Investigation on the Role of School Libraries Globally: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT This paper reports on the role played by school libraries for learners worldwide. The school libraries form part of the students and learners' academic programme. The role of libraries began to be professionalised in the late eighteenth century in Western Europe in the face of objections and grievances regarding the administration of book collections as well as the lack of knowledge of custodians. As a result, the librarians started to search for professional objectives for becoming more diligent and operational with collections that were destined to encourage both their utilisation and access. This paper explored the role of school libraries internationally. The methodology followed for this paper was studied by utilising a consistent literature review using a combination of the background and theoretical review methods. The results of the study indicate that developed countries have well equipped libraries with library collections in a different format. On the contrary, in the developing countries there is a lack of school libraries, those that are there are not up to standard. Based on these findings, it is recommended that all schools irrespective that they are in the developing countries should have a school library as well as a professional school librarian to assist in the library. Moreover, the school library should be equipped with a library collection that is relevant to the learners. The library collection should be developed with more books that will be able to meet the information needs of the learners. These include digital resources such as eBooks, e-journals, databases and digitised audio/visual materials.

INTRODUCTION

A school library is an information centre within a school where learners, staff and sometimes parents, and other members of the public have access to the different types of information resources (Shonhe and Marambe 2019; Morris 2004: 34). For the purpose of this study, a school library is used to include any form of libraries that are used to cater for learners in both lower grade and upper grade, who need the library collection, which is at their level of understanding as new readers who are still mastering the art of reading. These include forms of libraries such as the library building, cupboard library, box library, shelves containing books in the classroom as well as a library corner, which are mostly found in the foundation phase. The term "school library" in this study may also be used to refer to libraries organised inside the classroom either in the corner of the classroom, arranged on the shelves in the classroom, or set aside in the cupboard. The collection of these types of library includes reading materials in various forms such as picture books, storybooks, magazines, maps, children's encyclopaedias, children's handbooks, children's dictionaries, poetry, posters cards and charts. This is the type of collection that supplements the use of textbook in the classroom.

The way in which school libraries are managed may differ from one school to the other. Some school libraries are managed by school librarians who are qualified, whereas some are managed by the teachers in their respective classrooms, referred to as teacher-librarians. Kheswa (2021) and Asselin et al. (2003) regard a teacher-librarian as a professional teacher who also has the relevant knowledge of how to select, manage and utilise the learning resources in a school. Teacher-librarians and teachers are the best sources of information because they are the ones who should ensure that the reading habits of learners are enhanced and sustained. Equal Education (EE) (2010) reiterates that libraries provide access to much needed information and resources that will enable learners to explore their world of learning. According to the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) (2002), the importance of the libraries especially the school libraries is to instil in learners the love for reading and to develop an adult who will be a responsible information user. As a result, Equal Education (EE) started the campaign for school libraries in 2009. The

slogan of this campaign is "1 school, 1 library, 1 librarian", which is aimed at addressing the lack of libraries in the South African public schools. The Equal Education campaign for school libraries' demands are in line with the outcomes of local and international research, which indicate a clear link between the provision of school libraries and improved learners' performance.

According to the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and IFLA (2000), the school library is said to be effective if it has the following characteristics:

- It supports the school curriculum as well as the learning programme.
- It provides the resources and information that will meet the learners' and educators' needs.
- It plays an important part of the education system.
- It measures progress, checking actual performance by comparing it with standard plans on a regular basis.

Literature by Kammer et al. (2021), Donahay (2019), Mandrell (2018) and Fitzsimmons (2006) states that through the school libraries, librarians collaborate with class teachers to enrich curriculum content, and they help create a more authentic learning experience. Secondly, the school library's collections inform, educate, entertain and enrich students at all levels. Students learn to use and explore information in a meaningful way and their literacy skills grow rapidly. Through libraries, learners also learn how to learn.

Objectives

To attain the aim of this study, the researcher sets out to achieve the following objectives:
- To understand school libraries
- To examine the roles of the school libraries globally
- To explore the type and nature of school libraries globally

Research on the Role of School Libraries

The role of school libraries in the reading habits of learners has been studied extensively in many countries. Previous studies related to the topic under investigation are explored in this paper, including international studies from the United States of America, Europe and Asia, as well as regional studies in Africa and local studies in South Africa.

