

The impact of school libraries on learning and academic achievement: A Namibian case study

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Abstract

Studies have shown a strong link between school libraries and academic performance. However for a school library to effectively have an impact on academic achievement, it must fulfill a number of requirements such as, a conducive physical infrastructure, which is well furnished; be well equipped in terms of computers (with internet facilities) and photocopiers; a strong collection with relevant and up to date materials; and qualified skilled staff to run the library. The school must also effectively integrate the library activities into the school curriculum with a strong programme to enhance information literacy skills amongst learners. This paper is based on a study entitled: "The impact of school libraries on learning and academic achievement: a case study of Caprivi, Omusati, Omaheke, Karas and Khomas regions in Namibia" which was conducted by the University of Namibia's Department of Information and Communication Studies from July 2009 to February 2010. The study employed a qualitative and quantitative research design using a triangulation of data collection methods including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. The study's main research question was, "Do well run school libraries make a difference to academic performance in Namibia?" Although the study showed the existence of libraries in all the schools; more than 80% of these were not adequately resourced in terms of reading materials, equipment, staffing and hence the impact on academic performance was negligible.

Key words: school libraries, academic performance, educational performance, reading culture, Namibia

Introduction and Background Literature

Many studies have been conducted on the impact of school libraries on academic achievement in schools in the West, but few studies have been conducted in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and none in Namibia. The studies conducted in the West have proven a strong relationship between school libraries and academic achievement. In the United States of America, studies conducted in Colorado,

Alaska, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio, have determined the relationship between school library programmes and academic achievement.

These studies (Linking Libraries, n. d.) have shown that it is not just about having any library, but a strong library media program. When the library media specialist is actively involved in instructional programme of the school, collaborating with teachers, and teaching

information literacy skills, academic achievement is higher. Rodney, Lance and Hamilton-Pennell (2003) found that generally, better performing schools in Michigan in the United States of America have better developed school library programmes, i.e., higher levels of staffing, collection development, and funding.

Regardless of the demographics of the study, each confirmed the findings of the previous studies. There are several overwhelming conclusions and these are:

- Students with access to high quality library programs score higher on standardized tests;
- Students with access to libraries with highly trained and certified library media specialists score higher on standardized tests;
- Schools with higher test scores have library collections reflective of the needs of the curriculum; and
- The quality of the library program is reflected in the role that the library media specialist plays in the instructional program of the school.

A number of studies have been carried out on school libraries in the southern African region. Anderson and Mathews (2010) investigated the role of school libraries in Malawi in the promotion of culture, literacy and reading culture. In Botswana, Baffour-Awuah (2002), Chipunza (2001) and Metzger (2000), carried out studies on school libraries, which highlighted a number of factors hindering the growth of school libraries. These include: lack of qualified staff, low funding levels and divided administrative responsibilities for libraries. Hart and Zinn (2007) refer to disappointments related to school library development in South Africa since the first democratic elections of 1994. Zimbabwean studies by Doust (1998) and Nilsson (2002) highlighted the problem of donated books, which are often unsuitable for the

learners who are expected to read them. Sturges and Neill (2004) describes school libraries in Africa as being neglected and "Even where some semblance of a school library exists, it is frequently inadequately staffed, with an appallingly sparse collection, and is thus marginal in terms of its impact on the teaching-learning process". Ojiambo (as cited in Sturges & Neill, 2004) refers to surveys, which have shown overwhelming problems, including: lack of government policy for school libraries, shortages of finance, staff, equipment and library materials.

In a study in Uganda, Magara and Batambuze (2009) found that there were a number of challenges that schools needed to overcome, such as lack of facilities (buildings) and funds for continually stocking and restocking school libraries or collections, and the need for continuous skills development for teacher librarians who are appointed to the role without any specialized training.

Dent (2006) explored connections between the presence of a library at two schools in rural Uganda and certain student academic indicators such as scholastic performance, reading habits, study habits, and library use patterns and library use patterns. Five specific questions guided the research: Do students with a school library read more? Do students make good use of the library? Do students recognise the importance of having the library? Do students use the library materials for other than class-related work? Are there any noticeable differences between the grades of students with the library at their school, and those without? The study's findings indicate that there are several areas where the presence of a school library has an impact, including students' reading habits, use of materials for non-school-related activities, and academic performance.

The Botswana study reported on a lack of reading resources, a lack of appreciation

for the role of school libraries, a lack of library buildings, and lack of time for teaching staff to devote to library work. Regular transfer of personnel in charge of libraries without regard for their role in the library and a lack of trained personnel in many schools were also factors negatively impacting on the effectiveness of school libraries in Botswana (Chipunza, 2001).

Studies conducted in Namibia showed the problems reported by the Botswana studies (Baffour-Awuah, 2002; Chipunza, 2001; Metzger, 2000); the Uganda study (Magara & Batambuzi, 2009); Zimbabwe studies (Doust, 1998; Nilsson, 2002) and Sturges & Neill (2004) to be true of Namibia. A study conducted by the Ministry of Education (Smith, et al., 2008) in Namibia points to similar problems, confirming an earlier study by the Namibia Library and Information Council (2007), which revealed that most libraries were small corners more suited to being storeroom and could not contribute meaningfully to a learning programme.

