

Provision of Information Services and Resources for Enhancing Performance of Class 8 Pupils in Kimilili Community library, Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Information centers play a very crucial role in ensuring that the community has access to the right information to suit its various information needs evidenced by several research carried out on information centers. The rolling out of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya, in January 2003 led to overwhelming increase in primary school enrollment. This exerted pressure on educational facilities and created new challenges including inadequate information material for educational purposes. Community information centers whose role is to provide information services and resources to their respective communities have therefore an important role to play including provision of information services to supplement what the schools in these areas have including giving specific services and resources aimed at enhancing the performance of those pupils doing exams. Thus, this study purposed to assess provision of services and resources at Kimilili Community Library in Bungoma, Kenya for enhancing the performance of class 8 pupils. The study assessed the services and policies, available resources and the challenges encountered. The study was anchored on S. R. Ranganathan's laws of library science and Piage. Descriptive research design was used, and questionnaires and interview schedules were employed in data collection from 84 pupils, 2 librarians and 2 Ministry of Education officers. The study used statistical package for social science (SPSS), version 1.0 2023 for data analysis. The findings are presented in tables. The study established that Kimilili Community Library has various information resources including textbooks, novels, and atlases some in print and others in digital formats. If well utilized these resources would enhance the performance of class 8 pupils. The library also provides various services to pupils, including organized library visits and information literacy.

Key Words: *Community Libraries, Provision of Information services and resources, Enhancing pupils performance*

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1.0 Introduction

In order for education to flourish and encourage socioeconomic development, primary school pupils should have access to a variety of reading materials. By doing so, they will be able to acquire independent thinking. Every school should have its own library, which is the ideal arrangement. Nevertheless, most learning institutions, especially those in developing countries do not have libraries and Community libraries therefore play a significant role in these areas. According to Al and Richardson (2018), community libraries play a significant role in society, and their impact on social and economic development should not be underestimated. IFLA and UNESCO have emphasized that, when librarians and instructors work together, children exhibit higher levels of literacy, learning, reading, problem-solving, and information-plus-communication technology skills (IFLA/UNESCO 2002).

The Kenyan government has tackled illiteracy by providing free basic education. Due to the sharp growth in students enrolled in schools there has been strain in facilities including provision of information services and resources. The curriculum at all levels has continued to be revised to better meet the

socioeconomic needs of the country and this has further stressed resources. Information centers, according to UNESCO (2017), are essential organizations that advance learning and research at all educational levels and should be given the attention they deserve. According to Baada et al. (2019), community libraries should be spread around the country to improve the quality of life for residents because they encourage creativity, imagination, support literacy, leisure reading and children that attend nearby schools also benefit from them. The rural community library plays a crucial role in the education of school-age children, particularly those taking exams. With systematic and thoughtfully organized library services, this function can be performed successfully (Sultana, 2014).

Information centers are recognized as crucial tools for the advancement of social and economic conditions on a worldwide scale through the provision of information services. Information services largely have the potential of promoting the progress of their communities' and nations' social and economic systems through knowledge impartation. Mugambi, (2015). Laddunuri (2012), established that the number of students who passed their Form Four exams decreased steadily from 82.3 percent to 50.7 percent in the last five years, and that this was due in part to the inadequate number of books in the school library and the increased cost of books relative to the financial circumstances of the students. He also found that most schools were severely lacking in textbooks and lab supplies.

The Kimilili Community Library is a customer service organization with objectives that must be met with the aid of the tools provided by the government through the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) Board. The rural community library plays a crucial role in the education of school-age children, particularly those taking exams. With systematic and thoughtfully organized library services, this function can be performed successfully (Sultana, 2014). The provision of appropriate library services that meet each child's information needs is therefore necessary to encourage them to use the library. To do this, the library's main task is to understand the needs of its patrons and match them with appropriate services and resources. According to Mahwasame (2008), oral cultural problems such social and socioeconomic circumstances, the isolation of rural cultures from other areas, and a bad reading environment were found to be factors influencing children's reading habits. Community libraries should thus offer services that truly focus on the child and his or her information needs.