United States of America

Oberg (2001) noted that in the United States (US), many school libraries were established in schools during the 1950s. Subsequently, a number of studies on the impact of school libraries on the learners' academic achievement were conducted. These studies (Rodney et al. 2002; Rodney et al. 2003; American Association of School Librarians 2007; Krashen et al. 2010; American Association of School Librarians 2011) were conducted in different settings across the US to find out the relationship between the school library use and the learner's academic achievement. The surveys ranged from Foundation Phase learners to high school learners. Most of these studies demonstrated the benefits of school libraries and library media centres on learners' academic achievement. So far studies have not focussed on the reading habits of young children in the rural areas, which is the focus of this study. Burgin and Bracy (2003) also state that school library programmes in North Carolina elementary, middle and high schools have a significant impact on students' performance, as measured by the scores on standardised reading and English tests.

Moreover, Todd and Kuhlthau (2004) agree that students in Ohio school libraries reveal that 99.4 percent of students ranging from grade 3 up to grade 12 believe that school libraries and their services help them become better learners. While Rodney et al. (2002) compared Iowa elementary schools with the highest and lowest Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading scores. The highest scoring students used as many books and other materials during library visits. Consequently, Iowa reading test scores rises with the development of school library programmes. These findings are relevant to this study in that its aim is to analyse programmes and activities initiated by school librarians for grade three learners to become habitual readers in Vhembe District. On the contrary, the following studies found that learners in South Africa lack the culture of reading. The South African media as well as the public frequently point out the lack of reading

culture that is needed in children to become habitual readers (Wafawarowa 2003; Hove 2005). According to Sisulu (2004), the absence of reading habits is prevalent in the entire Southern African region. Cillie (2001), Wafawarowa (2003) and Williams (2003) confirmed this view, indicating that in most of the South African societies, reading is not considered as an essential element of life because of a weak reading culture. These studies have revealed that there is a lack of reading culture among South African learners. They have concentrated on the reading culture that is lacking without focusing on the role that school libraries can play to improve the reading habits of Foundation Phase learners in the rural areas.

School libraries may play a crucial role in developing the reading habits of learners. This might imply that there is a need for urgent attention in South Africa to develop the reading habits of learners, hence this study. Smith (2006) reports that in Wisconsin, the impact of library media programmes on learners' performance was visible across school levels, that is, from the elementary, middle school to high school levels. However, it seems there were no studies that concentrated on the role of these libraries in enhancing the reading habits of learners.

According to American Library Association (ALA) (2009), the number of school libraries has increased by nearly six percent since the 1999-2000 and 2006-2007 academic years. This improvement resulted from population expansion and the need for more basic and secondary public schools, and the need to strengthen minor schools into bigger school districts, including the requirement for extra school libraries to cater for the needs of learners and teachers. In 2007, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) introduced a yearly investigation of school library media programmes. The investigation was developed through the AASL Research and Statistics committee with AASL Board review and final approval (ALA 2009). This is in contrast with the situation in South Africa in which only eight percent of schools have libraries. Moreover, Equal Education (EE) (2011) reveals that in comparison to South Africans, 7.23 percent of whom attended schools with functional libraries, eighty-nine percent of learners in the other thirty-nine countries attended schools with functional libraries in 2007.

Krashen (2004) says that the survey conducted in the United States and in the United Kingdom indicated that learners obtain an unexpectedly huge percentage of their books from libraries. The school library is specifically regarded as an essential resource of books. The Scholastic Inc., and the Gates Foundation undertook a survey of about 40,000 teachers in which the school library was indicated to be the one used by the most leaners (Siu-Runyan 2011). Unlike in the United Kingdom, in South Africa, especially in rural areas, there is a lack of reading materials that are needed so as to develop the love for reading. Nevertheless, this study has drawn some lessons from the American experiences that the school library is the main source of books that the learners use the most.

Europe

With regards to the role of school libraries in developing the reading habits of learners, Thanuskodi (2011) has found that in the United Kingdom (UK), unlike in developing countries, especially like South Africa, the role of school libraries is essential to encourage learners to develop reading habits. Unfortunately, developing countries like South Africa do not consider school libraries as the first option to promote reading habits. It is further asserted that if learners are encouraged to start reading for pleasure at a tender age, it will create an impact in every aspect of their life, including their academic performance. The library, therefore, is considered the best place for encouraging successful reading habits, abilities and culture so that reading will be made enjoyable and voluntary. The library provides enough reading space as well as related facilities to quicken the reading habits of learners. Moreover, the library must show independent compassion that can change even the reluctant reader to be a lover of books. As a result, a library that is well stocked with a collection of books plays an important role in influencing the reading habits of learners (Thanuskodi 2011). However, learners should be guided by both the subject teacher and teacher librarian in selecting books that are interesting and at the learners' level to make effective use of the library collection in developing their reading habits. This is related to this study because for learners to develop an interest in reading, they need to be able to access books that can be provided by the library.

