the age group of 15- 20.

The findings illustrate the age distribution of respondents, revealing that the majority (72 respondents, 39.1%) fell within the age group of 21-24 years. This demographic profile highlights the predominance of younger students in utilizing library resources. Additionally, 52 respondents (28.2%) were aged between 30-34 years, indicating participation from older students as well. Moreover, 41 respondents (22.3%) were in the age group of 25-29 years, 16 respondents were over the age of 35, and only 4 respondents (2.7%) were under the age of 20. The significant presence of respondents aged 21-24 show a strong engagement of younger students with library

materials and services. Conversely, the lower representation of respondents was 15-20 years old indicates potential for increased outreach to this demographic. The variation in age groups reflects diverse student life stages, with younger students likely focusing more on academic pursuits while older students may juggle responsibilities such as jobs or family commitments, potentially impacting their library usage patterns.

#### 4.2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Education Level

Respondents were requested to mention their level of education, and the findings were as presented in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Education level at UDSM & OUT**

No.	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1.	Certificate	17	9.2
2.	Diploma	19	10.3
3.	Bachelor Degree	85	46.2
4.	Master Degree	61	33.1
5.	Foundation course	1	0.5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

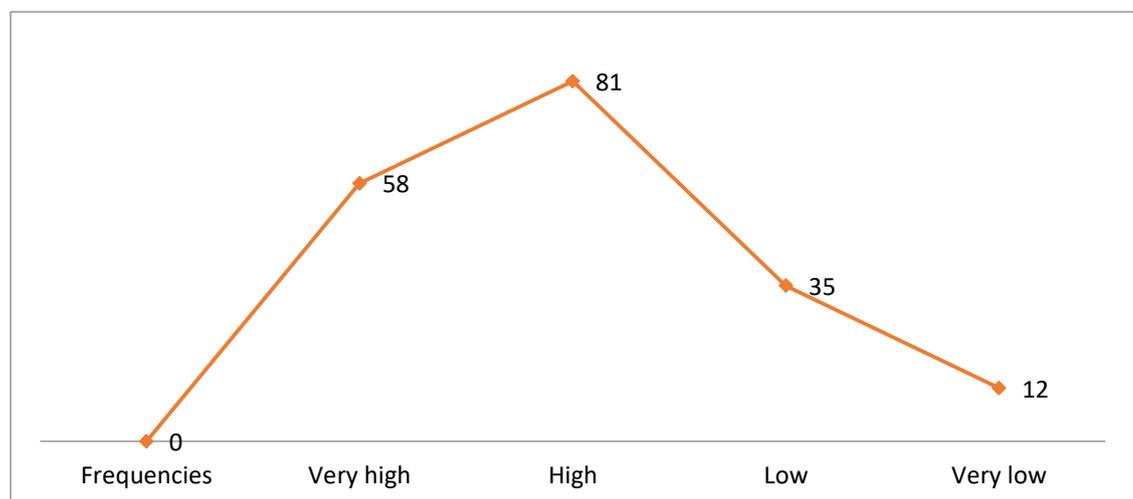
The findings in Table 4.2 reveal that the majority of respondents 85(46.2%) were studying Bachelor degree, followed by 61(33.1%) Master's degree level, 19(10.3%) Diploma, 17(9.2%) certificate level of education, while only 1(0.5%) respondent was studying foundation course. These findings show that most of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree; the next biggest group had a Master's degree, which is a higher level of education. There were also some with a Diploma, which is a bit lower than a Bachelor's degree, and some with a Certificate, which is even lower. Only one person

had a foundation course, which is the lowest level of education mentioned. The educational background of respondents influences their knowledge, needs, and preferences regarding reference materials and services in academic libraries. By understanding these factors, researchers and library administrators can better address the diverse requirements of their user community and enhance the overall effectiveness of library services.

### 4.3 The Awareness of Students on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services in the Library

#### 4.3.1 Awareness about Availability of Reference Materials and Services

Respondents were asked the extent of awareness on the availability of reference materials and services in their libraries. The findings are presented in Figure 4.2



**Figure 4.2: Awareness of the Availability of Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184).**

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings presented on figure 4.2 reveals that, majority of respondents reported 81(43.5%) high extent about awareness on the availability of reference materials and services in their library, then followed by 58(31.2%) of respondents who were aware to very high extent about availability of reference materials and services in their library, 35(18.8%) reported low extent while only 12(6.5%) of respondents reported very low extent about awareness on the availability of reference materials and services in their library.

The results shown in Figure 4.2 tell us how much respondents know about the reference materials and services in their library, many respondents were aware of the library resources, there are still some who don't know much about them. It's important to make sure everyone knows about the available resources so that they can make the most of what the library has to offer for their studies. Interview with library staff (reference librarian) to know if the library offers reference materials and services indicated that both libraries offer reference materials and services as illustrated by the following quote:

*“We offer reference materials and we normally inform students about the availability of reference services and materials in the library once they come at their first time during library orientation”.* (Library staff no. 1).

These findings are also in line with the study done by Ankrah and Atuase (2018) who asserted that, awareness of information resources in libraries by users is an issue of much concern, though availability may not be a guarantee to complete usage. Therefore, optimum utilization of information resources by users depends on the awareness of the available resources.

### 4.3.2 How Students become Aware on the Availability of Reference Materials and Services

Respondents were asked How they became aware on the availability of reference materials and services in their library, This was necessary because user awareness of a given service is the first step towards the usage or rejection of that service. The findings are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: How Respondents became aware about the Availability of Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

No.	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1.	Through librarian	22	11.9
2.	Classmate	29	15.7
3.	Orientation program	62	33.6
4.	Information literacy program	51	27.7
5.	Through library website	20	10.9
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

It can be seen from Table 4.3 that a majority of respondents 62(33.6%) become aware on the availability of reference materials and services in library through orientation program, followed by 51(27.7%) of respondents became aware due to Information literacy program, 29(15.7%) of respondents become aware through their classmates, then 22(11.9%) of respondents become aware through librarian, while only 20(10.9%) of respondents become aware through library website. the findings suggest that respondents become aware of the availability of reference materials and services in the library through various channels. From Table 4.3, These findings highlight the diverse channels through which respondents become aware of library resources and services. Orientation and information literacy programs emerge as the

primary means of introduction to library offerings, highlighting the effectiveness of structured educational initiatives in promoting resource utilization among students. Understanding these awareness pathways informs strategies for enhancing outreach and communication efforts within academic libraries, aiming to improve accessibility and utilization of reference materials and services for all library users.

