

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE OF KENYA NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE KANGEMA, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

Public Libraries located in rural areas are established and designed for the purpose of providing information services to all groups in the community including children and stimulate reading for fun that promote reading culture among children and in the process ensure user satisfaction. This study was an assessment of children library services provided in rural areas a case of KNLS Kangema, with an aim of establishing whether they satisfy children information needs that will lead to lifelong reading. Objectives that guided the study included to establish the perception of library services in rural areas, identify strategies used in providing information in a rural public library, determine the information needs of children living in rural areas, to assess whether the children library services provided satisfy their information needs, and to determine the suitability of children library services provided in supporting reading for life. Different literatures was reviewed. Descriptive research design a case study approach was used. Target population included all the children registered as library members (642), teacher librarian of all the schools that had registered as institutional members (9), and library staff (4). Purposive sampling was used to sample a sample size of 64 children, 9 teacher librarians and the entire population of library staff. Questionnaires, interview, focus group discussions were used to collect data. Collected data was presented and analyzed data in form of tables and pie charts. Computer based statistical package for social science was used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data collected from interviews and FGD was presented in a narrative form, and where

necessary the voices of the participants was cited and where possible organized thematically. The study established that libraries were perceived as a place for books and study and library services were essential and important. The library used a variety of strategies such as policy, dedicated children spaces, host reading related activities, the library had a variety of books and other information materials , integrated ICT in children library activities, they engage teachers, parents and children in library activities. However some users were not aware of the existing policy and some strategies used were not attractive to users and others were not aware how the library partners with various stakeholders to provide services. Children were aware of their various information needs majority of them identified education need as the major information need. Other include current awareness, entertainment, personal problem and personal development information need. Further the study found out that children used the information obtained for academic purposes. Library services were accessible to all children however majority of children visited the library weekly. The finding revealed that the library had inadequate information resources. There were various kinds of services/ programs that may be utilized by children, users were satisfied with equipment's/ facilities such as comfortable chairs and tables, well ventilated and with proper lighting junior section, dedicated librarian who coordinates all children activities and the library services to children available were suitable to support a reading culture. However, there is a percentage of users who were dissatisfied

with the services due to inadequate Information materials and computers, book borrowing fee, and unattractive library wall. The researcher recommends that the library to conduct user forum to change the community perception, should involve more stakeholders whenever they have reading related activities for children. Do a benchmarking with other libraries. More programs should be added to stimulate reading for life through attractive, fun library activities and encourage children to

frequently visit the library. To capture children's imagination, library wall should be made more attractive by adding educational pictures and murals. To achieve an effective reading culture, it requires continually funded support from the government. Therefore, the KNLS board should lobby for enhancement of budget allocation from the County governments for an effective library service to children living in rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study. It contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitation of the study, assumptions, theoretical and conceptual framework and operational definition of terms based on the assessment of children library services in rural areas.

Background of the study

Information is a vital resource and need to be accessed by all. Kabat citing (Oyiengo 1987) notes that information is one of the basic human rights of every citizen whether a city or rural dweller, and an essential instrument in socio- economic development of any nation. Where there is a well-planned and developed library service, then an effective transfer of information can effectively occur. In this modern society that is globalized and information driven, information is a vital resource (Unagha & Ibenne, 2011). Harande (2009) concurs and points out that a dynamic; development conscious government would not neglect its rural society in regards to disseminating information. He further observed that Africa is developing slowly simply because it has not adequately established information centers in rural communities, where the rural dweller can access relevant information that can assist in personal and national growth.

All over the world the public library's mission in many communities, in both developed and developing countries, is to facilitate and enable equal access and distribution of resources for individual abilities and community development and lifetime learning. (Aabo 2005; Yan & Agnes 2009). Empowerment of a rural community may be achieved through the contribution of library programs that promote literacy, lifetime learning and ensuring free access to computer and information technology resources to all residents including the children.

An effective library service should enable a child or any library user to move freely in and around the library. Different library services can be offered and be able to expose children to

all kinds of information materials and sources including opportunities crucial to reading achievements. Celano (2001) observes that children ability to read is enhanced through the use of various activities available. Therefore, children libraries hold a vital role in ensuring that the child has reading skills. In Pennsylvania studies have shown that teachers and parents have submitted that regular use of local libraries improves children reading significantly. According to Ngovi (2002) history of library services to children differ in each country. Nevertheless, with the increased realization that children have their own rights to information, libraries have started intensely to design and develop library services with the child as focus. In the USA and Europe for instance children library services began more than 100 years ago. In East Africa libraries like any other social services were developed separately for the needs of different communities segregation was the order of the day (Ngovi, 2002).

In Kenya, Mombasa was the first public library to be established in 1903. In early 1970 the Kenya National Library service board was established with a function to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries and information services in Kenya (Kenya Laws Chapter 223). However, despite the government opening branch libraries many children do not access library services. Kamla-Raj (2016) citing Mahwasane (2008) recommends that user education and user advice should be employed to facilitate effective utilization of library services.

IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development (2001), indicates that public libraries have an obligation of ensuring that library programs and activities are attractive to children and that every child will utilize the services and benefit in terms of cultivating a reading culture at an early age that may probably guarantee a continuous reading habit even in adulthood. In rural areas of Thonoyandou South Africa, according to Mahwasane (2008), finding shows that rural children search for information that will assist them to do schoolwork assignment. Also instead of using library resources to search for information, teachers and pupils approach individuals whom they consider to be knowledgeable. Harande (2009) supports Mahwasane by observing that rural areas are still experiencing insufficient information services. In Kenya this is also true, library service rendering is neglected by stakeholders in the education sector.

Akanwa citing (Emanalor,1990) notes that a very essential area in librarianship today is the provision of services to children in rural zones as greater part of the total population of a particular country who need to benefit from library programs live in zones that are purely rural. Some of the characteristics of a rural area are that majority of people are farmers, absence of well-constructed and equipped schools, lack of piped water, electricity and good roads and so forth. (Odewale (1986) identified the characteristic of rural areas as

1. Areas with low level of literacy
2. Limited educational and economic opportunities
3. Strong cultural, tribal and religious adherences and
4. Absence of large business and commercial institutions

African children can really benefit from the open spaces provided in the established libraries, for they disseminate a variety of information resources that can assist them to search and retrieve information that can enable them solve the challenges they encounter in schools, community and at a personal level. Therefore, they assume an essential role of availing a wide scope of imaginative and inventive programs that brings together children and thus removing the hindrances such as language barriers, age, ethnicity, cultural, and financial status.

In spite of the fact that the foundation of a rural child is oral based (Elkin and Lonsdale 1996), majority of their information needs can't be fulfilled by use of oral cultural methods alone. Information centers such as libraries can make books and other information materials accessible, bearing in mind that these information media are not readily available at school or home. Aina and Alegbeleye (2015) expressed that third world countries had come to understand that unless rural community is empowered through provision of adequate, free, relevant and timely information no meaningful development would be achieved.

In the recent past, it has been noted that the Kenyan government has endeavored to spread essential services/amenities to rural areas. For example, the availability of tarmacked roads, renovated/newly constructed classrooms in schools, availability of electricity and solar power supports this fact. In the same line, the government through Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) board has established branch libraries. (KNLS) is opening new libraries in rural Kenya this is because its function is to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries and information services in Kenya (Kenya laws chapter 225). However, the question is whether KNLS offers children library services that meet the expected standards and according to IFLA guideline. In this regard, rural public libraries such as KNLS Kangema, ought to put first priority on developing Children programs and activities.

KNLS Kangema is a service oriented institution with set goals to be achieved within the resources made available by the government through the KNLS board. The library in the rural areas has significant role in the progress of knowledge. This role can be effectively carried out with a systematized and properly planned library services (Sultana, 2014).

As noted by Mahwasane (2008) oral cultural issues such as social, financial conditions, the geographical remoteness of rural societies as well as a poor reading environment was observed to be the components that influence children's reading habits. Libraries can provide the kind of information that can't be given by guardians through a combination of different library services, and that's why they should provide services that actually focus on the child and his/her information needs and information seeking behavior.

Problem statement

Even in this digital era books and literacy remain crucial for child's growth and lifelong learning. Public library's role in general is to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to access books and other information media without biases in terms of their, age, economic background, ethnic origin or physical location, and ensuring that every child is exposed to the

right book at the right time, and in the process promote a reading culture among children. Children in the rural area already have major limitation imposed upon them in their search of library materials to meet their needs, due to the physical location and geographical layout, which sometimes may hinder access to the library. Akanwa (2010) did a research and established that the library is very important in the mental, social and emotional advancement of the child, which means it's vital for children who live in rural areas to access information services. According to World Bank collection of development indicators, rural population in Kenya was at 73.94% in 2006. This is an indication that big portion of Kenyan still live in rural areas and is engaged in agricultural activities, KNLS, has made an attempt to reach them through branch library services. Emphasis has been given to creation of kids spaces in rural/ branch library. In the library field there is a growing recognition that children library services particularly in public libraries, must be dedicated to improving the general quality of life from childhood to adulthood. Considering the foundation of library services to children in the rural areas, it can be argued that these services are poorly structured and that a child who lives in these areas cannot fully benefit like a child who is utilizing services in urban libraries that have well developed services. The study underpins the importance of library services to children and therefore the need to assess the infrastructure and reading resources of library services among children in rural areas.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess children library services provided at Knls Kangema, with an aim of establishing whether they satisfy children information needs that will lead to lifelong reading.

Objectives of the study

The study objectives are as follows

1. To identify strategies used in providing information to rural children at KNLS Kangema.
2. To determine the information needs of children living in rural areas at Kangema, Muranga, Kenya.
3. To assess whether the children library services provided satisfy the information needs of children living in rural areas.
4. To evaluate the suitability of library services provided to rural children at knls Kangema in supporting reading for life.

Research questions

1. What is your perception of children library services in rural areas?
2. How important are the children library services?
3. What policies and strategies are used to develop children library services?
4. What are the information needs of rural children and how do they search for information?
5. Are the children library services offered accessible to children in rural areas?
6. Are the resources available adequate to effectively develop an effective children library service that will satisfy the information needs of children?

7. How regularly do the children visit and use the library services offered?
8. Are the children library services available able to support a reading culture?

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is as follows;

- i. That the Libraries in the rural areas will be able to provide services that can enable the children get maximum benefit from the use of library resources and services.
- ii. The recommendations made will be applied in provision of extra reading resource to children in rural areas.
- iii. The study would also make useful contributions that KNLS management may use towards improving children library service to rural children.
- iv. The study findings may be used by the Policy makers as an eye opener to come up with polices and appropriate strategies on library services to rural children that are sensitive to children needs and also promotes reading for life.
- v. The study is expected to indicate as well as show the need and the importance of continuous government financial support towards rural public libraries
- vi. The recommendations made are expected to assist donors and other stakeholders by pointing out weak and strong points of children library services. It is hoped that the research will help reveal challenges that are hindering effective children library service to children in rural areas.
- vii. The model used in the study may also stimulate interest for further research in effective library services for children in rural areas.

Limitation and delimitation of the study

Limitations of the study are conditions that the researcher has no control of. And delimitations of the study are choices made by the researcher which should be mentioned as they describe the boundaries that the researcher set before the study

Limitation of the study

The limitation of the study was that the research involved teacher librarians of schools registered as institution library members, the researcher had no control over respondent's feedbacks.

Delimitation of the study

Kenya National Library Service categorizes those with five years to fifteen years as children. The researcher sampled only children aged ten years to fifteen and those only in upper primary school. This assisted the study in that children aged ten years and above were able to actively participate during Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Assumptions of the study

This researcher had the following assumptions;

1. Children in rural areas have a broad range of information needs which are currently not adequately met by children library services offered

2. Children in rural areas lack access to library and information service to enable them develop a reading culture for long life learning.
3. The respondents selected for the study will cooperate and provide reliable responses.

Theoretical and Conceptual framework

Theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory which explains why the research problem under study exists.

Conceptual framework refers to when a researcher conceptualizes the relationship between variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically or diagrammatically (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003)

Theoretical framework

A child regardless of the environment he/she is has information needs. Therefore, libraries should develop programs and activities that will support reading for life and help children develop information literacy skills. The study utilizes Piaget's (1932) intellectual or cognitive development theory complemented by Ranganathan's Five (5) laws of library science.

Ranganathan's Five (5) laws of library science.

The driving force for all library activities and services comes from the five laws of library science which were formulated in 1924 and proposed in 1931 by S R Ranganathan, namely

- i. Books are for use.
- ii. Every reader his/her book.
- iii. Every book its reader.
- iv. Save the time of the reader.
- v. Library is a growing organism

Books are for use means, open access where children and all readers can be able to choose from the shelves what they want to read. Loaning policies should be in place, library location should be accessed with ease, operating hours and days should be favorable to the user, library furniture and equipment should be comfortable and quality library staff.

Every book His/her book implies that the government and library management has the obligation to ensure each person has access to books/ resources that contain information which satisfy their information needs. And the reader should have information literacy skills. Every book it reader means that library services and selection of books should be done having user as focus. Services such as extension services may be used, reference services among others.