Moreover, in the UK, Clark (2010a) ascertains a substantial need for a functional school library and the impression it could have when run properly on the pupils' reading habits, literacy level, leisure reading, information literacy skills and access to knowledge on their self-esteem, confidence, sense of safety and well-being in the school community. This means that for a library to effectively play its role of offering personalised reading supervision programmes, being responsible for offering library group activities, teaching library skills to learners, assisting teachers in evaluating learner skills, as well as co-operating with the public library concerning reading programmes, it has to be well-equipped. Hughes (1997) maintains that even the most unfit child who has chanced upon the library's worth sits with the genius of the earth and turns the key to the whole world. The report by the Clark (2010b) established a powerful statistical connection between reading habits and school library use by learners in the UK. Moreover, young people questioned for this report talked briefly about what they did in the library and how the library backed their learning and assisted them in developing their reading habits. They also view school libraries' after-effects as encouraging them to love and appreciate reading as well as sustaining them in their aspirations to construct their wisdom foundation and to find information. The library is also seen as providing learners with a safe place for learners to read. This suggests that the school library has a significant role to play for learners who for various needs find the school environment particularly unwelcoming (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) 2007).

It is clear that there are different types of library provisions in different countries with regard to the development of reading habits on learners. There are, therefore, countries that are doing quite well in as far as the reading of their learners is concerned, and there are those countries that are in the same situation as South Africa. It is "important for school libraries to cooperate with their local public libraries both to benefit the school and to make the most of local authority" (Sundt 2002:71). Meanwhile, the school library should obviously take into consideration its educational purpose, and the librarian should also be suitable in

educating, as "teaching is undoubtedly required" (Tilke 2002: 71). Joint library services are generally satisfactory in most parts such as some German states or in the more contemporary "Bibliopoint" Project promoted by the city council of Rome, Italy (Seefledt and Syre 2007:59-61). A school may split its library area with the public library and broaden its services and facilities outside the school community, inside a wider cultural and social project, co-operatively shared and undoubtedly described. Therefore, school libraries are of importance and a priority in every school if learners are to develop good reading habits. It is essential to note that library cooperation is only applicable in developed countries where they have both school and public libraries that are well equipped. School libraries and public libraries that are needed in developing the reading habits of learners are lacking in developing countries.

According to Pespacho (1996), education in Portugal is experiencing an important transformation that is orchestrated by the Portuguese government. In 1996 the School Library Network (SLN) programme was started and established a number of school libraries across public primary and secondary schools. Before 1996 only 160 high schools had school libraries that were not yet automated and were still behind in terms of technology. Much of their library collections were out-dated and irrelevant to the needs and interests of learners, and most of their resources were in print format. For this reason, an out-dated and irrelevant library collection is the same as having no library because it will be of no use in developing the reading behaviour of learners. School libraries are always managed by the SLN. As a result of the above and the reforming policies, school libraries in Portugal are thoroughly equipped with Information Communication Technology (ICT) and collections in various formats that meet the needs of the learners. As school libraries make progress in supporting the school curricula, the problem now lies in establishing partnerships with teachers through collaborative work practices. Both the self-evaluation model and an external evaluation of the School Library Network Programme were launched to identify challenges concerning concepts, standards and critical success factors of school libraries (Veiga 1996). This implies that it is crucial that school libraries in South Africa be

studied so as to determine how best to develop their collections and services to the extent that they are able to develop the reading habits of learners. This opinion is sustained by studies that indicate the importance of libraries in enhancing learners to become readers (Lonsdale 2003; Pretorius 2005; Lance et al. 2007).

Asia

Karim (2004) stresses that there is a need to campaign for reading habits among Pakistan children since it is compulsory for all Muslim men and women to engage in reading all sacred and worldly literature constantly. As a result, Pakistan children are encouraged to read from the infancy stage. Children should read not only sacred and worldly literature, but also need to read their prescribed textbooks, magazines and journals, because these are considered important to supplement textbooks. Public libraries in Pakistan are established for all people, and specifically for every child for the sake of progress in their reading. Programmes such as Born to Read, has leaders who were found to be successful in promoting the literacy campaign in Pakistan. According to Karim (2004), reading is for information, knowledge, business, trade, and cultural and social refinement. Therefore, it is important for teacher librarians to initiate programmes and activities in school libraries in order to motivate learners to read so that they become habitual readers. Reading should be guided by adults including parents, teachers and librarians. This means that it is of paramount importance that subject teachers support the programmes and activities initiated by teacher librarians for learners to become avid readers. Moreover, libraries are regarded as being information centres and educational organisations that exist thoughout one's life. Libraries play a significant role, as they assist the general public as a whole in inspiring learners' present and future lives. The school library is at the centre of the child's academic life. It is the only place in which the child can learn to read and master the realities of life using accessible information. Every child has a chance to visit the library every week for the purpose of reading as well as selecting reading materials (Karim 2004).

