SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY LIBRARY FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN MOROGORO, TANZANIA

Carolina R. Makunda[*]

Patrick A. Ndunguru[*]

Stelyus L. Mkoma[**]

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to get the insight about the perceptions of students on the importance of libraries of academic achievement. Surveyed sample consisted of 240 students were by 119 were males and 121 females from two secondary schools in Morogoro, Tanzania. The data were collected using questionnaire which consisted of 18 test items developed and pre-tested for validation before use. The results from this study showed that both female and male students in surveyed secondary schools were equally in favour that use of libraries has positive effect for their academic achievement. Students from two studies secondary schools perceived that library has greater impact in providing motivation in reading and promoting use of technologies. This studt recommend the government through ministry of education and vocational training to establish quality libraries in secondary schools enriched with updated materials, computer facilities and trained library staff.

Keywords: Library, Quality learning, Academics, Secondary students, Tanzania

[*] Department of Education, Faculty of Science, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Chuo Kikuu,Morogoro, Tanzania.

[**] Department of Physical Sciences, Faculty of Science, Sokoine University of Agriculture,Chuo Kikuu, Morogoro, Tanzania.

1. Introduction

The process of learning that aimed at equipping people with attitudes, values, knowledge and skills to enable them to live a complete successful life is called education (Rizvi, 1997). From primary to higher education networks library enjoys a status of backbone for ensuring quality product. Library is a 'maternity room' of a workshop for creativity and ideas but not the holy place for veneration of books (Parry, 2000). Libraries exist to collect human experience record and to provide physical and intellectual access to that records. Libraries in particular, there is responsibility to preserve primary resources and scholars communication.

Library services were emerged in different countries in the world since the 17th century. In Tanzania the library services established in 1975 succeeding the the national central library in Dar es Salaam in 1967 (Kaungamno, 1975). In the opening ceremony, the "father of nation" late President Julius K. Nyerere said "the real importance to our nation of this central library derives from the fact that it is the hub of a wheel, from which spokes will reach out to towns and villages throughout mainland Tanzania." Tanzania library service was the first East African library system to accept the recommendation of the Hockey report in 1960 by the British council to assess the needs and make recommendation for developing East African library.

The primary important of learning process should be to offer easy access to the reading learning materials and to provide independent learning and thinking to the learners. School libraries help students acquire unique skills, becoming information seekers, reviewers and synthesizers, thereby preparing students for continuous learning (Smith, 2006). Studies on libraries as a learning resource centre and for student's achievement have been reported (Oberg, 2001; Durrance, 2003; Todd and Kuhlthau, 2005) but few have been carried out in Tanzania (Mcharazo and Olden, 1999; Mcharazo, 2000). Therefore, knowing the effect of school library on students learning, it was important to conduct this study to get insight that what the students perceive about the use of library in the education system. The study aimed to investigate the perceptions of secondary school students in Morogoro, Tanzania and their attitude on the importance of quality libraries for students' academic achievement.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Sampling protocol

The study used quantitative research approach in order to examine the perception of students on the importance of library to their academic achievement. Research design refers to the conceptual structure upon which the research problem is to be taken. This study has been designed in the form of a case study (Verma and Mallick, 1999).

Students at ordinary level from two secondary schools from Morogoro rural district in Tanzania were selected for in this study. These were Nelson Mandela and Mikese secondary schools. The students' sample of 120 from each school was selected randomly (Creswell, 2005) for the study purpose which included those in form II and form III classes. Here pieces of paper numbers from 1 to 60 and other blank papers were used in sample selection. For those who got the pieces of paper with number were used as the sample to represent the students in respective classes (Form II or form III). Therefore, sample size was 240 students from the two schools were involved in this study.

2.2. Data collection and ethical consideration

From the samples students data collection employed questionnaire type of instrument and analysed by SPSS software (Muijis, 2004). The questionnaire consisted of 18 statements based on the three point Likert style. Before actual survey, the questionnaire was pilot tested to a sample of 30 students of both gender from one of the non-participating secondary school and minor errors detected were corrected before data collection (Cohen, 2007). The questionnaire had items that related to the effects of library use on students' academic achievement such as study habits, learning skills, critical orientation, reading ability, and language development (Poll, 2005; Jagannath and Preveen, 2007).

Permission from authorities was requested before meeting the respondents and consent students who took part in this study. The information obtained was confidential and useful for academic matter only and not otherwise. Gender sensitive questions were avoided.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic characteristics

Table 1 show the students demographic characteristics at two surveyed secondary schools where 60 students from each class of form II and III in each school were selected. Of the total

120 students interviewed at each school 55% were female and 45% males at Nelson Mandela secondary school and about 46% and 54% were female and males, respectively at Mikese secondary school. However, overall about equal percentage of female (50.4%) and males (49.6%) participated in this study and majority (73%) aged between 16-18 years and 17% below 16 years of age.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of students from Nelson Mandela and Mikese secondary schools

Characteristics	Nelson Mandela (n=120)		Mikese (n=120)		Total (n=240)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender						
Female	66	55	55	45.8	121	50.4
Male	54	45	65	54.2	119	49.6
Age						
< 16	16	13.3	26	21.7	42	17.5
16 – 18	94	78.3	82	68.3	176	73.3
> 18	10	8.3	12	10	22	9.17