Save the time of the reader implies that information resources available in the library should be designed in such a way that they are accessed easily by arranging them systematically in a well labelled shelves, and the reader can be able to read and use them at their convenient time. Users should be able to borrow and return books with ease and the library to employ competent librarians. Library is a growing organism implies that the library ought to have a

balanced growth in their collection considering the needs of users and their requirements, embracing the new technologies that are emerging safeguarding both the safety of users and library assets and also the need for expansion.

Even though the above laws were formulated before the arrival of digital age, they are still usable and applicable today, they contribute the basic philosophy of library science and librarianship.

Piajet's (1932) Cognitive development theory

According to Greig & Taylor (1999). Cognitive theories are about the ways in which children come to think, know and understand the world around them. Jean Piaget theory was published in 1936, and focuses on children mental development from birth through adolescence and stress on language, memory reasoning and morals (Dean, 2019). This theory regard the child as an active participant in constructing knowledge. Piaget argues that children development is a process that results from biological maturation and a child's interaction with the environment. Jean theorized four levels of childhood development and each level has its sets of achievement in spatial, number, quality, time, moral, chance and probability concepts. The four levels are;

- i. Sensorimotor stage- birth to 2 years-**Main change at this level is object permanence
- ii. Preoperational stage 2- 7 years-**Playing and imagination are very important. Psychology theories state that children starts to develop memory during this stage, the child is egocentric.
- iii. Concrete operational stage 7-11 years-** the Child begin to have rational thought. According to Piaget, this is the foundation of essential milestones. The child start working things outside their head and are more aware of outside world and events.
- iv. Formal operational 11years to young adulthood-** Piaget believe that children become capable of formal reasoning at this stage. Ability to use abstract thinking when faced with problems. Instead of relying solely on their experiences, children begin to come up with other possible ways of solving issues.

Piajet theory has been used widely in education sector because it gives detailed account of children intellectual development. As indicated by Dean (2019) some educational programs are built on the idea that teachers should teach children only what is right for their level of mental development. Similarly the researcher opines that children library programs should be designed in such a manner that every child has access to a service that satisfy his need at every stage of development. Hence, librarians should consider children development milestones when coming up with services that target children.

How Ranganathan's five laws of library science and Piajet's cognitive development theory complement each other in this study

From the above laws and theory it can be conceptualized that the use of the five librarianship laws is directly proportional to mental development of children who uses these services. Furthermore, if one is to assess library services the researcher may use the five laws of library

science as they are the fundamental laws that apply to any problem in the area of information science, and library practices. As Ranganathan implies, these laws provided a scientific foundation assuring an indefinite future to librarianship and library use because they offer a philosophical approach to library matters. The laws are important for the study because they can be interpreted to reflect children information resources, services and the behavior children exhibit when participating in library activities. On the other hand, Piaget's theory is about recognizing the stages a child is currently in and catering to his information needs at that developmental level. By understanding the children's milestones the library staff design children services focusing on children process of growth having in mind that children will not participate in particular library activities until they are psychologically mature enough to do so. On the other hand maturation helps a child to understand their world and hence make sense of it. Particularly the last two stages helps the study as the children respondents are between the ages of ten to fifteen years and at these stage the child is aware of outside world and events also some are able to make hypotheses and grasp abstract. Therefore, the children respondents will be able to identify their information needs and assess the library services offered to them and based on these services able to identify those services that satisfy them or motivate them to develop a reading habit.

Therefore, at every level of growth children have a unique way of how they search information based on the cognitive abilities acquired. These librarianship laws and Piaget cognitive development theory collectively and separately constitute a measure for testing the validity of all the library services. The fact that information access is considered as constitutional right of every citizen, using libraries to access information widens the intellectual maturity, develops confidence, increases reading, listening and speaking abilities and maximizes critical thinking and reading reflection among individuals therefore, each user should be able to obtain the information he seeks at the appropriate time and location and in the manner in which he requires it.

Conceptual framework

In general, indicators that will guide in assessing library services to children in rural areas will include the following factors, library environment, strategies employed to develop the service, information needs and reading habits of children, which is also affected by the kind of information resources available, library partnership with stakeholders and cooperation between the school administration and public administration, government support and collaboration of teachers and parents. Thus knowing the children information needs, reading habits and children rights, may enable the library to provide library services to children that will satisfy these needs as they grow hence, promote reading for life. These variables are presented in figure 1 below,

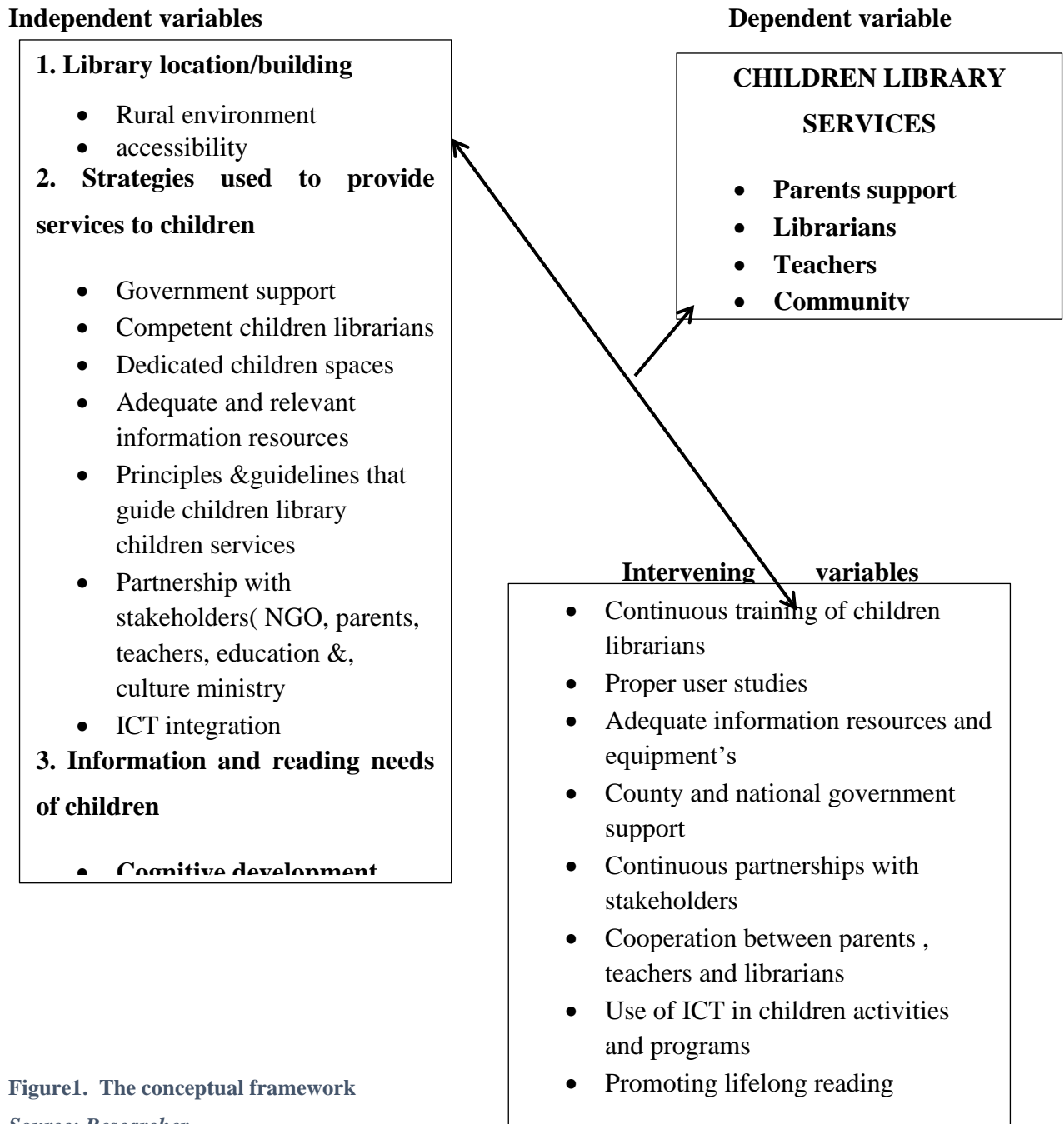


Figure1. The conceptual framework

Source: Researcher

A well designed children library service should be judged by how well it is able to ensure access to information that will fill the knowledge gap identified by the user and in turn the child will have information literacy skills that he/she will use for life long reading and learning. Continuous training of children librarian, adequate/ relevant information resources including use of ICT, Proper user studies, Collaboration/ cooperation with school administration, teachers, parents, and Government support, these intervening variables will ensure that the library develops a well-planned user focused service that will promote reading for life that will ensure an effective children library service.

Operational definition of terms

Assessment

A process of judging a service in regard to whether that service has met the user's information needs and expectation.

Children

Any child who uses the junior section of the library and according to this study is between the ages of ten to fifteen (10-15 years)

Children library services

These are information services/ activities/programs and resources that the library offers in the process of disseminating information, and are specifically designed to provide books, extension activities, facilities, and other information resources to children within a certain age bracket.

Information need

Defined as an individual recognizing or becoming aware of his inadequate knowledge to satisfy a goal or solve a problem which compels a desire to search for information that might fill a particular knowledge gap.

User Satisfaction

A feeling of pleasure and happiness experienced by a library user when the service offered corresponds with his need and expectations.

Public library

A type of library supported by government grants that provides library resources and services to all members of the community as well as provide library staff who oversees and guides them in their choice of book, program's and other information resources.

Reading for life/Reading culture

A developed habit of reading books and other information materials regularly, not for profession or career progression only, but also as a pleasurable activity for holistic growth in every aspect of an individual's life.

Rural area

A place that is not in the main city line with low population density, has few buildings and where people's economic activities is mainly agriculture and farming.

Source: researchers

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review on assessment of library services to children in rural areas. Guided by the study objectives review of the following areas was carried out, perceptions of library services in rural areas, strategies used to provide information to children, the information needs of children living in rural areas, user satisfaction and the suitability of children library services in supporting reading for life.

Perception of library services

Perception can be defined as the entire process by which an individual become aware of the environment and interprets it so that it will fit into their frame of reference (Kiriri, 2018). Perception as defined by the Dictionary of contemporary English (2009) is the way you think about something and your idea of what it is like. Therefore perception is an idea a belief or an image a user has about a library as a result of how they see or understand it.

According to a study by International Federation of library Association (IFLA) on the perception of library services in Africa, the findings indicate that library services are widely available in the majority of rural areas of Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Uganda and that the community around them is aware of their existence. Also, public libraries in these areas are perceived to only provide books and a place for studying.

Public libraries in rural areas provide traditional services such as lending books and providing a conducive environment for study. Children in these areas visit libraries to complete school assignments and other classroom related reading such as exam preparation (EIFL, 2011).

Most of rural public libraries are housed in small building or have limited spaces for children, are resource constrained, lack technology- related facilities while others have shortage of appropriate information resources to fulfil user's needs. It's a sentiment shared by Otike (2011) who urges that public libraries do not adequately serve rural communities since they are supplied with materials that aren't connected to the information requirement of most rural African. He also mention that children exposure to libraries is limited and suggests that more could be done to improve usage.

Public libraries are a place where children, parents teachers interact with right information resources professionally organized where competent librarians provides access to books and other print or non-print media. However parents in rural areas belief that library is a place that offer information services that are academic related only and therefore an extension of academic study.

A study by Elbert et al. (2012) shows that libraries throughout Africa contribute to the development of their countries in different ways. For example, countries such as Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria library services are supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

of their respective countries by supporting quality education through instilling skills for lifelong learning.

In Kenya in particular programs such as E-Learning Tablets Computer project at KNLS Kibera supports slum school children to use ICT to access information. The program has stimulated a love of reading for children and increased the number of young library users (<http://lib.ifla.org/862>). To this end library services for children has a remarkable position of assisting the government to respect the United Nation Convention (UNC) on the right of the child which stresses the right to free and open access to information materials and programs. Libraries in Kenya has not historically been perceived as partners in National Plan of Action for children where libraries are not mentioned as one environment where children can get accurate relevant information and as an institution which provide a child friendly environment. Elbert, et. al. (2012) concurs that local government stakeholders in Africa perceive libraries as lenders of books. Akanwa (2013) recommends that although public library in rural areas serves various groups in the community, library services to children ought to have a prominent place in the lineup of activities. Children need libraries therefore, whenever children are, libraries should be established and provide services in form of books, extension activities, audio visual materials and Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Scholars in the information industry agree that library services to children is an essential service which guarantees child's holistic growth. Therefore the government should support children services by providing funds to existing libraries, establishing more public libraries in rural areas and ensuring they are sufficiently supplied with appropriate information materials. Children need libraries to access information resources, knowledge acquisition, and development of reading skills, cultural knowledge, and introduction of ICT skills (Akanwa, 2013). He further adds that children library services in rural area is very essential in the psychological social and emotional development of the child.

