

An Overview of the Roles and Benefits of Libraries

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By

Nkhangweni Patricia Mahwasane

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I dedicate this book to the general public, but especially to the youth, adults, parents, teachers, teacher librarians, librarians and principals of schools, as well as education policy makers. Mostly though, the book is dedicated to the education authorities, whose voices are heard and who take part in education-planning, decision-making and policy-making for the betterment of our children's education, with the main aim being to build the reading nation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRL: American Association of College and Research Libraries

AASL: American Association of School Libraries

AECT: Association of Educational Communications and Technology

ASLA: Australian School Library Associations

CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

CHE: Council on Higher Education

DAC: Department of Arts and Culture

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DoE: Department of Education

DDC: Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

EE: Equal Education

EEA: Evaluation of Educational Achievement

EFAL: English First Additional Language

ICT: Information Communication Technologies

IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

HMI: Her Majesty's Inspectorate

LIASA: Library and Information Association of South Africa

LSE: Library and Information Services

LS: Library Association

LMC: Library Management Committee

LOLT: Language of Teaching and Learning

NCLIS: National Council for Library and Information Services

NEPI: National Education Policy Investigation

OBE: Outcomes-Based Education

OPAC: Online Public Access Catalogue

PEI: President's Education Initiative

PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

RL: Research Libraries

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA: United States of America

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, in both developing and developed countries, the library is one of the most important facilities. Libraries – including school, public, community, regional and national libraries – play an important role in the lives of users from children in kindergartens to older people in the communities. Libraries offer countless benefits to the community as a whole, not only as repositories of books, but also in their role as providers of information services in support of communities. Libraries also serve as a place where people can come together (Lankes 2012). In communities, libraries are a place for meeting commitments as civic engagement libraries consolidate community democracy. They are places of education where children and parents have opportunities to be exposed to various language skills through storytelling, songs and other activities (Zurinski 2013).

According to Morris (2004:34), a school library is a library within a school where learners, staff, and sometimes parents, of a public or private school, have access to different types of resources. The main goal of the school library is to ensure that all members of the school community have equal access to books and reading information, as well as to information technology. According to the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (2003), “a school library is used as a generic form that incorporates all forms and models of collection development and delivery that provides materials relevant to a resource-based teaching and learning approach to learners and educators in schools.” The Australian School Library Associations (ASLA) (2001:6) describes the school library as functioning or based within five domains, namely: “learners and learning; teachers and teaching; resourcing the curriculum; managing the physical environment and the provision of access to information. Its work in each domain is aimed at achieving the learning outcomes of the curriculum.”

In this book, the school library refers to a library which is attached to a school, which provides library resources to foundation phase or Grade 3 learners in different formats in order to supplement textbooks and to make them accessible to all learners. The school library enables learners to have reading materials that will enable the development of their reading abilities and other skills.

School libraries are regarded as hubs that provide learners with reading and learning materials that are made available in different formats in order to support their reading needs. There cannot be successful reading without functional school libraries. Unfortunately, this may not be the case with learners attending schools in Vhembe District, because there is a lack of school libraries to support reading so that learners are able to develop reading habits. Most learners come from families that cannot afford television, radio and the internet. The kind of information they get from these media is not adequate to supplement the textbook, and to enable them to develop the culture of reading.

There is no reading culture in South Africa because learners use prescribed textbooks in their learning process. To instil love for reading, there is a need for a diversity of books such as children's stories, adventure stories, classics, non-fiction, historic fiction, science fiction, thrillers and romance. Books in the library will inspire a love for reading in learners. Therefore, there is a need to increase the number of books in schools and public libraries. It is important to develop interest in reading, that is, a reading culture in society.

