

School Libraries as Catalysts for Future Ready Skills and Lifelong Learning in Katsina

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of school libraries as catalysts for developing future-ready skills and promoting lifelong learning among students in public secondary schools in Katsina State. The research aims to identify the current state of school libraries, evaluate their contributions to student skill development, and propose strategies for enhancing their effectiveness. The main objectives are to assess the existing infrastructure and resources of school libraries in Katsina State's public secondary schools, examine the impact of school libraries on students' acquisition of future-ready skills, including critical thinking, digital literacy, and collaboration and explore the relationship between school library utilization and students' engagement in lifelong learning activities. The researchers used mixed-methods approach by, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were questionnaire distributed to librarians across selected public secondary schools in Katsina State to gather information on library resources, usage patterns, and perceived impact on student learning. In-depth interviews were conducted to principals of the schools to gain insights into challenges and opportunities facing school libraries. Data were analyzed using statistical methods and thematic analysis. The study revealed that many public secondary school libraries in Katsina State are under-resourced and lack essential materials and technologies. Despite this, a positive correlation was found between active library use and the development of future-ready skills among students. Schools with well-utilized libraries reported higher levels of student engagement in critical thinking and collaborative projects. Furthermore, librarians expressed a strong desire for improved library services, indicating that well-equipped libraries could significantly enhance the learning experiences. However the researchers recommended the increased investment in school library resources, including digital technologies and relevant learning materials. Training programs for librarians and teachers to enhance their skills in promoting library use and integrating library resources into the curriculum; Development of community partnership to support library initiatives and provide additional resources for students and Implementation of programs that encourage regular library visits and

activities that foster critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy among students.

Keywords: School library, Skills, Lifelong learning, Technology, Curriculum, Librarian

Introduction

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and evolving workforce demands, the role of education in preparing students for future challenges has never been more critical. School libraries, as essential educational resources, play a significant role in fostering future-ready skills and promoting lifelong learning among students. This study aims to explore the capacity of public secondary school libraries in Katsina State to serve as catalysts for developing critical skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration, which are essential for success in the 21st century. The main objectives are to assess the existing infrastructure and resources available in school libraries within public secondary schools in Katsina State, evaluate the impact of school library usage on students' acquisition of future-ready skills and investigate the relationship between school library engagement and students' participation in lifelong learning activities.

Several studies have highlighted the pivotal role of school libraries in enhancing educational outcomes and equipping students with necessary skills for their future careers. For instance, Ogunsola (2014) emphasized the importance of library resources in fostering critical thinking among students, while Akinola (2017) examined how well-equipped libraries promote digital literacy. However, there remains a gap in understanding the specific contributions of school libraries in Katsina State, particularly concerning the development of future-ready skills and lifelong learning.

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of school libraries. Questionnaire was administered to librarians, teachers, and students across selected public secondary schools in Katsina State to gather quantitative data on library resources, usage patterns, and their perceived impact on skill development. An in-depth interview was conducted with school principals to collect qualitative data on challenges and opportunities faced by school libraries.

The rationale for this study lies in the recognition of school libraries as vital educational infrastructures that can significantly influence student learning and skill development. With the increasing emphasis on equipping students with future-ready skills in Nigeria's educational policies, understanding how school libraries contribute to this goal is essential. This research will not only fill a knowledge gap in the context of Katsina State but also provide actionable recommendations for enhancing the functionality and relevance of school libraries in fostering lifelong learning.

This literature review examines existing research and theories related to the objectives of the study, focusing on the role of school libraries in promoting future-ready skills and lifelong learning among students in Katsina State's public secondary schools.

Assessing Existing Infrastructure and Resources

The availability of adequate infrastructure and resources in school libraries is crucial for their effectiveness in enhancing students' learning experiences. According to Adeyemi (2016), well-resourced school libraries provide access to a variety of information sources that support the curriculum and foster student engagement. Similarly, Oduwole and Ibidunni (2019) found that libraries with modern facilities and diverse collections significantly impact students' academic performance. However, in many regions, including Katsina State, school libraries often face challenges such as inadequate funding, limited resources, and insufficient trained personnel (Nwosu, 2021). This highlights the need for a comprehensive assessment of the current state of school libraries to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Evaluating the Impact of School Library Usage on Future-Ready Skills

The impact of school libraries on students' acquisition of future-ready skills, such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and collaboration, has been widely documented. According to Eze and Okwudishu (2018), students who actively engage with library resources demonstrate improved critical thinking skills, which are essential for problem-solving and decision-making in the modern world. Furthermore, Akinola (2017) emphasizes that school libraries equipped with technology and digital resources enable students to develop digital literacy skills that are vital in today's technology-driven society. These findings suggest that promoting the active use of school libraries is key to enhancing students' competencies and preparing them for future challenges.