The interviews with library staff to know how they inform students about the availability of reference services and materials revealed that the library use various strategies to inform students about reference services and materials. Their responses were quoted as follows:

*“Some of the users browse library website to know what the library has, and others especially academicians use SDI system, reference librarian make contact with users by emails or phone when the information requested are obtained. (library staff no.1).*

*“We use several methods informing students on the availability of reference materials and services offered; methods like orientation, marketing, fliers/ brochures;s , post news alert on library web-page; library visit during orientation day and face-to-face sessions. & direct enquiry to reference librarian- generally this is face to face between individual user or group of users with library staff”, (library staff no.2).*

Generally; The findings are consistent with a study by Okorafor et al (2017) who point out that utilization of reference materials and services within the library environment depend on a lot of factors and of which student’s level of awareness take paramount position. Similarly Ademodi (2015) found out that the level of awareness of reference materials and services among undergraduates influenced their level of utilization of reference materials and services.

### 4.3.3 Reference Materials and Services Available in the Library

Respondents were asked, what reference materials and services are available in their library, and the finding on available reference materials are presented in Table 4.4 and available reference services available presented in Table 4.4.1

**Table 4.4: Reference Materials Available at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

SN	Reference resources	University of DSM (n=131)		Open University of Tanzania (n=53)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Encyclopedia	125	95.4	44	83.0
2	Bibliography	87	66.4	38	71.7
3	Directories	64	48.9	39	73.6
4	Dictionary	130	99.2	51	96.2
5	Almanacs	131	100	52	98.1
6	Handbooks	69	52.7	41	77.4
7	Gazette	125	95.4	34	64.2
8	Year Book	71	54.2	40	75.5
9	Manual	68	51.9	37	69.8
10	Atlas	70	53.4	43	81.1
11	Guide Book	101	77.1	45	84.9
12	Indexes	53	40.5	33	62.3
13	Abstract	120	91.6	49	92.5
14	Biographical sources	61	48.9	32	60.4
15	Thesaurus	113	86.3	35	66.0
16	Biographical sources	129	98.5	50	94.3

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.4: reveal that the majority of respondents indicated reference materials available in their library; and 131(100%) respondents indicated Almanacs, 130(99.2%) respondents indicated Dictionary, 129(98.5%) were indicated University prospectuses, 125(95.4%) indicated Encyclopedia & Gazette, 120(91.6%) indicated Abstract, 113(86.3%) indicated Thesaurus, 101(77.1%) indicated guide book, 87(66.4%) indicated Bibliography, 71(54.2%) indicated Year book, 70(53.4%) indicated Atlas, 69(52.7%) indicated Handbook. 68(51.9%) indicated Manual,

64(51.9%) indicated Directories, 61(48.9%) Biographical sources and only 53(40.5%) indicated Indexes. While At the Open University of Tanzania 52(98.1%) respondents indicated Almanac, then 51(96.2%) respondents indicated dictionary, 50(94.3%) indicated Biographical sources, 49(92.5% indicated Abstract, 45(84.9%) indicated Guide Book, 44(83%) indicated Encyclopedia, 43(81.1%) indicated Atlas, 41(77.4%) indicated Handbooks, 40(75.5%) indicated Year Book, 39(73.6%) indicated Directories, 38(71.7%) indicated Bibliography, 37(69.8%) indicated Manual, 35(66%) indicated Thesaurus, 34(64.2%) indicated Gazette, 33(62.3%) indicated Indexes, and only 32(60.4%) respondents were indicated Biographical sources.

The findings presented in Table 4.4 show that most of the respondents from both; the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) reported having access to various reference materials in their respective libraries. At UDSM, all 131(100%) respondents indicated the availability of Almanacs, with high percentages also indicating access to other materials such as Dictionaries (99.2%), University prospectuses (98.5%), and Encyclopedias & Gazettes (95.4%). Similarly, at OUT, the majority of respondents reported access to Almanacs (98.1%), Dictionaries (96.2%), and Biographical sources (94.3%). However, there were some differences between the two institutions, with UDSM respondents showing higher percentages for certain materials like Abstracts (91.6%) and Guides Books (77.1%), while OUT respondents indicated higher percentages for materials such as Biographical sources (94.3%) and Atlases (81.1%). These findings show the wide-ranging availability of reference materials in academic libraries, ensuring access to a

most of the resources to meet the varied needs of students and researchers. The interview done with librarian to know Reference materials available are as quoted;

*“In our reference department there several reference materials available such as dictionaries, encyclopedia, almanac, gazette, guide book, etc “(Library staff, no.1).*

The findings are in line with the study done by Ogbuiyi (2015) who assessed the availability and use of reference sources and services among undergraduates in Babcock University. The author reported that dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes and abstract, yearbook amongst other were available for usage among undergraduates. Findings further report high level of utilization of reference sources and services among undergraduates.