Todd (2006) stresses that school libraries are hubs for discovery, inquiry, thinking and creativity in learners. Inquiry in the school library encourages the 21st century learner to develop curiosity, and to have innovative and creative spirit in an academic context. Moreover, in the school library, the school librarian works hand in hand with an instructional team of teachers as well as other learning specialists, including leaders in reading, literacy, special needs and ICT. School libraries assist learners to learn how to think in a critical way, to solve problems and make decisions as well as to be reflective as a result of using different, and sometimes, conflicting sources of information.

Furthermore, Equal Education (EE) (2010) reiterates that libraries provide access to the much-needed information and resources that will enable learners to explore the world of learning. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2000:12), the importance of libraries, especially school libraries, is to instil in learners the love for reading and to develop an adult who will become a responsible information user. According to a study by Todd and Kuhlthau (2005), 99 percent of students indicated that the school library had helped them in their school work as well as outside the school.

The mass production of information has resulted in information explosion. Learners will be able to read and learn only if information is readily available to them. This is where the library comes into the picture; it plays an important role in separating wheat (important information) from chaff (less important information). It is the duty of the library to select relevant materials that are suitable for the various levels of learners. Current, relevant and timely information plays an important role in learners' ability to read, hence their academic performance. The library provides the information needed by both teachers, to succeed in their teaching, and learners, in their learning. As a result, this book may be of help to school librarians who work directly with learners and in collaboration with subject teachers, providing them with relevant, current and timely information in their work.

The context in which school libraries operate is non-existent since the advent of apartheid to date. This has consequent implications for student learning. The following trends suggest the need for a closer look at the potential role of school libraries in relation to learners' reading levels in the previous context of South African schools:

- Lack of functional school libraries in rural areas;
- Lack of adequate stock of library materials at the level of the learners;
- Lack of qualified teacher librarians employed in school libraries responsible for library work only, without the added responsibility of teaching;
- Explosion in information production and the development of increasingly sophisticated Information Communication Technologies (ICT); and
- Changes in the educational system, including greater focus on the learning outcomes.

Even after the death of apartheid, the new government has not been able to supply libraries with the necessary resources in order to address most of these challenges.

Libraries are probably utilised to advance the opportunities of all to access more services (Clark, et al. 2012). There are various benefits offered by libraries, including: improvement on quality of life; users being able to access information that they cannot find anywhere else; libraries making possible lifetime learning in both children and adults; and, most importantly,

libraries being the backbone of children's education (Library Council of New South Wales 2008).

There is a need to improve the provision of library services to the extent that they are able to supplement the textbook. There is also a need to increase understanding of how school libraries can form the basis or foundation of reading and learning. A child who cannot read is unable to learn; in order to learn effectively, one needs to be able to read.

This book attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge within the school library context, by investigating the role of libraries in boosting the reading ability of learners as well as their academic performance. The book determines the extent to which learners in rural areas have access to library resources.

The beneficiaries of this book will include learners, secondary and university students, young adults, parents, subject-teachers, teacher-librarians and principals, as well as the Department of Education, as they are involved in ensuring that children are developed educationally.

The Department of Education authorities will appreciate that a modern school should have a rich library that functions as a learning centre, supported by curricula and methods of teaching that enable learners to develop reading strategies in order to adapt to a knowledge-based society.

The provincial and national Ministry of Education will benefit from the results of this study. The Minister of Education, as well as officials in the Department of Education, will be able to have insight into what is happening in schools in rural areas in terms of the effects of school libraries on learners' reading ability. The study will provide information to the education authorities concerning the effects of school libraries on learners' reading ability. The study will help education planners at both provincial and national levels to make the right decisions concerning policies and guidelines in the context of the school library.

Ideas generated from the study will benefit national and international researchers, thereby shedding light on the effects of school libraries on learners' reading ability in rural areas. The study will add to the available body of literature for use by other researchers.

Learners will also benefit from this study as they will be able to change their information-seeking patterns, improve their reading skills, develop a

culture of reading, get a better reading score and grade, and perform at a higher level.

