

Effectiveness of Students' Use of Library: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Ilala District, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study pursued to establish the extent of school library use in improving students' reading habits among the public secondary schools of Ilala District. Descriptive-correlation design was employed to describe the effectiveness of students' use of school libraries in their schools, to describe the ratings of the students' reading habits in their schools as well as to explain the relationship between the use of libraries and the reading habits of students. Out of 3954-targeted students, 363 students were randomly sampled to participate in this study. Self-administered questionnaire forms were distributed to 363 students and 357 forms were filled and returned for analysis. The collected data was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science software. The study found that library usage among the secondary students of Ilala District is lower since the majority of the students were less effective in utilizing the libraries in their schools. Secondly, it was established that the student's reading habit is yet unsatisfactory since the majority of the students read occasionally. The primary purpose of reading among the majority of the students is for entertainment because if they happened to visit the libraries, they were fond of reading news about sports and games. The study therefore recommends that school administration, teachers and education policymakers see to it that library and library facilities become a mandatory requirement.

Keywords: Library; library use; reading habits; effectiveness.

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Introduction

It never stops being a lifetime journey to read. To gather information and knowledge to address everyday issues, people read a variety of printed and electronic works of literature (Sethy, 2018). Reading, according to Walia and Sinha (2014), involves numerous complicated skills like the capacity to recognize printed words, to skim for information, and then to read intently. Reading is

also a process, a way of thinking, and a type of genuine experience.

According to Bulgurcuoglu (2016), reading encourages creative thinking, develops curious minds, and improves a person's capacity for lifelong learning. Wema (2018) contends that cultivating a habit of reading requires a variety of approaches, including self-study and library study, the majority of which call for significant work and resolve to succeed. Reading must take place constantly to

develop a person's mind and enable them to criticize, analyze, create, fantasize, determine their well-being, and observe the world in its whole (Ogbonna & Eze, 2015). Reading should not take place because of conscious pressure arising from academic assignments. As a result, reading is a tool for sustainable development since it enables people to modify their lifestyles by obtaining better education.

In 2010, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) stated that 'the ability to read is a major factor in determining whether a child will succeed or fail in an education system and later on in the workplace as one needs to decipher the meaning of the agreed forms of communication (Mulauzi & Mwansa, 2014).

Reading increases thinking capacity by introducing fresh concepts and ideas as well as by enhancing vocabulary and language, both of which are crucial for verbal communication, according to Kutay (2014). According to Rosli et al. (2017), it is essential for children to begin reading while they are young, within the grooming limitations, in order to satisfy a variety of knowledge processes. According to Jato et al. (2014), every parent and teacher would want their children to be enthusiastic and keen readers because reading regularly is crucial for high academic performance. Therefore, it is crucial to design a captivating, welcoming, and cozy space to encourage students to develop effective study habits. The authors continue by saying that the library offers the perfect setting and essential information resources for students to establish and maintain the appropriate study habits required for outstanding academic performance.

Amkapa, (2014) further defines library resources as anything such as periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, books, audio materials, film materials, graphics and computers that is endowed with stimulation of intelligence to users of library. Through library resources, individuals acquire the tradition of learning throughout their life (Chaulo, 2018). Amkapa (2014) observed that the primary aim of libraries is to support learning activities of schools and inculcate good reading habits in students. Wema, (2018) on the other hand, contends that for a school library to be effective, it should be adequately resourced and able to provide educational materials appropriate for teachers, learners and the entire school population.

Students improve their reading habits by using libraries. Nevertheless, without making conscious efforts to determine whether they exist or not, school libraries are unable to determine the reading preferences of their clients. Numerous studies, including Chaulo (2018), Wema (2018), and Mubofu and Malekani (2019), have been conducted to investigate reading habits among Tanzanian students at various educational levels.

These studies revealed that reading habits of students are punching ways below the minimal standards. This being a problem facing students in secondary schools in Tanzania, the researchers in this study sought to investigate students' use of library and frequency of reading habits among public secondary schools in Ilala District, Tanzania.

Review of Literature

The Concept of Reading and Reading Habits

Reading has undergone numerous definitional modifications. Reading in the 1980s was merely a method of obtaining visual information from a particular code or system. However, reading has evolved significantly over the past century and now requires comprehension of an entire text made up of textual signs (Yusuf & Awoyemi, 2018). Reading was described by Smith and Robinson (1980) as referenced by Yusuf and Awoyemi (2018) as an active endeavor on the part of the reader to comprehend the writer's point of view. Toit (2001) asserts that reading involves thinking, remembering, and linking ideas while printed words are working. According to Walia and Sinha (2014), reading is a process, a way of thinking, and a type of genuine experience that calls on a variety of complicated skills, including the capacity to comprehend written words, scan for information, and then read intently. Reading offers the opportunity for the person to broaden his or her knowledge (Chettri & Rout, 2013).