#### 4.3.3.1 Reference Services Available at UDSM & OUT

**Table 4.5: Reference Services Available at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

SN	Reference service	University of DSM (n=131)		Open University of Tanzania (n=53)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Information literacy program	123	93.9	40	75.5
2	Online catalogue (OPAC)	130	99.2	43	81.1
3	Assist library users in accessing reference materials	117	89.3	50	94.3
4	Online database	128	97.7	49	92.5
5	Assist user enquiries'	126	96.2	51	96.2
6	Special Reading rooms	107	81.7	17	32.1
7	User training	101	77.1	50	94.3
8	The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service	94	71.8	36	67.9
9	Current Awareness Service (CAS)	108	82.4	44	83.0
10	Internet facility	131	100	45	84.9

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.4.1 reveal that the majority of respondents for UDSM have mentioned available services as 131(100%) Internet facility, 130(99.2%) Online catalogue (OPAC), 128(97.7%) online database, 126(96.2%) assist user enquiries, information literacy program, 117(89.3%) Assist library users in accessing reference materials, 108(82.4%) Current Awareness Service (CAS), 107(91.7%) special reading rooms, 101(77.1%) user training and only 94(71.8%) mentioned The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service.

While at the Open University of Tanzania have also mentioned services available as 51(96.2%) assist users enquiries, 50(94.3%) Assist library users in accessing reference materials & user training, 49(92.5%) online database, 45(84.9%) internet facilities, 44(83%) Current Awareness Service (CAS), 43(81.1%) online catalogue (OPAC), 40(75.5%) information literacy program, 36(67.9%) The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service and only 17(32.1%) mentioned special reading rooms.

Furthermore; The findings illustrate the range of services available at both the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). At UDSM, almost all respondents mentioned that they have access to the internet, online catalogues, and online databases. But not as many people mentioned a service called Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), which helps deliver personalized information to users. Maybe not everyone knows about it. While; At OUT, they also have helpful services like assistance for finding information and using the library. However, fewer people mentioned things like SDI and special

reading rooms. It seems like these resources might not be as well-known or used. In short, both universities offer various services to support learning and research, but there might be room to improve awareness and use of certain resources, especially those like SDI and special reading rooms.

The interview done with library staff to know Reference services available are as quoted;

*“In our library especially reference service department we provide many services that are good to students including user enquiries, internet, e-resources, and last year of 2023 we launched a new program called MyLOFT (My Library on finger tips) which help students to browse many databases at one platform. UDSM library provide even the special rooms for readers; other room kept for disabled persons such as dumb for easy oral conversation with their assistive partners” (Library staff no. 2).*

*“Users enquiries in our information desk of reference department, Current awareness services (new arrivals information materials), wireless internet, information literacy programs & computer room services were among the services available in library” (Library staff no. 1)*

These findings are in line with the study done by Otonekwu et al (2019) who evaluated on usage of reference sources and services among students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria and revealed high level of utilization of reference sources and services. Findings also revealed that dictionaries, bibliographies, yearbooks, handbooks, geographical sources, biographical sources, index and abstracts, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, reprographic services are the major reference sources and services available to the students.

#### **4.4 The Perceptions of Students towards Reference Materials and Services in the Library**

The perceptions of students towards reference materials and services in the library play a vital role in shaping their utilization and overall satisfaction with the available resources. Understanding these perceptions provides valuable insights into students' expectations, preferences, and needs when it comes to accessing and utilizing reference materials for their academic pursuits. To address this objective, several questions were asked as presented in Table 4.5

**Table 4.6: Perception towards the reference services in library at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

Perception	Agree		Disagree	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Reference collection is adequate for my academic needs	124	67.4	43	23.4
2. Reference collection is organized and easy to access materials	113	61.4	61	33.2
3. Useful materials are available for answering information needs	107	58.2	70	38.0
4. Reference staff are competent and helpful	128	69.6	49	26.6
5. Reference staff demonstrate good communication skills	131	71.2	51	27.7
6. Reference staff answer my reference questions timely	120	65.2	63	34.2
7. Reference section is conducive to study and	130	70.7	54	29.3
8. It is easy to borrow reference material for photocopy	87	47.3	68	37.0
9. Reference section provide access to adequate electronic reference sources	99	53.8	83	45.1
10. Good Internet facility is provided for searching online reference sources	110	59.8	66	35.9
11. Current Awareness Service (CAS) is helpful and useful	127	69.0	61	33.2
12. Library provides orientation on the use of reference services and resources	120	65.2	64	34.8
13. Use of reference section procedure is user friendly	92	50.0	89	48.4
14. The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service is adequate	96	52.2	55	29.9
15. Opening/closing hours of reference section is convenient	90	48.9	82	44.6
16. Library provides good interlibrary loan and document delivery services	95	51.6	89	48.4
17. Library Web pages is user friend and a good source for e-reference service	103	56.0	78	42.4
18. I am satisfied with the overall quality of reference services provided	141	76.6	40	21.7

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

Table 4.5 presents the perception of students towards reference services provided in library and majority 141(76.6%) agreed they satisfied with the overall quality of reference services provided while 40(21.7%) disagreed, 131(71.2%) agreed Reference staff demonstrate good communication skills while 51(27.7%) disagreed, 130(70.7%) agreed Reference section is conducive to study and convenient to use while 54(28.3%) disagreed, 128(69.9%) agreed Reference staff are competent and helpful while 49(26.6%) disagree, 127(69%) agreed Current Awareness Service (CAS) is helpful and useful while 61(33.2%) disagreed, 124(67.4%) agreed Reference collection is adequate for my academic needs while 43(23.4%) disagree, 120(65.3%) agreed Library provides orientation on the use of reference services and resources while 64(34.8%) disagreed, 110(59.8%) agreed Good Internet facility is provided for searching online reference sources while 66(35.9%) disagreed, 107(58.2%) agreed that Useful materials are available for answering information needs 70(38%) disagree, 103(56%) satisfied with the overall quality of reference services provided while 78(42.4%) disagree, 99(53.8%) agreed Reference section provide access to adequate electronic reference sources while 83(45.1%) disagree, 96(52.2%) agreed.

The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service is adequate while 55(29.9%) disagree, 95(51.6%) agreed Library provides good interlibrary loan and document delivery services while 89(48.4%) disagreed, 92(50%) agreed Use of reference section procedure is user friendly while 89(48.4%) disagreed, and only 87(47.3%) agreed that It is easy to borrow reference material for photocopy while 68(37%) disagreed.

