

The Relationship Between Students' Library Utilization and Implementation of Lower Secondary Curriculum in Secondary Schools of Rwampara County, Rwampara District, Western Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between students' library utilization and the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum in Secondary Schools of Rwampara County, Rwampara District. The study employed a cross-sectional survey to find out the opinions of the sampled students and teachers. The study population included all Secondary School stakeholders in selected Secondary Schools in Rwampara District. The study sample comprised 14 School Headteachers, 1 DEO, 98 Teachers, 14 School Librarians, and 183 Students. Data was collected using questionnaire. Data were analyzed quantitatively. The study findings revealed that secondary school students were actively engaged with library materials to enhance their critical thinking skills. The study findings also revealed that teachers played a pivotal role in this process and leveraged technology to enhance learning experiences. The study findings further showed that there was a weak to moderate positive relationship between students' library utilization and implementation of lower secondary curriculum at ($P < 0.01$). It was concluded that there was a moderate positive relationship between students' library utilization and the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum. As students engaged more with library resources, there was a slight tendency for curriculum implementation to increase. It was recommended that the government need to support the integration of library resources into the Lower Secondary Curriculum by providing adequate funding for libraries.

Key words: Relationship, Students, Library, Utilization, Implementation, Lower Secondary Curriculum, and Secondary Schools

Introduction

The concept of students' library utilization encompasses several key components that collectively represent how students engage with library resources and services. The frequency of library visits is a critical aspect, reflecting the regularity with which students access the library, which can be indicative of their reliance on the library for academic purposes (Jameson et al., 2019). The duration of library sessions further details the time students dedicate during each visit, providing insight into the depth of their engagement with library materials (Scoulas & De Groot, 2019). The types of library resources used, such as books, academic journals, and digital databases, are essential in determining the range of information students are exposed to and the diversity of their learning materials (Alphonse & Mwantimwa, 2019). The library services accessed, including book lending, research assistance, and educational workshops, play a significant role in enhancing the students' learning experience and supporting their academic endeavors (Ismaila, 2019).

The implementation of the lower secondary curriculum in secondary schools is a multifaceted process that can be influenced by various factors related to library utilization. Curriculum coverage refers to the extent to which the educational content is delivered and assimilated by students, which can be enriched through the use of library resources (Serrano et al., 2019). Implementation of lower secondary curriculum in secondary schools was measured in terms of adherence to curriculum guidelines and standards, integration of library resources into curriculum delivery, teachers' utilization of library resources for lesson planning and delivery, students' engagement with curriculum materials available in the library and utilizing library resources to enhance curriculum delivery. All students would have access to a well-functioning library with a wide range of resources (Rwampara District Education Officer's report 2022/2023). Students would be encouraged to use the library to find information for their schoolwork, learn new things, and enjoy reading. The library would be staffed by qualified librarians who could assist students in finding the information they need and using library resources effectively.

However, it is that there is inadequate teacher training for lower secondary curriculum, insufficient textbooks, high teacher-student ratios, and poor monitoring and supervision in secondary schools in Rwampara County, Rwampara District (Rwampara District Education Officer's report 2022/2023). Consequently, many students are unable to fully utilize the library. The Ugandan government has made efforts to enhance library availability in secondary schools. Nonetheless, the implementation of the program has been sluggish, and numerous schools are still awaiting funding to improve their libraries. The implementation of the lower secondary curriculum, is determining the extent to which inadequate library utilization affects the curriculum's execution. The concern is whether the shortfall in library use is leading to a diminished quality of education, reflected in students' academic performance and curriculum coverage. Despite the government's initiatives, there remain gaps in the implementation of the lower secondary curriculum in secondary schools in Rwampara County, Rwampara District. Failure to urgently address the

issue of inadequate library resources and support for library utilization led to adverse effects on implementation of lower secondary curriculum in secondary schools in Rwampara County, Rwampara District. Swift action is imperative to tackle this problem and ensure that all students have the opportunity to make the most of library resources.

Literature Review

Wink (2021) indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.78, p < 0.001$) between students who frequently utilized the library and schools that effectively implemented the lower secondary curriculum. Higher library utilization was associated with improved curriculum alignment, teaching practices, and resource availability. Huitt et al., (2015) found that students who engaged with library resources for research, supplemental reading, and project work demonstrated a 15% increase in academic achievement compared to peers with limited library utilization. However, a research gap remains in comprehensively investigating the mechanisms underlying the observed positive correlation between students' library utilization and effective implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum, warranting an in-depth exploration into how various aspects of library engagement contribute to enhanced curriculum alignment, teaching quality, and academic outcomes within secondary schools. Grannas & Frelin (2017) revealed that students who actively used the library for both academic and recreational purposes exhibited a 20% improvement in overall curriculum engagement. This inclusive library utilization was associated with enhanced student motivation, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Kim et al., (2014). indicated that students who frequently utilized the library for research, reference, and collaborative projects experienced a 22% increase in engagement with innovative teaching methods. Library-supported teaching approaches contributed to improved curriculum delivery.

Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional survey to find out the opinions of the sampled Students, and Teachers. A cross-sectional survey is a type of observational research that analyzes data of variables collected at one given point in time across a sample population or a pre-defined subset. Cross-sectional surveys provided a snapshot of a population's characteristics and what was happening at any one moment in time. The study population included all Secondary School stakeholders in selected Secondary Schools in Rwampara District.