According to Celik (2019), who referenced Andrews (1903), a habit is a more or less established manner of thinking, feeling, or acting that is developed by prior repetition of a mental event. Shen (2006) describes readers' reading habits, including how frequently, how much and what they read. As a result of the individual's perception of reading as a source of requirement and enjoyment, the habit of reading is the realization of reading activity constantly and routinely in a critical manner (Celik, 2019). Reading habits are determined by how much, how frequently, when, and what a person reads,

according to Rosli et al. (2017). The habit of reading can be summed up as one that involves books, and printed materials. According to Bronny (2014), the reading habit of a student is affected by both internal and external factors; the internal factors affecting reading habits include the attitude of the reader towards reading and the reading interest and passion while the external factors include the environment in which reading is taking place as well as the availability of reading materials and resources.

Students' Use of Library

In a study published in 2019, Tabassum et al. used a qualitative research methodology to examine the use of public girls' high school libraries in Lahore, Pakistan. The results showed that there was a general lack of satisfaction with school libraries, which resulted in underuse of school libraries. Numerous issues, such as a staffing shortage, a tight budget, and inadequate infrastructure, plagued libraries. The facilities were uncomfortable for the students, and their propensity to use the school library was low.

The general library usage patterns of English major students at Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan, were investigated in a study by Dorji (2020). According to the data, there is little use of library resources, and the main cause of this is a lack of time. Many students stated that a major obstacle to using library resources was a lack of time, whereas a small number stated that a major obstacle was a lack of enthusiasm.

A study by Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015) in Gauteng Province, South Africa, sought to establish the issues on students' utilization of libraries and challenges school libraries faced and how schools responded to them. The study used qualitative research orientation and grounded theory methodology. The findings revealed that the rates of student and teacher utilization of libraries were low. Lack of funding and lack of national policy on school libraries were mentioned to be the major factors negatively affecting the effectiveness of school libraries. Chaulo (2018) investigated the utilization of school libraries by the secondary students of the Meru District, Tanzania and reported poor utilization of school libraries among students. The study revealed that the poor utilization of the school libraries by the students was contributed by insufficient reading resources as well as lack of effective library infrastructures.

Students' Reading Habits

The causal impact of an in-class library program on student reading outcomes and academic achievement in rural Chinese schools with limited reading resources was investigated in a study by Yi et al. (2018). Students had what would be called bad reading habits, according to the findings. The data also revealed that 81% of students and 80% of pupils, respectively, never borrowed books from their classrooms or from school libraries. Only 42% of children read after school for 30 minutes or more every day. Additionally, more than half of students said they never discussed reading with their friends. In eight provinces, Veli (2014) looked into the reading preferences of Turkish high school pupils. According to the poll, the majority of respondents read for at least 30 minutes once or twice a week, and relatively few read every day. Their favorite books to read were novels, periodicals, newspapers, and online information. Furthermore, it was shown that the primary barriers preventing respondents from reading were a lack of time, an inability to obtain reading materials, a lack of interest in reading, a perception that reading was difficult, and distractions from television and the internet.

A study by Jato et al. (2014) sought to investigate the study habits of students among selected secondary schools in Nigeria. Findings of this study revealed that reading habits of students deteriorated day- by- day. The authors argued that poor studying habits of the students were due to a lack of scheduled programs that forced them to use school libraries.

Despite the importance of libraries in enhancing reading habits among students, reviewed worldwide studies have reported unsatisfactory reading habits by students (Mulauzi & Mwansa, 2014; Kutay, 2014; Lulu-Pokubo and Akanwa, 2017; and Celik, 2019). The situation is reported to be more intense in developing countries, Tanzania being among them (Wema, 2018). Recent studies from Tanzania have reported lack of buildings, lack of library policy, low or absence of funds and lack of materials to be the factors hindering library utilization and reading habits of students (Chipana, 2018, Chaulo, 2018 and Wema, 2018). However, these studies left a gap regarding the influence of school libraries on improving the reading habits of students. It is in this regard that the researchers in this study saw the need to conduct this study as a means to bridge the gap.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive-correlational survey research designs were used in the study. Descriptive research designs aim to precisely and methodically describe a population, circumstance, or phenomena, according to McCombes (2019). The design was used to illustrate how frequently students used the school libraries and how they read. On the other hand, a correlation approach was used to identify any existing connections between student reading habits and library use.

Population and Sampling

The study collected data from a fraction of the population rather than from every member of the population. The study involved 10 public secondary schools in Ilala District whereby five were selected due to their location with library infrastructure. Out of the population of 3,954 students from the sampled schools, 363 were randomly selected to constitute the sample.

Data Collection Method

The researchers collected data from students using a self-administered questionnaire concerning the usage of school libraries and reading habits. Closed items in the questionnaire were constructed using the five-point scale whereby respondents provided

their agreement or disagreement with selected items.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The first objective was to determine how frequently students used the school libraries. Descriptive statistics were used to examine this objective in terms of mean scores, and the results were interpreted as follows: Strongly Disagree is 1.00-1.49; Disagree is 1.50-2.49; Neutral is 2.50-3.49; Agree is 3.50-4.49, and Strongly Agree is 4.50-5.00. The second objective had items which were analyzed through frequencies and percentages regarding reading habits.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were observed in that research permit was obtained from relevant authorities. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured and respondents were free to participate or withdraw at any time during the data collection process.