The recommendation of the study will focus on school principals, people responsible for the smooth running of schools. According to the channel of communication, the principal is the right person to communicate with the department. Therefore, principals will be expected to urge the Department of Education to develop and equip school libraries to the degree that they can effectively support the reading needs of learners in schools. In addition, the results of the study will help these principals to encourage teachers in their schools to study towards qualifications in school librarianship or to become school media specialists so that they are able to support learning opportunities with a wide range of resources in the school library.

Chapter One of the book deals with the conceptual role of the school library, and gives an overview of the roles and benefits of school libraries in a global context. The chapter also highlights the different types of roles that school libraries play in the lives of school children because schools cannot operate effectively without libraries since, being backbones of the school, they supplement the school curriculum.

Learners are provided with various reading programmes as well as reading activities in school libraries, providing them with a diversity of reading books, instilling and developing in them love for books and for reading.

Chapter Two concentrates on the benefits of school library resources on students' learning. Since the South African education system depends on resources, it is imperative for schools to have well-equipped school libraries that will be able to support the school curricula. The chapter elaborates on the elements of power that school libraries have to assist learners to access relevant information in order to compile their assignments, school projects, homework and other school work in general.

Chapter Three deals with the function of libraries in the academic performance of students. Libraries are the backbones of the institution in which they exist. The learners that are the most successful in their academic performance are those that have stored information. This chapter documents the aims and functions of libraries in developing students' success in their school work. Also considered in this section is the benefit both that the students gain, by attending a school with a library, and also that a qualified

librarian offer when collaborating with teachers to make sure that they get proper assistance to enable them to cope in their academic endeavours.

Chapter Four outlines countless benefits that libraries offer children as users. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part I looks at how children benefit in terms of information services offered by libraries. Part II examines the importance and relevance of the language of the library collection that caters for foundation phase learners. Part III concerns the importance of systematic arrangement of the library collection to facilitate ease of access. The chapter elaborates on various kinds of user service functions in the library that are provided to children for the effective and advantageous use of the library. The language of the library collection is relevant to the foundation phase learners (elementary learners), and therefore the school library collection should be properly managed for ease of access by, especially, children at the elementary level.

The final chapter discusses the benefits of the library on young adults, who are still in a critical stage of their lives. They need libraries that provide them with information that will benefit them holistically. Libraries provide young adults not only with resources that will help them to succeed in their education, but also with information that will benefit their moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetics capacities. The chapter also proposes the interference by the education authorities with school library issues, which is still a challenge in most South African schools, especially in the rural areas.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPTUAL ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

Abstract

School libraries provide access to a wide range of sources. A library is more than just a storage place (repository) for books. Libraries also have important roles that they play in developing literacy skills in learners. School libraries support the goal of the school to grow a community of enthusiastic readers by making accessible a wide range of different reading materials that reflect both the learners' interest and their reading abilities. The aim of this chapter is to examine the various roles of the school library. It provides an overview of the conceptual roles of libraries. Based on the literature, researchers recommend that more community libraries should be established to supplement poor school library services. The libraries should be well stocked with a wide range of resources so that they can play their role effectively.

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Background

There are different types of library and information services in South Africa. They are as diverse as their aims and functions, which are influenced by the information needs and circumstances of their users. School libraries, regional libraries, public libraries and community libraries are also supposed to provide library services to children in rural areas.

The library can also play a crucial role in an area by arranging outreach workstations or booths in community locations such as stores, supermarkets, arcades, colleges, learning institutes and the house of worship, consequently making available the channel to retrieve the databases in which indigenous knowledge is deposited to the native inhabitants (UNESCO 1997).

Libraries were warehouses and excavations of knowledge, retained in books. A human attempt of numerous types, comprising education, research, creativity, enterprise and relaxation, has continuously been contingent to an approximate degree on retrieval of information. Books in libraries are vessels for carrying and conveying the information the libraries contain. Books were established to be communication means for information in the form of writings, and libraries were established to preserve, manage and arrange, as well as make them available in considerable amounts. The importance of libraries has frequently been determined by the extent of their collection; a number of books indicate a superior storage of books and extra extensiveness of coverage.

