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Assessment of Access and Use of School Library Information Resources by Secondary Schools Students in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania.

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Abstract

The paper reports results of a study on “Access and Use of School Library Information Resources by Secondary Schools Students in Morogoro Municipality Tanzania”. The main objective of this study was to assess access and use of library information resources by students of secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal. The study comprised of the following specific objectives; to investigate access and use of school library information resources by the secondary school students; to determine the level of satisfaction of students towards school library information resources and to find out challenges facing students in the use of school library and how to address such challenges. The study was carried out in five purposefully selected advanced level schools in Morogoro Municipality. Simple random sampling was used to select 30 respondents from each selected school to make a sample size of 150 respondents. The study employed a case study research design and used combination of methods to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Data was collected by using documentary review, questionnaires, interviews and personal observations. Quantitative data was analysed by using SPSS, while content analysis was adopted for qualitative data. Key findings revealed that the most frequently used library information sources by secondary students are only books and

novels. Moreover, other library information resources, such as atlas and maps, dictionaries, novels, audio visuals and poetry were not accessible by students hence those sources were not satisfactory to meet their information needs. The findings further revealed that secondary school students face many constraints in using school library including lack of current and up to date reading materials, restricted reading hours, lack of sitting facilities, and lack of informational professional/ librarian for processing materials. The study conclude that for effective use of Schools Libraries by the secondary school students, there is need for current and adequate school library information resources, provision of accommodation facilities, provision of professional school librarians to manage libraries and conducive reading environment. These could be done in collaboration with all stakeholders in secondary education in the country. However, the study recommended that adequate provision of fund is necessary for the provision of current and up to date information resources and also for the employment of qualified and trained teacher-librarian.

INTRODUCTION

There are various types of libraries such as; Special library, National library, Public library, Research library, Academic library and so on, but the focus of this study was on the School Library. A school library is the one of the library that has been established in a primary or secondary school (Edoka 2000). According to Waite (1989), School library is a collection of a wide range of learning and teaching materials which are housed in a place and centrally organized by librarian and indexed to serve readers. Fayose(1995) defined school library as the part of the school where collection of books, periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, films, computers, filmstrip, videotapes, recording of all types e.t.c. are kept for use by the students and teachers. Arua and Chinaka (2011) stated that school library information resources are seen as all inputs which are utilized in the library in order to provide good learning environment for students and teachers so as to be able to achieve educational goals. This variety of library information resources is essential to facilitate the school library fulfill its functions among which are: to thoroughly provide information resources necessary for the school's educational programmes and to help in improving and rising the reading skills and learning habits of students.

Fakomogbon, *et al.*, (2012) argued that school library help to support the school curriculum by providing up-date information to keep teachers and students abreast of new development. The library also promotes the development of reading skills and encouraged long term planning habits through reading, listening to and viewing a range of learning materials. Also, Merrill (1983), related library information resources to students' learning outcomes and found that the use of school library resources were associated significantly with better learning outcome. Effective school libraries provide additional reading opportunities for students, which in turn improve reading skills, knowledge, and writing and clarity of expression, which in turn support student performance in all other curriculum subjects (World Bank, 2008). However, Crossley and Murby (1994) revealed that the inadequacy of relevant information resources in school libraries contributed to low levels of student performance.

Statement of the Problem

Students cannot acquire knowledge only through text books or classrooms. They refer to other school library information resources also. The school library is of great help in fulfillment of their information needs. It is much more inconvenient for students to collect required reading materials from the school library (Alie, 2000). It does not only save their time but also cost of books and energy. Adeyemi (2009) opined that, student expectations and demands of the library are reflected in their library information resources usage. Salisu (1996) too argued that, the extent at which pupils and young people of today will be creative, informed and knowledgeable will be shaped by the usage of the library resources available within the school. In addition, Elaturoti (1993) described that, the usefulness of any school library Resource depends on its maximum utilization by students otherwise it is as good as wasted. That is why Fakomogbon, *et al.*, (2012) had stated that lack of standard school library with relevant information resources which students could use for their studies could be one of the major causes of mass failure in the school. However, little is known about the access and use of school library information resources in secondary school in Tanzania, particular Morogoro Municipal. Therefore, this is the gap that this study seeks to fill.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study were;-

