THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN PROMOTING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DODOMA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT: *To achieve and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that focuses on students' academic performance while promoting lifelong learning, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania is committed to improving school infrastructure. This has been reflected in various education development projects such as Primary and Secondary Education Development Plans of 2002-2006 and 2004-2009 respectively. However, from the researchers' observation, much effort of such plans has been pressed in the construction of laboratories and manufacturing of benches for primary and secondary schools. A sample of students and teachers/ library staff was drawn from the selected secondary school in Dodoma municipality, Tanzania. Interviews and survey questionnaires were used to collect data which were analysed thematically through the content analysis technique and later by SPSS where descriptive statistics was used. The findings of this study show that respondents had a positive attitude on the importance and usefulness of the library in achieving academic goals by the schools and students, and they as well believed that the presence of libraries could assist in improving students' academic performance and achievements. However, there are many others than the lack of laboratories and benches that affect students' performance in schools. One of the challenges is lack of well-equipped school libraries and trained librarians. As observed in most schools which had libraries, the services in such libraries were rendered by untrained librarians, resulting in ineffective library services delivery in schools. This was irrespective of its recognized essentiality in the performance of students. The conclusion made is that school libraries are a good driver and an essential tool for student's good performance and lifelong learning skills.*

KEYWORDS: *academic performance, library services, lifelong learning, reading habit, secondary school libraries.*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Experience shows that in recent years especially after the implementation of the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) in Tanzania, many secondary schools were established. However, the established schools lacked the most important and required facilities like laboratories, desks and libraries which results in the massive failure among secondary school students in their final examinations, specifically from 2013 to 2017. Many reasons for such mass failure have been identified and mentioned through various media but nothing related to library services provision has been mentioned. Since the independence of Tanganyika in 1961, the independent government has taken various initiatives and programmes to improve and raise the quality of education. The Vienna Convention of Human Rights which emphasises reducing the illiteracy rate and providing access to basic education to all fuelled these efforts. It is from that context that the government of Tanzania established and started the implementation of Education for All (EFA) under the Arusha Declaration of 1967. The EFA implementation was also taken and translated under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which emphasises much on 'education for self-reliance' of which the primary education was made compulsory for all (United Republic of Tanzania 1999). Although the programme

was silent on the provision of library services in schools, by that time schools were not registered unless they fulfilled basic requirements including having library services in place.

All the mentioned government efforts aimed at translating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 under Article 26 (1) which states that everyone has a right to education. Therefore, the government of Tanzania enacted many policies and strategies to strengthen the quality of education that is provided in schools specifically by creating conducive environment for school education. Among the strategies included is the establishment of rural and village libraries with well-equipped resources to facilitate studying and raising the reading culture of students in Tanzania. There were also adult literacy programmes which were implemented to support UPE. During that time, secondary and higher education were given only to a minority and they were considered less of a priority in terms of public resource allocation. Thus, the purpose of education was to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills for life rather than being a preparation for further academic studies. Although literature shows that up to the early 1980s the literacy rate of Tanzanians reached 80% as compared to today's situation, some years later other people considered UPE as a major cause of the deterioration in the quality of education at all levels in Tanzania (Leshabari and Masesa 2000). The reason(s) for such consideration is because during the time of UPE, the government and its responsible department of education vested many efforts on basic education than the other higher levels of education. Also, some of the policy and programme implementers wrongly translated the notion of 'education for self-reliance' by placing much emphasis in field works/manual activities among students than being in the classroom and libraries for self-study.

In 1963, the government of Tanganyika enacted the Tanganyika Library Services Board Act which empowered the Tanganyika Library Services Board (TLSB) to oversee the development of libraries in the country. The aim was to respond to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. According to the Tanzania Library Service Board Act of 1975, among other functions of the Board are to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain, and develop libraries; to provide efficient library services in both urban and rural areas; to advise the government and parastatal institutions on all matters relating to library services; to plan and co-ordinate library services in the United Republic of Tanzania and to carry out research in development of library services. Furthermore, the TLSB has the power to register all or any category of public libraries in Tanganyika and later Tanzania and provide the form of and the fee for such registration. Also, the Board has the power to prohibit employment of any person as a librarian of any public library unless such person holds a degree, diploma or other awards specified in the by-laws. Furthermore, the Board may require such schools and other educational institutions to establish and maintain libraries in such manner and of such standards as may be prescribed in by-laws from time to time.