Moreover, in most countries, nowadays most of the people are educated to a certain level and they are able to read and write. They depend on written or recorded text in that they keep diaries to remind them of something. (Sturges & Chimseu 1996). They realise that information will help them to do their work, further their studies, and find information for leisure purposes.

Moreover, Okore et al. (in Chisita 2011) recommended that libraries establish the surroundings that permit societies to come together and exchange opinions concerning agriculture, medical care, ecosystems, and farmer-to-farmer collaborations.

Introduction

A school library is part and parcel of, and operates within, an academic system and school jurisdictive background, and is contained by a public community. On the other hand, school libraries are directly connected with the education system and can also consolidate basic information literacy instructions through supporting curriculum and instructional goals, consulting on individualized reading guidance programmes, providing library group activities, teaching learners library skills, helping teachers appraise learners' skills, conducting workshops and discussions to help parents support learners' reading and learning, and collaborating with the

public library on reading programmes and technology (Salter and Salter 1991; Chisenga 2012).

The School Libraries Form Part of a Literacy Environment

The school library is a quiet and safe place in which learners can interact with the resource-rich environment and be immersed in reading activities which in turn build up their vocabulary and comprehension of text. As a result, the more time that learners spend in the library, the more their reading level improves (Celano and Neuman 2001; PIRLS 2006).

Wessels (2010) was of the opinion that school libraries can serve as a tool to open the door to the “magical world” while, on the other hand, contributing to literacy acquisition. School libraries support the goal of the school to grow a community of enthusiastic readers by making accessible a wide range of different reading material that reflect both the learners’ interest and their reading abilities. Krashen (2004) asserted that access to the classroom and school libraries encourages more reading to take place. Moreover, access to books does not only provide the learners with the opportunities to practice reading but also develops learners’ reading habits. Krashen (1995, 2004) and the South Africa Department of Education (2005) agreed together that those learners who attend schools with functional school libraries tend to achieve higher reading levels.

School Libraries Provide Equal Opportunities for Learning for all Learners

The Research Foundation Paper (2008) indicated that school libraries provide equal opportunities for learning and achievement to all students. We are living in an information society in which information plays an important role in the lives of people. As a result, information literacy has become an important asset, needed to succeed, for all people in all age groups. More so for learners who must be trained to be information-literate so that they will be able to access, organise, analyse, evaluate, use and share information in all formats, that is, in print and non-print formats.

School libraries also offer summer reading programmes when schools are closed. This is an expensive way of keeping learners busy and engaged in purposeful activities throughout the summer, so that when the schools reopen learners do not forget what they have learnt before the break. I.e. instead of returning to school having forgotten what they have learnt, they

go back to school with improved reading achievement (Celano and Nieman 2001).

School libraries help learners to become lifelong readers by allowing them access to current, high-quality and interesting, extensive collections of books and other print materials; this is the case not just in school libraries, but also classrooms and public libraries (Research Foundation Paper 2008). Rooted in genuine learning responsibilities, that can fake actual-life encounters, are formative valuations, like, for example, rubrics, journal blogs, and reflection sheets that trail learners' advancement and encourage replication by means of self- and peer evaluation. As a result of web 2.0 tools in the library, learners are also provided the opportunity to interact for self-regulation and self-monitoring while in the process of learning to read (Gordon 2009). Learners are also allowed opportunities such as, when collecting data, to make use of interviews and surveys. This is encouraged because it enables the learner to interact with the data they are collecting on their own and not depend on other people's data (Gordon 1999).

School Libraries Support Reading Programmes

Both the school library and the classroom library materials support the school reading programme. The school library cannot replace the classroom reading collection as these supplement each other. The school library consists of a "collection of resources that are organised according to a standard system with materials catalogued and classified for universal accessibility" (Frances and Webster 2002). The collection can be rich with all kinds of resources in different format, but if it is not accessible it becomes useless because no one will be able to use it. Therefore, the classroom reading collection should be organised according to the grade level of the individual classroom.