These findings provide students' perceptions of the reference services offered by the library, highlighting areas of satisfaction for most of respondents including quality of services provided, good communication with library staff;

The selective dissemination of information (SDI), but some of respondents also were dissatisfied to some services provided due to their perceptions that may require improvement. Understanding these perceptions is essential for library administrators to enhance the quality of services and better meet the needs of students.

The interview done with one of library staff to know their perception towards the reference services and materials they offer to students and other users; and if students were satisfied by the reference services and materials offered by library. The following are the responses;

*"Users have different perceptions of the library, particularly in the services provided but without explicit complaints about the services, I consider them satisfactory to students". (Library staff no.1)*

These findings are similar to Doo and Aliyu (2015) who assessed public library patron's utilization of reference resources and services in Benue State, Nigeria. The results revealed that. the respondents signified high level of satisfaction with the services provided to them by the library: likewise, to a study conducted by David-West and Owate (2019) on reference services and user's satisfaction in academic libraries revealed that there is a significant relationship between reference services and users' satisfaction.

## 4.5 Reference Materials and Services most utilized by Students while Accessing Information in the Libraries

### 4.5.1 How often Respondents use Available Reference Materials and Services in their Library

Respondents were asked how often do you use available reference materials and services in your library, and the results are presented in Table 4.6

**Table 4.7: How Often respondents use Available Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

No.	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1.	Daily	71	38.5
2.	Weekly	59	32.0
3.	Monthly	30	16.3
4.	Annually	6	3.3
5.	During EU exams	18	9.8
	TOTAL	184	99.9

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.6 reveal that the majority of respondents, comprising 71 (38.5%) users of available reference materials and services in the library on a daily basis. This is followed by 59 (32%) respondents who mentioned using these resources weekly. Additionally, 30 (16.3%) respondents utilizing them on a monthly basis, while 19 (10.2%) mentioned accessing them during EU exams. Only a small part of respondents, 6 (3.3%), use these materials annually. The results show that a significant portion of respondents utilize reference materials and services in the library frequently, with daily and weekly usage being the most common. The interview was done with library staff to know How often do students use available reference materials and services in library, as quoted below:

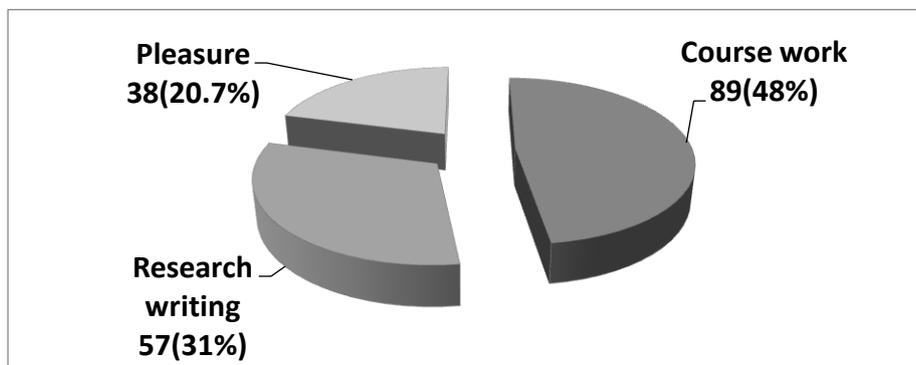
*“According to daily statistical records, the frequency of students entering the library varies depending on their academic schedules. However, around exam periods, most students come in large numbers to access and utilize library resources compared to regular days”. (Library staff no. 1).*

*“Many library users visit daily for internet browsing, checking online games, watching local movies, and keeping up with Simba and Yanga matches. However, there is a need for users to explore the additional resources available in the library”. (Library staff no.2).*

Generally; The finding aligns with previous research done by Aku (2017), who observed similar patterns of consistent utilization among respondents in their study area. It appears that respondents in this study exhibit regular engagement with library resources, highlighting the importance of these services in supporting their information needs.

#### **4.5.2 Purpose on the Use of Available Reference Materials and Services**

Respondents were asked for which purpose they use available reference materials and services in library, and the findings are presented in figure 4.3



**Figure 4.3: Purpose on the Use of Available Reference Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n-184).**

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

Regarding the findings in Figure 4.3, it reveals that the majority of respondents 89(48%) mentioned coursework as the primary reason for utilizing available reference materials and services in the library. This was followed by 58 respondents (31%) who cited research writings as their main purpose, while only 38 respondents (20.7%) stated using them for pleasure purposes/gaining general knowledge.

More ever; the findings provide insights into the purposes for which respondents use the available reference materials and services in the library. The majority of respondents, 89(48.0%) individuals mentioned that they use the library's reference materials and services primarily for their coursework. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents relies on the resources and support provided by the library to complete their assignments, projects, and other academic requirements.

Interestingly, a small number of respondents, 38(20.7%), mentioned using the available reference materials and services for pleasure/gaining general knowledge. This indicates that some respondents engage with the library's resources for personal interests, reading, or self-enrichment purposes. By recognizing these purposes, libraries can further tailor their collections, services, and outreach efforts to effectively meet the specific information needs of students for coursework, research writing, and even leisure activities.

The interviews with library staff aimed to understand the reasons why students utilize the available reference materials and services in the library, as illustrated by the following quotes:

*“In eBooks reading room (i.e., computer room available in reference department) some students came for research writings, assignments & learning by the u-tube lecturing, even though at Search Zone section in reference department users only using OPAC to search information materials”. (Library staff no.1).*

These findings aligns with the study done by (Otonekwu et al., 2019) insisted to assist users on their demands satisfactions as “Reference service also involves “determining information needs and understanding their context. Additionally, this involves working with individuals that “have difficulty articulating or even understanding their own information needs. Reference librarians then use a variety of search techniques and their skill in identifying sources to assist the users with the aim of ultimately empowering them to be able to do more themselves later.