However, according to the reviewed literature above they indicate that individuals in the community view library as only a place for books while studies have shown that libraries are places for holistic growth. Rural children have a completely different background based on the geographical, agricultural and development opportunities of the community. Therefore, the librarian must not assume that all children in the rural areas have the knowledge regarding the availability of library services in their community and also the librarians should understand that not all children are aware of the functions of a library. Therefore, with this thought the research is conducted to establish how the community view library services and their idea or perception of children library service in rural area.

Strategies used to provide information to children

The International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) Guideline for children services clearly states that libraries particularly those that fall under public category, have an exceptional obligation to support the process of improving reading, and to promote books and other media for children. Strategies used to provide information services must encourage

utilization of library from childhood as this will probably make them remain clients in later years as adults.

For a library to be able to provide services to children users there has to be a good policy which will govern how this essential service will be disseminated. Harris (2009) defines a policy as “a statement or general principle of intent that helps translate programme objectives into accomplishments by providing administrative guidelines for decision making and implementation” (p.115). Shannon (1995) on her part also holds that libraries should develop an overall library policy statement that commits the library to making programs, services and resources accessible to children. Rosthstein (2000) asserts that policies are formulated in order to serve as a public statement of the library’s intentions concerning provision of services to its clientele, and to establish clear guidelines for the library staff to aid the provision of services. Therefore, every publicly funded library should develop and implement an action plan which includes short and long term objectives, strategies for achievements and mechanism for evaluation and review.

Further, libraries should employ strategies that will ensure full government involvement and support of children information services and programs. In Darkar during a forum on world education (2000) it was observed that Africa’s learning institution do not have libraries even as governments aim to achieve the target of universal primary education, schools experience severe shortage of textbooks as well as additional information resources. Likewise the Kenyan government is facing the same challenge as they try to achieve universal primary education. The Kenyan government provides textbooks to schools especially for supporting the new Competency Based Curriculum. (CBC). However they only supply the textbooks leaving a gap for the supplementary books. For this reasons the government should encourage collaboration between schools and public libraries to ensure they fill the gap especially on supplementary books and also the government should provide the necessary funds, information materials, competent children librarians and ensure that all established rural libraries have reading spaces that are attractive to children.

Akanwa (2006) defines the children’s library as that section that is purely devoted to providing information materials such as books and other media without a fee to all children of a particular age group. Majority of rural libraries have realized that library spaces for children are the key in providing effective services (Celano, 2001). In the United State of America (USA), Alabi (2013) conducted a study and observed that all public library surveyed provided children library services. For example, the New York public library offer after school programs for children services such as free computer training, literary program and virtual library services are provided. Likewise, the Kenyan government through KNLS has established sixty four libraries across the country and in these libraries there is a section dedicated purely for children services and activities. In 2015 KNLS partnered with Book Aid International (BAI) to improve services in the junior section by implementing children corners in selected KNLS Libraries under a project named Open Doors Children and teen Corners (ODCC). In these sections of the library, children are served with resources and programs that correspond with their ages. The project not only focused on books but also

covered refurbishment of children and teen spaces in the library. The project aimed at creating vibrant library by inspiring young readers. (Kenal news, 2017).

In order to guide users or assist children in developing information skills and reading habits, qualified library staff is an important factor to consider. Mojapelo (2015) asserts that Children services are diverse and require having competent library staff who guides children to retrieve books and navigate other programs in the children section Therefore, the children section should be managed by competent children librarians who will be able to fit in the shoes of a child in terms of understanding each development level and create and provide simulative information service. Ngovi (2002) supports the point by enumerating the qualities of children librarian which include, patience, good listener, approachable and alert, a good organizer, good tempered and have a pleasant personality.

As noted earlier IFLA has recognized the importance of children library service and has set up guidelines for children and library services. Nevertheless, even with the well laid down guidelines Kibat (1990) observes that only countries with ample monetary resources have been in a position to deliver quality services for children nationwide. A study by Dent and Yannotta,(2000) showed that many libraries in Africa are underfunded by their government or parent organization this prevent frequent purchase of books and other information resources majority of books on their shelves are donations from other continents. For this reason libraries are using collaboration as a strategy for enhancing provision of children library services in public libraries. According to Eberechukwu and Ozoemelum (2016) collaboration with government, international bodies and other stakeholders in the education sector ensures greater performance and improved service delivery. For example as a way of supporting achievement of primary school educational goals KNLS libraries have identified gaps in the provision of school library programs. To this end knls in partnership with Book Aid International (BAI) developed an intervention project of donating books in boxes to primary schools. According to Kenal news, 2017 citing Kayoro, More than 5000 children benefited from this program that was implemented in twenty KNLS branches in ten counties. The books have proved beneficial and are heavily supplementing the “Tusome program” that target children and adult learners (Kenal news, 2017)

There is a variety of library programs designed for children, they include but not limited to services such as parent-child story hours, group activities, Computer literacy training, library and reading programs, books reading, talent search programs, recreational services, information for help with schoolwork and assignments, read aloud programs, reference services among others. Mahwasane (2008) affirms that effective service provision to children must ensure that the book talks and story hours include folk tales with African version. Today’s library is regarded as a powerhouse where information is stored, generated and transferred to fulfil user’s needs. To get the most out of this library, users should be aware of how to access the resources making each information search effective. A study on public libraries services in Nigeria challenges and strategies revealed that rural Nigerian were not benefiting from public library service hence the introduction of mobile libraries. He also asserts that children library services exposes children to information resources as early as

possible they provide picture books, story books, cartoons, games, poems, children magazines, textbooks, fiction and nonfiction for children. These services are presented in colorful manner to educate the children and encourage them to develop a reading habit. Other service include reference services, storytelling hours information literacy service discussion group/ talk shows, lending services reading promotion, mobile library service, book week, cultural service, recreational service and extension services. Children must be exposed to a diverse range of appealing and relevant materials in order to develop a reading habit. For example, “Book flood” are used as a strategy to increase the amount of reading materials in Fiji, Singapore and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, a pilot study in Sri Lanka found that “book floods” cause notable improvement in literacy skills particularly for young children who are being taught in a language other than their mother tongue.

Similarly as a strategy to expose children to a wide range of information resources Kenya National Library services uses book boxes and outreach programs (Kenal news, 2017). This strategy aims at ensuring easy access and utilization of the information resources available. In addition libraries uses outreach as a strategy to provide services to users who are infrequent or non-users. Outreach services ensures that all children in the community get access to information regardless of their location. Outreach is also used as a marketing tool thus ensuring the community is aware of the available services.

According to Mahwasame 2008 citing (Freiband 1992 and The Reading Agency 2004) scholars in the library field have found out that the secret to attracting more users in the junior section is ensuring that the services offered are attractive enough to stimulate interest among children. Integration of ICT in children services is another strategy used by libraries to provide information services. ICT fosters creativity, by allowing sound pictures, animations, video and text to be put together to make stories more interesting and convincing. For example “Kio –kit” device is used at knls Muranga by librarians as a digital learning interaction. According to Ngugi (2017), the Kio-Kits in libraries has been a game changer as far as pupils and their attitudes towards curriculum subjects are concerned. Sang (2016) noted that most library users have challenges while trying to find information for their diverse needs due to emergence of new technology and thus not able access or retrieve any information. However public libraries are striving to reinvent themselves and embrace the new technological advancement having in mind that children library collection is not entirely on print but also in diverse formats and media. For instance, “Tunachop” study forum in KNLS Meru library enables young members to engage in academic discussions through the forum students can post challenging assignment questions and they can get answers from their peers who knows the answer. Therefore, more libraries should come up with ways in which to support their users to access these materials. According to Atuti (in kenal newsletter, 2017), KNLS has increasingly adopted the use of technology in the promotion of literacy and reading program, Further, he asserts that partnership between KNLS and World readers (an international not for profit organization) under the program Libraries E- reading and Partnership (LEAP) provided E- readers to public libraries in Kenya. These devices contains at least 200 books and are used to read electronic books and also used by librarians to conduct outreach services (Kenal newsletter, 2017).

Another strategy used by libraries to provide effective services is Fee based services. Due to decreasing budget, Anyazebechi and Udo Anyanwu (2016) advises library managers to look for alternative ways of funding and income generation instead of solely relying on government subsidies. They further suggest that public libraries can charge fees for their services. Examples of revenue generating services include reprographic, binding and consultancy.

The reviewed studies showed that various strategies such as collaboration with stakeholders, diverse library programs, and integration of ICT in library services are being used by public libraries in the world and in Kenya to provide services. To this end the researcher sought to identify strategies used in providing information to rural children at knls kangema.

Children information needs

Information is a resource that is needed in all human endeavors (Olarongbe, et al. (2013). American library association glossary of library and information science (ALA), (2000) define information as all ideas and creative work of mind that have been communicated, recorded, published and distributed formally or informally in any format. Just like other rights (food, shelter, and clothing) information is important to mankind. For organizations and individuals to succeed in their daily endeavors they need accurate, relevant, up to date information for problem solving, current awareness, entertainment, and knowledge update. However, Olarongbe, et al, (2013) asserts that information use is dependent on its obtainability and convenience to users. Therefore, information can only be used if the user is aware of his needs, sources of information and how to seek information. Needs can be viewed as state of absence of the desired product to perform any activity.

According to Ogbonna (2016) information needs refers to demanding, wanting or desiring information for particular reasons. Similarly Olarongbe, et al, (2013) citing Timen described information need as a person's wish to find and acquire answers to want that have been recognized mentally or not yet recognized.

Children regardless of whether they live in urban areas or rural areas have many interests and abilities. Some people may ask why children library services should be given much attention. But the truth is that children have information needs and for them to grow holistically they need libraries. Chowdhury (2004) maintain that a child information need arises the moment the child identifies that his current state of knowledge is not enough to handle a given task or fill the gap identified. On the same vein Acheampong and Dzandu (2015) adds that what drives the process of recognizing one's information wants, is the desire to become a well-versed person. Akanwa (2013) notes that the various information media available in the library should bolster child's information needs and add to their psychological, emotional, social and language improvement. According to Mbenge (2015) information needs are impacted by the conditions surrounding an individual, thus the environment affects search behavior. Therefore, libraries ought to provide services that are well developed so that

children can get access to satisfying and empowering information that will fit their information needs.

Walter (1994) research finding about children's information needs, suggests that children experience information needs such as self-fulfillment, credit, love and belonging, security during their childhood. Thus Children have the right to information; for this reason the country strategic plan for Kenya 2012-2016 focused on strategies that will acts as a blueprint that will act as a guide to their responsibility of ensuring a people oriented service delivery. Furthermore, the strategy was to ensure that all children in Kenya have the right to free and compulsory basic education. Likewise the Convention of the Right of Children (CRC) has identified children information needs which relate to: life skills, safety and wellbeing; livelihood; abuse prevent; interrelationships; freedom of expression and thought; religion; social media; health; personal and social dignity.

Mahwasane (2008) points out that a child has information needs at every stage of development. These childhood development stages were formulated by Jean Piaget, (1952) (in Keenan,&Evans, 2014) He came up with a theory that distinguishes the various stages or levels of childhood development, namely pre-operational (2-7 years), concrete operational (7-11 years),and formal operational(11+ years) stages. At every level of development the psychologist points out the various cognitive needs of the child. Turnbull concurs and uphold that information needs are often considered in relation to one's cognitive needs. Greg (1999) supported Jeans theory by stressing that as the child develops his/her information needs changes. Information needs of a child may also be influenced by the child's gender, and the environment or situation that a child may find him/herself in. However, apart from basic information need, the children also have personal or individual needs (Greg 1999). Apart from searching for information that will assist in homework, children also look for information to solve problems that they encounter in their day to day life and thus the searched information ought to enable them make informed decisions.

Similarly, a study by Herman (2010) on the information needs of children shows that children's information needs include; school related information needs, entertainment and leisure related information needs, personal information needs(e.g. medication, family conditions), and information needs of specific individuals(e.g. people with disabilities, children). Gross (2000), further stresses that every child has specific information gaps that need to be satisfied. Furthermore, a child's information needs changes with every developmental milestone he/she takes. For example when they are in concrete operational stage about ten (10) years the child can be able to acquire reasoning skills that will assist him/her to assess information. Therefore, it is important that the library develop services that will assist the child to interpret and evaluate information. (Sieder, 1999) Mahwasane (2008) supports Greg and Sieder by pointing out that a child who resides in the country side mainly require information that is related to schoolwork assignment. He also observed that for a library to be able to provide quality library service in rural areas, a study of children characteristics, circumstances, and needs must be conducted.

A study conducted in public library in Nigeria by Olarongbe et al. (2013) on information needs and characteristics of users, revealed that a large number of respondents (students) wanted information that backs their education. In Southern Punjab a similar study was carried out by Kaur and Lal (2016), the study showed that most respondents visited the library to obtain materials for private studies, study in a quiet atmosphere, read newspapers, for leisure purposes and overall knowledge gaining. Study on information needs and information seeking behavior of teenagers in plateau state board, indicated that teenagers need information on academics thus, they search for information that is related to their school tasks and exams. Similarly a study by Otoide (2015) showed that information is a valued resource to every person including students in high schools whether living in urban or rural society. Also results indicated that secondary school student require information for their education, wellbeing, leisure, relationships, faith, family care among others. Moreover, the study pointed that students wanted these information for learning, to be well informed, fun, current awareness, individual growth, educational achievement and literature reviews. However, lack of awareness of information needs is one of the problem they encounter while trying to meet these information needs.