The Research Foundation Paper (2008) indicated that the classroom collections that match learners' abilities are more effective, especially when increased by revolving collections and each learner's choice of reading material, as suggested by the school library media specialists. The school library media specialists display their dedication to assist schools to meet the reading goals through the provision of proactive support in the form of in-class reading instruction. They also provide catalogued library materials in a way that will be easy to search and retrieve that information. On the other hand, learners are provided with the collection most relevant for research, skill-building and leisure reading, as well as the collection that most supports reading motivation.

School Libraries Play an Important Role in Teaching

Professional school librarians or media specialists are essential instructional partners or consultants who support and expand the school curriculum. These specialists work hand in hand with the teachers in order to change what is possible in the classroom, as well as support the learning with a wide range of reading materials and computer resources etc. (Research Foundation Paper 2008). The school library, through its school librarian, plays an important role in up-and-coming literacy across various curriculum contexts within the scope of the school curriculum. The school librarian facilitates reading comprehension by making learners aware of their comprehension when they are involved in guided inquiry.

Teacher librarians in a school are there to support learners at the coming together of reading and information. As students understand the phases of these, thoughtful reading approaches are intertwined into the material of teaching, for example, when students, through previous understanding, use mind-mapping to take notes or question the author, they are improving reading understanding (Gordon 2008). In the school library, the teachers employ evidence-based practices in their teaching, which enables them to use tools like action research that demonstrate the utilization of evidence as part of action inquiry (Todd 2001; Gordon 2006).

School Libraries Inspire Literacy

Literacy can be defined as a life-long procedure that originates in early infancy and carries on through the course of a lifespan. Literacy is the capability to read and write with a slight level of expertise (Reitz 2004; Kupetz 1993). Learning to read and write starts early in life. The child learns more skills that are utilised in reading before he or she starts schooling. Emergent literacy is “learning about print” (Lapp et al. 2005). Emergent literacy skills develop in children who come from families that engage in reading and writing activities with them as well as when they read story books to them (Machet 2000). Pre-literacy experience also takes place in families in which reading, writing and story-telling is a daily occurrence (Machet and Olen 1997).

The school library has an unswerving connection with the education system and as such can be utilised to strengthen elementary reading ability instruction by offering backups in the curriculum and teaching goals. The school library can offer personalised reading supervision programmes, responsible for offering library group activities, teaching library skills to

learners and assisting teachers in evaluating learner skills, as well as co-operating with the public library concerning reading programmes. The school library is designed to support classroom activities and can also be utilised in instructing library skills, providing reading materials beyond the textbook, strengthening teachers' programmes, and providing unintentional reading materials for learners (Salter and Salter 1991).

A library is more than just a storage place (repository) for books. Libraries also have important roles that they play in developing literacy skills in learners. Teacher librarians can also employ literacy strategies like, for example, the Dial-A-Story service which is accessed telephonically and can encourage learners to listen or audiotape their own stories. Supplying learners with crayons and markers at the end of the story time can also inspire them to draw or write concerning their literacy understanding (Dowd 1997). Since literacy is a continuous process that starts in infancy, the public library provides pre-reading experiences that advantage children. The children are trained to concentrate on something, to distinguish substances and develop sensory consciousness, strengthening their elementary thoughts; this also provides the chance for corporeal confidence to develop, which is very important for young children's responsive and academic development. The librarian is responsible for selecting relevant books that are suitable for children, such as books of rhymes, point-and-say" books and also touch-and-smell books. The librarian also provides modelled reading-aloud strategies (Kupetz 1993).

When learners are provided with the opportunity to use school libraries to access and read stories and be able to explore information that matters to them, different forms of literacy and numeracy develop in learners. Research has revealed that school libraries have the power to stimulate literacy in learners of different ages (Research Foundation Paper 2008).