1.1 Research Problem

The provision of suitable information services and resources by libraries and other information centers continues to be essential for empowering communities especially in this era of information explosion. According to Maharaj (2018), most rural schools lack libraries and mostly rely on the informational institutions closest to them. This suggests that most pupils in remote locations may have to rely on the local libraries for their information needs. The Kimilili Community Library provides such information services to students to raise students' academic performance and improve their reading habits. Community Libraries play the role of the educator outside the classroom. They lend books that boost the class texts, offer much needed reading spaces and even information literacy training. With the many challenges faced by rural schools including lack of libraries, these community information centers help the pupils with much needed information products and services. Because of their significance, community libraries can be used to improve students' academic achievement by offering pertinent information services and resources. Therefore, this study aimed at evaluating the resources and services provided by the Kimilili Community Library and how they enhance the performance of class 8 pupils in the neighborhood.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To identify the information services the Kimilili Community Library provides to standard 8 pupils that can enhance their performance.

- ii. To evaluate the types of information resources accessible in the community library of Kimilili that can improve pupils' performance.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the five Laws of Library Science developed in 1924 and proposed in 1931 by S. R. Ranganathan, and also the Cognitive development theory by Piaget (1932).

2.1 Five Laws of Library Science

S. R. Ranganathan's, Laws serve as the foundation for all library activities and services. They are as follows:

- i. **Books are for use:** This suggests open access, meaning that readers of all ages can choose books off the shelf that interest them. There should be clear lending guidelines, easy access to the library's location, convenient opening and closing times for patrons, comfortable library furnishings and equipment, and qualified library staff.
- ii. **Every book his/her book:** suggests that it is the responsibility of the government and library administration to make sure that everyone has access to books and other informational resources that meet their informational needs. Additionally, the reader should be literate in information.
- iii. **Every book its reader:** and this is where by library resources and amenities and books selection should be complete taking operator as center. Services like addition services and reference services may be utilized.
- iv. **Save the time of the reader:** means that the library's information resources should be organized so that readers can access them quickly by putting them in a shelf with clear labels and reading them whenever it's convenient for them. Users should find it simple to check out and return books, and the library should hire skilled staff members.
- v. **Library is a growing organism:** The collection of a library should grow in a balanced way, taking into account user needs and requirements, adopting new technologies as they emerge, and protecting both the security of library assets and patrons as well as the necessity for expansion.

The aforementioned rules, which were developed before the advent of the digital age, are useful and valid currently and add to the core principles of library science and librarianship.

2.2 Cognitive development theory of Piaget (1932)

According to Greig and Taylor (1999) Cognitive theories discuss how school-age children learn to think, know, and understand their surroundings. Jean Piaget's theory emphasizes language, memory reasoning, and morals, focuses on children's mental development from infancy through adolescence (Dean, 2019). According to Piaget, a child's relationship with their surroundings and biological maturation play a role in how they develop. According to Jean's theory, there are four stages in a child's growth, and each stage has its own requirements for mastering the notions of space, quantity, quality, morality, time, and chance.

The four stages are as follows:

1. Sensorimotor stage (birth to two years)
2. Preoperational stage (two to seven years)
3. Concrete Operational stage (seven to eleven years)
4. Formal Operational stage (eleven to twenty years)

Because the Piaget theory provides a thorough description of children's intellectual development, it has been widely applied in the field of education. According to Dean (2019), certain educational initiatives are based on the notion that educators should only impart to students what is appropriate for their stage of mental improvement. The scholar also believes that kids' library programs ought to be created in a

way that ensures every kid has contact to services that meet his needs at all developmental stages. Therefore, when creating services aimed at children, librarians should take into account children's developmental milestones.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study's independent variable are services offered and available information resources. The intervening variables in the study are government policies; budget allocation; skilled staff and adequate staff which end up affecting the outcome of the study which are enhanced performance, faster access to information and easy retrieval of information by pupils as indicated in Figure 1.