- To investigate access and use of school library information resources by the secondary students
- To determine the level of satisfaction of students towards school library information resources
- To find out challenges facing students in the use of school library and how to address such challenges

LITERATURE REVIEW

Access and use of school library information resources

Libraries are social institutions created to safeguard knowledge, preserve the cultural heritage and provide information for education and research purposes to different users. According to Elaturoti (1990), school library can be defined as an area designed for provision of all types of learning and teaching resources. Oniovosa(2004) notes that, in a survey around the world on the reading ability of the children that, one of the factors that positively influence children's reading attainment is the availability and accessibility of books and other non-books resources in their immediate surroundings, at home, in the classroom and in the library. Accessibility and utilization of library information resources are key factors in the provision of quality services in different types of libraries. Abdullahi (1998) adds that usefulness of a library depends upon its proper organization which includes the accessibility and availability of information resources, their arrangement, the situation of the library, etc. Moreover, Bhatt (2013) asserted that the successful library services depend mainly on satisfaction level of its users with the relevant library information resources, user-centric library services and library staffs' supportive attitude.

Several studies have been done on the use of school libraries. For instance, a study by Agyekum and Filson (2012) on the use of library resources by students in Ghana schools found that most of the students use library resources and services to supplement their class notes, assignments and helped them in examination preparation. In the same vein a study conducted by Clabo (2002),

pointed out that students use school library information resources for recreational readings, for reference purposes, doing their school homework, teacher requirements and reading news from newspapers. Similarly, Orji (1996) found out that users use the school library for many and various reasons i.e.; to prepare for examination; for leisure; recreation for serious academic work, to see friend and people and so on. Daniel (2004) concluded that the school library remains the power house of educational institution and that an education institution without a library is like a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul. However, Abdullahi (2008) asserted that most of the Nigerian students who enter universities or colleges have never used the library effectively during their primary and secondary schools.

Problems facing students in using of school libraries

Several scholars have addressed the problem facing students in using school libraries. For example, the study by Adeyemi (2009) in Nigeria found that poor quality of school library resources, scarcity of current reading and research materials were the challenges facing students in using school libraries. In the same vein Arua (2011), observed that poor library accommodation; poor library orientation and restricted library hours were problems militating against the use of school libraries. In South Africa, Patron-Ash (2012), revealed that one the problem facing school libraries include the lack of a national policy, school library information resources, the theft of computers as a result of the lack of security, as well as the lack of understanding by teachers of the role the library in teaching and learning. Furthermore, Clabo,(2002) asserted that reading rooms restrictions, restrictions on numbers of books, reference materials, lack of computers and internet connectivity are the challenges that hinders students in use of school libraries.

Furthermore, a study by World Bank (2008) observed the following problems as facing school libraries in Sub- Saharan African countries including Tanzania:

- Critically inadequate funding, with little or no government financial support and only occasional donor support, which leaves most of the burden of library financial support on parents who are already overstretched with the other costs of secondary education.

- Lack of sufficient library premises, which are usually just converted classrooms with insufficient space, shelving, furniture, equipment or security.
- Lack of money to undertake regular maintenance. Thus amenities tend to deteriorate rapidly.
- Where library collection exists it is generally old and often irrelevant to current curricula and teacher/student interests. More often than not there is virtually no appropriate collection available at all and there are rarely budgets for stock upgrading or replenishment.
- Heavy collection wear and tear, theft, loss and damage etc caused by poor security, pest and fungal damage, theft, and so forth.
- Lack of understanding by both teachers and students of the role and function of a school library and thus an increasing inability to use libraries properly even if they are well-established.
- Untrained school librarians and poor training and overloading of teacher librarians.
- Poor library management systems. For overstretched and poorly paid teachers the workload involved in selecting, ordering, receiving, cataloguing, managing loans and returns, re-shelving, repairs, and so forth is simply too much and even when funds are available basic management systems are often not up to standard.

