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Study title: Utilisation of Secondary School Libraries in Government-Aided Schools in Kabale District, Uganda.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the utilisation of secondary school libraries in government-aided schools in Kabale District, Uganda. The objectives of the study were to: establish the extent to which school libraries are utilised, examine the role of secondary school library services in teaching and learning in government-aided secondary schools in Kabale District, assess the adequacy of library resources and services in government-aided secondary schools and to explore challenges faced by secondary school libraries in promoting the effective utilisation of library resources and services. A convergent parallel mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative data from 345 questionnaire surveys and 39 qualitative interviews conducted with teachers, library staff, and school Top administrators. Wilson's Information Behaviour model (1996) and the Resource-Based Learning models served as the study's theoretical framework.

The study findings revealed that although students visited libraries, with 71% reporting daily use, they primarily did so to read their notes and complete assignments. Although most schools had designated library spaces, library collections, and a staff member in charge, limited opening hours, insufficient materials, and poor infrastructure discouraged frequent use of library resources and services. The findings revealed a positive perception of the role of school libraries among students, teachers, and administrators. The libraries were perceived to enhance reading habits and support independent learning, but fewer appreciated their collaborative or social learning functions. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between students' perception of the role of school libraries and the effective utilisation of school libraries ($r = 0.236$, $p < 0.01$). The study also revealed high levels of adequacy for some resources and services, including library operating hours, location, and the cleanliness and suitability of the library environment. Moderate adequacy of library services was noted, with information materials and digital infrastructure being found inadequate. A statistically significant positive correlation was observed between the adequacy of library resources and school library utilisation ($r = 0.118$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that greater adequacy is modestly associated with increased utilisation of the library by students and staff. The study further identified several persistent challenges affecting effective utilisation of the school libraries, including inadequate funding, insufficient staffing, understocked libraries, and weak government support. The study concludes that despite widespread recognition of school libraries as vital to teaching, learning, and academic achievement in government-aided secondary schools, their utilisation remains shallow and largely traditional due to systemic institutional, infrastructural, professional, and policy-related constraints, including inadequate staffing, limited resources, weak governance frameworks, absence of a national school library policy, and persistent urban-rural inequalities that undermine equitable access to quality educational support. Enhancing utilisation requires targeted interventions in policy, staffing, infrastructure, and ICT integration, as well as greater collaboration among teachers, librarians, and students. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should develop and implement a national school library to standardise various aspects of school libraries, and that school administrators should place the resourcing and visibility of school libraries at the forefront of strategic planning, capacity building and human resources development to be institutionalised to enhance the competencies of library staff in library management. A framework was developed to guide future efforts to enhance library utilisation, emphasising institutional action, capacity building, human resource development, policy interventions, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The findings underscore the need for strategic investment in school library infrastructure and services to support Uganda's shift towards a competency-based curriculum and to advance national education goals.