#### **4.6 The Challenges inhibiting Students in Utilizing Reference Materials and Services in the Library**

There are various challenges that can inhibit students from fully utilizing these valuable resources. Understanding these challenges is essential for libraries to address and overcome barriers that may hinder students' access and utilization of reference materials and services effectively. Thus, the findings for challenges were as categorized;

##### **4.6.1 Whether there is any Challenge when using References Materials and Services in Library**

Respondents asked if they face any challenge when using references materials and services in their library, and the findings are presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.8: Whether there is any Challenge when Using References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

No.	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1.	YES	106	57.6
2.	NO	78	42.4
3.	TOTAL	184	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.7 reveal that the majority of respondents 106(57.4%) replied YES they face challenge when using references materials and services in library, while only 78(42.4%) of respondents replied NO. Furthermore, the findings indicate that a majority of respondents, 107(57.6%) reported facing challenges when using reference materials and services in the library. This shows obstacles or difficulties in accessing and utilizing the resources and support provided by the library, these findings emphasize the importance of continuous efforts to optimize the user experience and ensure that students can effectively access and utilize the reference materials and services provided by the library.

#### **4.6.2 Challenges when using References Materials and Services in the Library**

The 106 (57.4%) respondents who reported that they faced challenges when using reference materials and services in the library were further asked to select the challenges they face when using reference materials and services, the reason was to determine if their library was not meeting their information needs. The findings are presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.9: Challenges when using References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=106)**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1.</b>	Insufficient copies of high-demand resources	101	95.3
<b>2.</b>	Lack of awareness among students	104	98.1
<b>3.</b>	Technological challenges	91	49.5
<b>4.</b>	Lack of guidance and support from library staff or faculty member	99	53.8
<b>5.</b>	The complexity of navigating and accessing the library's resources	82	44.6
<b>6.</b>	Old/outdated reference materials	57	30.9

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.8 reveal that the majority of respondents 104(98.1%) were mentioned Lack of awareness among students, then followed by 101(95.3%) mentioned Insufficient copies of high-demand resources, 99(53.8%) mentioned Lack of guidance and support from library staff or faculty members, 91(49.5%) mentioned Technological challenges, 82(44.6%) mentioned the complexity of navigating and accessing the library's resources, and only 57(30.9%) mentioned old/outdated reference materials.

Furthermore, the findings provide insights into the challenges identified by respondents regarding accessing and utilizing reference materials and services in the library. These challenges base on the obstacles that hinder students' seamless utilization of library resources. The majority of respondents, 104(98.1%) mentioned a lack of awareness among students as a significant challenge. This highlights the need for improved communication and outreach efforts to ensure that students are well-informed about the available resources and services in the library. The difficulty of navigating and accessing the library's resources was

mentioned by 82(44.1%) respondents. This need for user-friendly interfaces, clear instructions, and improved search functionalities to assist students in locating and retrieving the required materials effectively. By addressing these challenges, libraries can improve the user experience, enhance resource accessibility, and provide effective support systems that cater to the diverse needs of students.

The interview done with library staff to know challenges when using references materials and services in their libraries as quoted below:

*“The greatest challenges include inadequate internet, and the lack of an active generator during power cuts”.* (Library staff no. 1).

*“In my opinion, challenges have decreased since we moved to this new building compared to the old library, where ICT infrastructure and facilities were insufficient—only 12 computers were active for library users. However, limited access to certain important unsubscribed resources remains a challenge here”.* (Library staff no. 2).

According to Buhari (2016), inadequacies in library facilities such as unreliable internet connectivity, outdated computer systems, and limited bandwidth significantly hinder the effective utilization of library information resources and services. The literature review also highlights various challenges faced by postgraduate students during their research activities, including the lack of current books and journals, unreliable electricity supply, outdated journal editions, and ineffective inter-library loan systems.

Similarly, Makinde et al. (2017) examined the accessibility and utilization of reference resources among undergraduate fisheries students in university libraries

in North Central Nigeria. Their study revealed a low level of utilization of reference materials, attributed to inadequate training of reference staff, outdated reference materials, and extensive time spent by students in the library searching for relevant resources.

#### **4.6.3 Suggestions for Improving Availability and Usage/Utilization of References Materials and Services**

Respondents were asked what should be done to improve availability and usage of references materials and services in their libraries and the findings are presented in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.10: Suggestions for Improving Availability of References Materials and Services at UDSM & OUT (n=184)**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1.</b>	Regularly Update and Weed Outdated Materials	114	61.9
<b>2.</b>	Enhance Digital Access	92	50.0
<b>3.</b>	Provide User Education and Support	126	68.5
<b>4.</b>	Enhance Interlibrary Loan Services	83	45.1
<b>5.</b>	Improve Accessibility	90	48.9

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.9 reveal that the majority of respondents 126(68.5%) indicated to Provide User Education and Support, then 114(61.9%) respondents indicated Regularly Update and Weed Outdated Materials, 92(50%) of respondents indicated to Enhance Digital Access, 90(48.9%) of respondents indicated to Improve Accessibility, while only 83(45.1%) of respondents indicated to Enhance Interlibrary Loan Services.

The findings provide suggestions of respondents regarding improvements to reference materials and services in the library. These highlight areas where libraries can focus their efforts to enhance the overall user experience and better meet the needs of students. The majority of respondents, 126(67.7%) indicated the importance of providing user education and support. This shows a strong desire for libraries to offer resources, workshops, and guidance to help students develop information literacy skills and effectively utilize the available reference materials and services. Enhancing inter-library loan services was indicated by 83(45.1%) respondents.