The above reviewed literature showed that even though the use of school library information resources in various countries have been studied ,the use of school library information resources in Tanzania , especially in Morogoro municipality , have not been adequately addressed. This is the gap that this study intends to fill.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. The design allows a researcher to collect data at once in a single point. The nature of study objectives dictates the adoption of such kind of a research design. Five schools from Morogoro municipal in Morogoro region were studied. Morogoro municipal was chosen because it is among the areas where most of all Advanced levels school has a school library. Also, its schools are located in town where all services such as internet, public library, and academic library are found where students can consult. These schools were Kilakala High school, Alfa High school, Saint Peter Seminary, Saint Francis high school and Morogoro secondary school. The population of this study comprised of all form six students. This category of students was chosen because they are mature enough in using library also they about to join to University. In this study, both random and non random sampling techniques were employed. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools to be included in the study area. John and Christensen (2004) argue that purposive sampling relies on the decision of the researcher, based on some well known criteria. The sampling process required the development of a sampling frame, whereby in this study was the current list of all the form six students contained in the students register list in the headmaster office in collaboration with the school academic master in each school. Thus, 30 respondents were simple randomly selected from each school and hence making a total sample size of 150 respondents. Saunders et al., (2007) argue that a sample size of 30 or more will usually result in a sampling distribution that is very close to the normal distribution and the larger the absolute size of a sample, the closer its distribution will be to the normal distribution. Simple random sampling was used since it gives each case in the population an equal chance of being included in the sample (Singleton, 1993). Data were collected from the respondents through the use of a questionnaire, and was administered to one hundred and fifty using face- to -face interviews. Both closed and open ended questions were included in the questionnaire. However, Interview and personal observation was also done to supplement information. The quantitative data collected from questionnaire was coded and summarized prior to analysis by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. The investigators utilized descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages in data analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis.

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

About 150 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents out of those 140 questionnaires were returned and analysed by the researcher. The response rate was 93.3%. This section contains the study findings and discussion of results obtained from the study that investigate access and Use of School Library Information Resources by Students of Secondary Schools in Morogoro Municipality Tanzania. The data generated were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).version 16

Background Characteristics of Respondents

The study findings indicates that out of 140 respondents, 59 (42.1%) were females and 81 (42.1%) males. On the other hand, age category 18 – 21 years accounted for 63.6%, respondents with the age 22- 24 years accounted for 30 %. While age category above 25 accounted only for 1.4%. Age categories of the respondents give the impression that the majority of form six students interviewed were in the active age group. This can have impact on use and access of school library information resources.

Possession of school library

The study findings show that about 79.3% of the respondents who had interviewed their school had school library while 20.75% of the respondents had no school library. This implies that majority of the school had a school library. This is probable because school library is a key indicator for education development of any school. These findings support earlier findings by Daniel (2004), who argues that the school library remains the power house of educational institution and that an education institution without a library is like a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul.

Use of a school library by students The results indicate that 77.9% of the respondents use school library while 22.1% of the respondents do not use school library. The implication is that there is attentiveness that school library exists in these schools.

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Table 1; Purposes for use of school library (N= 140)

S/N	Purposes of using school library	No. of the respondents (N)	%
1	Leisure reading	25	17.9
2	To do assignment and homework	61	43.6
3	To read and borrow library books	89	63.6
4	To read for examinations only	47	33.6
5	To read newspapers and magazines	30	21.4
6	Meet friends	5	3.6

Table 1 above indicates the purposes of use of school library. The results shows that 63.6% of respondents visited the school library to read and borrow library books, 43.6% visited school library to do assignment and homework, 33.6% to read for examinations only, 21.4% to read newspapers and magazines, 17.9% for Leisure reading while 3.6% visited library to meet friends. This indicates that the majority of students make use of library purposefully for reading and borrow books and also for doing their assignments and homework. Therefore, government or other institution responsible should strengthen the existing school libraries or building more school libraries and stock with different information resources that can meet students information needs and hence raises their school performance. Spreadbury and Spiller (1999) supported that school libraries are still responsible for acquiring and providing access to books, reference materials, and other media that meet the educational, recreational and informational needs of their users.