Majid and Tan (2007) report that it is important that parents, teachers, librarians, publishers as well as other stakeholders in Singapore to have a better understanding of children's reading habits and preferences so that they will take best procedures for marketing reading amongst learners. However, marketing reading amongst learners will be effective if books are also part of the procedures to be used in promoting reading. Children in Singapore relate books and reading with studying, homework, school projects, assignments and obtaining a higher grade due to high pressure to perform well academically. It is clear that learners do not read books for the sake of reading, but they read because they want to perform well academically and not for enjoyment. As a result, there are no reading habits present among these learners. Although learners in Singapore will not resist reading school-related information, it is still difficult to make them habitual readers (Cheah 1998). National Centre for Education Statistics (1993) and Shefelbine (1998) indicate that there is a progressive association between learners, leisure reading and their reading performance and that leisure reading increases the development of habitual reading in learners. The "Book Flood Strategy" was used in Fiji, Singapore and Sri Lanka to improve the quantity of reading materials on hand. As a result of the "Book Flood Strategy", most students are involved in reading, discussion and sharing books in a variety of ways (Tella and Akande 2007). An investigation in Sri Lanka on the provision of basic library resources of interesting reading collection as well as presenting simple reading practises like silent reading periods at the beginning of the school day and the reading of stories to children, indicated that the reading scores almost improved in a few months (Makotsi 2004).

Like many other countries, Bhutan is not a habitual reading society, and as a result of the development of school libraries, library-related projects that promote reading started in 2000 (Shaw 1992). Since 1998 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has supported the improvement of school libraries. On the other hand, the World Bank education development projects funded the development of school libraries in secondary schools. Moreover, UNICEF sponsored the National Reading Week, which usually takes place annually to promote reading among children parents as well as teachers (Bhutan and UNICEF 2002). It seems that there was a backup provided by UNICEF to promote

reading among students in secondary schools. The researcher holds the opinion that the reading habits of learners should be developed at an early stage in the lower grades (Foundation Phase), which is related to the support by UNICEF to promote reading habits among learners, parents and teachers. Moreover, Jansen (2011) revealed that the South African government spends the largest amount of its budget on education, which is about twenty percent, as a means to address the reading problem in the country. Of concern is the fact that school libraries are not seen as a first solution, while on the other hand the reading level of learners is not good at all in South Africa. So far studies have not focussed on whether this expenditure is related to the development of reading interests in young children.

Majid and Tan (2007) advocate for several factors as liable to inspire the reading habits of learners. As a result, the Singapore government is making collaborative endeavours to get ready a new type of students who will become lifelong learners. They are achieving this by making use of a network of public libraries to provide numerous programmes to instil and promote reading habits amongst learners. This is an indication that well-planned programmes in the library enable learners to develop a reading culture. Kumar et al. (2010) assert that in India the school library is still considered the best place to promote reading habits. As a result there need to be in libraries, sufficient reading space and associated resources to speed up the development of reading habits. Haycock (1995) stresses that learners read more when there is a school library. Furthermore, in schools with functional libraries and professional librarians, learners perform better at higher levels in their reading comprehension, and in knowledge as well as the use of reference materials than students in schools with the least or no library service. It seems that the attitude of learners is positive for those students who attend schools where there is a functional library as well as a professional librarian.

School Library Services and Reading in Regional Context

Alemna (1982) states that unlike in developed countries, where numerous surveys were conducted on the reading habits of learners, very little has been done in this field with regard to African children. However, there are few African countries where school library services and the reading habits of learners were reported. Below follows a discussion of few countries where something has been reported about school libraries and reading habits of learners, namely, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi and few other African countries. Generally, learners in African countries are not readers. Sangkaeo (1999:2) indicates, "We are not a reading society in Africa but chatting society, the background of learning through culture, cultural habit of people… prefer to listening and chatting more than reading". Darko-Ampem (2005) stresses that the lack of a reading culture in most African countries is influenced by factors such as the type of education system that acknowledges the oral culture of societies, more specifically traditional stories and storytelling traditions as well as lack of reading materials in the mother tongue.

Kenya

The Camel Mobile Library Services was established by the Kenya National Library Service in which two camels deliver boxes of books and reading tents to schools on a monthly basis in the Garissa Province in north Kenya. This is a positive step, although different types of weather negatively affect the service during the delivery of the books. The camel mobile libraries are also able to provide library services to roaming and refugee communities (Betten 2003). A cost-effective approach for providing schools with library collections is to connect them with the community library association. For instance, a community library in Karatina has established school boxes of additional reading resources, which are transported by a motorbike where one box goes around amongst several schools. Reading resources for the schools are frequently restocked, making use of book stocks from the library as a maintainable resource of provision (Betten 2003). This implies that schools in the rural areas must be equipped with full-fledged libraries that will be able to accommodate library resources for ease of use by learners. This situation is similar to the situation in rural South Africa as revealed by Mahwasane (2008) and Mojapelo and Dube (2014) where few books are held in boxes and cupboards instead of school libraries. Books are supposed to be easily accessible to learners in order to assist in

developing their reading habits. As a result, the present study sets out to describe the state and conditions of school libraries.