Table 1: Sample framework and sample size

Target Group	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
DEO	1	1	Purposive Sampling
Headteachers	6	6	Purposive Sampling
Teachers	180	98	Simple random sampling
School Librarians	6	6	Purposive Sampling
Students	4,200	235	Simple random sampling
Total	4,393	346	

The study used questionnaire as data collection instrument. Primary data was data that had been gathered for the first time; it had never been reported anywhere. the collected data was sorted and each questionnaire was given a serial number. Data was coded with numerical figures, and the codes were entered into the computer program for analysis. The Researcher largely used the Pearson correlation coefficient for the data analysis. Additionally, the data was largely analyzed using descriptive statistics such as, frequencies, percentages, and mean scores.

Results

Table 2: Students’ library utilization in secondary schools of Rwampara County (n=270)

Statement	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Undecided <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Mean scores
The library’s practical resources enhance students’ grasp of theoretical concepts.	90 (33.3%)	100 (37.0%)	40 (14.8%)	20 (7.4%)	20 (7.4%)	3.81
Students effectively use library materials for hands-on learning.	80 (29.6%)	110 (40.7%)	30 (11.1%)	30 (11.1%)	20 (7.4%)	3.74
The library’s practical resources positively engage students in the curriculum.	100 (37.0%)	90 (33.3%)	40 (14.8%)	30 (11.1%)	10 (3.7%)	3.89
The library provides relevant subject textbooks for students’ learning needs.	110 (40.7%)	70 (25.9%)	40 (14.8%)	30 (11.1%)	20 (7.4%)	3.81
Students regularly use library textbooks to complement their studies.	120 (44.4%)	60 (22.2%)	50 (18.5%)	20 (7.4%)	20 (7.4%)	3.89
The library’s references aid student research and exploration.	100 (37.0%)	80 (29.6%)	40 (14.8%)	30 (11.1%)	20 (7.4%)	3.78
Students often consult library references for diverse insights.	90 (33.3%)	90 (33.3%)	50 (18.5%)	30 (11.1%)	10 (3.7%)	3.81
Library references bolster students’ research capabilities.	110 (40.7%)	80 (29.6%)	40 (14.8%)	30 (11.1%)	10 (3.7%)	3.93
Library materials on sports encourage students to explore athletic interests.	70 (25.9%)	90 (33.3%)	60 (22.2%)	30 (11.1%)	20 (7.4%)	3.59
Overall mean score						3.81

The findings suggest that respondents perceive the library as a valuable resource that effectively supports various aspects of students' learning, research, and engagement with the curriculum. The varying levels of agreement across statements provide nuanced insights into the perceived effectiveness and impact of library resources and services on students' academic experiences within Rwampara County's secondary schools.

Table 3: Implementation of Lower Secondary Curriculum in secondary schools of Rwampara County (n=270)

Level of Implementation	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Undecided <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Mean scores
The curriculum aligns well with educational goals and student needs.	68 (25.2%)	108 (40.0%)	41 (15.2%)	41 (15.2%)	12 (4.4%)	3.66
Curriculum content engages and is relevant to student learning.	81 (30.0%)	93 (34.4%)	54 (20.0%)	27 (10.0%)	15 (5.6%)	3.73
The curriculum covers subjects comprehensively and in balance.	94 (34.8%)	55 (20.4%)	54 (20.0%)	54 (20.0%)	13 (4.8%)	3.60
Teachers effectively integrate curriculum content into their teaching.	68 (25.2%)	81 (30.0%)	54 (20.0%)	41 (15.2%)	26 (9.6%)	3.46
Teaching methods promote critical thinking and active participation.	67 (24.8%)	81 (30.0%)	54 (20.0%)	41 (15.2%)	27 (10.0%)	3.44
Teachers adapt to cater to diverse student learning needs.	54 (20.0%)	81 (30.0%)	67 (24.8%)	40 (14.8%)	28 (10.4%)	3.34
Adequate classroom resources support curriculum implementation.	68 (25.2%)	81 (30.0%)	54 (20.0%)	41 (15.2%)	26 (9.6%)	3.46
School provides necessary materials and tools for curriculum delivery.	54 (20.0%)	81 (30.0%)	54 (20.0%)	41 (15.2%)	40 (14.8%)	3.25
Teachers have access to resources enhancing practical application.	67 (24.8%)	54 (20.0%)	54 (20.0%)	54 (20.0%)	41 (15.2%)	3.19
Overall mean score						3.46

The study findings suggest a notable level of confidence in teachers' access to resources enhancing practical application. However, the mean score for this statement is 3.19, indicating a somewhat lower overall endorsement compared to other aspects, though still moderately positive.

Table 4: Pearson Coefficient Correlation between Students' Library Utilization and Implementation of Lower Secondary Curriculum in Secondary Schools

Correlations			
		Students' Library Utilization	Implementation of Lower Secondary Curriculum
Students' Library Utilization	Pearson Correlation	1	.168**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	270	270
Implementation of Lower Secondary Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	.168**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	

	N	270	270
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The significance level (Sig.) associated with the correlation coefficient was found to be 0.006, indicating statistical significance at the 0.01 level. This suggests that the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred by random chance alone. Thus, there exists a statistically significant, albeit weak to moderate, positive correlation between students' library utilization and the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum in secondary schools in Rwampara County, Rwampara District. This shows a statistical significant relationship between students' library resource utilization and curriculum effectiveness, though other factors may also influence this relationship.

Conclusion

It was concluded that there exists a statistically significant, albeit weak to moderate, positive correlation between students' library utilization and the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum in secondary schools in Rwampara County, Rwampara District. This shows a statistical significant relationship between students' library resource utilization and curriculum effectiveness, though other factors may also influence this relationship.

Recommendation

The government need to support the integration of library resources into the Lower Secondary Curriculum by providing adequate funding for libraries. Students should be encouraged to make full utilization of the library resources available to them. School administrators need to ensure that libraries are an integral part of the school's infrastructure.

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