Table 2; Frequency of using school Library by Respondents (N= 140)

Responses	No of respondents	Percentages (%)
Always	56	40
Occasionally	97	69.3
Never	27	19.3

Table 2 above shows the frequency of using school library. The results show that 40% of respondents use the library always, (69.3 %) use the library occasionally while 19.3% never use the library. From the findings it is clear that a greater majority of respondents use the library occasionally. These findings are consistent with those of Aura (2011) on use of school libraries that most of the students who interviewed visited the library irregularly. This means that more efforts need to be made to improve the rate and frequency of library use and one of such efforts could be in the area of provision of recent and relevant information materials.

Table 3; other resources do students consult in meeting their information needs (N= 140)

S/N	Alternative sources	No. of the respondents (N)	%
1	Public library	71	50.7
2	Academic Library	26	18.6
3	Internet sources	65	46.4

Table 3 above indicates other resources do students consult in meeting their information needs. The findings shows that 50.7% of respondents consult the public libraries as alternative sources to meet their information needs, 46.4% of respondents consult internet and 18.6% of the respondents consults academic library as alternative information resources. This implies that greater majority of students use public libraries as their alternative information resources. This is probably because public library contains various information resources that meet their information need which may not be available in their school libraries. The other reason might be accessibility of public library in the area of the study. Therefore, government and other stakeholders should make more efforts in stocking different information resources in public libraries that meet information needs of students. Lwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) asserted that the public library is a local centre of information resources that makes all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. Also, other alternative resources consulted by students are internet resources. This indicates that school libraries should be connected to internet facilities so that students can access more relevant and current information resources.

Information Resources used by students in the Study Area

The respondents were asked about the information resources used in the study area. The question aimed at identifying the various information resources used by students in the study area. The respondents had to choose answers from a detailed checklist provided. However, they were allowed to add any other resource not included in the checklist.

Table 4: Information Resources used by students in the Study Area (N= 140)

S/N	Information resources	No. of the respondents (N)	%
1	Novels (fictions)	77	55
2	Text books	108	77.1
3	Dictionaries	69	37.1
4	Atlases and maps	52	49.3
5	Newspapers/Magazine	21	15.0
6	Poetry	52	37.7
7	Audiovisuals	10	7.1

The results in Table 4 show that 77.1% of the respondents used textbooks as information resources in their school libraries, 55% used novels as information resources, 49.3% used atlases and maps, 37.7% used poetry, 37.1% of the respondents used dictionaries, however, and only 7.1% used audio visuals. These findings are consistent with those of Arua and Chinaka (2011), Moswela (2005) on the use of school libraries information resources. This indicates that the vast majority of the respondents used text books to satisfy their information needs. This is probable because textbooks may contain usefully information which is relevant to their subjects' areas. Therefore there is need for school libraries to be stocked with more text books covering different subjects which are relevant to secondary schools curriculum. Moreover, very few respondents used audio visual materials as their information resources in the secondary schools under the study. This might be due to its availability and lack of awareness of existence of resources.

Frequency of use of library information resources

The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of use of the library information resources (Frequently, occasionally, and never)

Table 5; Frequency of use of library information resources (N= 140)

Category	Frequencies of use of the inf. resources					
	Never		Occasionally		Frequently	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Novels	60	42.9	30	21.4	50	35.7
Textbooks	32	22.9	31	22.1	77	55
Atlases and maps	98	70	37	26.4	5	3.6
Dictionaries	71	50.7	43	30.7	26	18.6
Newspapers and magazines	119	85	19	13.6	2	1.4
Poetry	91	65	25	17.9	24	17.1
Audio visuals	135	96.4	5	3.6	0	0

As indicated in the Table 5 above, the findings of this study revealed that the information resources frequently consulted by students were textbooks (55%), and novels (35.7%), while 30.7% of the respondents used dictionaries occasionally. However, 96.4% of respondents claimed they had never used the audiovisual materials, 85% claimed they had never used newspapers/magazines, 70% claimed they had never used atlases/ maps , 65% claimed they had never used poetry, 50.7% claimed they had never used dictionaries. This has implication that textbooks and novels provision to all secondary schools is of a great important. This will encourage reading habits of students and enhance student independent learning hence improve their school performance. This was evident by researcher during the interview with some students. For example, one student from Kilakala secondary school commented:

“With the availability of enough text books I can learn different subjects on my own without depending assistance from teachers”

This means that there is a great need for the government and other Non Government Organisation to supply more text books in different secondary school that meet student academic need. That is why Adeyemi (2009) observed that students' use of library resources in the schools is a function of students' learning outcomes. Moreover, the findings revealed that most of the students have never used the audiovisual material. This is probably because of lack electricity for its operation, lack of awareness on the role of audiovisual as important information resources, availability and insufficient funds to purchase such materials. This was not surprising as, for example Kasmiri, (2007) also found that the presence of related media like CD, DVD, Audiovisual materials etc. is almost nonexistent in secondary school libraries. Therefore the provision of audiovisuals material to school libraries is of a great important as it helpful learning tools for secondary students especially for handicapped users.

Accessibility of school library information resources

The respondents were asked to indicate the accessibility of the school library information resources (Not accessible, Accessible and highly accessible)

Table 6; Accessibility of school library information resources (N= 140)

Category	Accessibility of school library information resources					
	Not accessible		Accessible		Highly accessible	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Novels	62	44.3	31	22.1	47	33.6
Textbooks	34	24.3	33	23.6	73	52.1
Atlases and maps	96	68.6	39	27.9	5	3.6
Dictionaries	76	54.3	34	24.3	30	21.6
Newspapers and magazines	120	85.7	15	10.7	5	3.6
Poetry	93	66.4	25	17.9	22	15.7
Audio visuals	139	99.3	1	0.7	0	0

As it shown in the Table 6 above, the findings of this study revealed that the information resources which are highly accessed by students were textbooks (52.1%) and novels (33.6%). However, the information resources which are not accessible were Audio visuals (99.3%), Newspapers and magazines (85.7%), atlases and maps (68.6%), poetry (66.4%), and dictionaries (54.3%). This means that textbooks and novels are highly accessible in school libraries compared to other Information resources. This is probably because of their availability and its relevance to their academic discipline. For example, for those schools which study languages, every student should read novels as part of their subjects, this lead to highly accessibility of such resources. The findings also revealed that audiovisuals, newspapers/magazine, poetry and dictionaries were not accessible by most of the students of secondary schools under the study. This finding is consistent with those of Adeyemi (2009) who reported students were found not to have access to the use of many resources in the school libraries. This indicates that the government and other related education institutions should provide more funds to secondary school libraries in order to improve accessibility of such resources to students.

Table 7; Satisfaction of school library information resources (N= 140)

Category	Satisfaction of school library information resources					
	Not satisfied		Satisfied		Highly satisfied	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Novels	86	61.4	18	12.8	22	15.7
Textbooks	90	64.2	28	20	26	18.5
Atlases and maps	111	79.3	25	17.9	4	2.9
Dictionaries	91	65	31	22.1	18	12.9
Newspapers and magazines	131	93.5	8	5.7	1	0.7
Poetry	113	80.7	16	11.4	11	7.9

Audio visuals	136	97.1	4	2.9	0	0
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Satisfaction of school library information resources

As it evident in the Table 7 above, the findings of this study revealed that the information resources were not satisfied students. Majority of the respondents (97.1%) said they were not satisfied with audiovisual materials, 93.5% said they were not satisfied with news papers/magazine, 80.7% said were not satisfied poetry, 79.9% said atlases and maps , 65% said dictionaries, 64.2% said textbooks and 61.4% said they were not satisfied with novels. This also corroborates Aruas's (2011) findings, which revealed that the majority of the students were dissatisfied with the school library information resources. This indicates that most of the information resources which are found in school libraries do not satisfy student academic needs. This is probably because of poor accessibility of those resources, unavailability, relevancy, and lack of current reading materials. Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) had stated that satisfaction is a function of three main sources; quality of the information resources, the Information system and the services that make the information product available. Therefore, there is a need to improve school libraries in secondary schools by provision of quality and quantity materials in order to meet information need of students.

Challenges facing students in using school libraries

The students were asked what constraints they face in using school libraries and to choose their answers from the checklist.