The study above shows that children just like Adults have information needs at each level of their development. Researchers have noted that information is vital for a child's healthy growth. Therefore, it is the responsibility of libraries to ensure they adequately address specific information needs of children in their location. Without knowing their specific needs it is difficult to offer useful and helpful services, In addition, selecting and acquiring appropriate library information materials without knowing what the user require to satisfy his needs is a challenging task. For this reasons, the librarians must have a thorough knowledge of the children information needs.

Information needs of children may be categorized in five dimensions namely, educational, survival issues, family issues, social/community issues and personal development issues. In Kenya the literature reviewed shows that there is very few published research work on information needs of children in rural areas therefore, the study sought to fill this gap.

Children user satisfaction with library services

Satisfaction can be defined as a feeling of pleasure and happiness that comes when a service is successful and the desire of the user are fulfilled, User satisfaction is a key concept that any organization including rural libraries must appreciate in order to remain competitive and relevant in any business environment. Libraries must understand and have the capability to measure satisfaction based on the user's viewpoint by doing so, they will be in a better position to understand and satisfy their needs. Based on library and information science research, information is consumable product. Therefore, for this product to satisfy the consumer (the library user), it must be taken together with certain information services which disseminate information. In this regard user satisfaction in library is a product of a well-planned and developed service that has been accessed, received and utilized.

Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) assert that satisfaction is a function of three main sources. They enumerate these sources as the quality of service rendered, all the systems that facilitate service delivery and all the resources that make the information product available. They also points out that measure of satisfaction fall in three levels namely, information resources, facilities and services. Igben (1993) affirms by pointing out that libraries perform better when they create services that are user friendly and user oriented.

Information is a valuable commodity. Therefore, librarians should ensure that children easily access it whenever they require it to satisfy their information needs. To this end various researchers recommends that to fill the information gap identified by a junior user, in this modern times, libraries are encouraged to acquire , organize and disseminate relevant, accurate and adequate information resources and ensure their accessibility, through various means that are easy to use either manually or through the use of Information Communication technology (ICTs) where necessary. It is a fact that a rural library not only serves children, they also serve a large number of users including the adults and all the other groups in the community, for these reason it becomes a very difficult of ensuring the available resources satisfies all users needs. Anuobi (2003) in Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) noted that libraries are yet to make impact on students who are below college/university level. However, it can be argued that the ultimate goal of any information oriented organization is to ensure that they provide services that will result to user's satisfaction.

Further, they observed that what brings overall user satisfaction in libraries is the combination of various factors. These factors are adequate information resources, facilities, a well-developed information service which include the use and accessibility of ICT. They also points out that if the library resources that can be accessed is not utilizable and does not promote individual growth, the user will be dissatisfied however the satisfaction aspect comes when the accessible information resources brings empowerment both at a personal level or community level.

Study by Brown (2004) recommends that to sufficiently address children information needs a public library should have a children section. He enumerates the following typical features of a good children section

- i. Have accessible, retrievable and utilizable information
- ii. Provide both print and non-print information materials
- iii. Offers preschool programs
- iv. Have programs such as Storytelling , reading competitions, puzzles, jokes among others

Similarly Rowley (2004) argues a public library environment (children area) should be conducive enough for a child to access information and information services. In addition the layout and appearance should be attractive with bright colors and small furniture's. Further a study by Adebibu and Adio (1997) shows that one of the key factor that lead to user satisfaction is appropriately trained staff and motivated librarians.

Brown (2004) study shows that Australian public library have historically been successful in providing recreational reading programs for children. The research describes how the librarians integrates crafts works as part of library program, perfected the act of storytelling and designed holiday activities that are inspiring and attractive to children under the age of fourteen (14). According to the finding above it is a fact that libraries that conduct children user need assessment and are able to identify with their information need and search behavior has an advantage not only in improving child schooling and overall academic performance but also to ensure the continues use of the library, thereby improving the services provided to children and leading to the satisfaction of library user.

Ngovi (2002) asserts that to judge the quality of service rendered, the users of the service must be able to give out their view. She further suggests that libraries should be in a position to evaluate the performance and conduct an output measure of its services. Consequently, Kenya National Library needs to upgrade its services accordingly. This concurs with a study on library service user satisfaction by Ikolo (2015) that found out that “there is a significant relationship between the assessment of library collection by users and the satisfaction with information sources”. To this end public libraries serving children must ensure that acquired books and information materials contain content appropriate for the age of the child. This is due to the fact that information resources acquired by library are of no value if the intended user does not use them, hence the information materials for children should be packaged in an attractive way to encourage maximum use.

According to Rowley (2004) in his study on customer experience of libraries indicates that in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market, organizations develop a customer a strategy to meet customer needs, which is important for improving service positioning, provision, market research, tracking customer data and monitoring customer satisfaction. Leonicio (2001) agrees and shows that customer satisfaction strategy helps libraries to recognize their customers and thus increase satisfaction and improve access to information in real time.

Satisfaction can motivate users to use library’s services over and over again and even recommend them to others (Motiang, 2014). Study by Thakuria (2007) showed that the following factors contribute to user satisfaction; availability of up to date information materials; visibility of facilities, accessibility of resources (easy access to library service and retrieval of information); friendly staff; attractive appearances of the library, library services and facilities In addition Nzivo (2012) adds that absence of up to date printed information materials, difficulties in user education, poor access and retrieval skills among library users and insufficient resources are the main issues that impact service quality in public libraries. Nzivo's findings agree with Burke's (2011) opinion that, despite global library evolution, public libraries in Kenya have yet to achieve world-class status. Furthermore, Amollo (2011) observed in her study on digitization for libraries in Kenya that most libraries face major challenges such as financial constraints, inadequate facilities, and unskilled personnel, all of which impede provision of services.

According to Dent and Yannotta (2000) study on rural community library in Africa: a study of its use and users, one of the weak areas of libraries is the scarcity of books and other information materials that are both charming and engrossing to the mind of users. Moreover, inability of libraries to stock books that are well liked and relevant to different needs is the major cause of user dissatisfaction. They also discovered that many libraries in Africa are underfunded by their governments or parent organization preventing them from purchasing books and other information materials on a regular basis. In agreement Mojapelo (2015) adds that adequate library facilities, collection, competent staff, and funds are required to successfully implement and support a children library service. Usefulness of a library depends on its proper organization in terms of information resources arrangement, accessibility, availability and also the condition of the library (Dulle, 2014). Further, Bhatt (2013) asserts that successful library services depends mainly on satisfaction level of its users with the relevant library information resources, user focused services and library staff supportive attitude. Forrest (2009) in agreement with all the above researchers recommends that “the library success should be measured not in terms of what it has (input) but of what it does, the activities it supports and its output”

The reviewed literature shows that users expect more reliable services and more qualified library staff members who would understand and allocate time for each user’s individual needs. Therefore, satisfaction plays a very important role as it is able to keep users and encourage them to continue using the services. The needs of the users have to be fulfilled in order for satisfaction to result. Furthermore the effectiveness of the library service is determined by user’s satisfaction. Therefore the study was conducted to assess services and resources which the library provide for children and find out whether the users are satisfied with them. This objective intends to address the satisfaction gap in relation to the availability, accessibility and usability of library programs/activities by children living in rural areas

Suitability of rural libraries in supporting reading for life.

Reading can be defined as an active process that involves the cognitive processing of written information. Therefore, reading is a deliberate and conscious act of engaging one’s eyes on written materials for purposes of understanding, obtaining general information or for pleasure (Gathumbi & Masembe, 2005). People read for various reasons, including reading for survival, general knowledge, for fun or for academic purpose. In agreement Oke (1996) enumerated self-improvement, pleasure, relaxation as well as a feeling of pride and prestige as some of the reason why people read. Therefore, Reading is an instrument for acquiring lifelong learning and reading skills, thus efforts to develop a reading culture cannot be overlooked (Makenzi, 2004). Reading culture is part of a specific culture and habit that is shared and valued highly by a particular society. Thus, reading habit is an attribute gained by an individual when he makes reading a routine action.

Reading for life therefore, is the process of building up positive reading attitude among children over a period of time. Gbadomosi (2007) asserts that a person is said to have a reading culture when he reads books and other information materials on a regular basis that are not essentially required for him to advance in his job or occupation. The goal of

promoting a reading culture is to popularize reading among members of the general public. It is an activity designed to popularize reading and turn it into a lifelong hobby. Rural libraries just like any other public library provide spaces dedicated for children services. The space dedicated to children ensures favorable environment for reading that positively promotes a reading culture among children. Furthermore, rural libraries provide a place for leisure, entertainment and cultural development. They expose children to various instructional resources and learning opportunities. For example the library story telling programs for children in pre-school encourage early literacy also other library services such as book clubs and debates stimulates critical thinking among children. Reading aloud programs motivate children to read and at the same time ensure there is pleasure in reading.

According to Okundu (2005) instilling a reading culture in children should begin at a young age. This is due to the fact that reading and reading culture develop overtime and early promotion will shape them into lifelong readers. However, in the Kenyan education system reading culture is promoted in a vacuum, most schools lack libraries and adequate reading materials due to a lack of firm government policies. Also language teachers are charged with the responsibility to promote and cultivate reading culture through the use of library lessons, this alone cannot encourage voluntary reading for pleasure (Otikey, 2011). Most countries in Africa countries as well as the rest of the world have prioritized the development of a reading culture among their citizens. UNESCO manifesto states that constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge thought culture and information.

To this end, public library especially those located in rural areas have the responsibility of promoting reading for life. Aina et al. (2011) when researching on reading habits among Nigerians found out that in this technological era children are in danger, this is because they are moving directly from an oral to a digital culture therefore missing the well-known process of writing and reading culture. They also points out that it is the responsibility of libraries regardless of their location or type to provide information services that enable access to information that nowadays is found in various forms and formats. Therefore, library services must be attractive enough to encourage their use and in the process promote reading culture among children. According to Ngovi (2002) the objective of children's library service is to provide a favorable environment where children can access information resources and through that access become informed and empowered citizens who can participate in developing the community. Success is attributed to many things, one of them being able to read and write, this can be said to be true because reading instills permanent literacy. Douglas (2002) affirms Ngovi assertions when he states that for a child to succeed in school and in order for him to become a responsible citizen of a democratic society, He/she must be able to read.

Reading is firmly identified with professional effectiveness and thus it can be regarded as the foundation of much pleasure throughout everyday life (Aina et al. 2011). This is supported by a report done by Antwi (1985) that pointed out that there is a connection among reading and child's mental health, emotional wellness, and social behavior. Forudo (2010) asserts that

self-esteem problems that manifest later in a life of an individual may be triggered by effects of inadequate reading skills that may have resulted to the negative attitude towards school.

According to Otike (2011), what is taught in the classroom cannot be reinforced unless students have the opportunity to read widely. Pupils are unable to develop the skills of finding, choosing, classifying, using as well as assessing and processing information. Therefore, libraries are established to guide children and to ensure they have information literacy skills. To this end, Libraries are regarded as service institutions, because progressively they have developed into enablers of knowledge and lifetime reading opportunities, stressing on quality and with priority given to identification of users' needs and communication of solutions (Krolak, 2005).

During the Kenya publishers association forum in 2016, David Waweru stated that “problem with the Kenyan society is that we read mostly for exams, light academic fires and burn books as we dance after completing education” for this reason reading trend in Kenya is worrying, and affecting children linguistic growth. Further, the forum expressed concern about the country's reading culture stating that Kenyans read mostly for exams. Also what bothered publishers was the fact that children were not making reading a routine. However, in Kenya the need to promote effective reading habits has received great support from the government through Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) since 1965. One of core function of the KNLS Board is “to stimulate public interest in books and promote reading for knowledge, information and enjoyment”, by acquiring books and such other materials produced in and outside Kenya and to establish, equip, manage, maintain and promote the national & public library services in Kenya.

Just like Nigeria, the promotion of a reading culture in Kenya is not a new concept since the beginning of the twentieth century many activities and programs have taken place to promote the concept. For instance, Kenya recognizes literacy as a key enabler for the attainment of nationwide advancement and personal growth and that is why rural libraries or any other public library located in rural areas of Kenya have an open system that encourages library usage. Frequent visit to the library promotes a reading habit in children. Aina (2011) affirms the government efforts by saying “A reading nation is an informed nation”p.8. Therefore, reading as a routine ought to start early (baby stage), and rural libraries together with all the other stakeholders in the community must continue to develop strategies that can promote reading culture.