The education policies of Tanzania, starting with the Education Policy of 1995 and later the Education Policy of 2014 are silent on the presence, absence and/or the standards of school libraries. Such situations have been the same even in various strategies like the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) which aimed at improving the environment for proper delivery of education. In 2004, the government of Tanzania in collaboration with the World Bank for Funding launched the SEDP, covering five years (from 2004 to 2009). The plan's ultimate aims were to overhaul secondary quality and equality education across the country. However, SEDP had no provisions for school libraries. It is from this context that one can ask the validity of the famous statement that the 'library is the heart of any learning institution'; that if the success of any learning institution depends on the presence of a library, what about the success of secondary schools in Tanzania?

Basically, the purpose of a library in any learning institution is to assist the academic community in using the available knowledge and technology to transform the practices in various matters and improve their academic lives. There are about seven criteria to use in assessing what should be called the school library. First and foremost, the library should be administered and supervised by a full-time librarian with at least diploma level of education in Library and Information Sciences. Second, the library should have a sufficient number

of staff with at least diploma level of education in library and information studies and their responsibilities should be to organise and maintain the library collection as well as to manage information and reference services for the academic community. Third, the library should be well-equipped with up to date and varied resources that adequately serve the purpose of the institutions and the needs of the users. Fourth, the goal of the library should be focused in providing information services to the academic community. The services are in most cases measured by their effectiveness in meeting users' needs and expectations. Fifth, the library should provide adequate and appropriate space and facilities to allow users to sit and use the resources within the library and even out of the library through lending and circulation of the available resources. Sixth, the library should have a separate, realistic and adequate budget to support its various activities and services.

In four or three consecutive number of years i.e., from 2013-2016; failure rates in form four examination results were in an increasing trend on a yearly basis. However, among the projected reasons for such failure rate in all the mentioned years none was mentioned that related to library services. Thus, one can have the presumed conclusion that the library services are good and at higher standards in secondary schools. It is however the present researchers' experience that some schools face library services challenge; as a result, their students are not performing well. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the status of secondary school libraries and their impacts as an essential tool for students' good performance and lifelong learning.

STATEMENT TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the late 1980s to 2000s, many secondary schools were established under various plans and strategies. As the strategies to ensure prosperity and improvement of learning and the teaching environment, SEDP was established in 2004 with such a major aim. However, for three consecutive years from 2013 to 2017, Tanzania has witnessed the massive failure in secondary schools' examinations. Among the reasons behind mass failure, the most frequently mentioned reason(s) included lack of laboratories, classrooms and benches but nothing related to library services was mentioned. This maybe because it was also not stated by the SEDP. Hence, the practices are contrary to the Tanzania's Ministry of Education under the Education for All (EFA) 2015 National Review Report which states that, among the terms and requirements for registering a school is the availability of a library.

Therefore, the status and the contribution of the secondary school libraries to the students' performance in their final secondary school examination results were not well established. Thus, nothing related to library services has been stated in any of the strategies to enhance the quality of education. This called for the necessity of conducting this study on the perceived role of libraries to students' academic performance and lifelong learning, otherwise nothing would be improved and the library would be disregarded with regards to the academic performance of students in secondary schools. Therefore, it was the intention of this study to establish the role of library services to students' performance in their final examinations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper pursued the following objectives:

1)   To assess the status of, availability and access to school library and information materials;
2)   To examine stakeholders' perceptions on the importance of libraries in enhancing students' academic performance and lifelong learning;
3)   To establish the way forward for the improved library services in schools.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

It is widely accepted that library services have a close connection with the students' academic performance. Academic performance and achievements among students are facilitated by the interest in learning activities which is normally cultivated by the availability and accessibility to a well-equipped library. According to McGrew *et al.* (2004), students who have 'synchronized' academic values (the positive intrinsic reasons for engaging across academic domains) demonstrate higher academic motivation than students with asynchronous academic values (high intrinsic interest in some domains coupled with only a utilitarian value in other domains). According to a study conducted in Ghana by Agyekummr and Filson (2012), most students use library resources and services to supplement their class notes and assignments, and this helps them with examination preparation. This is what is referred to as active learning which the school libraries are to instil to students.