However, the study further reported that libraries built in recent years and those in the previously advantaged schools were found to be big enough for the purpose they serve. As regards staffing, the study reported that many library personnel, mostly teachers who were given library functions in addition to their other teaching responsibilities, did not have librarianship training. Some libraries were managed by general workers such as cleaners, who had limited education and who were unable to speak English. Many school authorities pointed out that the Ministry staffing norms restricted them from recruiting teacher librarians or allocating library tasks more effectively (Namibia Library and Information Council, 2007).

A large proportion of about 50% Grade 10 students are not qualifying for Grade 11...” (Pass rates still..., 2011). Figure 1 presents some statistics from Ministry of Education, Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2009)

Figure 1: Points scored in the JSC examination

Figure 1 (a): Caprivi and Erongo

Figure 1(b): Hardap and Karas

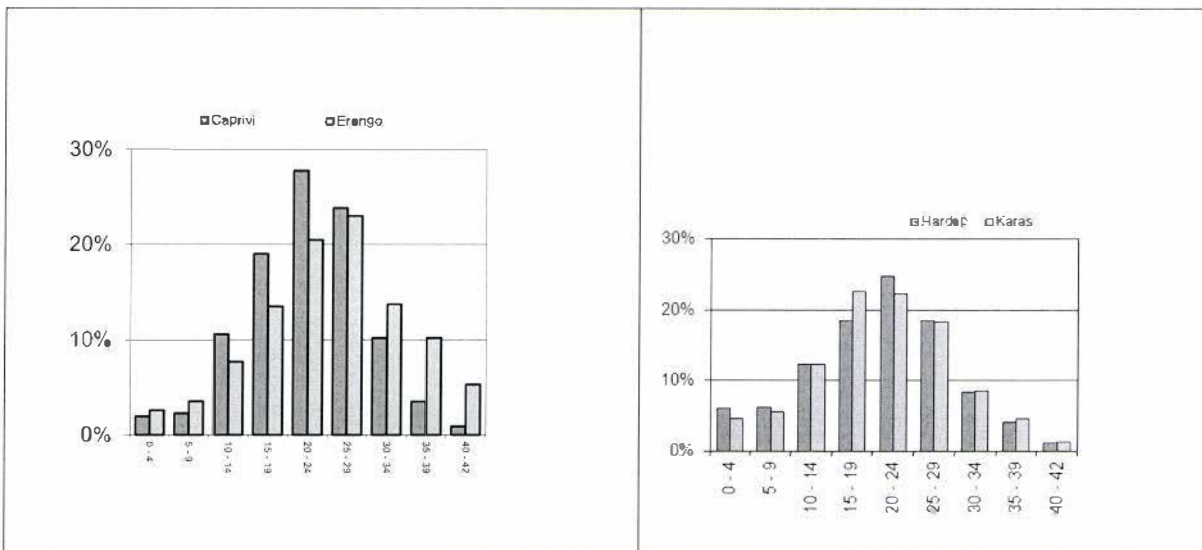


Figure 1(c): Omaheke, Omusati and Oshana

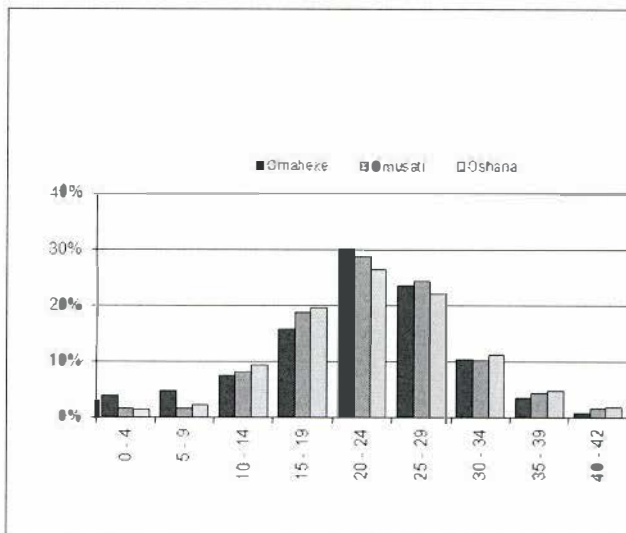
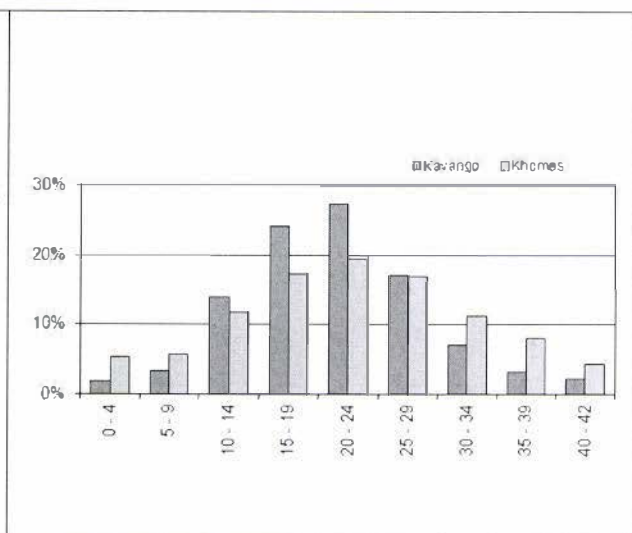


Figure 1(d): Kavango and Khomas



Points were calculated for each candidate as the sum of scores of his or her five best subjects and English: A=7 points, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2 and G=1 point. The highest score a candidate could achieve was thus 42. Ungraded and incomplete subjects were counted as 0 points. The entry requirements for Grade 11 in 2009 were 23 points and F or higher grading in English. In 2009, 50.3% of the junior school certificate (JSC) candidates scored the required 23 points, an increase of 1.5% compared to 2008. There was a decrease of 1.0% in the number of candidates for 2009 compared to 2008 (Ministry of Education, EMIS, 2009).