IFLA/ UNESCO has recognized the role library plays in promoting lifelong learning and have formulated guidelines to assist libraries all over the world to implement high quality children services. These guidelines specifies that public libraries have a unique obligation to support all programs that promote reading. They also have a responsibility of ensuring an effective information service that helps a child to use and interpret the information retrieved from resources, such as books and other media. They therefore should ensure that the child's imagination is captured as he/she interacts with all the library collection and by doing so the child will more likely continue being a frequent library user even in years to come. Abu, et.al.

(2011) asserts that a rural library holds an important position in knowledge development especially to children.

Similarly a study by Lonsdale (2003) shows that a print rich environment encouraged more reading. Public libraries provide children and youth access to reading materials that allows them to learn and improve their reading skills. The Library services and programs offered promote the use of reading for information, pleasure, passing examination and personal growth by providing materials that offer more broad and varied information than classroom study. As a result through its collection the library aids in literacy development and supports the idea of reading as an enjoyable, intentional action that add value to the life of a person. Furthermore, Hon Ole Ntimama in July 2011 challenged Kenyans to read in order to refresh and protect their minds from rotting (kenal news, 2007). Therefore, libraries have a key part in shaping the community future, by nurturing a reading habit.

In a study done by Otike in 2011 on reading culture cultivation and its promotion among pupils in Kenya, identified that the absence of a reading culture has hindered Kenyans from appreciating the value of books. The findings, further indicates that libraries play an important role in the promotion of reading habits. However these libraries (school or public) are either none existing or not playing their expected role.

According to Gathoni's blog, (June 18 2018), titled who is responsible for nurturing a reading culture among children, points that children and young adults spend all of their time studying for exams leaving no time for leisure reading . In addition when students are no longer required to read for exams they rarely pick up a book to read for pleasure. Sethy (2018) study on promoting reading habits and the role of library found out that to make the society well literate libraries need to move with speed to develop a reading culture in the society so that individuals can make reading their key ingredient in daily life.

Nganga (2015) study on the role of KNLS in promoting lifelong learning through literacy skills recommended that libraries ought to have a framework for developing information literary skills. According to him, the framework should have components such as strategy, ICT infrastructure, users training, building partnership with local organizations and evaluating of information literacy programs.

According to Parry (2009) reading in many Kenyan rural communities and other parts of East Africa are Average at best and dismissal at worst. Mugambi 2015 citing (Commeyras & Inyega), concurs and notes that books and reading were introduced by colonialist and spread by the early missionaries. However, they did not promote reading as a pass time activity. The findings indicates that people were promised rewards to encourage reading, but once they received the reward they stopped reading because there was nothing else to read for. As a result of this reward-seeking attitude, the thought of choosing to read for fun is uncommon despite the fact that there is a positive connection between voluntary leisure reading and educational achievement. A steady reading culture therefore, is recognized as a key feature in quality education. However, research findings shows that several African countries has a poor

reading culture (Obanya, 2003). In addition, to develop the culture of reading in a society it requires skills to use information resources available.

A study by Walter (1996) indicated that Children in rural areas face particular difficulties in accessing books and even where books are available they are not sufficient and most are curriculum books. Likewise, for most households, it is hard to buy reading materials due to the poor economic situation. This scarcity of reading materials means that African children rarely have the opportunity to read for fun or other non-academic purposes and when they finish school, they enter an almost bookless society

According Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2000 a factor that has contributed to a poor reading habit is the failure to use locally intelligible languages in publishing reading materials. Furthermore, in cases where books are available they are rarely written in languages of the intended readers and do not draw upon their everyday life experiences. In order to make sense of the content, the reader has to constantly think in their most fluent language.

All these factors have generated considerable interest towards promotion of reading from various local and international organizations in the hope that a culture of reading will eventually take root especially in rural communities. The problem of a poor reading culture among the Kenyans is said to be attributed to absence of libraries or their inability to provide adequate reading materials. The findings indicates that lack of functional library in schools, lack of trained librarians and lack of a favorable reading environment at home as factors mitigating against children reading habits.

According to a report from the education watch magazine 2005 (cited by Mugambi, 2015) adults in Kenya do not have a reading culture but children love books and what deserves attention is to try and establish what public libraries in Kenya are doing to instill the value of reading among children particularly in rural areas. Various studies on reading and development of a reading culture have been undertaken. They have indicated that libraries are the most suitable institution in regard to ensuring children develop a reading culture. However, majority of the case studies are in schools. Very few have studied the suitability of public libraries in rural areas in supporting a reading culture specifically among children. In order to fill this gap, the researcher is interested in establishing the suitability of children library services offered at KNLS Kangema, in supporting a reading culture among children living in rural areas.

Summary

From the selected literature review there is evident that children library services are a key factor in ensuring that children living in rural areas have access to information that will satisfy their information need at every level of development. The related literature also evidently shows that there are gaps in assessment of children library services to children in rural areas. Although library services are widely available in majority of rural areas of Kenya, there are no current studies in Kenya that has been done to assess these children library

services. Therefore, more need to be done by the information professionals in assessing whether library services to children in rural areas are achieving their intended purposes. S.R Ranganathan's five laws of Librarianship clearly expounds that information is for use and that every user must be able to get his/her information. To guarantee effective information access, libraries ought to identify the perception of users towards library services, develop various strategies of information service provision, identify information needs of children, assess information resources available and determine whether they are able to satisfy their information needs. Information resources are of no use if they do not positively impact the growth of a child especially to develop a reading habit that leads to reading for life. This study therefore, sought to assess the children library services and address these areas.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter show the design and methodology the researcher used to gather the required information. It consist of research design, variables, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instrument, piloting study, validity reliability, data collection techniques data analysis logistical and ethical consideration

Research design

Orodho (2009) defined a research design as a plan that is used to generate answer to research problem. The research design used in this study is descriptive research, a case study approach. Descriptive research according to (Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) citing Gay is a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject in the study. A descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. "Case study approach is an intensive study that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context", (Yin, 2009:13). This method was potentially the best way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information and reporting results.

Variables

In this study the dependent variable will be children library services. the independent variables guide the dependent variable thus the independent variables will be, library location (rural environment, library accessibility), strategies used to provide services to children(the various strategies include government support, competent children librarians, dedicated children space, adequate and relevant information resources, principles & guidelines that guide children library children services, partnership with stakeholders(NGO, parents, teachers, education &, culture ministry, ICT integration and information and reading needs of children.

Intervening variable will be continuous training of children librarians, proper user studies, adequate information resources and equipment's, county and national government support, continuous partnerships with stakeholders, cooperation between parents , teachers and librarians, and use of ICT in children activities and programs. The ability of children library services to satisfy users' information needs and promote reading for life will be measured.

Location of the study

The research was carried out at KNLS Kangema. It is one among many branch libraries of Kenya National Library services. Kangema is one of the rural areas of Muranga County, Kenya. The library is located at Kangema Township where all the national government offices are located in one compound. It is categorized as community library. It was established through the help of Community Development Fund (CDF) who build the library building and furnished it with furniture's while the KNLS board stocked it with books and employed or deployed employees. It is a public library a branch KNLS library located in rural Kenya. The researcher chooses this library because it's one of KNLS branch whose building construction was fully funded by the CDF, so as to assess the impact it has brought to the community in terms of service.

Target population

According to Orodho (2009) target population is all the items or people under consideration in any field of inquiry which constitutes a universe or targeted population. In this study the target population will consist of three categories namely librarians totaling to four (4), all the children registered users totaling to 642, and teacher librarians of 9 Primary schools that are registered as institution members of the library.

Figure II Target population

Category	Target population
Children registered users	642
Librarians	4
Teacher librarians	9
Total	655

(Source: library statistics)

Sampling techniques and sample size

Sampling according to Kothari (2019) is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining a part of it. The researcher selects a number of individual from a particular group and the selected individuals represent the larger group in the study.

Nassiuma (2000) defines a sample as a group drawn from a population according to specific set guidelines, with generalization to be made at the end of the study about the whole population.

Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques are the various approaches used to get a sample from a population (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). For this study Purposive sampling techniques was used. It was used for sampling because it involves choosing individuals from a population based on certain criteria. In addition this technique was chosen because according (Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003), the technique allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his/her study. The assumption of the study was that children library services are offered at KNLS Kangema and children library users (ten

(10) years and above), and teacher librarian from registered institution consume the children information service offered and being assessed and together with the librarians have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. Therefore, they were in a good position to give out their perspective and experiences about library services to children in rural areas. Library staff were also purposely sampled because the researcher needed expert opinion regarding the study.

Sample Size

The researcher sampled ten (10%) percent of the total children population which was 64 children comprising of sixteen (16) children from each class (class 5, 6, 7, and 8). The researcher used the entire population of teacher librarians (9) and library staff (4)

Figure III: Sample size used for this study

Category	Sample Size
Children registered users	64
Librarians	4
Teacher librarians	9
Total	77

(Source: From Researcher)

Research Instruments.

Research instruments are the means/tools used by researchers to help in collecting necessary information or responses from respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). Case study design permits use of various instruments (Nassiuma 2000). For this study questionnaires, interviews schedules and Focus Group Discussion checklist were used because of their suitability in this kind of research.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a collection of questions to which a respondent is expected to give their feedback by writing their own answers in the spaces provided. Questionnaires are more efficient and can be used to collect information that is not openly visible since they among other things inquire about feelings, motivation, attitude, accomplishment as well as an individual's experiences (Kothari, 2019). This study, used questionnaires to elicit responses from children and teacher librarians. Questionnaires were prepared and hand delivered to 48 children and 9 teacher librarians.

Interviews

An interview is an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview schedule. Interviews are therefore face to face encounters (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). An interview schedule enables a person to gather information that cannot be seen directly and to capture meanings beyond words. An interview schedule was used to collect information from the all four library staff.

Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

Focus group discussion is a face to face mode of collecting data from multiple participants at the same time. FGDs are a predetermined semi-structured interview this mode of collecting data enabled the participants to interact freely with each other resulting to the researcher getting detailed and elaborated responses from different participants. In this study Focus group discussion was used to collect data from 16 children respondents.

Piloting (pilot text)

Before actual data collection, a researcher conducts pilot texting of research instruments to ensure reliability and validity. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) holds that the principle of pilot texting of the instruments is to ensure that the same meaning is attached to the items for all participants. The pilot text for this study was carried at KNLS Murang'a library where questionnaires were pre-texted with five children respondents and two teacher librarians. Focus group discussion with five children was conducted to pre-test the FGD Check list and one member of library staff was interviewed. The researcher aimed to find out whether the respondents experienced any difficulties when responding to the questions and whether the questions were clear and in cases of difficulties all the necessary amendments were done.

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (Polit and Hungler, 1995). "It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study" (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). In this study, validity of the instruments was determined using logical and content validity. The instruments were pretested on a pilot population where necessary amendments were made before they were used in the actual study,

Reliability

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) defines reliability as "a measure of the degree to which research instruments yields consistent results or data after repeated trials". According to Kombo (2006), a reliable instrument produces consistent results. To ensure reliability the researcher confirmed that the questions in the questionnaire and interview schedules were accurate and carefully phrased to avoid ambiguity, also the test-retest technique was used to assess reliability. To check whether research instruments were reliable in measuring study constructs, the researcher examined the uniformity of answers from several respondents.

Data collection procedures

Data collection is a systematic way of gathering information which is relevant to the research questions. The researcher collected data from multiple participants using three instruments namely questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FDG) where quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The data was collected from 77 sampled respondents, the researcher personally administered questionnaire with both structured and unstructured questions to 48 children respondents and nine (9) teacher librarians. The researcher collected data from sixteen (16) children respondents through Focus Group discussion divided into two

groups of eight (8) each, and the researcher requested for a date and conducted personal interviews with the four (4) library staff.

The researcher conducted the research without any assistant. To get access to all the respondents the researcher requested for permission from librarian in charge to visit the library when the children were on holiday and personally administered the questionnaire and conducted Focus group discussions. The children respondents were requested to fill and return the questionnaire same day, Focus group discussion (FDG) with the children and face to face interview with library staff was conducted in the library premises. FDG checklist and interview schedule were used to guide and ensure consistency of questions asked. Questionnaires were sent to teacher librarian respondents due to the distance and geographical location a two weeks period was given to fill and return the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Procedure and Technique

Until collected data is analyzed and evaluated it has no meaning. Therefore, data analysis is the procedure of gathering, modeling and transforming data in order to extract useful information, suggestions, conclusion that support decision making. For this study data analysis was based on the objectives of the study. Quantitative data collected was coded and using Computer based statistical package for social science, quantitative summaries were created also qualitative data was thematically analyzed. Interviews and FGD generated qualitative data, this data was presented in a narrative form, and where necessary the voices of the participants were cited. Frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts and percentages were used to present the analyzed data and the presented data was interpreted in textual form and thereafter a final report was written.

Logistical and Ethical Consideration

To ensure successful research completion logistics and ethical consideration in research is very important. Ethical considerations are the principles the researcher is obliged to when conducting the research. Permission to conduct research was first sought from Kenyatta University whereby a University introductory letter was given to the librarian in charge of KNLS Kangema library seeking authorization to conduct the study. Since some of the respondents were children parental consent was sought this was given by the librarian in charge as the children participated in the study while in the library premises. Respondents were informed of their right to remain anonymous with an assurance that all information given will be handled with total confidentiality. The study was founded on ethical considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, intellectual honesty, and non-fabrication of findings. Information received was used only for research purposes. In addition, all sources and other people's work used in the study were cited and referenced.