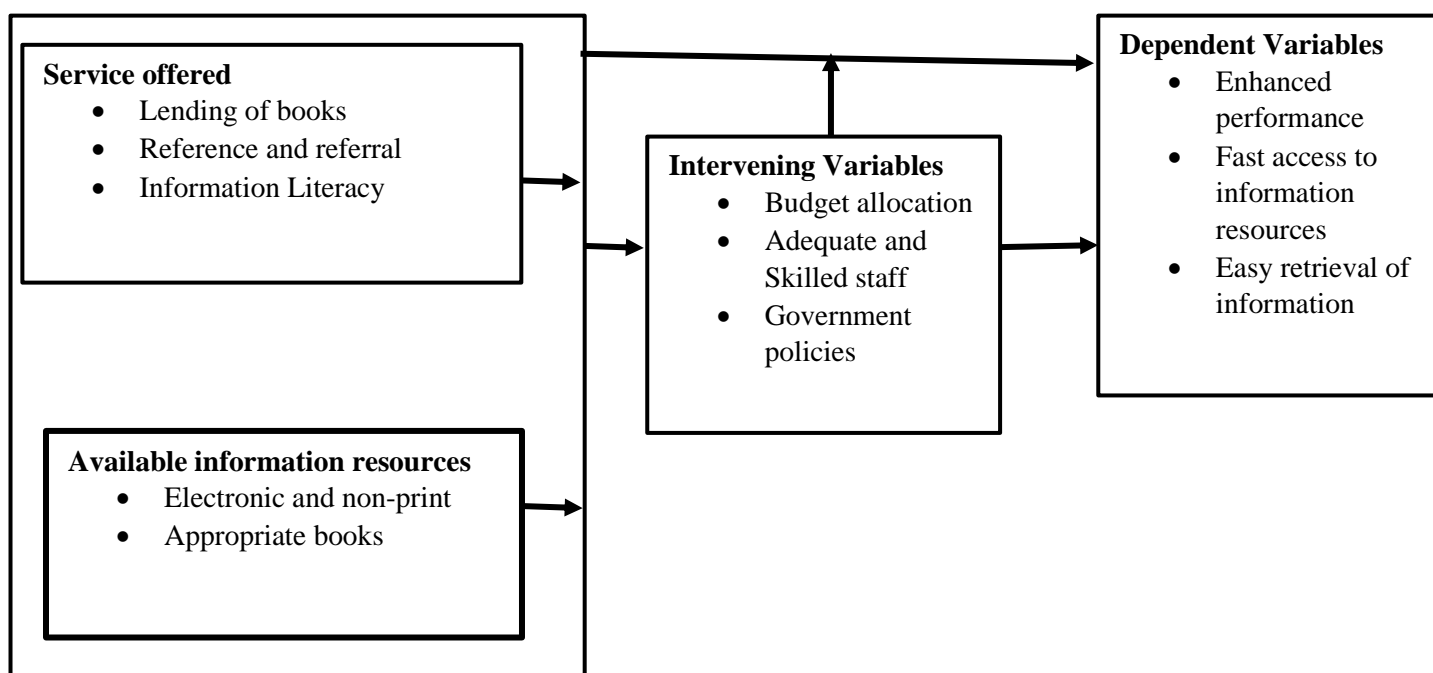


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

3.0 Research Methodology

Descriptive research design was employed by this study. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), the purpose of descriptive research is mainly “to bring out the real picture as it appears currently”. The study was conducted at Kimilili community library in kimilili municipality. Kimilili community library was selected for this study because it was the only community library that had given special attention to class 8 pupils in terms of supporting their class work unlike other community libraries that were giving out general services to pupils. It is also the only active library in Bungoma County .The large population of pupils that use the community library present great opportunity of access to information resources available in the library, hence it was deemed a suitable place to assess the provision of information services and resources to class 8 pupils. Apart from that, the community library serves pupils across the county from different schools thus providing a rich coverage best for the study unlike other community libraries that have limited number of pupils. The target population of this study was 840 pupils that are registered by the library2 ministry of education staff, and 2 community library staff. The study sample comprised 84 pupils (from the population size of 840), and through random sampling identified 2 library

staff, who were well placed to provide required information for the study. However, for the ministry of education staff purposive sampling was used and therefore only 2 members were sampled. The study used two sets of structured self-administered questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions to collect data. The questionnaires were structured to capture data and feedback relating to the study problem which was based upon the set objectives of the research. These were administered to the pupils and library staff as appropriate.