This highlights the desire for libraries to collaborate and share resources with other institutions, expanding the pool of available materials and providing greater access to a wider range of resources for students. Overall, these findings demonstrate the importance of user education and support, the need for regular collection updates, the significance of digital access and accessibility improvements, and the potential benefits of enhanced inter-library loan services. By incorporating the results and focusing on these areas, libraries can strengthen their support systems, offer up-to-date and diverse resources, and foster an environment that promotes effective utilization of reference materials and services. The suggestions from interviewed library staff on improving the availability and use of reference materials and services, as summarized in the table, are quoted below:

*"For challenges such as inadequate internet and lack of an active generator during power cuts, the library management*

*should allocate sufficient budget to address these situations."  
(Library staff no.1)*

*"Currently, our new library at UDSM has the capacity for more than 160 students to use computers simultaneously. However, some users, especially first-year students and external users, encounter difficulties in locating information resources. Reference librarians assist users through mentorship trainings to alleviate these issues." (Library staff no.2)*

These findings align with Ayan et al. (2015), who emphasize that factors such as personal preferences, library environment, inconveniences related to operating hours, and distance from users' residences can influence library usage. The effectiveness of a library in supporting learning depends on its ability to efficiently provide users with the information they seek.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further study.

#### **5.1 Summary of Key Findings**

##### **5.1.1 Awareness of Reference Materials and Services**

The study revealed a high level of awareness among students regarding the availability of reference materials and services in the libraries of UDSM and OUT. Approximately 43.5% to 31.2% of respondents indicated they were aware of these resources. The primary means of awareness were orientation programs (33.6%) and information literacy programs (27.7%). Various reference materials such as almanacs, dictionaries, and biographical sources were reported to be available in both libraries.

##### **5.1.2 Perceptions towards Reference Materials and Services**

Overall, respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of reference services provided; however, there were areas identified for improvement. Enhancing internet facilities and interlibrary loan services were highlighted as necessary improvements to better meet student needs.

##### **5.1.3 Utilization of Reference Materials and Services**

Regarding the utilization of reference materials and services, the findings showed

that a majority (%) of respondents used these resources on a daily or weekly basis. They primarily utilized them for coursework and research purposes, indicating their importance in academic endeavors.

#### **5.1.4 Challenges Inhibiting Utilization of Reference Materials and Services**

Challenges hindering access and utilization of reference materials and services included lack of awareness among students, insufficient copies of high-demand resources, and technological difficulties. These challenges need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of library services.

#### **5.1.5 Suggestions for Improvement**

Respondents provided several suggestions for improving the availability and use of reference materials and services. These included enhancing user education and support, regularly updating materials, improving digital access, and enhancing overall accessibility in the libraries.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

The findings highlight that students at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) exhibit a strong awareness of available reference materials and services and this was largely influenced by orientation and information literacy programs. Both institutions provide a wide range of resources like almanacs, dictionaries, and biographical sources, tailored to meet academic needs. While students generally expressed satisfaction with reference services, improvements in internet access and interlibrary loan services were identified as

crucial. Students actively utilize these resources for coursework and research, yet face challenges including limited awareness, insufficient availability of high-demand materials, and technological barriers. Recommendations from respondents include enhancing user education, updating materials regularly, improving digital access, and enhancing overall library accessibility. These insights stress the ongoing need for evaluating and enhancing library services to effectively support student learning and research in Tanzanian academic settings.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the general and specific objectives of the study regarding the utilization of reference materials and services in selected academic libraries in Tanzania, the following recommendations can be made:

**Improve Awareness and Communication:** Libraries should enhance their efforts to raise awareness among students about the availability of reference materials and services. This can be done through orientation programs, information sessions, library website updates, and effective communication channels such as email newsletters and social media platforms.

**Enhance Perception of Value:** Libraries should focus on understanding and addressing the perceptions of students towards reference materials and services. This can be achieved by actively seeking student feedback, conducting surveys or focus groups, and implementing strategies to enhance the perceived value and relevance of the library's resources.

**Promote Utilization:** Libraries should implement initiatives to encourage and promote the utilization of reference materials and services by students. This can include targeted information literacy programs, workshops on research skills, and collaborations with faculty to integrate library resources into the curriculum.

**Overcome Challenges:** Libraries should identify and address the challenges inhibiting students in utilizing reference materials and services. For example, addressing issues related to resource availability by ensuring sufficient copies of high-demand resources and exploring inter-library loan services. Technological challenges can be mitigated by improving infrastructure and providing necessary support and training.

By implementing these recommendations, academic libraries in Tanzania can enhance the utilization of reference materials and services, meet the information needs of students more effectively, and contribute to their academic success and research endeavors.

#### **5.4 Areas for Further Research**

While the study aimed to investigate the utilization of reference materials and services in selected academic libraries in Tanzania, there are several areas for further research that can build upon the findings and contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic includes investigate the level of user satisfaction with reference materials and services in academic libraries. This can involve gathering feedback from students through surveys or interviews to assess their overall satisfaction, identify

areas of improvement, and measure the impact of library resources on their academic success.

## REFERENCES

- Aboyade, W. A., & Aboyade, M. A. (2017). *Fundamentals of libraries education*.  
Osogbo: *Joymab Educational Publications*. Lagos: Elis Associates.
- Ademodi, D. T. (2015). Empirical study of awareness and use of reference sources  
by undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University Library. *Information  
and Knowledge Management*, 5(8):10-22.
- Adeoye, A.A. and Adeoye, B.J (2017). Digital Literacy Skills of Undergraduate  
Students in Nigeria Universities. *Library Philosophy and Practice*  
(ejournal). 1665. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu>.
- Ankrah, E. and Atuase, D, (2018). The Use of Electronic Resources Postgraduate  
students of the University of Cape Coast. *Library Philosophy and  
Practice (e-journal)*. 1632. Retrieved from  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ibphilprac/1632> Barrett, Felicia
- Auman, D.,& Laspinas, M. (2015). Pupil's performance in library orientation and  
instruction vis-à-vis utilization of resources. Cebu city: Philippines.  
*Asian pacific journal of education arts and science*, Vol,(2 )No,2.
- Awodoyin, A. F., & Aina, L. O. (2018). An analysis of quality reference services  
delivery as perceived by undergraduates in selected university libraries in  
South-west, Nigeria". *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*.
- Bopp (2011). *Reference and Information Services An Introduction* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Unlimited  
libraries. oxford
- David-West, B.T. and Owate, C.N. (2019) Reference services and survey of users  
satisfaction in Academic Libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Journal of  
Education and Society*, 9 (1), 44- 53