Nigeria

According to Adeniji (2006), the school library is the heart and soul of the educational system in Nigeria and that school libraries play an important part in offering motivation to pupils in schools from nursery schools to the most knowledgeable senior in high schools, by providing them with information in a diversity of formats. There are some schools in Nigeria that are operating without a school library. Daniel (2004) stresses that the library remains the powerhouse of educational institutions, and that an educational institution without a library is like a motorcar without an engine and a body without a soul. Smith (2002) reveals that academic brilliance can be realised because of the school library because it is the pillar of purposeful education. The school library and the school are like hand and glove, as they need each other to operate well.

The school needs a library to attain commendable objectives of Nigeria education Gbadamosi and Omotayo (1995). As far as reading in Nigeria is concerned, the school library acts as motivation to publicise successful reading habits in learners. School libraries can be associated with a "foundation of a building", as an insubstantial foundation cannot sustain a building, which means that an insubstantial school library environment and conditions cannot sustain the education of the learner. Most investigations in Nigerian schools are undertaken via the medium of English at all phases. Reading, speaking, listening and playing are the main means through which the mental power of the learner develops (Alegbeleye 2010). This indicates that there cannot be effective teaching if there is no library. As a result, library services should be provided as early as possible.

Uganda

Magara and Batambuze (2009a) indicate that in Uganda, there is lack of operational school library buildings. Libraries are found in the form of bookstores, and classrooms are changed into libraries. In some instances, books were stored with stock and equipment, including musical instruments, chalk, firewood and food (Magara and Batambuze 2009b), which is an obstacle because it is risky for learners to be able to access books in such conditions, as they can be injured. Learners are allowed to borrow books home and there is a policy that deals with damaged and lost books. The teacher librarian manages the library.

The Ministry of Education and Sports, and civil society organisations, including the National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU), have put forth the energy to participate in the encouragement of reading in Ugandan schools (Magara and Batambuze 2005). The School Library Development (SLD) in Uganda dated back to 1963 in the Castle Report of the Uganda Educational Commissions. Nevertheless, the initial endeavour by the government to develop the school libraries did not bring forth coherent policies and guidelines. The Ministry of Education and Sports, together with the government White Paper on Education, set up a technical committee to write a School Library Development (SID) policy. The Management Handbooks for School and Districts was provided by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2004 for the proper management of books (Batambuze 2006).

NABOTU played an essential role in promoting reading by presenting activities such as school-based reading tents, which the learners visit for leisure reading. This is because there are no school libraries to be used by learners, and as a result, teachers were also trained in major expertise incorporating library management as well as improving storybooks by making use of book donations. NABOTU introduced the next stage of the School Library Development Programme (SLDP) in 2005, which stressed the advancement of major literacy skills, children's reading skills, imparted reading skills to teachers and developed library professional skills to librarians (Magara and Batambuze 2005). The National Library of Uganda (NLU) donated children's storybooks to schools to allow them to sustain reading on a sustainable basis (Batambuze 2006). The aim of NLU is to promote the habit and culture of reading through reading campaigns and book exhibition (Uganda 2003). On the other hand, the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) trained teachers and improved the skills of librarians with the aim of developing their reading culture (Magara and Batambuze 2005).

This means that there is an emphasis on library programmes and activities initiated for instilling the love for reading.

The education system of Uganda undertook numerous transformations from mission schools to privately owned schools, all of which pursued the same education curriculum. In 1997 the Republic of Uganda introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme that caters to schoolgoing children. In this scheme schools are characterised by large numbers of pupils where the teacher-learner ratio is 1:100, less qualified teachers, and lack of equipment and instrumental materials (Nalusiba 2006). It seems that there is a lack of books, let alone school libraries that will be able to provide learners with a range of reading books that will help them in developing their love for books, which will in turn develops their reading habits. As a result of lack of reading culture in Uganda, it has resulted in a book industry being unfledged, and the inadequacy of available reading materials. Moreover, the poor culture of reading also affects the social and economic development of most communities in Africa (Mulindwa 2001). Evidently, the picture revealed by studies conducted in different countries indicates that there can be no doubt that learners' reading habits is a concern.