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DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter deals with presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data obtained during research. Data collected was analyzed in line with the research study objectives and the research questions. The researcher used table, pies charts, descriptions and reporting to present the findings.

Response rate

The researcher administered questionnaires to forty eight (48) children and conducted two (2) Focus Group Discussion (FGD), each with (8) participants. 9 questionnaire for teacher librarian were administered and interviews were conducted to four (4) library staff. Response rate is as shown in the table below

Table 4.1 Response rate

Category	Respondents (sample size)	frequencies	%
Children registered users	64	64	100%
Librarians	4	4	100%
Teacher librarian	9	9	100%
Total	77	77	100%

Source: field data

The finding above shows that all the forty eight (48) children and nine (9) teacher librarian returned the questionnaire, 16 children participated in the focus group discussion and all four(4) library staff were interviewed showing that all the seventy seven (77) sampled responded, this indicate a response rate of 100%.

Demographic information

In attempt to ensure the researcher got the correct class of children and their ages, a question was asked. The finding revealed that those who were sampled to participate in the research (class 5-8), were between the ages of 10-15 years. Table 4:2 presents these findings

Table 4:2 Age of children respondents

Age bracket	Respondents	Frequencies	%
10-11	64	14	22%
12-13	64	41	64%
14-15	64	9	14%
Total	64	64	100

Source: field data

From the table above the finding revealed that majority of the children who responded 50 (78%) were above 12years of age with the highest percentage of those who responded 41(64%) were between ages 12-13 years and according to Piaget’s cognitive theory they have already acquired reasoning skills that assist them to assess information.

Perception of library services

The first objective of the study was to establish the perception of library services in rural areas. A question was asked to respondents on perception of libraries in rural areas. The option given were a “place of study”, “a place of books” “a place of information” “a place of entertainment, “a place of growth” The results are shown in Table 4:3

Table 4:3 Perception of libraries in rural areas. (Children respondents)

Category	Respondents	Frequencies	%
A place of study	64	36	56%
A place of books	64	53	83%
A place of information	64	31	48%
A place of entertainment	64	15	23%
A place of growth	64	3	5%
Any other	64	0	0%

Source: field data

The results in table above indicates that majority of children 53(83%) perceive libraries as places where books are found and more than half of children 35(56%) a place of study. only 31(48%) perceive libraries as places of information, 15(23%) a place of entertainment a small fraction of 3(5%) indicated a place of growth. This is same as what was indicated by EIFL 2011, public libraries in rural areas provide traditional services such as lending books and providing a conducive environment for study.

A similar question was posed to teacher librarian all 9(100%) indicated that libraries are perceived as places of books, followed by place of study 5(56%), 4 (44%) place of information, no responses were indicated in place of entertainment and place of growth. This could be attributed to how parents and teachers belief that library is a place that offers information services that are academic related only.

Responses from library staff interview revealed that perception of libraries varies depending on individual’s profession or interests some people perceive libraries as a place of study a place to get rare books and a place to get materials that can assist in their studies.

The researcher posed an additional question on perception and invited the respondents to indicate how important or unimportant library services are to children Table 4: 4 below reflects results from all respondents.

Table 4: 4 Importance of children library services in rural areas.

Category	Respondents	Frequencies	%
Essential	77	56	73%
Important	77	21	27%
Not Important	77	0	0%
Total	77	77	100

Source: field data

The finding from table above indicates that children library services are regarded as an essential service with 56(73%) and 21(27%) of respondent indicating important service. None of the respondent indicated that the service to children are unimportant. This finding concurs with different scholars in the information industry who posits that library service to children is an essential service which guarantees child’s holistic growth.

Policies and Strategies used to provide children library information services

(a) Policies that govern children library services provision

A policy is a blue print to guide the library staff on what to do while providing services. The researcher sought to find out if the library had a policy on provision of library services to children. Responses from children (64) and teacher librarians (9) are as shown in the table 4:5 below,

Table 4: 5 availability of a policy that govern children library services in rural areas.

Is there a policy	Respondents	Frequencies	%
Yes	73	20	27%
No	73	0	0%
Not sure	73	53	73%
Total	73	73	100

Source: field data

Majority of the children and teacher librarian respondents 53 (73%) indicated that they were not sure whether a policy exist or not. Only 20(27%) agreed a policy was in existence. None of the respondents indicated that there was No policy.

Library staff interview answers indicated there was a general policy that govern all the library services offered for both children and adult users.

Following up the question on policy, researcher sought to know how the users became aware of the existence of a policy. In response, the library users whose response was yes indicated that they became aware of the policy during library user education and library publications.

The findings above reveals that although a policy is a very important guide to services provision, as noted by Rosthsteins (2000) who asserts that policies are formulated so that they function as a public statement of the library’s plans regarding provision of services to its clientele, they highlight procedures to be followed by the library staff as they provide services, majority of the users were not sure whether there was a policy or not. This means that the library management should address this omission by ensuring users are aware of the policy/policies governing service provision to children.

(b) Strategies used to develop and provide children library services that attracts them to visit the library

For any library service to be fully utilized it must be well developed. The study sought to find out strategies used to develop and provide children library services in rural areas at knls Kangema. A question was posed to children respondents to identify strategies used to develop and provide children library services that attracts them to visit the library. Table 4.6 below shows the results.

Table 4:6 Strategies used to provide children library services

Strategies used to provide information	Respondents	Frequencies	%
Dedicated spaces for children services	64	64	100%
Reading related activities	64	60	94%
Friendly librarians	64	48	75%
Availability of books and other information Materials	64	43	67%
Engaging parents/teacher/children in library Activities	64	54	84%
ICT Integration in library activities	64	31	48. 4%

Source: Field Data

The findings as shown above indicates Majority 64(100%) were attracted by spaces dedicated for children, this is expected because all KNLS libraries country wide provide section purely dedicated for children, followed by 60(94%) who indicated reading related activities, 54(84%) of the respondents indicated engaging parents/teacher/children in library Activities, and 48(75%) indicated friendly librarians. The finding further reveals that although books and other information materials are key factor in developing an effective library service only 43(67%) of respondents are attracted to the library by variety of books and other information materials. The finding also shows the least attractive strategy as ICT integration in library activities with 31(48.4%) of the children respondents. This should not be the case in this era of technology because as noted by Mahwasame 2008 the secret of attracting more users in the junior section is the integration of ICT in children services as it fosters creativity.

A follow up question was posed to teacher librarian on whether they were aware of strategies used by the library to develop children library services. Responses from teacher librarians 9(100%) indicated they were aware of three strategies namely, the library having a dedicated spaces for children activities, hosting reading related activities, and engaging parents/teacher/children in library activities, 4(44.4%) indicated aware of library partnering with various stakeholders, 3(33.3%) indicated the library has a variety of books and other information materials while only 1(11%) aware that the library had integrated ICT in library work. Figure 4:1 below reflects these finding.

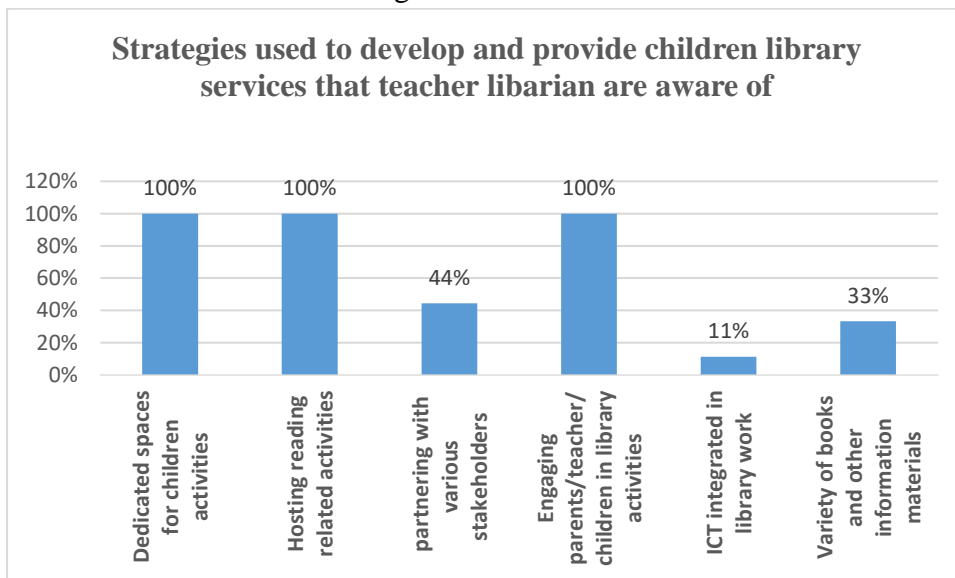


Figure 4:1 Source: Field Data

From the finding above it shows that KNLS Kangema uses a variety of strategies to provide children services, all the teacher librarian respondent affirmed that the library had section purely dedicated to children activities, host reading related activities and engage parent/teacher/children in library activities. This finding is consistent with those of Celano 2001) who reported that majority of rural libraries have realized that library spaces for children are the key in providing effective services.

A supplement question from librarian interview revealed that the library provide services to all people in the community including the children and that “the library is divided into three section adult, junior and the e-resource section, where the junior section is purely dedicated to children with their book, tables and chairs, with a librarian who coordinates children activities, and the resource center/ computer lab is used by both adults and children”.

The children librarian in charge of children section stated;

“One of the strategies used is having a policy that ensures children up to 15 years access the library freely without paying any fee”

The findings from all the respondents on policies and strategies used to develop and provide children library services reveals that the library uses different strategies to develop and provide services to children in rural areas and children users were attracted to use the library due to the various strategies. This finding is consistent with those of Rowley(2004) who reported that in order to gain customer satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage in the market libraries develop diverse strategies to meet customer needs which is important for improving service positioning and customer satisfaction

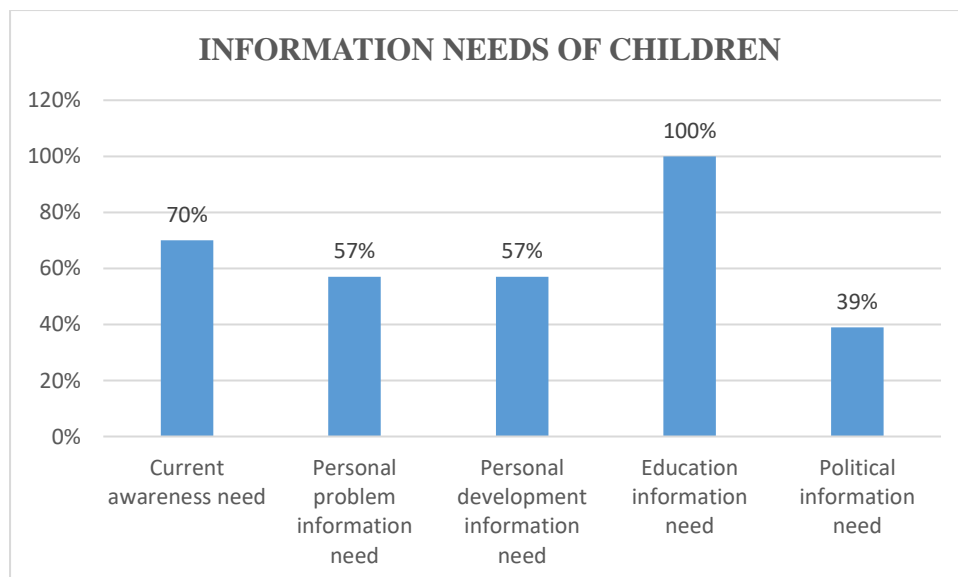
Information needs of children

Libraries have a big role of ensuring that they satisfy the information needs of children. Children just like any other human being have information needs. Depending on child’s level of development, each child has specific information gap that need to be satisfied.

(a) day to day information need of a child

To determine the information needs of children living in rural areas the researcher posed a question to know the day to day information need of a child living in rural area. Figure 4:2 below reflects children respondent’s findings.

Figure 4:2: Children Information needs



Source: field data

The finding above reveals that out of the outlined needs, the children respondents indicated that a big percentage of their need was education need with 64(100%), this is expected because majority of the respondents were pupils and first point of knowledge gap to fill is those related to education. This was followed by personal development need and personal problem need each with 57(89%), current awareness need 45(70%), and political need 25 (39%). This further reveals that children were aware of their day to day information needs as more than half of the respondents indicated four out of the five outlined information needs.

