

User's Satisfaction with School Library Services: A Case of Selected Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Uganda

***Rest Chance**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1825-4681>

East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda

Email: restchance@gmail.com

Constant Okello-Obura

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2131-3324>

East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda

Email: obura2007@gmail.com

David Luyombya

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2156-7386>

East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda

Email: deeluyombya79@gmail.com

***Corresponding Author:** restchance@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examined user satisfaction with school library services in government-aided secondary schools in Kabale District, Uganda. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 345 respondents sampled systematically from the population of 2,507 subjects. Data was gathered through a questionnaire and an observation schedule. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and the thematic approach. The findings indicate that users were highly satisfied with the cleanliness and conduciveness of school libraries, convenience, library opening hours, comfort, reference services, timely information delivery and sufficiency and currency of library materials. Additionally, users appreciated librarians' understanding of their specific needs, staff responsiveness and willingness to assist. However, dissatisfaction was noted in areas, such as access to internet-connected computers and the expertise of library staff in utilizing digital resources. The study highlights a gap in technology integration and staff training, affecting the overall library experience. Based on these results, the study recommends enhanced investment in ICT infrastructure within school libraries, regular staff training in digital literacy and the provision of up-to-date resources to align with modern learning needs. Addressing these challenges would significantly improve user satisfaction and optimize library utilization in government-aided secondary schools in Uganda.

Keywords: User Satisfaction, School Libraries, Government-Aided Schools, Technology Integration, Library Services, Uganda.

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Introduction

Satisfaction of students and staff with library services in secondary schools is a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of these services in supporting educational goals. Libraries play a pivotal

role in providing access to information, fostering learning environments and promoting academic success. A school library is a library associated with pre-tertiary institutions, including nursery, primary and secondary schools, with the purpose of fostering the intellectual growth of learners (Udo &

A. S. O., 2016). It plays a very central role in promoting the teaching and learning process, which is very indispensable in the educational landscape. The primary responsibility of a school library is to acquire, classify and systematically organize books and other information resources, ensuring their accessibility to students.

Consequently, the availability of reading materials is fundamental to the provision of information within secondary school libraries. School libraries facilitate learners' access to books, periodicals and other informational resources in a manner that aligns with their academic needs and convenience (Mogaka, 2019; Ternenge & Agipu, 2019). Therefore, every school library should strive to provide a high-quality service that meets the educational needs of its users. To achieve this, libraries should be able to promote information literacy and critical thinking by providing resources and an environment that promotes self-directed and research-based learning. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the extent to which the school libraries' users in secondary schools are satisfied with the services.

It is common practice for libraries to conduct user satisfaction surveys to improve quality of services offered to users (Amarasekara & Marasinghe, 2020; Kaishe-Mulungu et al., 2024; Mairaj & Naseer, 2013; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2003). These surveys play a fundamental role in evaluating libraries' strengths and weaknesses in order to provide library managers with a basis for increasing user satisfaction. However, a thorough analysis of user satisfaction with library services has been largely ignored by researchers and practitioners in library and information science and was not given priority in secondary school libraries in some developing countries (Kaushamali & Weerakoon, 2020).

Secondary school libraries in Uganda, of which those in Kabale are no exception, have long suffered from neglect due to insufficient funding, lack of prioritization by school administrators, and the absence of a well-developed indigenous book industry. Additionally, these libraries often struggle with inadequate and outdated collections, improper utilization and, in some cases, a complete lack of designated library spaces and necessary facilities (Ikoja-Odongo, 2009). According to Magara (2016), the lack of proper school library facilities has led to excessive dependence on teachers, a situation that affects the quality of education. This is exacerbated by lack of implementation of school library policy

although the formulation of a school library policy in Uganda dates back to 2006. These raise concerns about the extent of satisfaction with secondary school library services. It is therefore necessary to carry out this study to understand the extent of satisfaction with the services provided by school libraries in secondary schools in the Kabale District. Although the government aided secondary schools in Kabale District have school libraries that offer various resources and services, the extent to which the users are satisfied with the facilities and services offered is not yet established.

Besides, there is a significant gap in the literature of comprehensive analysis of satisfaction with school library resources and facilities in government aided secondary schools within the Ugandan context. The purpose of the study was therefore to examine the extent of satisfaction with the school library services and facilities in government aided secondary schools in Kabale District in order to identify gaps in library resources, services, and facilities, leading to improvements that align with users' needs.