Zimbabwe

Just like other developing countries, Zimbabwe forms part of the Third World setting. In 1980 Zimbabwe gained its independence, and twenty years later, they lost hope, as the economy was under pressure. This resulted in poverty in the country. There was a lack of funds to buy books. Zimbabwe Reads (2011) reports that leisure reading as a pastime is at risk as a result of the number of years without textbooks or reading promotion. The librarians, publishers and booksellers confirmed that very few students showed interests in books than in textbooks, set texts and books that will help them to prepare for their examinations. The literacy rate in Zimbabwe is currently below eighty percent. Donkey cart mobile libraries are used in Zimbabwe to move books from regional library branches to the other parts of the community. There are no children libraries, as there is a lack of proper infrastructures, there are no libraries, and there is also lack of children's books

and a scarcity of literature written in the mother tongue (Makotsi 2004). Reading in Zimbabwe was further paralysed by the collapse of the Third World economies in the 1990s, which resulted in lack of occupation, worsening oppressive hardships for the masses. Joblessness, little salaries, increasing inflation rates and the cost of living affected the acquisition of books. On the other hand, writing in the mother tongue is inadequate in as far as quality and quantity is concerned. Zimbabwe is characterised by poor publishing, poor book delivery and insufficient reading (Elkin 2009). This indicates that books written in the mother tongue are supposed to form the largest part of learner books. On the contrary, there are insufficient books written in the mother tongue.

Namibia

Totemeyer (1991) indicates that in Namibia 77.3 percent of schools have no libraries while only 22.7 percent of schools have some sort of library collection. This relates to the South African context as shown by National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), which reported that only 7.23 percent of South African public schools had functional libraries (Equal Education (EE) 2010). These libraries were mainly in former Model C schools. To put this into perspective, of the 24,979 public schools in South Africa, it is estimated that 79.3 percent did not have any form of library infrastructure (Equal Education 2011). The South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality SACMEQ II indicates that in Namibia, learners in the upper primary were found to have performed the lowest in as far as reading is concerned. Merely 25.9 percent of learners in the upper primary in Namibia were found to have achieved at a lowest possible level in reading literacy (Makuwa 2005). The findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRL) survey are backed by other studies (Loh 2009; Clark 2010a; Clark and Douglas 2011) showing that those learners who read much during their leisure time develop into competent readers. They also achieve better than those learners who read less during their leisure time. Time spent in leisure reading is the best indicator of reading attainment (Krashen 1993; Allington and McGill-Franzen 2003; Allington

2006). For learners to become volunteer readers, they need to acquire fundamental skills in deciphering as well as in understanding. "It is also shown that the time children spend in voluntary reading remains stable, indicating that children who read a lot during the early years retain their reading habits and thus become even better readers" (Leppanen et al. 2005). This indicates the importance of early reading, which is reading from childhood. Early reading develops the love for reading books, which in turn develops learners into habitual readers.

Most of the learners in Namibia struggle to master reading, writing and mathematics skills. Even the Ministry of Education in Namibia is concerned about the state of low performance among Namibian learners (Government of Republic of Namibia 2004, 2007). The SACMEQ of 2004 results reveal that learners in the upper primary grades in Namibia are performing badly as far as their reading competencies are concerned. It was found that merely 16.9 percent of the learners were able to achieve the level, which enabled them the prerequisite of the next year of schooling. On the other hand 6.7 percent were able to achieve the anticipated level (Makuwa 2005). Furthermore, Namibian learners in grade six achieved the lowest as compared to grade six learners from other participating African countries. Namibian learners achieved third from the bottom in reading while in numeracy they remained at the actual lowest of all participating countries. This shows that South Africa and Namibia share similar sentiments in as far as the reading levels of their learners in the lower grade is concerned. Learners are achieving the lowest level in reading as compared to their counterparts in other African countries.

Botswana

Tella and Akande (2007) emphasise that primary school learners in Botswana do not have a culture of reading, and as a result, their reading habits are poor. They have found that 36.7 percent of learners in Botswana read every day. Most of the learners read textbooks with the aim of writing and passing examinations. 53.3 percent of learners read for only 1-2 hours per day. Tella and Akande (2007) further indicate that other learners rely mostly on teachers' notes as their main source of reading sources based on insufficient accessibility to books. Moreover, insufficient book availability, lack of children's books that are fascinating and the learners' level were found to be some of the factors hampering learners' reading habits development. There is still a need to equip primary school libraries with current and relevant books in Botswana. This means that emphasis should be placed on making reading materials available in various formats so as to attract learners to read and to enable them to develop positive reading habits. Parents also need to be attracted to their children's reading so as to assist them with their reading. Moreover, Village Reading Rooms (VRR) in Botswana were started mostly in the primary schools to back up and extend library services to "literacy graduates" in rural areas. These rooms are currently used by learners and teachers (Rosenberg 2000). This situation in Botswana is similar to the South African situation as revealed by Zinn (2001), who revealed that Biblionef assists rural schools that do not have access to libraries by donating books to schools and organisations where there is no culture of reading.