There are several factors that have been said to attribute to poor academic performance in schools. These include personal characteristics of learners and

factors related to learners' school and home environment. According to Lockheed and Komenan (as cited in Bojuwoye, 1992), the effects of the school environment in most cases tend to impact the academic performance more than the home environment. School environment factors include poorly trained teachers, language of instruction, teacher/learner ratios, poor physical infrastructure and inadequate resources such as textbooks (Bojuwoye, 1992). The Namibian Education System audit, "harnessing the metaphor of 'elephant in the kraal' identified indiscipline and the absence of a healthy work ethic among teachers as to principal concerns which contribute to lower levels of nominal learning..." ([Namibia's National Education Conference], 2011).

Figures 2 and 3 below indicate the learner/teacher ratios in Namibia's schools.

Figure 2: Learner/teacher ratios in schools staffed by the State (2009)

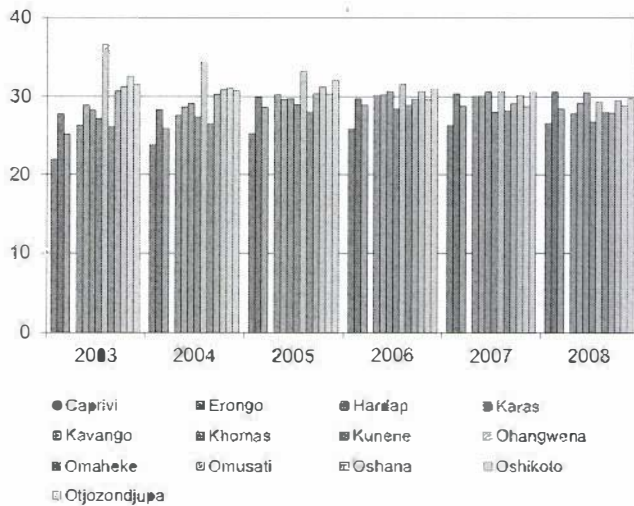
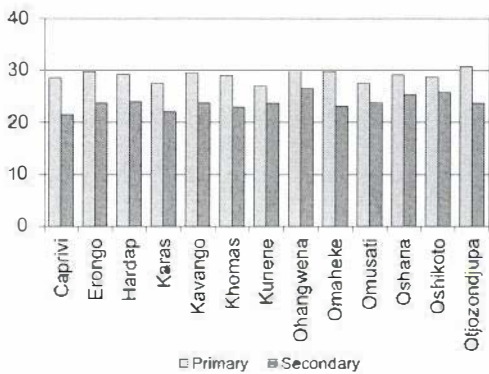
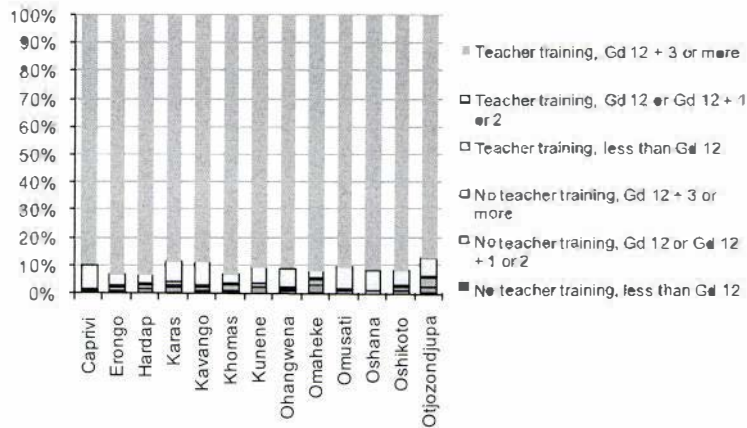


Figure 3: Learner/teacher ratios in the primary and secondary school (2009)



The ratios indicated in the figures above are below the national accepted ratios of 40 for primary schools and 35 for secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, a study conducted in the United States by Diaz, et. al (2003) showed that a class with a student-teacher ratio of under 19 students is the most beneficial setting for a classroom.

The audit of the Namibian Education System reported that the country had, unlike in the past, qualified teachers with the number having increased from 55.6% in 2004 to 76.8% in 2010 (Heita, 2011). Figure 4 below indicates the qualifications of secondary school teachers in Namibia's thirteen regions.

Figure 4: Qualifications of secondary school teachers

The above figure indicates the number of years (3 or more years; 1 or 2 years) spent on tertiary education.

Regarding the language of instruction, “the national rating of English proficiency is below basic, where nearly 80% of learners in six northern regions score the poorest mark in English proficiency” (Heita, 2011).

In a study of this nature, it was important to take cognisance of these factors when reaching conclusions on the study’s findings.

Purpose of the study

There are several factors that have attributed to the higher failure rate in schools in Namibia. These include the language of instruction, poorly trained teachers, and poorly run library facilities. This study therefore explored the impact of libraries on academic achievement. The study aimed to show a link between school libraries, learning and student academic achievements. In order to achieve this, the study used the same indicators as used in other studies such as academic performance, reading habits, study habits, library use patterns, levels of staffing, collection development and funding of school libraries.