Literature Review

Defining satisfaction services from the service organization's perspective is more subjective than the manufacturing perspective due to the intangible nature of service and also the fact that the user or customer is involved in the process of service delivery most of the time. In accordance with the research conducted by Nyantakyi-Baah (2016), which delved into the user perception of academic library service quality and value in Ghana, the process of establishing satisfaction judgments concerning services, as opposed to tangible products, is often regarded as a more intricate undertaking due to its reliance on diverse sets of expectations.

In the context of library services, it is apparent that distinct users hold varying sets of anticipations. Some individuals give paramount importance to the demeanor of library staff, specifically valuing attributes, such as courtesy, knowledgeability and willingness to assist patrons. Conversely, another segment of users maintains elevated expectations regarding the accessibility and quality of information resources (Verma & Lalrokhawma, 2018) while yet another faction assigns primacy to the physical infrastructure and amenities of the library facility. Thus, the measurement of satisfaction with library services can encompass various aspects, including library resources, services

provided and the operating environment (Idiegbeyan & Esse, 2013). This was also affirmed by Lulu-Pokubo and Akanwa, (2017), who observed that one quality of a school library that will enhance satisfaction in secondary schools is the physical attraction in terms of space, arrangement, equipment furniture and fittings etc. Verma and Lalrokhawma (2018) also affirms that satisfaction with library resources plays a pivotal role in delivering effective library services since these resources form the core assets of libraries.

Gyau et al.(2021) observed that evaluation of user satisfaction is a significant determinant of library performance in terms of quality service delivery to ascertain and innovate where the library services need improvement. Parasuraman et al. (1988), the developers of the SERVQUAL model for measuring service quality are of the view that customer satisfaction is the precursor to service quality. Moreover, Gyau et al. (2021) argued that rendering quality services to these users will significantly influence their satisfaction with the services rendered to them. This will therefore increase user's library usage frequency and also attract more users.

Satisfaction can be interpreted as an emotional response, reflecting the level of contentment or discontentment experienced during a specific transaction or interaction, resulting from comparing the perceived performance of a product. Thus, contentment with the quality of school library services can be influenced by various factors, including the book collection, resource availability, technological accessibility, library staff and overall library environment. Goodall and Pattern (2011) assert that user satisfaction is directly linked to the quality of service. When the performance of a service falls short of a user's expectations, it tends to lead to dissatisfaction. Conversely, when the service performance aligns with a user's expectations, it results in satisfaction (Bua & Yawe, 2014).

Ho (2019) underscores the importance of customer loyalty and retention for the success of service organizations, including libraries. Thus, the retention of library patrons and their continued utilization of library services becomes crucial for achieving the library's objectives. The satisfaction of library users with the services offered demonstrates a positive correlation with overall patronage and loyalty to the library. Consequently, assessing client satisfaction holds significant value in the evaluation

of library services and is considered a reliable criterion for determining library effectiveness (Akanwa et al., 2019; Ho, 2019; Tetteh & Nyantakyi-Baah, 2019).

The purpose of school a library is defeated if its users are dissatisfied with the resources and services it offers. Subsequently, it is critical to develop information services that not only cater to current user needs and enhance existing services but also anticipate future user requirements (Kaushamalika & Weerakoon, 2020). Thus, for satisfaction to be achieved, it is essential to fulfill the user's needs (Akanwa et al., 2019). Satisfaction with library services, therefore, pertains to the extent to which the user's information needs such as academic, future career, recreation needs among others and reasons for visiting the library have been met. Idiegbeyan and Esse, (2013) noted that some school libraries face limitations in terms of resources, resulting in an inability to fully satisfy their users while others, possessing ample and high-quality collections and offering a range of services, can better fulfill user expectations. Thus, libraries capable of providing users with their desired resources are more likely to attain higher levels of user satisfaction, whereas the opposite holds true.

Additionally, the library operating hours play a significant role in determining the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among users. This observation was made by Verma and Lalrokhawma (2018), who investigated the utilization of library resources and services by teachers and students, and their corresponding satisfaction levels. Consequently, the convenience and extent of the library's opening hours directly influence user satisfaction. Other factors identified in the same study that impact user satisfaction include the sufficiency of internet services, the efficiency of library staff, and the availability of library resources, among others.