School Libraries Support Reading as a Key to Understanding

School libraries provide access to a wide range of sources. School libraries making use of the school library's resources provide access to reading materials and they also motivate reading and integrate literacy with their instructions. The importance of access to reading materials is reflected in the study of Lu and Gordon (2008). Lu and Gordon (2008) further indicated that school librarians encourage reading both for pleasure and personal growth by providing learners the opportunity of choosing and approving the use of alternative media such as newspapers, magazines and websites, which is a critical component in reading commitment.

Libraries encourage learners to read books on their own and to listen to books read aloud through summer reading programmes. Furthermore, most of the programmes provide events that enhance the learners' reading understanding. These types of activities are similar to the exercises offered in fundamental school reading programmes as well as in kindergartens. In most school libraries, learners are compelled to read a book and also compose a short paragraph or an abstract concerning the main idea being presented in the book. The learners are also required to make art projects, like, for example, dioramas, paintings or sculptures that illustrate the book that the learner has read. These literacy-related activities improve learner's reading ability by giving greater meaning to the written word as well as showing the learner's thoughts on the story (Celano and Nieman 2001).

School Libraries Support Voluntary Reading

Pretorius (2000) stated that Grade 4 South African learners were found to have scored the lowest, in numeracy, literacy and life skills, among 12 African countries, according to the studies by the Department of Education and the UNESCO- UNICEF Monitoring Learning Achievement Project. In 2005, matric results released by the Department of Education showed nearly a third failed the examination. As a result, educational institutions and libraries encounter some huge encounters in attempting to develop a reading culture in learners. Machet and Pretorius (2003) reflected that there cannot be literacy without learning and there cannot be learning without literacy. For learners to be successful in their studies, they must be able to read fluently.

Voluntary reading has much to do with becoming a life-long reading activity. For learners to participate in voluntary reading activities, they must be able to read fluently without any difficulty. Voluntary reading is concerned with reading because one is willing to read; voluntary reading, in turn, develops the foundations of a reading culture. Reading flourishes when it is realised that a sense of pleasure is gained from the activity (Elley 1992). The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study revealed that the most important goal for reading instruction, which is highly considered in most countries, is the development of a voluntary reading culture in children (Elley 1992).

Methodology

The method used for this paper was investigated through a systematic literature review by utilizing a combination of both contextual and conceptual review methods. A thoughtful and knowledgeable review of suitable literature positions the researcher in a framework of contrasting study.

Discussion

The objective of one of the roles of the library is to provide learners with the environment which is most conducive to learning. Learners need a safe and quiet place to study. When most of the learners come to school, they come with poor vocabulary and without any pre-literacy skills, but the school library material can create the opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Therefore, professional school librarians, and school libraries that are well stocked with reading materials, play an important role by promoting information literacy and reading for information and inspiration. For this reason, Chorum et al. (2016) opined that school libraries are hugely significant in as far as the accomplishment of the school's academic purpose is concerned. Moreover, school libraries are indispensable means in the academic, social and cultural development of a child.

Kumar (2010) was of the opinion that to be able to participate in reading activities, learners must be given the opportunity to read willingly. Learners come from a variety of family backgrounds. On one hand, there are some learners that are raised in homes where there are no reading materials, not even newspapers, i.e. their homes are print-poor. On the other hand, there are children brought up in homes that are print-rich and have the opportunity to read leisurely at home because their home is conducive to reading. As a result, for learners that are from print-poor homes, the school library is the only hope where they can have the opportunity to read. Therefore, school libraries are relevant to the 21st century learning environment as they provide equal learning and achievement opportunities to learners as a whole, irrespective of their socio-economics status or the educational level of their communities.