A follow-up question was posed to teacher librarian, Table 4.7 below shows the findings
Table 4.7: Teacher librarian’s response on children information needs

Information need	Respondents	Frequencies	percentage
Current awareness need	9	5	55.6%
Personal problem information need	9	9	100%
Personal development information need	9	8	88.9%
Education information need	9	9	100%
Political information need	9	2	22.2%
Any other information need	9	7	78%

Source: field data

The finding above shows that teacher librarian respondents acknowledge that children in the rural areas require information for their day to day activities. education and personal problem information need indicated predominance among the respondents with the highest percentage of 9(100%), followed by personal development need with 8(88.9%), other need not outlined (entertainment need) with 7 (78%), current awareness need with 5(55.6%) and the lowest percentage political information need with 2(22.2%). This finding concurs with those of Herman who showed that children information needs include school related information needs, entertainment and leisure related and personal information needs. This further indicates that children needed information to support their education and to assist in solving personal problems. Responses from librarian’s interviews indicated that information need of children in rural areas mainly are those related to education to support their school performance. Other information need of children include entertainment need and current awareness need.

The responses above reveals that children have different information needs, they not only need information for education purposes but also for personal growth and development.

Frequency of library visit

To establish whether children use library services to fill their information gaps, the researcher posed a question asking how often children visit the library Table 4.8 below reflects the findings.

Table 4.8: Frequency of children library visit

Frequency of visit	Respondents	Frequencies	percentage
Daily	64	10	16%
Weekly	64	48	75%
Once a month	64	0	0%
Any other	64	6	9.4%

Source: field data

The table above shows that in order for children to satisfy their various information requirements, majority 48(75%) visited the library weekly, followed by 10(16%) visting the library daily , a small percentage of 6(9. 4%) any other (when school is closed) and no response was indicated in once a month option. These finding are consistent with those of library staff who were interviewed, their responses revealed that majority of the children users visited the library on Saturdays and during the school holiday when the library receive majority of the children on a daily basis. One of the librarians (Children librarian) interviewed state;

“When schools are on sessions some children are unable to frequently use the library, they rely on the books borrowed from the library by their teachers, the schools that have registered as library users borrows books on behalf of their pupils and they stay with them for one month then they return and borrow others”

The finding further indicates that majority of children only access the available library services weekly whereas it is expected that the services be utilized more frequently. Ikolo (2015) points that information acquired by libraries are of no value if the intended users does not use them. Therefore, library management need to improve the frequency of library visit by children.

Children information seeking and searching behavior

Children seek information that enables them resolve challenges they face in their daily undertakings. Thus they need to gather right information at the right time so as to enable them make informed decision.

In an attempt to establish children information seeking and searching behavior, a question was posed on how children search for information while in the library. Table 4.9 reflects these findings.

Table 4.9 Children Information searching behavior

Information searching behavior	Respondents	frequencies	%
Browse book & other information materials	64	43	67%
Ask librarians for assistance	64	30	47%
Ask other children for guidance	64	21	33%
Use computer to access information	64	27	42%
Any other behavior	64	12	17%

Source: field data

Responses from children respondent revealed that 43 (67 %) children respondents browse books and other information materials, this could be due to the fact that the library collects, organize and disseminate books and other information resources for children. 30(47%) ask librarians for assistance, 21(33%) ask other children for guidance while 27(42%) use computer to access information in the internet and 12(19%) indicated other behavior such as watching television and videos.

The findings above reveals that children approach different sources to search information. They therefore need a combination of different information resources for them to have variety of information sources to choose from.

Responses from a similar question asked to library staff and teacher librarian revealed that all respondents are in agreement that children use the available sources such as books, internet, teachers, parents, librarians and friends to search for information.

Purpose of the information obtained by children from library resources

Children need information for various reasons and thus have the right to information. To find out what children use information they obtain from the library for, a question was asked to that effect. Table 4.10 reflects these findings

Table 4.10 Purpose of the information obtained by children from library resources

Purpose of Information	Respondents	frequencies	%
School assignment	64	60	94%
General knowledge	64	34	53%
Personal development	64	31	48%
Reference	64	45	70%
Entertainment	64	59	92%
Supplement school notes	64	60	94%

Any other purpose	64	0	0%
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Source: field data

Responses from children respondents revealed that two (2) reasons namely for school assignments, and supplement school notes had the highest percentage of 60(94%) followed closely by entertainment purposes 59(92%), for reference 45(70%), general knowledge 34(53%), and the least purpose was cited to be personal development with 31(48%). This indicates that the majority of children use the information they obtain from library resources purposely for academics and entertainment purposes. Library services should not only support education needs of the child but should encourage use of library resources for other purposes not related to education or academics so as to achieving a holistic child growth. These finding are consistent with (Greg 1999) who indicated that apart from searching for information that will assist in homework, children also look for information to get answers on how to overcome problems encountered in their daily activities.

Similar question on purpose of the information obtained by children from library resources was posed to teacher librarian. Table 4:11 below reflect findings

Table 4.11 Responses from teacher librarian on Purpose of the information obtained by children from library resources

Purpose of Information	Respondents	frequencies	%
School assignment	9	7	78%
General knowledge	9	5	56%
Personal development	9	3	33.3%
Reference	9	5	56%
Entertainment	9	4	44%
Supplement school notes	9	6	66%
Any other purpose	9	0	0

Source: field data

The finding above indicates that 7 (78%) of the teacher librarian respondents were in agreement that children use the information they obtain from the library for school assignments, followed by to supplement school notes with 6(66.6%), for general knowledge

and reference purposes each with 5(56%), entertainment purposes with 4(44%), and least percentage was cited to be personal development with 3(33.3%).

Further the findings above reveals that the respondents found out that children use the information they obtain from the library for education purposes. This finding agrees with those of Chowdhury (2004) who indicated that a child information need arises the moment the child identifies that his current state of knowledge is not enough to handle a given task or fill the gap identified. Further the finding can be anchored in Piaget theory of cognitive development about recognizing the stages a child is currently in and catering to his information needs at that developmental level. Those using library resources to get information are pupils and they spend their days in school. Therefore, a higher percentage of information gap identified is on education. They therefore, use the obtained information for school related purposes.

A follow-up question were asked to librarians during the interview on how they ensure children access information which is relevant to their needs. Response from the librarian revealed that librarians directs children to books with information they may need, conduct continuous user education, separating junior books from adult books, books are arranged using Dewey decimal classification scheme (DDC) and the book shelves are well labeled, books are selected with children as focus and those that target children as their audience.

User satisfaction

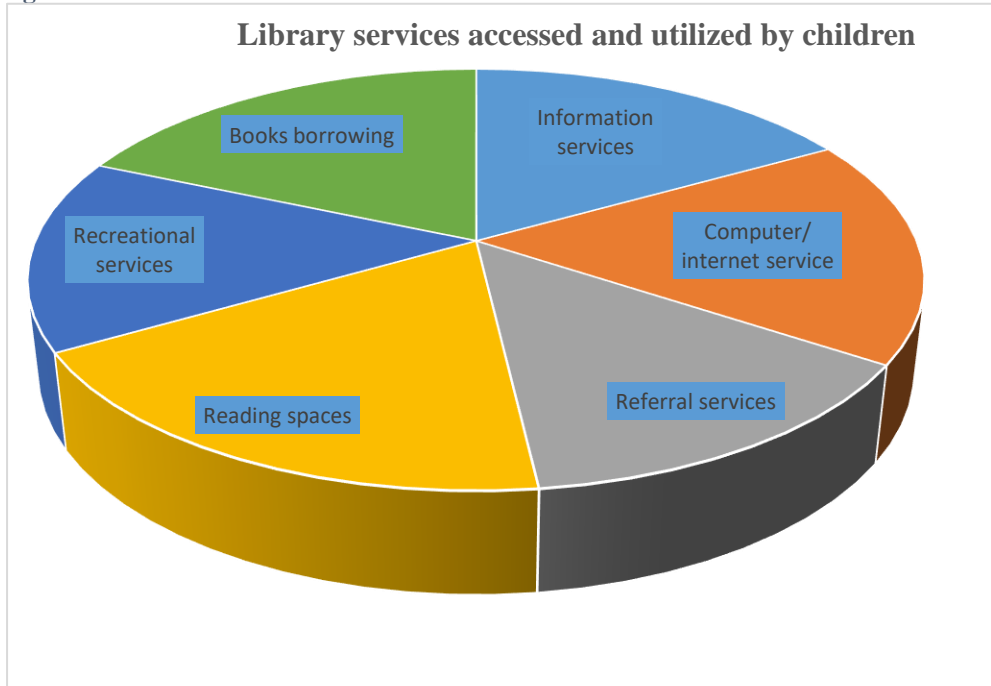
Information is a consumable product and for these product to satisfy the consumer it must be taken together with certain information services which disseminate information. To measure user satisfaction the researcher used three levels namely information services, information resources, and information facilities.

The study therefore, sought to assess whether the children library provided satisfy the information needs of children. Several questions were asked.

Kind of information services children access and utilize

The researcher sought to find what kind of library services children access and utilize. Out of the outlined categories to choose from the research revealed that the children were able to access services such as information service with a response rate of 58 (90.6%) computer /internet services with 60 (93.8%), referral services 48(75%), reading spaces 64 (100%) recreational services 51(79.7%) and book borrowing 64(100%) Figure 4:3 below shows these findings.

Figure 4:3 Kinds of information services that children access and utilize



Source: field data

The finding above shows that the library had different kinds of services that are available for access and utilization by children. This finding concurs with Celano (2001) who observed that different kinds of library services position and exposes a child to a variety of print and other non-print information sources and opportunities that are crucial to reading achievements.

A follow-up question was posed on whether the information services offered were able to cater for children information needs. Respondents were asked to answer “Yes” or “No” out of the total 77 respondents 52(68%) agreed and the rest 25(32%) did not agree that the information services offered were able to cater for children information needs.

Accessibility of children library services

One of the question to respondent was “are the children services offered easily accessible to children in rural areas?” respondents were asked to answer “Yes” or “No”. Table 4.12 below reflects the responses from all respondents.

Table 4.12 Accessibility of children library services

Are services easily accessible	Respondents	frequencies	%
Yes	77	54	70%
No	77	23	30%
Total	77	77	100%

Source: field data

The finding above reveals that out of the total 77 of the respondents 54 (70%) responded Yes while 23 (1%) responded No. Those who responded “No” were asked to elaborate their answer and the answer they gave revealed that some children live far from the location of the library and thus require bus fare to be able to visit the library others said they have to be accompanied by parents/ guardians to access the library. Another children respondent during Focus group discussion stated;

“Am unable to borrow books to read at home because my mother is unable to give me five shillings book borrowing fee”

Adequacy of information resources

Availability of relevant and adequate information resources adds value to a service. To find out whether information resources available was adequate to develop an effective children library service that can satisfy children information needs a question was asked. Responses from all respondents are as shown in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 Adequacy of information resources

Adequacy of Information	Respondents	frequencies	%
Adequate	77	19	25%
Fairly adequate	77	23	30%
Inadequate	77	27	35%
Not sure	77	8	10.4%
Total	77	77	100%

Source: field data

The above finding shows a bigger percentage 27(35%) found information resources inadequate, 23(30%) found them fairly adequate, 19(25%) found them adequate, and 8(10%) of the respondents were not sure. This could be attributed by the fact that the library is a public library and depends on the government for financial assistance to acquire information resources. This finding concurs with Dent and Yannotta (2000) finding that showed that many libraries in Africa are underfunded by their government or parent organization this prevent frequent purchase of books and other information materials.

Follow-up question was asked for those who responded that the information resources were inadequate. Responses indicated that curriculum books were few and for some subjects not available at all, computers were not easily accessible by children and they were always occupied by adult’s users. Story books with African context were very few and no children magazines and educational toys and games were unavailable. This concurs with Dent and

Yannotta (2000) who stated that one common limitation among libraries is the absence of suitable and captivating reading materials in their collection which has led to users being disappointed with library services.

For those respondent who indicated the information resources were adequate they were requested to specify how effective they were. Their response revealed that the information resources were effective due to “the library offer supplementary story books not easily available elsewhere, the library children section had a designated member of staff who coordinated all children services, the information resources assist in craft activities such as drawing, the books were available to be borrowed to read outside the library premises (at home/ school), computers has enabled children to be computer literate. The library reading spaces had enabled children to use their free time in constructive ways by socializing with other children through leisure activities that assisted them not to engage in any anti-social behavior”.

Satisfaction with the library building (equipment / facilities)

To facilitate easy access and utilization of library service by children, the library building, furniture, facilities and its appearance should be inviting. To this end, a question was posed to assess whether users were satisfied with library building (facilities and equipment’s) available. Table 4.14 below presents the results

Table 4.14 Satisfaction with the library building (equipment / facilities)

Category	Respondents	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Library location & opening hour	77	13	17%	59	77%	5	6.5%
Library lighting & ventilation	77	36	47%	41	53%	0	0%
Chairs and tables	77	20	26%	55	71%	2	3%
Computers	77	2	3%	25	32%	50	65%
Library wall appearance	77	1	1.3%	11	14%	65	84%
Books shelves & arrangement	77	19	25%	57	74%	1	1.3%

Source: field data

The finding above shows that, on library building and operating hours, majority 59(77%) were satisfied, 13(17%) were highly satisfied and only 5(6.5%) were dissatisfied. On library lighting and ventilation a higher percentage of 41(53%) were satisfied, 36(47%) were highly satisfied and none were dissatisfied. On chairs and tables 55(71%) of the respondents were satisfied, 20(26%) were highly satisfied, only 2(3%). On computer/ internet services, majority of the respondents 50(65%) were not satisfied, 25(32%) were satisfied and only a small percentage of 2(3%) were highly satisfied. The table further showed that the highest percentage of respondents 65(84%) revealed that they were not satisfied with the library wall appearance, followed by 11 (14%) who indicated they were satisfied and only 1(1.3%) were highly satisfied. on book shelf's and arrangement majority 57(74) were satisfied, 19(25%) were highly satisfied and only 1(1.3%) were not satisfied. This concurs with Dr. Ranganathan's librarianship laws that implies that "library building should be well designed with both natural, and electrical light, relaxing interior, beautiful furnishing, comfortable chairs, among others.