Saikia and Gohain (2013) proposed that enhancing user satisfaction in libraries requires library staff to comprehend the information needs of users and address them accordingly. They argue that such an approach greatly contributes to the development of effective user-centered library and information services. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of conducting user awareness programs at the commencement of each academic session in order to fully leverage the available resources and services. This viewpoint is echoed by Kiriri (2018),

who emphasizes the necessity for service providers to anticipate customers' needs and demonstrate tangible outcomes to maintain their status as reliable service providers. This raises the question of whether these measures can be applied to address the issue of user satisfaction within the context of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Various theories and models have been developed to explain user satisfaction in the context of library services. Notable among these are Web-Qual, Lib-Qual, and ServQual, which provide valuable insights into user perceptions of library service quality. Previous studies, including those by Gathoni and Van der Walt (2019) and Kaishe-Mulungu et al. (2024) have employed these models to evaluate user satisfaction with library service provision. The SERVQUAL model was chosen for this study because of its suitability for assessing user satisfaction in library services. It is designed to be applicable across a wide range of service industries and it offers a foundational framework for evaluation, based on the comparison of user expectations and perceptions. This structure can be easily adapted or enhanced to align with the specific research objectives and organizational context of the study.

The SERVQUAL model identifies five key dimensions, commonly referred to as RATER, which are essential for service excellence. Reliability pertains to the consistent and accurate delivery of promised services. Responsiveness reflects the willingness and promptness of staff in assisting users. Empathy emphasizes the provision of personalized attention and care to library patrons. Assurance encompasses the employees' knowledge, courtesy and ability to inspire trust and confidence among users. Collectively, these dimensions serve as a comprehensive framework for evaluating and enhancing the quality of library services.

Methodology

The methodology section presents the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods and analytical techniques employed in the study.

Design

The study employed the cross-sectional design, which enabled the researchers to collect data at a single point in time. This research design offers significant advantages in terms of time and resource efficiency, particularly in contexts where these are constrained (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The selection

of participants in such studies is guided by predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Notably, cross-sectional studies are recognized for their expedited implementation and cost-effectiveness. The study utilized the mixed method approaches, that enables the collection of diverse data types. This methodological integration enhances the credibility of the findings by capitalizing on the strengths of each approach while mitigating their respective limitations (Kothari, 2004).

Population and Sampling

The study targeted 2507 students of s3, s4 and s6 classes of five government aided secondary schools in Kabale District. The five schools were selected from a total of 22 government aided secondary schools in Kabale District. Schools were sampled as follows; 3 schools from Kabale Municipality, 1 from Ndorwa West and 1 from Ndorwa East constituencies. The schools were systematically selected to ensure representation from all the three constituencies that form Kabale District. The three schools were selected from the municipality in order to ensure adequate representation because there were more schools in the municipality than in each of the other constituencies.

A sample size of 345 students was selected from the population of 2507 possible respondents across the five schools involved in the study. To obtain the sample size, the population of each school was established and then the sample size calculated by applying the Yamane's formula, which states, $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ where n stands for the sample size, N is the population and e is the sampling error from the total population of the chosen classes with a margin error of 5%.

$$n = \frac{2507}{1 + 2507(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2507}{1 + 2507 * 0.0025}$$

$$n = 345 \text{ students}$$

Further, the sample size for each school was determined using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) technique, using the following formula; $n_n = (n/N) N_n$ Where, n_n is the sub-sample size for each school, n is the sample size, N is the population size and N_n is the population size for each school. Simple random sampling was employed to select students to participate in the study. This approach helped eliminate selection bias, ensuring that every student had a known probability and equal chance of being

chosen. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed in the selected classes of s3, s.4 and s.6.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to gather data. A structured questionnaire was administered to learners to gather data on the extent of satisfaction with the school library services and facilities. An observation guide was employed to gather data on the physical facilities of libraries and general environment within the school libraries.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the rigor and reliability of the instruments, a detailed multi-phase validation procedure was implemented. First, subject matter experts carried out a content validity assessment to ensure the questionnaire effectively addressed the targeted constructs. The instruments were pretested for content, construct and concurrency validity prior to distribution.

A pilot test involving 40 participants was carried out in two schools outside the study, which resulted into some of the items being refined. Reliability was assessed by analyzing the items using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency, and reliability of each item in the questionnaire, which resulted in a reliability score of 0.805, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Quantitative data was examined using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed through a narrative approach, with ideas systematically organized into thematic categories.