Namibia’s Vision 2030 (Office of the President, 2004) and the Education Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) recognise the role of libraries, and in particular school libraries, in the development of the country. As the country strives to improve the culture of reading and improve literacy levels, school libraries have an important role. This study therefore sought to address the question “Do well run school libraries make a difference to academic performance in Namibia?” Similar studies in other countries have shown that there is a link between school libraries and academic performance.

The research objectives were to:

1. investigate the existence of school libraries in Namibia;
2. access how well established these libraries are in terms of funding and collection development;
3. assess how well integrated school library activities are into the school curricula;
4. investigate the reading habits of students with school libraries and those without;
5. establish the impact of school libraries on academic performance; and
6. recommend interventions for effective school library systems and programmes in Namibia.

Research Methodology

This was a multi-school study that used qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study used a triangulation of data collection methods including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, documents search and observation.

The population was all the combined and secondary schools in Namibia. Purposive sampling, ensuring the choice of regions was well spread, was done to select five of the country's thirteen regions. These were Caprivi, Karas, Khomas, Omaheke and Omusati. Random sampling method was employed to select two schools per each of the five regions for interviews, observation and focus group discussions. The main sampling frame was the list of secondary schools from the Ministry of Education. The first sampling level was the schools, and then within the selected schools respondents comprising learners and teachers were purposively and conveniently sampled. Respondents

included: school principals/heads, learners, librarians, and Ministry of Education, School Library Services administrators.

Questionnaires were mailed to all combined and secondary schools on the sampling frame. The questionnaire mailed to the schools management had both close-ended and open-ended questions aimed to gather data on existence of libraries, staffing, library budget and collection development and library programme issues. The purpose of the survey was meant to make the study more representative and generalisable. The response rate from these mailed questionnaires was very poor. Out of the 247 questionnaires distributed, only 39 (15.8%) were returned. The data from the questionnaires was supplemented with data from the interviews and the focus group discussions, as well as data collected through desk study research.

Eleven focus group discussions were conducted with learners, two in each region except for Karas where there were three. A semi-structured interview guide was used for this purpose. The same applied to the focus group discussions with the teachers. Interviews with purposively selected school heads and librarians, as well as officials in the Ministry of Education's Department of Educational Library Services were conducted. Documents from the Ministry of Education (Education Statistics, 2008, 2009 and 2010) on school performance from the Ministry of Education were also consulted.

Basic level descriptive statistics were used to organise and analyse statistical data obtained using quantitative techniques, into categories of objects for every variable measured by the different

questions in the questionnaire. Qualitative data from the interviews and focus group discussions was analysed using content analysis. The data is integrated and presented in this paper in the form of tables and descriptive narrative under the following headings:

- Libraries' physical infrastructure and facilities
- Staffing
- Funding
- Collections and collection development
- Integration of the school library programme into school activities
- Academic performance

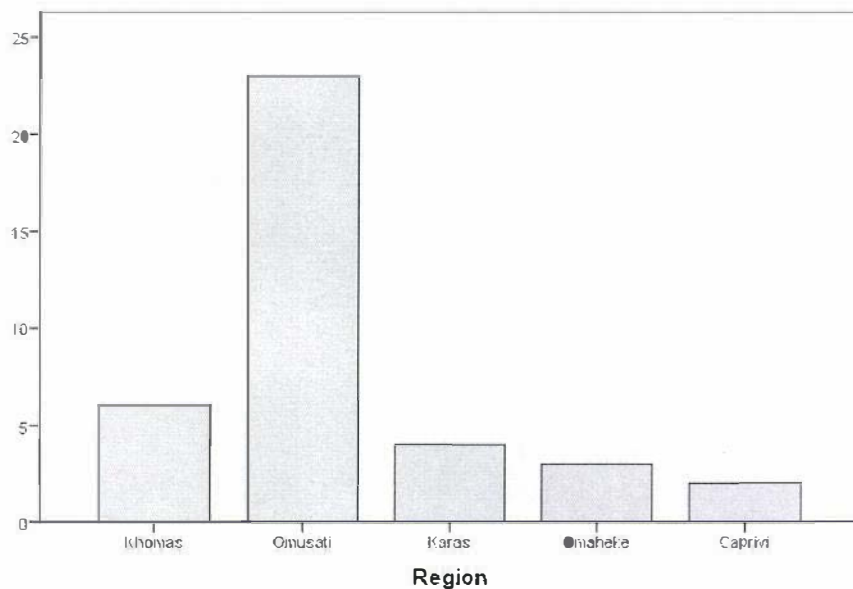
The Study's findings

This section presents the findings of the study from the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Two hundred and forty seven copies of the questionnaire were distributed to every combined school and secondary school as follows: Caprivi - 50; Omusati - 132; Karas - 15; Khomas - 39; and Omaheke - 11. Figure 5 presents the number of those schools, which responded: Khomas - 6 out of 39 (15.4%); Omusati - 24 out of 132 (18.2%); Karas - 4 out of 15 (26.7%); Omaheke - 3 out of 11 (27.3%); and Caprivi - 2 out of 50 (4%).

Respondents to questionnaires by region

Despite the poor response from the regions, data from the questionnaires was supplemented by data from the interviews and focus group discussions.