A study by Aanu and Olatoye (2011) notes that the quality of library collections has a tremendous impact on student's academic performance and higher test scores and this is even more so with a higher usage of the school library resources. It is from this perspective that the school libraries should provide more than just books, magazines, newspapers, computers and other technologies, databases with accurate information, e-books, plus fun and educational activities. It should rather include reference books, non-fiction books like textbooks, and fiction books like the story books, novels and cartoons. According to Afolabi (2016), a school library at a minimum should consist of books, pamphlets, paper cuttings, gazettes and government publications, atlas, maps and charts, photography records, films, record players, cassette tapes/players, film projections, slides, pictures, photographs, realia and periodicals. On this basis, a school library collection will not be complete without reference books, as well as non-fiction and fiction texts. There is a need to provide these resources in a school library in order to provide a clear path towards the realisation of curriculum goals.

On the other hand, Ugah (2008) is of the view that the use of library services has a high degree of dependence on the accessibility of information sources. With the right resources, school libraries can facilitate cross-communication and enhance collaboration between students, teachers, administrators, and families. In line with these views, Oddone (2013) opines that school librarians should be trained to help and teach teachers and students to locate the needed information materials from millions of titles available in the library in various forms. Iyandave and Salawu (2006) stress that the strength of every library lies in its resources and information services to the people. In other words, a school library will be adjudged good or otherwise by its ability to meet, to a large extent, the information needs of its clientele. To this end, professional librarians continue to strive to collect, store, organize and disseminate all forms of recorded knowledge to satisfy both present and future information needs of users. A well-stocked academic library is a storehouse of information, or a record of human experience to which users may turn to for data or information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in the Dodoma Municipality which is one of the Tanzania's thirty-three administrative Regions and the capital city of the country. The targeted population were secondary school students; of which ten (10) secondary school libraries namely, Dodoma Secondary School, Masalato Girls Secondary School, Kiwanja cha Ndege Secondary School, Viwandani Secondary School, Selesian Secondary School, Miyuji Secondary School, Jamuhuri Secondary School, Maria De Matias Secondary School, Umonga Secondary School and Chinangali Secondary School were involved in the study. Among the selected secondary schools, seven (7) were public (community) schools, whereas three (3) were private secondary schools. All the private schools were owned by religious organisations (two by Christians and one by Muslims). A purposive sampling technique was used to involve students' class leaders and the school librarians in the study. By this technique, respondents were involved in the study on the basis of the positions they occupied at the school. Other students who were not leaders were involved in this study through random sampling under the convenience

technique whereby the respondents were involved in the study based on their readiness and willingness to participate. Hence, out of 10 schools a sample of 106 respondents in total participated in this study.

The study employed two methods of data collection namely, questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 93 students. The reasons behind the use of the questionnaire is because it is possibly widely spread geographically and free from the bias of the interviewer. Also, this method gives respondents adequate time to give well thought answers Kothari (2004). According to Denscombe (2007), a questionnaire is economical, easy to arrange, supplies standardized answers and it also encourages pre-coded answers. The interviews were used to collect data from 10 providers of library services in the schools. Interviews allow interviewees to speak their minds and this is therefore a better way of discovering things about complex issues. Interviews allow interviewees to use their own words and to develop their own opinions Denscombe (2007). Generally, researchers use semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of participants' perceptions on the role of libraries in improving students' performance. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches for data analysis was used. The collected data were at first analysed through thematic content analysis to get impressionistic findings, by which means, the contents of interviews and open-ended questions from questionnaires were further broken down into smaller meaningful units of information, then they were systematically coded to produce numerical descriptions which were statistically analysed using SPSS, where descriptive statistics were used. The results were presented with frequencies and percentages. This helped in ascertaining the values and attitudes of respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic information of the respondents

Among 10 visited secondary schools, seven (7) had libraries, while three (3) schools had no libraries. The three schools which had no libraries were the community secondary schools locally known as *shule za kata* in Kiswahili. It was funny to note that although such schools had no libraries, they had teachers appointed to the position of the school librarian. This finding however, implies that private secondary schools adhered to the requirements of establishing schools as compared to others. Therefore, there is a need for the government to equally administer their strategies to all education stakeholders to promote good performance and lifelong learning among students. As stated in Section 3.1, many (seven) public schools were involved in this study than private schools. The reason(s) for this selection was that public schools were many due to the government initiatives of ensuring each ward to construct one or more secondary schools, whereas the private ones were owned by religious organisations and depended much on church members' offerings for constructions and improvements.