4.0 Data Analysis Results

4.1 Information Services Offered by Kimilili Community Library

The study sought to establish the information services offered by the Kimilili community library to class eight pupils. A question was asked to respondents on information services offered to them by the community library. The options given were “Organized library visits”, “Training on access to digital information”, “Trainings on how to access print information materials”, “Reading promotion/competition”, “Lending services”, “Study clubs”, “Homework clubs” and “Author/storyteller visits”. The results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Information services offered by Kimilili Community Library

Category of Service	Respondents	Frequency	%
Organized library visits	84	52	62
Trainings on how to access print information materials	84	68	81
Training on how to access digital information	84	58	69
Reading promotion/competition	84	74	88
Lending services	84	60	71
Study clubs	84	40	48
Homework clubs	84	50	60
Author/storyteller visits	84	30	35
Any other	84	0	0

Source: Field Data (2023)

From the study findings as shown in table 1.0, 74 (88%) of the pupils indicated that reading promotion/competition as one of the major services that is offered by the community library. 81% of the pupils indicated that they are trained in how to access print information materials, 69% indicated that they are trained on how to access digital information resources. 62% of the respondents strongly look at the community library as offering library visits. Nearly two thirds indicated lending services, 48% study clubs’ services, 35% indicated the library as a place where authors/story tellers are provided. This is in line with Else Bah (2011), who stated that libraries provide an arena where information materials are organized and kept for enhancing studies and recreation purposes. While Celano (2001) asserted that information centers are important tools in enhancing free primary education by providing access to information, raising awareness, building capacity, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of policies.

4.2 Types of Information Materials Available in Kimilili Community Library

The study also sought to establish the types of information materials available in the community library. Findings from pupils, library staff questionnaires agreed with those from interviews with ministry of education staff and branch librarian. Respondents indicate level of agreement with the statement as provided in table 2.

Table 2 Types of Information Materials Available in Kimilili Community Library

Category	Respondents	Frequencies	%
Core Text Books	84	70	83
Story books	84	50	60
Novels	84	50	60
Magazines	84	40	48
Maps & charts	84	35	42
Newspaper	84	45	54
Past examination papers	84	30	36
Atlases	84	25	24
Any other	84	0	0

Source: Field Data (2023)

Respondents were required to indicate the types of information materials available in Kimilili community library that enhance their performance, 70 (83%) of the respondents indicated core Text Books as the main resources, more than half of pupils indicated story books. 60(50%) indicated Novels as the resources and 40(48%) indicated Magazine, 35(42%) were for Maps and charts. while 45(54%) Newspapers and 30(36%) indicated past examination papers as the. Only 24 (24%) indicated Atlases as some of the resources available in the community Library. The findings agree with the study by Maharaj (2018) which stated that community libraries are important resources for learning, research and entertainment he further asserts that, they provide access to a wide range of knowledge and information in various formats depending on the user's needs: such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers audio visual materials and digital resources. The study was cognizance of the fact that pupils would indicate the resources they mostly use hence lower percentage on atlases.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

From the Finding it has been noted that community libraries are perceived as places for study and leisure reading. Kimilili Community Library uses a variety of strategies to provide information materials and services to pupils. They host reading-related activities, and the library has a variety of books and other information materials. However, it was established that some users are not aware of the available policies and strategies used by the community library. It was also discovered that some activities were not attractive to users, others were not aware of any partnership the library had with stakeholders to provide services. Pupils in rural areas were aware of their various information needs, most of them identified academic need as the major pull to use the library.

The study identified that pupils used acquired information from the library for academic purposes. Children are free to access information services available in the library, although some have been hindered by the geographical location of their homes. On the adequacy of information resources, Respondents gave different views, some indicated they are sufficient while others they were not enough. The Community library has equipment's/ facilities that include chairs and tables, well ventilated reading area with proper lights. There is a trained librarian who coordinates all children services. However, there is a percentage of pupils who are dissatisfied with the services offered by the community library and their views should be carefully discussed to ensure that their issues are seriously addressed by the library management and solutions sought to ensure all are satisfied.

5.2 Recommendation

The management of information centers should conduct forums that will target the user needs and come up with marketing strategies that will change perception of users so that Libraries are not only perceived to be place of books and a place of study but as a place of Information and holistic growth The library management should acquire more information materials to be used by the pupils and hopefully the

National government will increase the funding. The library management should involve the community to look for donors who can donate books and computers to be used by pupils and also support the adult readers so that there is continuity in the usage of the library for reading for academic achievement and information enrichment.

To ensure that pupils' imagination is captured as they interact with all the library resources the library management should make the library wall more attractive by adding more informative resources like charts and maps. The library should make sure that it has policies in place to help control information resources in its custody. Up to date collection development policy, will help the library not to stock Obsolete and inadequate resources that is not relevant to the needs of Class eight pupils. Information materials procured by the community library have no value if they are not utilized. Therefore, the management of the community library should come up with outreach services that will enable the library to reach those who are far. They should not address the needs of users that only visit the library.

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