Figure 5: Respondents to questionnaires by region



Physical infrastructure (school library infrastructure) and facilities

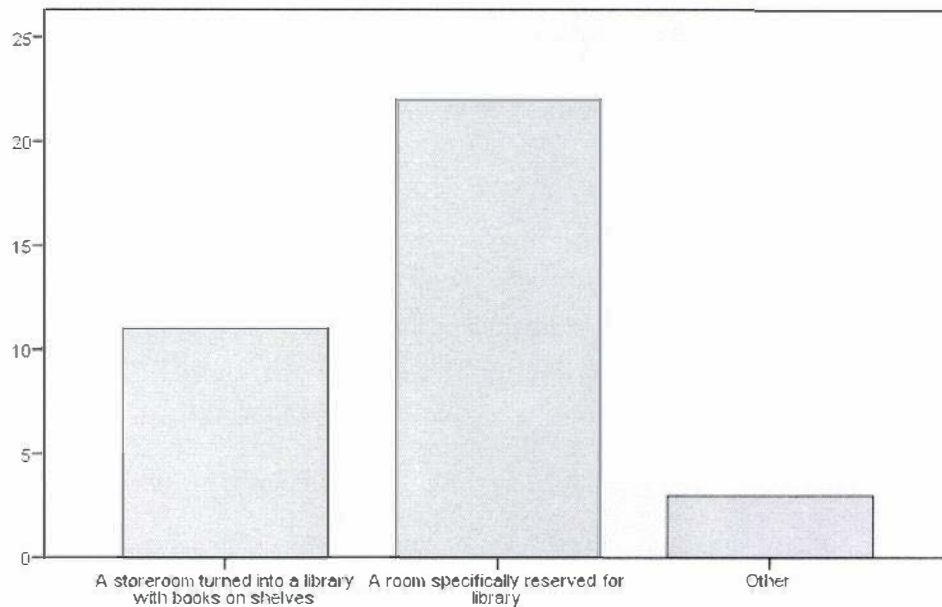
Data on physical infrastructure is presented under the following subheadings: presence of libraries; library infrastructure; library furniture; computer facilities; and internet facilities.

Presence of libraries

To determine if schools had libraries the question “does the school have a library?” was asked. All the schools had libraries, which are best described as a room specifically reserved for a library (61%); a storeroom turned into a library with books on shelves (31%); and other (8%). Other descriptions were classrooms with books on the shelves and media centre.

Library physical infrastructure

Figure 6: Physical infrastructure



Most of these so called libraries were not purposely-built. They were either a storeroom turned into a room with books on shelves, or a classroom with books on shelves. The *Education Statistics* of 2009 and 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2011) regarding infrastructure do not even reflect libraries.

Computer Facilities

The focus group discussions and interviews established that 8 of the 11 schools visited had computers, ranging from 1 to 30 computers per school library. The findings from the questionnaire sent out to schools however show that only 23% of the schools had libraries

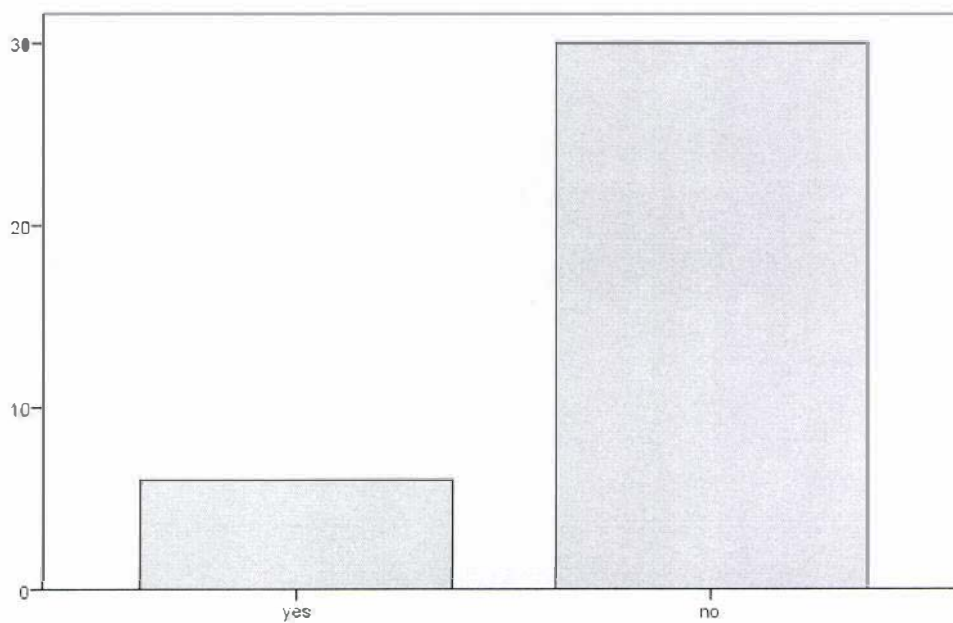
with computer facilities. In most cases where school libraries had computers, the computers were for the librarians' use only.

Education Statistics of 2010 reveal the following statistics of computer rooms (permanent, prefabricated and traditional, i.e. made of poles, metal sheets and tents): Caprivi – 29, Karas – 56; Khomas – 130; Omaheke – 41; and Omusati – 61. This is out of a national total of 770 schools. It should be noted that these figures include primary and secondary schools.