The distribution of respondents from the 10 schools was as follows: 71 of 106 respondents were from the Ordinary level of secondary schools and 35 from the Advanced level of secondary schools. On the basis of their occupation status, 96 (91%) of 106 respondents were students from the mentioned 10 schools (which comprised six secondary schools at Ordinary level and four at Advanced level), whereas the other 10 (09%) participants were teacher librarians who participated in this study through face-to-face interviews. Among the 96 students that were provided with questionnaires to respond to, only 93 (97%) returned the filled in questionnaires. This marked a total of 103 respondents who responded to the research questions; this includes 10 workers who were working as librarians but with or without the required qualification as the results show that most of them were professional teachers except only two.

On the basis of the gender of respondents (students and librarians), results show that among 103 respondents in this study, more than a half of them (55) (53%) were male, whereas 48 (47%) were female. This may be due to the fact of male teachers' dominance in schools than their counterparts (females). The age variable of students indicated that of the 93 students who participated in this study, 39 (42%) were of the age ranging between 11-17 years of age, whereas 32 (34%) were of the age range of 18-25 years of age followed by 22 (24%) with the age range of 26 years old and above. This signifies that the majority of the students were at a

mature age thus it was prudent to provide them with the chance to judge on something as to whether good or bad, and in need of improvement or not. Additionally, more than half of the library staff (8) (80%) who participated in the study through interview were teachers and only two (20%) of them were the professional librarians with certificate and diploma level qualifications in library studies.

Availability of library, materials and the visitation patterns

Respondents were asked to state whether their schools had library services or not. Results show that 74 (72%) of all 103 respondents reported that their schools had library services, 29 (28%) stated that there were no library services in their schools. When respondents who stated to have no library services in their schools were further asked to state the ways they coped within such an environment, they stated that class and subject teachers sought past examination papers and discussed some questions with students in their remedial classes. Actually, the way they explained this strategy, the researchers thought that what has being done in such schools was a kind of rote learning thereby discouraging creativity, innovation and the facilitation of a reading culture among students. When students from schools without libraries were required to state the likelihood that they would use library services for their academic undertaking if made available; results show that all 29 students were likely to use the library. This suggests that respondents would likely use libraries for their various academic purposes and for leisure.

On the other hand, among the 74 participants who confirmed to have libraries in place at their schools, they were further asked to state the types of resources that are available in their school libraries. On the basis of multiple responses, the following were their responses: 60 (81%) were of the opinion that there were academic resources (text books) in their libraries, while 36 (49%) were of the view that their libraries consisted of both textbooks and story or leisure books, and only 4 (19%) opined that their libraries were equipped with leisure materials only. This finding is similar to Benard and Dulle (2014) who evaluated the access and use of school library information resources in Morogoro Municipality. In their study, Benard and Dulle (2014) found that the most frequently accessed and used library information sources by secondary students were books and novels. In connection to the findings of this study, Benard and Dulle's (2014) finding is factual with regards to textbooks and novels or leisure as the only resources required in school libraries.

Students who stated that they have libraries in place at their schools were also asked to state how frequent they visited the library. Results show that 37 (50%) students who participated in this study visited the school library occasionally, followed by 19 (26%) who visited the school library frequently while 18 (24%) did not visit the library at all. This is an indication that students who did not visit the library and those who visited occasionally were not aware of the role of school libraries in promoting lifelong learning and good academic performance. This was probably attributed to lack of marketing and promotion of library services to the students. This may further be the results of operating library services by unprofessional personnel.

Furthermore, students were asked to provide reason(s) for their visitation status to the library. Based on multiple responses of 56 participants who responded to this question, a majority of students as represented by 43 (77%) students visited the available school libraries for accessing academic materials, while 29 (52%) visited the school library just for leisure and relaxation of the mind, and 18 (32%) respondents stated that they have not visited school library at all and their argument was that the library had no enough seating spaces and materials for their academic needs. One of the respondents had this view: "our library comprises of outdated materials which help nothing in our academic achievements". This is an indication that students visit and use school libraries services for the purpose of responding to their assignments and not for acquiring general knowledge and for improving the reading culture and lifelong learning.