- Dempsey, Lorcan. (2015). "From Infrastructure to Engagement: Thinking About the Library in the Life of the User." Keynote presented at Minitex 24th Annual Interlibrary Loan Conference, 12 May, in St. Paul. <http://www.slideshare.net/lisld/from-local-infrastructure-to-engagement-thinking-about-the-library-in-the-life-of-the-user>.
- Doo, A. P., & Aliyu, M. (2015). Utilization of reference resources and services by users of Benue state public library, Makurdi, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 6(1); 51-61.
- Elmer E. Rasmuson Library (2018). Reference sources and services. Available online at <https://library.uaf.edu/lis101-reference-services>
- IFLA (2019). Reference and information service section statement on libraries and development: A case study of Covenant University, Nigeria. *Chinese Librarianship: An International Electronic Journal*, 34.
- Japhet (2016). Non Use of Academic Library Services: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Library Science* 2016, 5(1): 7-13 DOI: 10.5923/j.library.20160501.02. from: <http://journal.sapub.org/library>
- Karim, Sazzadul (2018). Library Performance Measurement: a study of Dhaka University residential hall libraries, Bangladesh. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 1831. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ibphilprac/1831>
- Kennedy, B.L. and Thornberg, R. (2018) 'Deduction, induction and abduction', in U. Flick (ed.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*. London: Sage, pp. 49–64.

- Kiilu, Peris W. and Otiike, Japhet (2016). Non Use of Academic Library Services: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Library Science* 2016, 5(1): 7-13 DOI: 10.5923/j.library.20160501.02. Retrieved from: <http://journal.sapub.org/library>
- Kothari, C.R. (2019). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. 4th Edition, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi.
- Makinde, O. T., Aba, J., & Ugah, A. D. (2017). Accessibility and utilization of reference resources by fisheries undergraduates in university libraries in North-central, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 10 (3); 48-55.
- Nwankwo, Ndid Grace; Chukwu, Ifeyinwa Loveth; Igbokwe, Olisa Paul & Agbanu, Norbert Amaechi (2019). Awareness and use of library information resources: a conceptual approach. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews* Vol.9 No.2; p.188 – 197.
- Ogbuiyi, S.U. (2015) Availability and use of reference sources and services in Babcock University Library. *An International Journal of Recent Research in Social Science and Humanities (IJRSSH)*, 2(1) 44-49.
- Okafor V.N, (2019). Management and utilization of serials in federal university libraries in South-east, Nigeria. (PhD thesis, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike).
- Okorafor, K., Ariole, I., & Anyalebechi, L. (2017). Awareness and use of reference and information services amongst library users in university libraries in two States in Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 10 (3); 108-116.

- Okunade, B. (2016) *Reference sources and services: LIS 113*, University of Ibadan Distance Learning centre, open and distance learning course series development. Ibadan: Distance Learning Centre.
- Onye UU, (2016). Availability, accessibility, and utilization of information resources by students of in the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. *Information and Knowledge Management.*; 6(10):1-8.
- Oriogu, C. D., Chukwuemeka, A. O., & Oriogu-Ogbuiyi, D. C. (2018). Faculty awareness, perception and use of information resources and services in a private university in Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Library and Information Science*, 1(2); 32-44.
- Otonekwu, F. O., Oyedokun, T. T., Komolafe, S.R., & Adeware, J. O. (2019). Evaluation of the Use of reference sources and services among students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria. *International Journal of Information Processing and Communication*,7(2); 185-195.
- Quadri, R. F., & Abiodun, O. S. (2017). Availability and use of reference sources and services to Federal Polytechnic Offa students, Kwara State. *Journal of Information Science and Systems Science*, 2(1); 10- 28.
- Razaq, F.Q. and Olaleye, S.A. (2017) Availability and use of reference sources and services by Federal Polytechnic Offa Students, Kwara State *Journal of Information Science and Systems*.
- Shukla, S, (2020). *Research Methodology and Statistics*. Ahmedabad: Rishit Publications.
- Suleiman, H., Rajeev, V., & Hassana, J. (2018). Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources by Library Users' of Nims University Central Library,

Jaipur, India. *International Journal of Movement Education and Social Science*. 7(2), 1067-1078.

Tofi, S. T., Agada, E. O., & Okafor, C. J. (2020). Utilization of digital reference resources and services by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(6); 72-81.

Ugah AD. (2017). Availability and accessibility of information sources and the Use of library services at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. *Library Philosophy*

Ziaei, S. & Ranjgar-korjan, F. (2018). Assessment of services quality in Tabriz central library from the users point of view based on LibQual model. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)* Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ibphilprac/>

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

**Dear Respondents,**

I am Wilson Msogolwa, pursuing a Master degree in Library and Information Studies at the Open University of Tanzania. I am currently conducting a study titled *“Investigation on the utilization of reference materials and services in selected academic libraries in Tanzania,* as part of my study program requirements. Please reply the given questions as per instruction given. This is done for academic purpose only.

1. Gender (please tick)

a) Male ( )

b) Female ( )

2. Age (tick the appropriate category)

a) 15- 20 ( )

b) 21-24 ( )

c) 25-29 ( )

d) 30-34 ( )

e) 35 and above ( )

3. What is your education level? (Tick the appropriate category)

a) Certificate ( )

b) Diploma ( )

c) Bachelor Degree ( )

d) Master Degree ( )

e) Other (Specify) .....

4. Are you aware with availability of reference materials and services in your library?

a) YES

b) NO

5. How extents are you aware on the availability of reference materials and services in your library?

a) Very high

b) High

c) Low

d) Very low

6. How did you become aware on the availability of reference materials and services in your library?

a) Through librarian

b) Class met

c) Orientation program

d) Information literacy program

e) Other (specify).....