In order to teach learners to read, the reading programme is necessary, which is why, according to Baker (2016), teacher librarians should display the ability to spearhead and effectively implement school library programmes so that the library can play the vital role discussed above. Moreover, school librarians should cooperate with subject teachers, as well

as the school community, to support the school curriculum. Both the classroom teachers and the reading teachers need books that are well-selected and are suitable to learners' levels. The reading material should be interesting and attractive to learners, to stimulate their desire to enjoy reading. Teacher librarians, together with literacy teachers, should collaborate in initiating reading programmes. The availability of school libraries in schools empowers the programmes that promote reading to take place throughout the year which is a critical way to maintain reading habits.

Moreover, learners who do not read regularly, throughout the year, often end up with poor reading test scores. In as far as the low achievers and struggling readers are concerned, school librarians play an important role by providing a huge choice of reading materials as well as advice beyond the scope of the school curriculum. This is congruent with literature that shows slow achievers and struggling readers need reading experiences that are relevant to their own lives, which will provide both emotional and psychological benefits (Lu and Gordon 2008). As a result, this is an indication that there is a need to provide resources and structures that help students to develop cognitively, mentally, expressively as and socially, through their reading experiences (Lu and Gordon 2007; Kumar 2010).

Libraries provide children with the opportunity to devote substantial time being exposed to books, which is the principal stage to establishing reading achievement. Moreover, libraries also inspire parents and teachers to play superior roles in developing their children's reading ability, which is yet an additional influence that leads to reading achievement. It was also found by Celano and Neuman (2001) and Okiy (2014) that children who participate in library summer reading programmes read expressively well compared to children who attend a camp programme; therefore, the time that youngsters devote to being in the library considerably enriches their literacy attainment as equated to time spent on other entertaining activities.

Moreover, parents and teachers believe that consistent utilization of libraries improves children's reading ability. This is in consistence with literature that libraries play an important role in achieving literacy through the following: they provide the relevant facilities, resources and opportunities to improve the literacy skills of learners who are still learning to read; libraries form part of the education system prevailing in that area; they extend traditional library roles to users by enhancing emergent literacy skills. In addition, they employ new strategies of providing afresh literate people by: understanding the collection; taking the initiative in education activities; distributing information and supporting the use of collection; and

finally co-operating with other organizations in literacy programming like, for example, the National Literacy Strategy (Lyman 1977). Supported by literature, frequent visits to the library inspires children to devote extra time in a literacy-enhanced environment, thus setting up the occasions for them to read and borrow books as well as other materials. As a result, these events frequently yield what children acquire by means of books and spread it into a better-off literacy experience (Celano and Neuman 2001; Owolabi 2010).

According to Okiy (2014), school libraries are the core of the school that makes sure that school programmes are available to learners. Playing the role of teaching, libraries, specifically the librarians that work in them, provide teachers with a diversity of library collections for teachers to use when preparing a lesson. Textbook information is not adequate for producing quality lessons. Teachers need information sources that they will refer to when teaching. Teacher librarians collaborate with teachers, administrators as well as support staff in assisting with teaching learners how to use libraries. This is corroborated by literature in AASL (2007) and Baker (2016) that supports the instructional role played by school librarians as guides and facilitators and they also stress “reading, inquiry, information literacy, critical thinking and knowledge construction.”

When teacher librarians read stories to learners during story hours or reading periods, they offer the learners appreciated reading ability understandings. The teacher librarian also enables learners to gain an upper hand in as far as developing emergent reading skills is concerned, by training them to read books, tell stories, dramatize a story based on a book that was read, recite rhymes, and sing choral verses from a book.

Conclusion

Within the school library, learners must interact with information sources in various formats and at a level suitable for them. School libraries should provide learners with an environment which is safe and conducive to learning. School libraries and literacy go hand in hand in the same way as schools and literacy. They both have the responsibility to provide learners with access to reading materials. As a result, school libraries play an important role in learners' literacy environment by providing support to facilitate use of their resources, to develop learners so that they want to read for pleasure. School libraries are valuable, especially to those learners who are from families that do not own books or other reading materials, or don't even have access to public libraries.