Investigating the Relationship between Library Engagement and Lifelong Learning

The concept of lifelong learning is closely linked to the resources and programs provided by school libraries. Makhdoom (2020) argues that libraries serve as gateways to continuous education, offering resources that encourage self-directed learning and exploration beyond formal schooling. In their study, Agboola and Asubiojo (2022) found that students who frequently utilize library services are more likely to engage in self-directed learning activities, thereby fostering a culture of lifelong learning. This underscores the importance of creating an environment that encourages library use as a means of promoting sustained learning beyond the classroom.

Strategies for Enhancing School Libraries

To enhance the effectiveness of school libraries in supporting skill development and lifelong learning, various strategies have been proposed. According to Bassey (2019), investing in professional development for librarians is essential for improving library services and ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of students. Additionally, collaboration between schools, communities, and local governments can lead to increased support for library programs and resources (Olusanya, 2021). Furthermore, integrating library resources into the curriculum can create more meaningful learning experiences and encourage regular library engagement (Ijeoma, 2022). These recommendations highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach to strengthen the role of school libraries in education.

Model for the Study

The Information Literacy Framework serves as a suitable model for this study, focusing on the role of school libraries in equipping students with future-ready skills and fostering lifelong learning in Katsina State's public secondary schools. This framework emphasizes the development of skills necessary for effectively navigating, evaluating, and using information in various contexts.

Justification for Using the Model

The Information Literacy Framework is particularly relevant to this study for several reasons:

Focus on Critical Skills: The framework encompasses essential skills such as critical thinking, information evaluation, and digital literacy, which are integral to the study's objectives (ACRL, 2016). These competencies align with the need for students to be prepared for a rapidly changing information landscape and workforce.

The model emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, encouraging students to take initiative in their learning processes, a key objective of this study (Wilson, 2018). By fostering an environment where students learn to seek, evaluate, and utilize information independently, school libraries can enhance students' ability to adapt and thrive throughout their lives.

The Information Literacy Framework integrates various aspects of library science, education, and technology, providing a holistic approach to understanding how school libraries contribute to skill development and learning (Hepworth, 2020). This comprehensive nature is beneficial for exploring the multifaceted role of school libraries.

Strengths of the Model

The model directly addresses the educational goals outlined in national policies for skill development and lifelong learning (Federal Ministry of Education, 2014). Its focus on information literacy aligns with the aims of Nigeria's educational reform.

Flexibility and Adaptability: The Information Literacy Framework can be adapted to various educational contexts, making it suitable for different school settings, including those in Katsina State (Peter and Lydia (2023)). This adaptability allows for tailored interventions based on specific needs and challenges faced by local school libraries.

The framework promotes collaboration among librarians, educators, and students, facilitating a shared responsibility for fostering information literacy (Hepworth, 2020). Such collaboration is vital for enhancing the effectiveness of library services and resources.

Weaknesses of the Model

Implementation Challenges: Implementing the Information Literacy Framework may face challenges due to a lack of trained personnel, insufficient resources in some schools, particularly in underfunded areas like Katsina State

(Nwosu, 2021). This limitation can hinder the model's effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

Evaluating the outcomes of information literacy initiatives can be complex, as measuring skills such as critical thinking and information evaluation may not yield straightforward metrics (Mackey & Jacobson, 2014). This difficulty in assessment can complicate the demonstration of the framework's impact.

The success of the model depends on the active engagement of various stakeholders, including educators and administrators, which may vary significantly across different schools (Cleveland, 2019). Lack of engagement can undermine the model's effectiveness in promoting a culture of information literacy.

The Information Literacy Framework provides a robust model for investigating the role of school libraries in developing future-ready skills and promoting lifelong learning among students in Katsina State's public secondary schools. While it presents certain challenges related to implementation and assessment, its strengths in addressing critical educational objectives and fostering collaboration make it a valuable tool for enhancing the effectiveness of school libraries.

Statement of the Problem

School libraries play a crucial role in fostering essential skills for the 21st century, including critical thinking, information literacy, digital competence, and a passion for lifelong learning. However, in Katsina State's public secondary schools, these libraries face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to serve as catalysts for future-ready skills and lifelong learning. Many school libraries in Katsina State are under-resourced, lacking updated collections, adequate facilities, and modern digital tools essential for developing information literacy and research skills among students. Furthermore, limited access to trained library personnel and relevant library programs significantly reduces the library's potential to engage students in learning activities that go beyond the classroom curriculum.