Malawi

The Malawi National Library Service (MNLS) makes available various community information services as an attempt to popularise reading culture in Malawi (Community Information 2002). Information and education is used as an effective way for controlling the spread of HIV. The MNLS plays an important role in offering an exclusive collection of reading materials on HIV/AIDS. Other library services provided by the MNLS include gender, democracy, human rights, good government, family planning as well as other collections such as newspapers, journals and posters. The MNLS works in conjunction with a number of institutions to strengthen their libraries and information centres. More than 1300 minute libraries were started in schools, community centres and churches, especially in rural areas to facilitate access to books and information to people (Community Information 2002).

Other African Countries

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the problems of illiteracy and scarcity of reading and learning resources/

sources greatly limit the chances for people to learn and be able to exchange their experiences (Tella and Akande 2007). Makotsi (2005a) emphasises that reading is a fundamental education instrument and is essential for deriving pleasure. This means an emphasis on the availability of reading materials in order to eradicate illiteracy among people as a whole. Ehri's reading theory indicates that the child's ability to read is influenced by the availability and accessibility of reading materials. Panigrahi and Panda (1996) and Eyre (2005) argue that reading enables one to enhance one's understanding of own experiences.

Reading habits among African children is varnishing into thin air, and is associated with a lack of reading culture among Africans as well as lack of reading resources (Panagrahi and Panda 1996). Panagrahi and Panda (1996) reiterate, "Once the child has been taught to read and develop a love for books, they can explore for themselves the wealth of human experience and knowledge." Moreover, "children missing the opportunity of getting in touch with books find it difficult to acquire reading habits in their later years". It is difficult to determine reading culture in people in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the lack of reading and learning materials (Makotsi 2005b). Therefore, a wide range of reading interesting books at learners' level should be made available and accessible to learners to allow them time to immerse themselves in them so that they will develop a love of books and reading.

School Library Services in South Africa

South African and African librarianship is rooted in its colonial past. As a result, the South African librarianship is shaped on Anglo-American, Eurocentric and Anglophone library practices. Most South Africans' understanding of librarianship is derived from the public library backgrounds of other countries. African authors (Berghammer and Karsson 1988; Verbeeck and Stilwell 1988; Stilwell 1989; Fairer-Wessels and Matchet 1993) feel that it is high time that a more community-oriented model library for African countries be considered. Africa as well as South Africa has to develop a library model of its own that will be suitable for African communities. During the time of apartheid, some communities were not provided with public library services in South Africa, and as a result, resource

centres and community libraries were stated in those areas as a new development for those disadvantaged areas of South Africa (Berghammer and Karsson 1988; Verbeeck and Stilwell 1988; Stilwell 1989; Fairer-Wessels and Matchet 1993). This is evidence that the development of a suitable model for school libraries that would motivate learners to become habitual readers in rural schools might make a difference.

Witbooi (2005) has designed a library model that incorporates all the endorsements of the above authors, which he believes is suitable for African and South African circumstances. Witbooi (2005) asserts that Opperman's endeavour corresponds with President Thabo Mbeki's and other academics' appeal for an African Renaissance, in which they call for continental orientation and unity. Moreover, Witbooi (2005) states that Opperman's model is referred to as a developmental model in which libraries are libraries for the community, about the community, with the community and through the community. This is the trademark of this model. In this model the community-centric research approach plays an important role. As a result, the types of developmental matters such as, for example, literacy programs, survival and life skills lectures and talks, as well as educational activities are organised in conjunction with local civic organisation, clubs and institutions and volunteers from these sectors of the community (Witbooi 2005).

It is clear that there are different library models in South Africa, and the only challenge is to identify which model works better.

METHODOLOGY

This paper used a systematic literature review method by using a mixture of both the background and theoretical review methods. A considerate and well-informed review of appropriate literature places the researcher in the context of the conflicting study. Different documents such as the databases, internet, books, journals, magazines and newspapers were used to gather data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dual use of school/community libraries is a model that can be a solution, as it serves two different target groups of users (Hart 2021; Haycock 2006). It is logical that the benefits

for a dual-use library model are that there is an increased library collection as well as access to automated library services making use of the internet connections for facilities, increased library service rendering hours, qualified librarians as well as the development of a centre for community participation and lifelong learning. In most rural areas, there are no public libraries, let alone community libraries. This is also in consistence with literature by Shonhe (2019) and Bopape et al. (2021) that there are challenges that face both learners and teachers who teach in schools where there are no school libraries, and the dual-use school/community library is used. There are problems relating to the relevance of the library collection as well as differences in the purpose and approach of school librarians and public librarians in their profession (Haycock 2006).