The finding further reveal that respondents were satisfied with the library building and furniture, however the highest percentage 84% were not satisfied with library wall appearance. This should not be the case, according to a study by Rowley (2004) the finding showed that a public library environment should be conducive for a child, the layout and appearance should be attractive with bright colors and small furniture's.

Level of overall satisfaction

The question on overall satisfaction with all the available children library services was posed. Responses from children respondents are shown in figure 4: 4 below.



Figure 4: 4 User satisfaction

Source: field data

The finding above shows that majority 34(53.13%) were satisfied, 20(31.3%) indicated very satisfied, 7(10.9%) indicated fairly satisfied and 3(4.7%) indicated not satisfied. According to Bhatt (2013) successful library services depends mainly on satisfaction levels of its users with the relevant library information resources, user focused services and library staff supportive attitude.

Responses from teacher librarians indicated 7(77.8%) were satisfied while 2(22.2%) were very satisfied. Responses from library staff interview responses were in agreement where one library staff said that

“We are confident that the services we offer to children satisfy their information need although there is room for more improvement”

Support reading culture

Reading instills permanent literacy thus it is regarded as the foundation of much pleasure throughout everyday life. The study sought to find out which activities encourage children to visit the library and read more often. Results are presented in Table 4.15 below

Table 4.15: Library activity/ program that motivate children to visit & read more often

Category	Respondents	frequencies	%
Story telling session	64	21	35%
Conducive environment	64	60	95%
Books borrowing	64	35	56%
Reading newspapers	64	30	47%
Computer games and videos	64	53	83%
Craft activities	64	59	92%
<u>Any other</u>	64	10	16%

Source: field Data

The table above shows that 60(95%) of respondents indicated they were encouraged by conducive environment, 59(92%) indicated craft activities, 53(83%) indicated computer games& videos, 35(56%) indicated borrowing books, 30(47%) reading newspapers, 21(35%) indicated story telling sessions and 10(16%) indicated any other (outdoor library activities) 0(0%). responses through the FGD conducted one respondent stated;

“I became attracted to use the library services because the library is built near my home”

Further the researcher sought to know the effectiveness of children library services provided in promoting a reading culture among rural children. Responses from library staff interviewed revealed that the children library services provided are effectively promoting a culture of reading. One librarian interviewed stated that” *in KNLS Kangema we have designed activities that make children read not for exams or assignment but read as hobby. These activities include reading aloud, drawing competitions based on the theme of a story, outdoor games and cooking activities”* However, one librarian noted that more need to be done to ensure the library embraces the new emerging technologies and new education

system to ensure the children library services are attractive to children at all levels of development.

One of the qualities of a well-developed children library service is the ability to promote a reading culture among children and should be able to support lifelong reading. The researcher sought to find out whether KNLS Kangema was able to support a reading culture among rural children. Respondents were asked to answer “Yes” or “No” out of the total respondents (77) 53(67%) agreed that the children library services are suitable to support a reading for life while 24(31%) did not agree. This concurs with IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development (2001), which states that public libraries have a unique obligation to support all programs that promote reading.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the information as it was received from the study. Therefore, the findings made, conclusion drawn on assessment of library services to children in rural areas were based on the data analysis of the research.

Findings Summary

The purpose of the study was to assess children library services at KNLS Kangema with an aim of establishing whether they satisfy children information needs and lead children to lifelong reading. Five main objectives guided the study, and data was gathered from children users, teacher librarian from selected school and library staff. The summary of the research finding is as follows,

Perception of library services

The study sought to establish perception of library services in rural areas. The study revealed that majority of the respondent perceived libraries as places of books and place of study.it was further revealed that library services in rural areas were highly rated with some respondents indicating they were essential services and others as an important service. No response was indicated in not important option.

Policies and Strategies used to provide children library services

Policy used to govern children library services.

The study reveals that majority of the respondents were not sure whether the library had a policy that govern provision of library services to children. However, library staff responses revealed that there is a policy. The study further revealed that some respondents who indicated that there was a policy became aware of its existence during library user education and through library publications.

Strategies used to provide children library services

During the research, it was found out that knls Kangema library have a variety of strategies that they employ to design and provide children library services to children in rural areas. A section dedicated to children services, hosting reading related activities, and engaged teachers, parents, children in library activities were indicated by majority of respondents as strategies that attracted them to visit the library followed by availability of books and other information materials and the least attractive strategy was ICT integration in children library activities. Further majority of the teacher librarians were not aware of how the library partnered with the various stakeholders to provide library services to children.

Information needs of children

Information needs of children in rural areas

From the finding the researcher found out that children need information for their day to day activities. The finding indicated that children go to the library to access the services that will satisfy their needs on education, current awareness, personal problem and personal development, entertainment and political needs the research also indicates that children in the rural areas are aware of their information need and they are aware that they can get information in the library. Responses from the teacher librarian and library staff revealed that children not only need information for education purposes but also for personal growth and development.

Frequency of library visit.

Further, from the finding it seems that a percentage of children in the rural areas were not in a position to visit the library daily during schools days, majority visited once a week or on Saturdays. Children were only able to visit the library on a daily basis during school holidays.

Children information searching behavior

According to responses, the research finding indicates that Children in rural areas visit the library not only to browse information materials but they also ask librarians for assistance, ask other children for assistance and browse the computers to search for information. The finding indicates that based on the kind of information they are looking for, children search information using different forms and different Medias that might assist them to fill the information gap.

Purpose of information obtained

The finding from the research indicate that the very most purpose of information obtained from library resources by children is for academic purposes with the highest percentage of respondents indicating they use the information obtained for school assignments, supplement school notes and for reference . However, based on their various information needs they also use the information for other purposes such as personal development, entertainment, and for general knowledge.

User satisfaction

Kind of information services children access and utilize

The finding shows that the library had different kinds of services that are available for access and utilization by children. Services such as information services, referral services, computer/internet services, reading spaces, recreational services and book borrowing services.

The study further revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that the information service offered were able to cater for information needs of children. However some respondents disagreed.

Accessibility of children library services

The finding reveals that Seventy percent of children and teacher librarian respondents agreed that children library services were easily accessible to children in rural areas and thirty percent of the respondent disagreed. Similarly the responses from library staff indicated that Children up to age 15 years access the library for free unlike the adult users who are required to pay an access fee. Therefore, library services are easily accessible to all children. On the other hand, however, for those children who wish to borrow book and read at home or at school they were required to pay a book borrowing fee which according to study responses hinders some children who are unable to pay the fee and may wish to read from home.

Further the researcher found that the library is located in Kangema town but a lot of children homes and school are located outside the town and this limits access as some children are required to pay bus fare to visit the library or be accompanied by their parents or teachers.

Adequacy of information resources

The finding found out that majority of the responses indicated that information resources were inadequate to develop an effective library service for children. Responses revealed that the children collection lacked adequate curriculum books, popular story books and there were few computers that could be used to access the internet. However some respondents were of contrary view they indicated that the available information resources were adequate and are effective because the library offered supplementary books not easily accessible elsewhere, the library children section had a designated member of staff who coordinated all children services, the information resources assisted in craft activities such as drawing, the books were available to be borrowed to read outside the library premises (at home/ school), and the few available computers had enabled children to be computer literate. Further the study found out that the library reading spaces had enabled children to use their free time in constructive ways by socializing with other children through leisure activities that assisted them not to engage in any anti-social behaviour.

Satisfaction with Library facilities/ equipment

The research finding indicates that the users were satisfied with the library opening hours and availability of library facilities such as accessible library building with a functioning children section, well ventilated, proper lighting, comfortable chairs and tables, well labeled shelves. However a big percentage of the respondents were not satisfied with the library wall appearance and computer facilities.

Overall satisfaction with all library services provided to children

The researcher found that the library offer children library services that satisfy majority of children information need. However, users who indicated that they were fairly satisfied and those who were not satisfied hold a percentage of sixteen percent of children respondents. The library management cannot ignore their view as this may escalate and discourage other users who have the same information needs not to utilize the children library services.

Support reading culture

From the finding it has indicated that a well-developed children library service should be able to support lifelong reading. The researcher found out that the available library services for children at knls Kangema were able to support and promote a reading culture among rural children. The services provided were able to stimulate reading, activities and programs such as craft activities, and book borrowing program were very effective in supporting lifelong reading. Others that were effective include story telling sessions, reading aloud, computer games and on-line stories.

Conclusion

From the Finding it has been noted that libraries are perceived as a places for books and study. knls Kangema used a variety of strategies to provide information services such as dedicated to children services, they host reading related activities, the library had a variety of books and other information materials , integrated ICT in children library activities, they engage teachers, parents and children in library activities. However some users are not aware of the existing policy and some strategies used were not attractive to users and others were not aware how the library partners with various stakeholders to provide services. Children living in rural areas were aware of their various information needs majority of them identified education need as the major need that need satisfying. Other include current awareness, entertainment, personal problem and personal development information need. Further the study found out that children used the information they obtained from the library for academic purposes first. Children library services are accessible to all children however due to geographical location of their homes some are unable to visit the library. Responses revealed contrary opinion on adequacy of information resources some indicated they are adequate while others indicate they were not adequate. The library had developed various programs that may be utilized by children in all level of development, they have equipment's/ facilities such as comfortable chairs and tables, the junior section is well ventilated and with proper lighting there is a dedicated librarian who coordinates all children activities and the library services to children available are suitable to support a reading culture. However there is a percentage of users who are dissatisfied with the services. Therefore, their views should be critically analyzed to ensure that their dissatisfaction are seriously looked at by the library management and solutions sought to ensure a one hundred percent satisfaction.

Recommendations

Perception of library service

The library management should conduct user forums and marketing strategies to ensure that libraries are not only perceived as places with books and a place of study but as a place of information and holistic growth and as an essential services to the community development.

Strategies used to provide children library services

The library management should ensure that various stakeholders in the community such as the religious institutions, farmers association and government in the community are aware of their role in supporting and partnering with the library to ensure a reading culture is cultivated among the rural children. The library should come up with appropriate way of integrating ICT in all its activities

Information needs of children

Children not only use the information they obtain from the library for educating purposes only but also for growth and development. The library management may engage children by involving them more often when designing the programs and activities. Also the library management may improve their children library collection by adding more resources especially curriculum books according to the users requirements. Thus children services may be designed to fit each level of child development and attractive enough to stimulate more reading for entertainment general knowledge and growth so that children can use the information available in the library to grow holistically.

Frequency of library visit.

Information resources acquired by a library have no value if they are not utilized. Therefore the library management should come up with outreach services that take the service to the people in the community. They should not serve clients that only visit the library but should take the information service to where the children users are. Also they should conduct regular meeting with parents and teacher to encourage them to be frequently borrowing books on behalf of their children and pupils. Also should partner with schools for them to be conducting library lessons in the library premises. This may improve library usage.

Children user satisfaction with library services

The library management should sensitize parents and other stakeholder on the services offered to children so that the parents embrace the services by supporting their children to utilize all the services. The knls Kangema staff should also do a benchmarking with other libraries located in the rural areas in Kenya and other African countries to share ideas on children library services in the 21st century.

Library facilities/ equipment

The library management should acquire more computers to be used by the children the National government should increase the funds that they give to libraries. County Government should support the libraries in their county as libraries according to the

constitution is a devolved function. The library management should involve the community to look for donors who can donate books, computers to be used by children and also support the adult section so that children can continue using the library and reading for life. To ensure that children's imagination is captured as they interact with all the library resources the library management should make the library wall more attractive by adding educational pictures and murals on the wall.

Support reading culture

To achieve an effective reading culture among rural children, it requires a consistent, frequent financial and policy support from the government. The KNLS Board should lobby for enhancement of budget allocation from the County governments in order to meet information resources, library staff capacity building and other financial requirements for an effective library service to children living in rural areas. Knls Kangema library staff should continue to engage more parents in library activities. The library may start a parent –child sessions in the library occasionally as a start. Also the researcher recommends the library to start book clubs that promote reading for pleasure. This will promote a reading culture among rural children. Knls Kangema should solicit for financial support from county government, corporate bodies, non-governmental organizations, friends of the library and other well-wishers to support children library services and promoting reading for life among rural children

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