3.2. Perceptions of students on importance of libraries on academic achievement

Questionnaires were used to collect information from students in order to determine the importance of libraries. The following below are the responses from the respondents. The mean and associated standard deviation (Table 2) indicates that, students from Nelson Mandela secondary school perceived that library has an impact in providing motivation in reading (2.10±0.60), promoting use of technologies (2.03±0.59), achievement for students' learning (1.99±0.21), followed by language development (1.96±0.35), creating study interest among students (1.95±0.22), developing study habit (1.95±0.26) and on students' reading ability (1.95±0.41). Also they argued effects in problem solving (1.94±0.56), doing better school works (1.92±0.41), contribution in class discussion (1.91±0.37), on library effects gathering of correct information (1.87±0.55) and getting better grades (1.85±0.46). Lastly, students' perceived that library promote communicative skills (1.67±0.64). The results therefore indicate that library has positive impacts on the different areas of student's achievement as perceived by the students at Nelson Mandela secondary school.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows that students at Mikese secondary perceived that library has an impact most in providing motivation in reading (2.17±0.64), promoting use of technologies (2.12±0.55), students' reading ability (2.05±0.39), problem solving (2.03±0.56), promoting communicative skills (2.03±0.65), achievement areas for students' learning (2.00±0.18), and in gathering of correct information (2.00±0.52). It followed by developing study habit (1.98±0.16), doing better school works (1.98±2.03), language development (1.96±0.40), contribution in class discussion (1.96±0.40), creating study interest among students (1.95±0.25) and lastly getting better grades (1.94±0.44). These results indicate various positive effects the library has on the different areas for student's academic achievement.

The mean score calculated statements in all areas ranged from 1.67 to 2.10 at Nelson Mandela and 1.94 to 2.17 at Mikese secondary school (Table 2). Therefore the quality library should be an integral part of educational institutional because it has a positive impact on different areas of students' achievement as perceived by school students. Students perceive that a quality library can help them to get better grades hence achieving well in their academics.

Table 2: Mean and associated standard deviation of the effect of library on students' academic achievement (n = 240)

S/No	Statement about quality library	Nelson Mandela		Mikese Sec	
		Mean	Stdev.	Mean	Stdev.
1	Creates study interest in students	1.95	0.22	1.95	0.25
2	Has a positive impact on students' learning	1.99	0.21	2.00	0.18
3	Develops good study habits in students	1.95	0.26	1.98	0.16
4	Helps students in gathering information they need	1.87	0.55	2.00	0.52
5	Has an impact on students' reading ability	1.95	0.41	2.05	0.39
6	Helps students search relevant information	1.97	0.53	2.01	0.38
7	Provide motivation in reading to students	2.10	0.60	2.17	0.64
8	Helps students to contribute in class discussion	1.91	0.37	1.96	0.40
9	Helps students create new ideas and information	1.95	0.41	2.04	0.49
10	Ensures the effective use of ideas and information	1.90	0.64	2.11	0.67
11	Plays role in language development	1.96	0.35	1.96	0.40
12	Helps students in getting better grades in tests	1.85	0.46	1.94	0.44
13	Promotes critical thinking among students	1.92	0.47	2.00	0.55
14	Promotes learning to use new technologies	2.03	0.59	2.12	0.55
15	Have tools to inspire literacy in learners	1.99	0.38	2.02	0.47
16	Helps students solving problems in a better way	1.94	0.56	2.03	0.56
17	Helps students in doing their school work better	1.92	0.41	1.98	2.03
18	promotes communicative skills in classrooms	1.67	0.64	2.03	0.65

Note: 1= disagree, 2= agree, 3= undecided

3.3. Perceptions effects of library use on students' achievement by gender

Table 3 indicates that, there is very small difference in the percentage of males and females on the perceptions of the students on the effects of library on their academic achievement. The percentage of females from both schools was 50.42% whereas of males was 49.58% hence a difference of 0.84%. Therefore, it is concluded that both female and male secondary school students have similar positive perceptions about the effects of effective use of library on their academic achievement.

Table 3: Perceptions of female and male on the effects of library use on students' academic achievement

School name	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Nelson Mandela secondary school (n=120)	66	55	54	45
Mikese secondary school (n=120)	55	45.8	65	54.2

4. Summary and conclusion

This study revealed that library has positive impacts on students' achievement such as for gathering relevant information of specific topic and promoting the students' reading ability. In addition the library has difference importance to society as a whole (Reding, 2005). Existing research shows that school libraries can have a positive impact, whether measured in terms of reading scores, literacy or learning more generally, on student achievement. Libraries are at the centre of the academic excellence of educational institutions providing the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning and research functions. Therefore, libraries should be equipped with digital and non digital resources to enable the students get involved in learning opportunities at international level.

Quality learners are needed for the society and today's young generation is real stakeholder for future in different spheres of life. Libraries help schools in producing good quality learners at different education level. The objective of this research was to investigate secondary school students' perceptions about the importance of use of library in connection with the academic and

learning of students. The results showed that students (both females and males) have similar perceptions concerning the use of library for better academic achievement. Therefore the study concludes that library should be a crucial part of educational institutions at all levels and society in general to impacts students' academic achievement. Based on major findings and thus conclusion in this study we recommend the government through ministry of education and vocational training to establish well equipped libraries in schools with trained library staff, computer facilities and enriched with updated material. The role of print and electronic media in libraries could also be very useful.

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