Satisfaction with the library services delivered at the school

In order to obtain respondents' impression on the library services at their schools, students were asked to state their satisfaction level with the library services and facilities at their schools. Results show that of all 93

students who returned the questionnaire, 47 (50%) were not satisfied, 25 (27%) were moderately satisfied, and only 21 (23%) were very satisfied. When respondents were required to provide reason(s) for their responses on the levels of satisfaction, those who were of the opinion that they were moderately satisfied and those who were not satisfied had almost the same reason(s): On the basis of multiple responses of the 72 respondents, 48 (67%) stated that they were not or were moderately satisfied because their library lacked the required infrastructure including computers, chairs and tables, 44 (61%) were of the perception that the school library buildings were not properly designed to cater for the library services delivery as most of them lacked designated reading spaces and had no enough ventilations, 26 (36%) stated that the library staff acted unfriendly and unprofessionally when serving students, while 33 (46%) opined that it was not easy to locate library resources from shelves, 18 (25) observed that their libraries were equipped with inappropriate information resources that do not fulfil students' information needs.

On the other hand, respondents who were of the opinion that they were satisfied were required to state the areas of their satisfactions. On the basis of multiple responses of 21 respondents, 13 (62%) stated to have been satisfied with physical resources and academic materials (especially the available books) in their libraries that the books met their information needs whereas 15 (71%) were of the view that Library staff acted very friendly and treated students fairly without discrimination and responded to students queries timeously. Furthermore, it was observed that almost all responses that respondents were satisfied with library services delivered at their schools came from schools with professional librarians. This possibly helped them to manage services delivery in a more professional manner as compared to the teacher-librarians.

This result suggests that respondents agreed that the library services and materials for students during the period of undertaking this study in some schools were in place. However, they were not satisfactory to fulfil the information needs of students, and as such the respondents were unhappy with the ways in which library services and resources were delivered to students. This is true given the fact that the absence of the mentioned facilities and resources cripples the provision of library services.

Importance and role of library services to students' academic performance

In this study also, authors sought to understudy respondents' perception on the importance and usefulness of library services for the academic achievements of students and the school at large. Therefore, respondents were asked to provide their views on the importance of library services and their role in the academic achievements of the students. Results show that out of all 103 respondents, 16 (16%) responded openly that it does not play any role in the academic performance and achievements of students, whereas 87 (84%) stated that the libraries had a great role to play in the students' academic achievements. Furthermore, to have a more justification of students' concerns on the role of libraries in their academic undertakings, all the1ten librarians were asked to provide their views. Results show that 100% of them were of the view that libraries had a great role in the academic achievements of students. One of the respondents expanded that,

> *"It is very important to have a well-managed school library for the academic and career development of both students and teachers at schools because libraries will not only simplify teaching-learning process but also improve and strengthen students' academic performance and achievements".*

More importantly, when the librarian was required to provide reflections on his experiences on the importance of the library to the students' academic performance, his response showed that students who used the library frequently were academically better endowed and performed better in their national examinations than those who do not use the library or those who use it occasionally.

The respondents from both students and librarians who stated that libraries can be helpful in the academic undertakings of students were further requested to respond to the follow-up question that required them to state how students could be using the library. Based on the multiple responses of 87 respondents, results

show that 100% of them had the view that they will use it for responding to various take-home assignments, and for knowledge addition in the subjects of interest. While 57 (66%) of these respondents were of the opinion that the library is a recreational centre for students' relaxation and leisure after having a series of class sessions, 44 (51%) respondents opined that the school library is the only centre in school that is responsible for influencing a reading culture and promoting lifelong learning among students. Therefore, it is the present authors' conviction that school owners should take library services more seriously for improving students' academic achievement, reading culture and promoting students' lifelong learning.

On the other hand, respondents that did not see any role that library services play in academia had some reason(s). Based on multiple responses, a wide range of concerns was given as the reasons why 16 respondents rejected the importance and usefulness of libraries for the academic achievements of students and the schools as well because students were capable of passing examinations even in the absence of the library services.

Based on these responses, it is clear that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude on the importance and usefulness of the library in achieving academic goals by the school and students as well. Respondents thought that the presence of the library could assist in improving students' academic performance and achievements. These include both considerations of the library as a centre for education materials delivery, as well as the documentation and preservation of important documents for reference services by students, and simplification of information access by students. Moreover, it can be argued that respondents were aware of the values of the library for the students' academic growth and achievements. However, the reason(s) provided by respondents who had a negative perception on the importance and usefulness of the library services in schools should be considered seriously to avoid rote learning.