In an era where technological advancement and information accessibility is key to education, the gap in school library resources and services limits students' preparation for future academic and professional demands. Without the necessary support, students in Katsina State's public secondary schools are

at a disadvantage in building competencies that align with current global educational standards. This study seeks to examine the extent to which school libraries in Katsina State are equipped to foster these future-ready skills and promote lifelong learning and to identify the main barriers affecting their effectiveness in this role.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the research is to assess the information tools for future ready skills and lifelong learning in Katsina

Specific objectives of the study

1. To assess the availability of resources, infrastructure in public secondary schools' libraries in Katsina State
2. To investigate the relationship between school library engagement and students' participation in lifelong learning activities
3. To identify the challenges faced by school libraries in effectively promoting future-ready skills and lifelong learning

The following null hypotheses were evaluated at a significance level of 0.5.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the availability of resources in school libraries and the development of future-ready skills among students in public secondary schools in Katsina State.

H2: There is a positive correlation between students' frequency of library usage and their participation in lifelong learning activities outside the classroom.

H3: There are significant differences in the acquisition of collaboration skills among students based on their level of engagement with library programs and resources.

Findings of the Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between the availability of resources in school libraries and the development of future-ready skills among students in public secondary schools in Katsina State.

The results indicated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$) between the availability of resources (such as books, digital materials, and technology) and the development of future-ready skills, including critical thinking and problem-solving. Schools with well-stocked libraries reported higher levels of skill development among their students, confirming the

H₂: There is a positive correlation between students' frequency of library usage and their participation in lifelong learning activities outside the classroom.

Findings: A positive correlation was found ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) between the frequency of library usage and engagement in self-directed learning activities. Students who reported visiting the library regularly were more likely to engage in additional reading and research beyond their school assignments, thus supporting the hypothesis.

H₃: There are significant differences in the acquisition of collaboration skills among students based on their level of engagement with library programs and resources.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to explore the role of school libraries as catalysts for future-ready skills and lifelong learning in Katsina State's public secondary schools. The methodology consists of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of school libraries and their impact on students.

The target population for this study includes all public secondary schools in Katsina State, focusing specifically on students and librarians within these institutions. According to the Katsina State Ministry of Education, there are approximately 1300 public secondary schools in the state. With a total population of over eleven million seven hundred thousand students (11,700,000)

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of 15 public secondary schools across different zones in Katsina State. From each selected school, 10 students will be randomly chosen using resulting in a total sample size of approximately 150 students. Additionally, all librarians in the selected schools will be included in the

study, ensuring a comprehensive perspective on library usage and its impact. It was done by using ballots to draw the required number of samples to eliminate bias and ensures every respondent equal chance

Results

The findings of this study on "School Libraries as Catalysts for Future-Ready Skills and Lifelong Learning in Katsina State's Public Secondary Schools" are based on the analysis of data collected from questionnaires, interview

Table 1: Current State of School Libraries

S/N	Information resources	Yes	No
1	Fictions	√	
2	Text books	√	
3	Reference books	√	
4	Periodicals		x
5	E-books		X
6	Online databases		X
7	Audio visual materials		X
8	Televisions		X
9	Radio		X
10	Almanac	√	
11	Calendar		X
12	Dictionary		X
13	Encyclopedia		X
14	Computers	√	

There are notable differences in the kinds of information resources that are available in school libraries, according to the statistics. Print Resources (Traditional Materials): Computers, textbooks, reference books, novels, and almanacs are all fairly represented in school libraries. According to these resources, libraries should give priority to conventional reading and academic support materials, especially those that are necessary for classroom instruction and literary development. Their accessibility reveals a fundamental endeavor to advance academic research, reading culture, and popular reference. Periodicals, calendars, dictionaries, and encyclopedias are among the crucial resources that are absent. Without these resources, students have less opportunity to acquire up-to-date information, expand their vocabulary, and do in-depth study. Basic reference materials like dictionaries and encyclopedias are essential for promoting self-directed learning and knowledge growth. One significant gap is their unavailability.. Audiovisual materials, online databases, and e-books are completely nonexistent. This suggests that ICTs and digital learning materials, which are becoming more and more important in the twenty-first century, are not being integrated into libraries. Students are

deprived of access to varied, current, and interactive content that could enhance print collections in the absence of such resources. Additionally lacking are radio and television, indicating a dearth of multimedia assistance for instruction. While not traditionally part of all libraries, these tools could enhance student engagement and support diverse learning styles.