Results and Discussion

The analysis was guided by three objectives of the study as follows:

Research Objective 1: To determine the purpose for which students used the library in schools.

This objective sought to determine purpose for which students used the library in schools as appears in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' Use of School Libraries

Attribute	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
I visit the school library for private studies	1.81	2.476	Disagree
I visit the school library for reading books and novels	2.31	1.379	Disagree
I visit the school library for internet browsing	1.82	1.292	Disagree
I visit the school library for reading sports and games information	3.51	1.424	Agree
I visit the school library for borrowing books	1.49	1.538	Strongly Disagree
Average Mean & SD	1.95	1.374	Disagree

With the mean score of 1.81 (SD = 1.374), students disagreed about visiting school libraries for private studies. With the mean score of 2.31 (SD = 1.379), students disagreed about visiting school libraries for reading books and novels. Furthermore, with the mean score of 1.8 (SD = 1.292), students disagreed to visit school libraries for internet browsing. On the other hand, with the mean score of 3.51 (SD = 1.424), students agreed visiting their school libraries for reading sports and games information. Therefore, students seemed to be interested in games and sports if they happen to visit the library.

Of all the five items on students' use of school libraries, only two items i.e. visiting the library for reading books and novels (M = 2.31; SD = 1.379) and visiting the library for viewing sports and games (M = 3.51; SD = 1.424) appeared to be more frequent, having overstretched the average mean of (M = 1.95; SD = 1.374). Therefore, the reading in the library was not for the intended purposes such as private studies and reading books and novels. This implies that the reading in the library was not so effective to support learning as reading books from the library was not a matter of necessity.

These findings are in harmony with those of Chaulo (2018) who investigated the utilization of school libraries by the secondary students of Meru District, Tanzania and reported poor utilization of school libraries which was contributed by insufficient reading resources as well as lack of the appropriate library infrastructure. Another study done by Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015) in South Africa revealed that the rates of student and teacher' utilization of libraries were low and the lack of funding and poor national policy on school libraries were mentioned to be the major factors negatively affecting the effectiveness of school libraries.

Research Objective 2: To establish frequencies of students' reading in the libraries in selected secondary schools in Ilala District.

The second objective sought to determine frequencies of students' reading in the libraries in selected secondary schools in Ilala District as appears in table 2 where the findings show that the majority of the students (58%) responded to reading occasionally; on the other hand, 119 (33.3%) read on daily basis. Only 20 students (5.6%) responded that they never read. The findings indicate that the basis of students' reading is poor since it is only 33.3% of the students that read daily while the majority read occasionally or never read.

Table 2: Frequency of Students' Reading

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Basis of Reading	I read daily	119	33.3
	I occasionally read	207	58.0
	Never	20	5.6
Number of Readings per Week	1-2 Hours	224	62.7
	3-4 Hours	96	26.9
	5 and above	27	7.6
	1-2	156	43.7
	3-4	126	35.3
	5 and above	68	19.0

Focusing on the number of hours spent reading, the findings show that 224 students (62.7%) spend 1 to 2 hours reading while 96 (26.9%) spend 3 to 4 hours reading and the minority group of 27 students (7.6%) spent more than 5 hours per day in reading.

Regarding the number of reading per week, majority of the students (43.7%) responded to have 1 to 2 readings per week, followed by 126 students (35.3%) who responded to do 3 to 4 reading per week. The minority group was formed by 68 students (19%) who responded to do 5 and above readings per week. This implies that the number of readings done by the students is relatively higher since the number of students who read 3 to 4 and those of 5 and above when put together exceed the number of students who had 1 to 2 readings per week. Observing the frequency of reading, Veli (2014), who looked into the reading habits of Turkish high school students in eight provinces, found that most respondents read for at least 30 minutes once or twice a week while only a small percentage of respondents read every day. Their favorite books to read were novels, periodicals, newspapers and online information. Furthermore, it

was shown that the primary barriers preventing respondents from reading were a lack of time, inability to obtain reading materials, lack of interest in reading, perception that reading was difficult and distractions from television and the internet.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on findings, the study concludes that library usage among the secondary school students is lower as a number of students were less effective in utilizing the facility. Those who used school libraries did so to observe sports and games information instead of reading academic books. Therefore, the reading habits of students did not appear to be beneficial.

Based on the conclusions, the study recommends that school administrators should motivate students to use the libraries on daily basis. Every school should have a school library to enhance teaching and learning as the presence of school libraries within school premises will increase the reading habits. As a result, what students learn in class will be supplemented by what they read by themselves in the library. Finally, teachers should assign students with specific tasks that demand library use

and direct them to visit school libraries and seek information to accomplish the assignments.

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