Factors affecting access and the use of school library materials and services

Respondents were asked to mention the factors constraining access and use of the available library resources. On the basis of multiple responses, 71 (69%) of 103 respondents mentioned lack of knowledge of the resources available in the school library as one of the factors affecting access to and use of the library resources and services, 43 (42%) of respondents revealed that time limitation was a major factor that hinders students from accessing and using the school library. To expand on this, one student reported that:

> *"It is unfortunate that our library opening and closing hours are not friendly to our timetable. Our library is always open during working days especially during official working hours and closes during weekends, as you know during work hours you will find most of the students attending classes and they have no time to access and use the library. And during weekends when most of us are free and can use the library you find that the library is closed. That is really a challenge to us when it comes to the issue of accessing and using library services in our school".*

On the other hand, 35 (34%) respondents had the observation that the distance from the library and classes and dormitories was the other constraining factor for the access and use of library services. Also 32 (31%) respondents mentioned lack of trained personnel (librarian) to run the library as the other factor constraining access to and use of library services and resources. One of the respondents noted that:

> *"Without having the assistance of the librarian for the arrangement of the available resources, it is not easy for us to locate the materials in the library, that is why most of us don't have access and use such resources because trying to access books in our library is like another way of wasting our time".*

Other respondents (29) (28%) observed that most of the secondary school libraries had no enough space for reading as most of them stated that most secondary schools had no library as a separate building, except a very small room in the administration block. Figures 1-4 are the photos taken from the visited schools to show libraries without or with very minimal reading spaces.

Figure 1: School library from school one

Figure 2: School library from school two

Figure 3: School library from school three

Figure 4: School library from school four

A follow-up question to all these responses was that, "Were the students capable of accessing the information they needed from such a kind of library?" The results revealed that 77 (75%) managed to access the information needed and available in the library whereas 26 (25%) did not. One of the respondents noted that, "The reasons for the failure of accessing information needed by students among others were lack of appropriate books; outdated library materials; and lack of past examination papers." The present researchers therefore observed that the lack of professional librarians to provide the services was really a challenge as out of 10 visited school libraries, only two were managed by professional librarians.

WAYS FORWARD TO PROVIDING LIBRARY SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

Respondents were asked to provide their opinions about what should be done to effectively give students a chance to have access to and usage of information in their school libraries. The findings indicate that secondary school libraries should provide enough materials to cater for the information needs of the students, as well as updated and appropriate materials; schools should provide enough time to visit the library; students should be aware of the importance of the library; the school should train students on how to access e-resources; secondary school libraries should operate throughout the class hours and even after; secondary school libraries should be open during weekends (Saturday and Sunday); and the services should be provided by a qualified library staff. Additionally, and more probably the time for personal readings and library use should be allocated in the school timetable and various assignments should be attached to library use.

These findings relate to several previous studies including the study by Bernard and Dulle (2014) which was undertaken in Tanzania concerning school libraries. In this study, it was found that school library services are poor in various aspects such as having lack of qualified staff, lack of a library building and lack of up-to-date relevant materials. In order to facilitate school libraries to achieve their goals, it is important to improve and provide information materials, infrastructure as well as skilled library staff.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The status of secondary school libraries in terms of administration and qualified staff, equipment, up to datedness of the resources and information services provision was not adequate to foster students' performance and lifelong learning. Therefore, to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number four to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", it is important to improve library services at all educational levels.

Based on the main research findings, the researchers make recommendations on the following four aspects: First, the government in collaboration with private sectors should make sure that all secondary schools are assisted to have libraries in place. This can be successfully implemented only if it is well-stated in the education policy and guidelines for establishing secondary schools. Secondly, school owners (both public and private) should ensure that libraries in their schools have sufficient number of staff with required qualifications to work in libraries, at least a diploma level of education in library and information studies. Thirdly, secondary school libraries should have a separate, realistic and adequate budget, and lastly but not least in priority, there should be a clear guideline providing that for an organisation to operate as a secondary school such organisation should have a library equipped with up to date and varied resources. More importantly, for the purpose of instilling the sense of reading culture and lifelong learning skills among students, the government and the non-government organisation, and if possible, in a mode of private public partnership, education stakeholders should work together on establishing children's libraries everywhere in the society, and subsequently primary schools should have a sound library services in order to enhance children's love for books and the library. By so doing, when the so raised children go to secondary schools, they will be able to make maximum use of libraries.

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