Internet facilities

The responses from the questionnaire regarding internet facilities in school libraries are reflected in figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Internet facilities



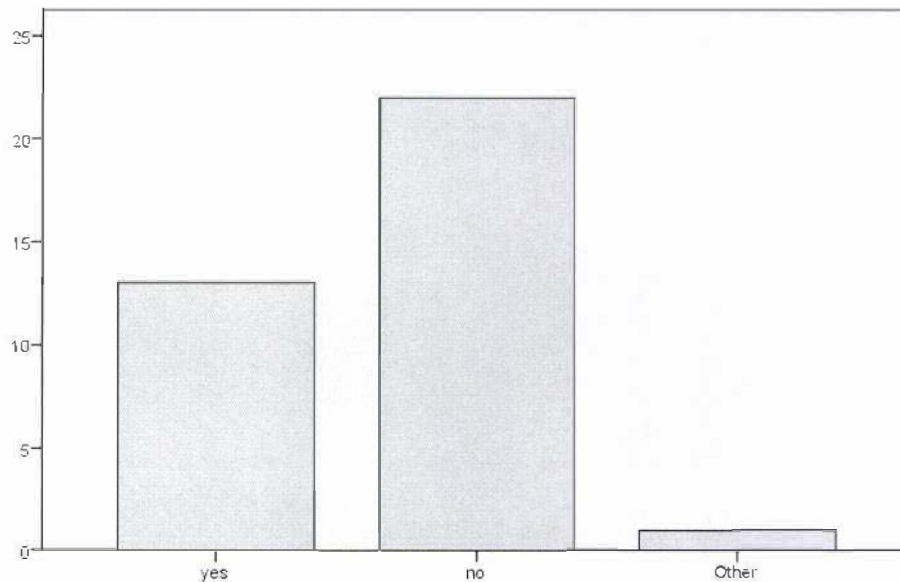
The responses from the interviews and focus group discussions revealed that only 1 school library out of the 11 schools visited had computers connected to the Internet. The findings from the questionnaire sent out to schools show that only 17% of the libraries had Internet facilities. The schools that had Internet facilities rated Internet reliability as very reliable (36%), reliable (14%), and half of the respondents said Internet was not reliable or not reliable at all.

To establish whether learners have access to Internet, learners were also asked if they have access to the Internet outside of school. Some learners said yes. They had access to the Internet from cell phones, nearby public libraries, computers at home and Internet cafés, but some learners had no access to the Internet at all.

Staffing

The study wanted to establish if school libraries were being run by qualified librarians. Figure 8 presents responses to the question “Do you have specific position for a librarian?”

Figure 8: Librarian positions at schools



The findings from the focus group discussions and interviews were that only two of the 11 schools visited had a specific position for a librarian; one position each. The findings from the questionnaire sent out to schools show that 61% did not have a specific position for a librarian. In most schools, Basic Information Studies teachers, and teachers with full-time teaching responsibilities, are in charge of the libraries, while in some schools, secretaries assist in the libraries. Findings from the visited school also show that the two specific librarians had librarianship qualifications: B. Bibl Ed. Findings from the questionnaires show that only 22% of the librarians had formal librarianship qualifications. These qualified teachers include those who had studied librarianship as a minor subject, those with B. Bibl. Ed., as well as those who had attended library workshops.

Collection development

The data on collection development is presented under the following sub-headings: types of library materials; acquisition of library materials, including methods and frequency of receipt of materials from the Ministry of Education’s Department of Educational Library Services; and relevance of materials and funding.

Types of materials in the libraries

The types of materials ranged from textbooks, reference materials, magazines and newspapers, to audio visual tapes and other materials in different media formats. Most school libraries reported that they had magazines and newspapers (29) in their collection followed by reference

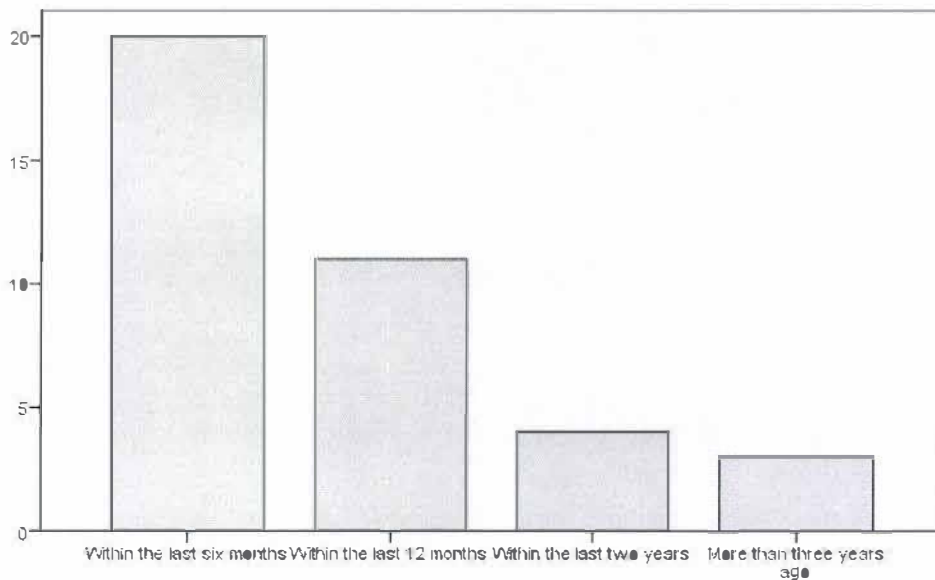
materials (28), textbooks (24), and audio visual tapes including cassettes and DVDs (9).

The schools were asked when they had last received some library materials from the Ministry of Education's Department of Educational Library Services (ELS). The responses are indicated in figure 9 below.