Moreover, there is a common misconception that technology replaces school libraries and librarians. But the way in which children use technology today affects their reading habits and behaviour. This study seeks to emphasise the fact that printed books remain the most appropriate method by means of which knowledge is transferred from generation to generation. Books produce positive potentials out of learners if they start reading at a tender age (Busayo 2011). It is not surprising that Alemna (1982) confirms that reading books has special advantages compared with other media. The printed word will, therefore, continue to be the most important channel of education and cultural development.

According to Ganiyu et al. (2014) and Suleiman et al. (2018), the school library collection should be updated with current, relevant, and challenging collection to stimulate the learners' interest in reading. As perceived by Olajide and Adio (2017), it is necessary that the library service be computerised to keep the records accurate and up-to-date. Against this background, it is understandable that the library collection should be updated, and new books added to the collection now and then to build it and thereby make it sufficient for large classes with many learners. As a result, all learners will be able to have access. For this reason, teacher-librarians should assist in selecting relevant and up-to-date resources that are at the learners' level (Okeuhie et al. 2021). The library collection should be developed with more books that will be able to meet the information needs of the learners. These include digital resources such as eBooks, e-journals, databases, and digitised audio/visual materials. This notion of the role of school libraries augurs well with Kim's (2004) concept that learners will be motivated to read, and their reading accomplishment will be advanced when the classroom atmosphere is plentiful in reading sources such as recent magazines, the internet and real-life documents.

In a nutshell, the child's ability, and desire to read plays an important role in their learning and ultimately, academic success. This entails that for the child to be able to learn and succeed academically, they must be exposed to the reading environment and must be able and willing to read (Mahwasane 2017a, 2017b). It is therefore understandable that primary and elementary school phases are critical periods in the development of reading skills and the formation of lifelong reading habits. For that reason, the school library environment plays an important role in instilling the love for reading in learners (Mahwasane and Mudzielwana 2016; Cullinan 2000). That is in congruent with literature Wine (2020), Mahwasane (2017c) and Smith (2006), that the impact of library media program on learner's performance where visible across school levels that is from the elementary, middle school as well as the high school level. This view is also supported by Burgin and Bracy (2003) who stated that school library programs in North Carolina's elementary, middle and high schools have a significant impact on the student's performance, as measured by the scores on standardised reading and English tests. Kim (2004) argues that learners will be motivated to read, and their reading accomplishment will be advanced when the classroom atmosphere is plentiful in reading sources such as recent magazines, the internet and real-life documents.

Therefore, it is not strange that according to Mahwasane (2016) and Mahwasane (2017d), the school library should purchase resources for relaxation such as popular or graphic novels, music, computer games, films, magazines, comics and posters. Learners should be encouraged to read beyond the schoolwork. For this reason, the school community should donate resources that can be of use in the school libraries as well as a wide range of library materials so as to support classroom reading instruction, and to meet the different needs of the learners. Reading books

that are at the level of the learners should be purchased and be made available to them.

CONCLUSION

The role of school libraries in developing the reading habits of learners is successful in various countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Asia. However, it was established that the use of libraries to promote reading among learners is effective, as they have well-equipped libraries to support the reading habits of their learners. But on the contrary, it was also founded that in developing countries school libraries are scarce and not well equipped to perform the duties of a school library, that of supporting the school curriculum. The library should also consist of books in a wide variety, in all formats so as to encourage learners to develop the reading habit in all school levels, that is elementary, middle and high schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All schools irrespective of whether are in the developing countries should have a school library as well as a professional school librarian to assist in the library. Moreover, the school library should be equipped with the library collection that is relevant to the learners. The school library collection should be updated with current, relevant and challenging collection to stimulate learners' interest in reading. As a result, it is necessary that the library service be computerised so as to keep the records accurate and up-to-date. The library collection should be updated, and new books added to the collection now and then so as to build it in order to make it sufficient for large classes with many learners. As a result, all learners will be able to have access. Teacher librarians should assist in selecting relevant and up-to-date resources that are at the learners' level. The library collection should be developed with more books that will be able to meet the information needs of the learners. These include digital resources such as eBooks, e-journals, databases and digitised audio/visual materials.

LIMITATIONS

This study is very important in that the role of the school libraries globally was studied. However, the limitation of the study is that it was conducted theoretically in which mostly secondary resources were consulted. Therefore, there is a need for further research to be conducted empirically.

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