Table 8; Challenges facing students in using school libraries (N= 140)

S/N	challenges	No. of the respondents (N)	%
1	Lack of current reading materials	91	65
2	Lack of informational professional/librarians for processing reading materials	87	62.1
3	Lack of sitting facilities	89	63.5
4	Restricted reading hours	81	57.8

Table 8 above shows that 65% mentioned the lack current reading materials as a major constraint, 63.5% said lack of sitting facilities, 62.1% said lack of informational professional/librarians for processing reading materials and 57.8% said restricted library reading hours. These findings corroborate those of previous studies (Adeyem. 2008; Spreadbury and Spiller 1999; Clabo, 2002 and Arua 2011).

Lack of current reading materials

Lack of current reading materials in most of the school libraries in the study area is a major problem, constraining students from using school libraries. For example, in the school libraries surveyed, there were a lot of reading materials which are not current and relevant. This discouraged students from using of school libraries hence poor learning outcomes. Ladelunuri (2012) asserted that poor performance of secondary schools in Tanzania is attributed by lack of enough and current books in the school libraries. In view of this government and other stakeholders should put more effort in strengthen the school libraries by provision of more current and relevant reading materials that meet academic need of the students.

Lack of sitting facilities

The lack of sitting facilities, such as tables and chairs was also considered a major constraint in using school libraries by students. This is a common problem in most school libraries in Tanzania. During the interview with teacher librarians they reported the same problem which was also observed by researchers. This means that there is a need of provision of adequate furniture in school libraries so that students can have conducive learning environment.

Lack of informational professional/ librarians for processing reading materials

Lack of informational professional/ librarians for processing reading materials in most of the schools libraries in the study area is a major problem, hindering students from using school libraries. For example, in the study areas surveyed the school libraries were managed by language teachers, by students, office attendant who are not professional in the library field. As it was evident by researchers in the area of the study, most of the information resources like textbooks were just scatted over the tables and other to the shelves and most of them were not

catalogued and even classified. In view of this, it is difficult for students to access the right information at right time and get right guidance on how to locate and use information in such libraries. Therefore, secondary schools should train or employed staffs who are professional in library field. According to Krolak (2005), quality of library services depends on the professional quality of its staffs and this in turn depends on the quality and relevance of the training that they have received. Also he added that running a library with unprofessional staff is like teaching without professional background.

Restricted library hours

A restricted library hour is another major constraint cited by students as a key factor hindering them from using school libraries. For instance, in the study areas surveyed some of school libraries had no standard time for opening library and some were opened for short period of time. Occasionally, usage of school libraries as it was evident by vast majority of students partly could be contributed by restricted library hours also could be attributed by lack of permanent employed professional staffs that will be responsible for management of school libraries. Also, other problems mentioned by staffs during interview include inadequate library information resources, insufficient fund for purchasing various information resources and other school libraries facilities and library space.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

School library is very important element in education development of any school. Key findings revealed that the most frequently used library information sources by secondary students are only books. Moreover, other library information resources, such as atlas and maps, dictionaries, novels, audio visuals and poetry were not accessible by students hence those sources were not satisfactory to meet their information needs. The findings further revealed that secondary school students face many constraints in using school library including lack of current and up to date reading materials, restricted reading hours, lack of sitting facilities, and lack of informational professional/ librarian for processing materials. In view of this for effective use of schools libraries by the secondary school students, there is need for current and adequate school library information resources, provision of Information and Communication facilities, and provision of

professional school librarians to manage libraries and conducive reading environment. These could be done in collaboration with all stakeholders in secondary education in the country. However, the study recommended the following;-

- The government should put more priority on adequate provision of fund necessary for the provision of current and up to date information resources and also for the employment of qualified and trained teacher-librarian
- The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should provide guidelines to regulate and lay down modes of operation, procedures and principles of administrative and management practices etc. in all school libraries in Tanzania.
- The government with collaboration with other stakeholders should build new school libraries in different secondary school in the country and equipped them with all necessary library facilities.
- There is the need for collective action by individuals, Non Government Organizations, and government to rescue the development of school libraries in the country.

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