Acquisition of library materials

The responses from the questionnaire indicated that the most common method of acquisition of library materials was through the Ministry of Education's Department of Educational Library Services. The majority of schools reported that they received their materials from Education Library Services (30), followed by purchases from school funds(9), and through solicited donations (9). Some materials were also acquired through unsolicited donations, the smallest number being library materials purchased through other funds (1). The same findings were gathered through focus group discussions and interviews.

Figure 9: Frequency of receipt of materials from the Ministry of Education



The responses indicated in figure 9 show that most schools had received materials within the last six months. The same was expressed by the interviews. From the questionnaires the responses were: “within the last six months” (20), “within the last twelve months (11), “within the last two years” (4) and “more than 3 years ago” (3).

Relevance of the library materials

In focus group discussions with teachers, most highlighted the outdatedness and lack of relevance of the materials in the library. In some schools they complained about the lack of materials in indigenous languages. The lack of materials on science was also mentioned.

Funding for library materials

The interviews revealed that not all schools had library budgets. Of those with library budgets, the size of budgets ranged from N\$10 to N\$20,000. For those schools with library budgets, most of the schools (42%) said the library budget was not at all adequate. When asked about where the sources of funding came from, the responses were: none, school development fund (SDF), Ministry of Education’s Department of Educational Library Services, readathon fundraising activities, school library budgets and donations. Respondents also provided the following answers on how they spend their allocated library budgets: buying books and magazines, stationery, processing materials, audio visual materials and equipment, teacher reference software for computers, and posters.

Integration of the school library programme into the school activities

The data under this section is presented under the following sub-headings: learners’ reading habits, teachers’ use of the school library for lesson preparation, library usage statistics and library periods and opening hours.

Learners’ reading habits

The focus group discussions with learners revealed that learners generally read regularly. The reasons why they read included reading for fun, to get information, to improve reading skills and to help them in doing their homework. In response to the question “When last did you read a book?” the responses ranged from: “1 hour ago” to “not reading at all”. When asked if they read during their spare time, the answers were “yes” and “no”. A follow-up question was asked to establish what they read, and the majority of the learners read fiction, though some read newspapers, magazines and reference books.

Teachers’ use of library for lesson preparation

The use of libraries for teaching preparation by teachers varied. Some teachers used the library and would have liked to integrate it into their teaching but were hindered from doing so because the libraries were not well resourced. Some teachers used the public libraries. One teacher said she consulted the library materials in the school library and then referred learners to relevant pages, but they found it difficult to consult the materials as they were not given training on how to use them (information literacy skills). However, some teachers said they did not give enough library oriented tasks. The same was echoed by the teacher librarians. In one of the schools visited, with a well-resourced well-run library and a qualified librarian, the librarian said that she did not receive much cooperation from the

secondary school teachers but she did from the primary school teachers.

Schools indicated that usage tended to be standard throughout the year. Only two schools reported an increase in usage during examination time. Five schools indicated that the rate of usage increased according to grade levels; whilst three schools reported that the rate of usage is the same for scheduled and non-scheduled library times.

Library periods and opening hours

Five out of the 11 schools visited did not have library periods. At schools that had, library periods varied from once a week to twice a week. The times the libraries were open was during break time and after classes in the afternoons.

All the schools interviewed had the Basic Information Science (BIS) subject that introduces learners to how to use sources of information and the library. All schools confirmed that BIS was on the timetable, but in some schools there was a confusion between separating BIS periods and library periods. In the focus group discussions with learners, in response to the question, "What do you do during BIS period?" some learners responded that they came to the library and read books and the teacher asked them to report on books they had read. In some schools, BIS period was considered a free period.

Academic performance

The data under this section is presented under the subheadings: rating of academic performance by school management and significance of the impact of school libraries on academic performance

Rating of academic performance by school management

The schools' management was requested to provide their opinions on the academic performance of their learners. In the questionnaire, the majority of the schools (28) reported that their performance was generally good; three (3) schools reported that they were very good; and five schools reported that their results were poor. The interviews with school management produced the following findings: 8 of the 11 schools reported that their academic results were good; 2 schools reported that they were poor and 1 school reported they were very good.

Significance of the impact of libraries on academic performance

The opinions expressed by the schools' management in the questionnaire with regard to significance of school libraries on academic performance were: 24 - very significant; 14 - significant, 3 - not significant and 1 - not significant at all. The same results were confirmed by the interviews. The responses from the 11 schools interviewed were: 7 - very significant, 1 - significant; 1 - not significant; and two - not sure.

Recommendations on libraries from the schools

Learners and teachers were asked to suggest recommendations on how their school libraries could be improved. The following recommendations were made.

Learners' recommendations

- Buy more books such as career books, as well as daily newspapers;
- Provide computers for use and access to the Internet; and
- Employ a member of staff with an interest in the library, who can keep the library open all the time.

Teachers' recommendations

- Bigger library room and more resources;
- Materials in the library covering subjects taught at the school as well as materials in local languages;
- Provide Internet facilities and photocopiers;
- Eliminate the sharing of books amongst learners; and
- Assign permanent members of staff to take care of the library

Discussion of the findings and their implications

This section discusses the study's findings; determines if the research objectives were met, as well as answering the study's main research question: "Do well run school libraries make a difference to academic performance in Namibia?"

The study revealed that all the schools have school libraries but most school libraries are not purpose built. They are either store rooms turned into a room with books and shelves or a classroom with books on shelves. This support the finding NLIC (2007) that most school libraries are small corners more suited to be storeroom and could not contribute meaningfully to the learning programme. School libraries were not well resourced and most library materials are outdated and not relevant to learners and teachers. With regards to funding, school libraries got their funding from the school development fund, school budget, fundraising activities and donations. However these funds were not adequate. These findings confirm Magara and Batumbuze's (2009) findings that school libraries need to overcome challenges of funding in order for them to continuously restock and update school library collections.