7. What are reference materials and services available in your library? Tick all that applies in Table A and B

A: reference materials

SN	Reference resources	University of DSM	Open University of Tanzania
1	Encyclopedia		
2	Bibliography		
3	Directories		

4	Dictionary		
5	Almanacs		
6	Handbooks		
7	Gazette		
8	Year Book		
9	Manual		
10	Atlas		
11	Guide Book		
12	Indexes		
13	Abstract		
14	Biographical sources		
15	Thesauras		
16	University prospectuses		

#### B: Reference services

SN	Reference service	University of DSM	Open University of Tanzania
1	Information literacy program		
2	Online catalogue (OPAC)		
3	Assist library users in accessing reference materials		
4	Online database		
5	Assist user enquiries'		
6	Special Reading rooms		
7	User training		
8	The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service		
9	Current Awareness Service (CAS)		
10	Internet facility		

8. What is your perception towards the reference services in your library?

Indicate Agree or Disagree

Perception	Agree	Disagree
Reference collection is adequate for my academic needs		
Reference collection is organized and easy to access materials		
Useful materials are available for answering information needs		
Reference staff are competent and helpful		
Reference staff demonstrate good communication skills		
Reference staff answer my reference questions on timely		
Reference section is conducive to study and convenient to use		

It is easy to borrow reference material for photocopy		
Reference section provide access to adequate electronic reference sources		
Good Internet facility is provided for searching online reference sources		
Current Awareness Service (CAS) is helpful and useful		
Library provides orientation on the use of reference services and resources		
Use of reference section procedure is user friendly		
The selective dissemination of information (SDI) service is adequate		
Opening/closing hours of reference section is convenient		
Library provides good interlibrary loan and document delivery services		
Library Web pages is user friend and a good source for e-reference service		
I am satisfied with the overall quality of reference services provided		

9. How often do you use available reference materials and services in your library?

- a) Daily
- b) Weekly
- c) Monthly
- d) Annually
- e) During EU exams
- f) Other (specify).....

10. Do you use available reference materials and services in your library for which purpose?

- a) Course work
- b) Research writing
- c) Pleasure
- d) Other (specify).....

11. Do you face any challenge when using references materials and services in your library? (a) YES (b) NO

.....

12. What are those challenges when using references materials and services in your library?

.....

.....

13. What should be done to improve availability and easy use of references materials and services in your library?

.....

.....

**APPENDIX II****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARY STAFF**

1. Does your Library offer Reference services and materials to students and staff? If yes, what are reference services available in your library? And what reference materials are offered by your Library?

If no, explain why

2. Do you inform students about the availability of reference services and materials in your library? If Yes, how do you inform students about availability of reference services and materials?

If No, why?

3. What is your perception towards the reference services and materials in your library? Do you think that students are satisfied by the reference services and materials offered by your library? If Yes, explain and if No, why?

4. Which reference materials and services are most utilized by students in your library?

5. Do you face any challenge when providing reference materials and services to students in your library? If Yes; what are those challenges?

6. What do you think should be done to improve availability and use of reference materials and services in your library?

Thank you

**Appendix III: Research permit letter from UDSM**

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM  
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND  
PUBLICATION

*In replying please quote:*

Ref. No. AB.269/319/01 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

Director  
Directorate of Library Services  
University of Dar es Salaam

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MR. WILSON MSOGOLWA**

Kindly refer to the subject mentioned above.

2. This is to introduce Mr. Wilson Msogolwa, Reg. No. PG201801807 who is a student at the Open University pursuing Master of Library and Information Management (MLIM). Mr. Wilson Msogolwa at the moment is conducting data collection as part of his studies. The title of his research is *Investigation on the Utilization of Reference Materials and Services in Selected Academic Librarian in Tanzania*.

3. This is to request you to grant the above-mentioned student any help that may enable him to achieve his study objectives. The period for which this permission has been granted is from 24<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

4. Yours sincerely

  
Dr. Mussa I. Mgwatu  
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

cc: Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research  
cc: Ms. Wilson Msogolwa

Cranford Pratt Building, University of Dar es Salaam, P.O. Box 35091, Dar es Salaam  
Phone: +255 22 2410500-8 Ext. 2084, Phone: +255 22 2410727 - Direct Fax: +255 22 2410727  
Email: [research@uds.ac.tz](mailto:research@uds.ac.tz), Website: [www.uds.ac.tz](http://www.uds.ac.tz)

**Appendix IV: Research permit letter from OUT**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**  
*Directorate of Research, Publication and Innovation*

P.O. Box 23409  
Dar Es Salaam  
<http://www.out.ac.tz>



Tel : +255 -22 2668992/2668445  
Fax : +255 22 266230  
ext.  
Email: drp@out.ac.tz

---

Ref. No. **OUT/DRP/RC/08/2023** Date: **2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2023**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic, Research and Consultancy),  
The Open University of Tanzania,  
P.O. Box 23409,  
**DAR ES SALAAM**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE AND DATA COLLECTION**

This letter is written to allow **Mr. Wilson Msogolwa**, a student from The Open University of Tanzania, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to collect data at The Open University of Tanzania and write a report as a part of his study programme.

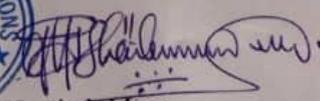
His tittle research is "*Investigation on the Utilization of the Reference Materials and Services in Selected Libraries in Tanzania*" He will be collecting data from 24<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

It is my hope that **Mr. Wilson** will be accorded the necessary cooperation in the relevant departments.

Yours Sincerely,



**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**  
Date: 2/6/2023



Dr. Harrieth Mtae  
**Director of Research, Publication and Innovation**

For: **VICE CHANCELLOR**

cc. DVC – ARC  
DVC – PFA  
DLS