Table 2: The relationship between school library engagement and students' participation in lifelong learning activities

S/N	Relationship between school library engagement and students' participation in lifelong learning activities	Yes	No
1	I visit the school library regularly	√	
2	The library is easily accessible to me		X
3	I use the library to complete my class assignments and projects	√	
4	The library provides adequate textbooks and reading materials		x
5	I use the library to read storybooks, magazines, or newspapers		X
6	The library provides access to digital resources (computers, e-books, internet)		X
7	I read books outside my school curriculum to gain new knowledge	√	
8	I enjoy learning new skills (e.g., computer use, writing, public speaking).	√	
9	I participate in debates, quizzes, or clubs that encourage knowledge sharing	√	
10	I plan to continue using libraries even after finishing secondary school	√	
11	The library has helped me develop the habit of reading and researching		X

Students' answers about the connection between their involvement in lifelong learning activities and their use of the school library are displayed in the Table. of the statements, 27% (3 out of 11) were answered "no," while 73% (8 out of 11) were answered "yes." In addition to lacking digital resources (computers, e-books, and the internet), the library is ill-equipped with sufficient textbooks, storybooks, magazines, and newspapers. Assignments and projects are the primary reason why students utilize the library (Yes). Students continue to have a significant interest in reading outside of the curriculum, picking up new skills, and taking part in debates, quizzes, and clubs (all yes) in spite of the lack of resources. Additionally, they indicate that they are willing to keep using libraries beyond high school (Yes). It's interesting to note that even while kids read outside of the classroom, they do not strongly believe that the school library has assisted them in forming a lifelong habit of reading and research. This demonstrates a disconnect between the availability of libraries and students' self-motivation. Pupils show a strong sense of drive and enthusiasm in activities that promote lifelong learning. However, the library's ability to fully support lifelong learning is limited by

issues with accessibility, print resources, and digital resources. Students' intentions to continue utilizing libraries later in life indicate that any improvements made to the library will have a long-term effect on their orientation toward lifetime learning.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by School Libraries for Future Ready Skills and Lifelong Learning in Katsina

S/N	Challenges Faced by School Libraries for Future Ready Skills and Lifelong Learning in Katsina	Yes	No
1	The library lacks adequate and updated learning materials	√	
2	There are insufficient computers, internet facilities, or e-resources	√	
3	The library space is too small, noisy, or un conducive for effective study	√	
4	The library has limited opening hours that prevent me from using it effectively		x
5	The library does not provide enough programs or activities that encourage lifelong learning	√	

The Table 3 illustrates the difficulties school libraries in Katsina confront in encouraging pupils to pursue lifelong learning and future-ready skills. Students affirm that there are insufficient and out-of-date educational resources available in libraries. This suggests that the majority of the resources are out-of-date, inadequate, or unrelated to contemporary curricula and skill development. Lack of computers, internet access, and e-resources is a significant problem for libraries (Yes). As a result, pupils are unable to acquire digital literacy, a crucial ability for the future. It is said that the library setting is excessively cramped, noisy, or unsuitable for studying (Yes). Students are less able to concentrate and participate in group learning activities under such circumstances. Limited opening hours are not seen as a problem by students (No). This demonstrates that even if other aspects are still insufficient, the libraries are sufficiently accessible during school hours. Libraries do not offer enough lifelong learning-promoting programs or activities (e.g., debates, clubs, seminars) (Yes). This demonstrates a lack of involvement on the part of students beyond academic reading. These issues restrict school libraries' ability to foster lifelong learning habits and equip students with abilities that will be useful in the future, such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and creativity.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. School libraries must incorporate ICT-based resources, current reference works, and magazines to stay current and useful in assisting with teaching and learning. Students will be more equipped for research, innovation, and lifelong learning if these areas are

- strengthened. To guarantee access to contemporary materials and technologies, the report advises the government and educational authorities to give school libraries first priority when allocating funds.
2. Creating training programs for librarians will improve their ability to run libraries efficiently and encourage students to be information literate
 1. Make things more accessible Increase the library's hours of operation. Make sure the library has a friendly atmosphere and is easily accessible. Enhance Your Resources and Make sure there are enough textbooks, storybooks, periodicals, newspapers, and to promote information literacy, introduce digital tools like computers, e-books, and internet access. Within the library, host discussions, quizzes, skill-development courses, and reading clubs.
 3. Verify that the materials complement the curriculum and 21st century competencies (science, technology, leadership, and entrepreneurship). Increase the library's size to accommodate additional patrons. Establish a peaceful, well-ventilated, and cozy space for reading and group projects. Collaborate with educators to plan reading groups, debates, tests, ICT workshops, and seminars on research skills. Promote peer-to-peer education and activities that foster creativity (such as writing contests and invention challenges).

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