The learners' reading habits showed that the learners read regularly. These results however, do not confirm what is happening on the ground and the reason could be that access to school libraries is rather limited since some school libraries are always closed or the opening times are not convenient for the learners. One important reason also reported by learners is that most of their school libraries are stocked with outdated materials that have no relevance to their curriculum. It was also noted that some learners who do not have well equipped school libraries also use nearby public libraries and internet cafes for their information needs. This study's findings confirm similar findings by Smith et. al (2008) who recommended that public libraries should cater for the needs of the learners coming from nearby schools owing to the fact that some school libraries are poorly resourced.

Teachers, on the other hand, reported that they use the school library for varied reasons, including lesson preparation and research. It was also reported that although they want to integrate library activities into their teaching, they are hindered from doing so by the lack of relevant materials in their school libraries. Some, however, use the public libraries as an alternative source of information. A worrisome situation is that a number of teachers do not give library-oriented tasks to their learners due to the fact that some teachers do not support library activities and do not see the relevance and contribution of school libraries in supporting the curricula and teaching activities.

The study revealed that most schools do not have library periods. These results seem to confirm the findings of the Botswana study by Chipunza (2001), which argued that lack of time devoted to library work is a

fundamental factor that hampers effective integration of school library activities into the curricula. Where the library period is indicated on the timetable, a number of teachers do not seem to take this seriously since they do not accompany and support their learners in the use of the library. More often, the period of Basic Information Science (BIS), which is a compulsory but non-examinable subject in Grades 4-10, is sometimes confused with the library period. It should be mentioned here that although BIS focuses on teaching information literacy skills, it is slightly different from the library period, where learners are exposed to investigating the truth on their own, through reading and using a school library.

In a similar study conducted by NLIC (2006), it was reported that lack of trained library personnel in many schools, and regular transfers of personnel in charge of libraries without regard for their role in the library activities, were also factors that were negatively impacting on the effectiveness of school libraries in Namibia. The findings of this study revealed a similar picture, whereby most school libraries do not have a specific position for a librarian, and in cases where the position exists, the teacher librarian is often overloaded with other teaching.

Studies (Linking Libraries, n. d.; Rodney, Lance & Hamilton-Pennell, 2003;) on the impact of school libraries and academic performance all agree that for school libraries to have a positive impact on academic performance, libraries must have adequate infrastructure; be well resourced in terms of funding and materials (which must be up to date and relevant); be manned by a full time qualified librarian; be integrated in the school's curriculum; and learners be information literate. The findings clearly show that the majority of the libraries are

libraries in name only. Namibia confirms Sturges' observations (2004) of neglected school libraries in Africa where even if there is "some semblance of a school library, it is frequently inadequately staffed, with an appallingly sparse collection, and is thus marginal in terms of its impact on the teaching-learning process".

Although the study reported the majority of the schools saying that their academic performance was generally good, poor academic performance was reported by the audit on Namibian Education System (Heita, 2011). The *Education Statistics* of 2009 and 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2011) in figure 1 confirm this. Looking at the requirements that school libraries must meet to have an impact on academic performance, and the fact that over 80% of the school libraries in Namibia do not meet these requirements, this study can conclude that school libraries in Namibia have very minimal impact on academic performance. A small percentage of the schools meet these requirements and also happen to have a good pass rate. However it is also in the same schools where learners do not share textbooks, they receive books as presents and have access to the Internet even at home. As the literature has shown (Bojuwoye, 1992), a number of school factors and home factors contribute to academic achievement. The audit on Namibia Education System (Heita, 2011), shows that the poor state of libraries is only one of the many school factors contributing to the poor academic performance. Other factors such as learners' indiscipline and absence of work ethics play a part (Namibia's National Education Conference, 2011). The poor state of school libraries is only a small component of the school environment which is said to have a greater effect on academic achievement than the

family or home environment (Lockheed and Komcnan (as cited in Bojuwoye, 1992).

Recommendations

One of the study's objectives was "To recommend interventions for effective school library systems and programmes in both rural and urban schools in Namibia". The study's findings provide information to educational policy makers, school decision makers, school boards, principals, teachers and school librarians, which can be used to support the establishment and improvement of school libraries in rural and urban areas in Namibia. The following recommendations emanate from the study's findings:

- Provide better school library infrastructure to replace the storerooms/classrooms turned into libraries with libraries that are purpose built.
- Provide adequate furniture for school libraries.
- Create librarian positions for school libraries and hire professionally qualified librarians to run the school libraries.
- Provide adequate funding for collection development.
- Provide adequate computers in all schools, and Internet facilities.
- Develop meaningful library programmes and integrate these into the school curriculum.
- Revamp the Basic Information Science programme to enhance information literacy.
- Encourage teachers to give library-oriented tasks or projects to their learners (promotion of learner-centered education).
- Teaching loads for teacher librarians should be lessened to allow them to commit more of their time in school

library activities and promotion of a reading culture.

- Partnerships between the training institutions such as the University of Namibia and the Ministry of Education's Department of Education Library Service (ELS) should be consolidated to facilitate continuing training programmes for teacher librarians.
- An area for further research could be to investigate the extent to which the school library in relation to other factors, contributes to academic achievement in those schools with well run libraries and a good pass rate.

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