Ethical Considerations

Adherence to research ethics underscores the importance of treating research participants with dignity and sensitivity, particularly considering the varying degrees of risk they may encounter due to research procedures (Bless et al., 2006). To uphold ethical standards, the researchers obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (UCUREC) and got permission from the relevant authorities within the schools where data was to be collected from. Additionally, participants were provided with an informed consent form, explaining the ethical principles of voluntary participation and ensuring participants' safety by clarifying the research project's nature, purpose, and potential benefits (Babbie, 2016). Participants were explicitly informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement and were assured of their right to

withdraw from the study at any stage. More so, Measures were taken to uphold participants' confidentiality and anonymity during data collection and reporting. Personal identifiers and school identifiers were not collected in the instruments to safeguard participants' identities.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study. The findings are illustrated in tables.

Response Rate

A paper-based questionnaire was administered to 345 students. However, four questionnaire items were incomplete, which rendered them unusable. Thus, there were 341 questionnaire sheets, which were dully filled, giving the overall return rate as 98.8%. According to Babbie (2001), a response rate that is above 60% is appropriate to make conclusions. The return rate was a clear indication that a good number of respondents participated in the study.

Satisfaction with Library Services and Facilities

A number of statements were presented to the respondents in line with the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, which includes tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance, in order to understand the extent of satisfaction in secondary school libraries services and facilities in government aided schools in Kabale. Data was analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, where the mean scores obtained were interpreted using the following scale :1.00-1.49= strongly disagree; 1.5.00-2.49- disagree; 2.500-3.49= undecided; 3.50-4.49=agree and 4.50-5.00=strongly agree.

Satisfaction with Library Tangibles

The study investigated the extent of satisfaction with library tangibles, which referred to the physical library space, its layout, seating arrangements and availability of resources such as computers and study materials. The findings are in table 1.

From table 1, majority of respondents agreed that the library collection was sufficient to meet their needs. The results are significant (mean = 3.75, SD= 1.20). This implies that the library collection comprised of materials in the different subjects and in relatively sufficient ratios although there was still room for improvement. These findings agree with a study conducted by Younus et al. (2021),who found out that majority of the students were satisfied with library resources, such as reference books, text

books, newspapers/magazines and noted an acute absence of audiovisual resources.

Further, the findings indicate that the respondents were satisfied with the library's clean and conducive environment in the libraries, implying that the respondents highly appreciated the cleanliness and conduciveness of the library environment (Mean=4.21 SD=0.90). The cleanliness in 4 of the schools was found to be of acceptable standards in agreement with these findings. Observational findings corroborated this, revealing that the libraries in SS1, SS2, and SS3 were notably clean while SS5 lagged in maintaining an acceptable standard. Cleanliness and conduciveness are central for the comfortable utilization of the school library premises. However, the findings from this study deviate from those of Musonda-Mubanga and Chakanika (2018), who found out that the majority of respondents perceived poor sanitation of the library as detrimental for its utilization.

The location of the school libraries was highly regarded as convenient (mean= 4.18, SD=0.95). The accessibility of libraries, facilitated by their central locations within schools, was notable as the convenient location of libraries, often integrated within classroom blocks and enhanced accessibility

for users. Observation showed that all libraries were strategically located, allowing both day and night access, except in schools with limited staff. These findings about the location of the school libraries were consistent with those obtained from observations, which revealed that all the libraries in the schools under study were located conveniently within the schools. This rendered them accessible to the learners both during day and night. The libraries were noted to open from 8am to 5pm and from 7pm to 10pm for schools which had more than one library staff. Those libraries which had only one staff often closed at night and learners were not in position to access and utilize the them. The library in SS5 was observed to be closed most of the time and it was established that it would mostly be opened if anyone needed to borrow materials. These findings are in agreement with those of Kabanda, (2020), who conducted a study on school libraries management effect on student academic performance in Nabweru Division, Nansana Municipality, Wakiso District and noted that the libraries were suitably located for the learners to access them conveniently. The author further noted that availability and ease of access to library resources play a significant role in students' overall satisfaction.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Library Tangibles

Statement	M	SD
The library has modern (up-to-date) and sufficient material for learning and research	3.75	1.20
The library's physical facilities are visually appealing	3.55	1.09
The library environment is clean and conducive	4.21	0.90
The location of the library is convenient	4.18	0.95
The library has computers with internet connection	2.13	1.53
The reading space is big and comfortable	4.02	1.09
The library opening hours are adequate and conducive	4.06	1.07

The adequacy of library opening hours was well-rated with a mean of 4.06 and SD=1.07. The libraries were observed to open at 8.00am until 10pm in SS1, 2 and 3. However, in SS4 and 5, they closed at 5pm. This suggests that the opening time was sufficient for learners to use the read from the libraries and interact with the collections. Schools with multiple library staff extended hours into the evening, which increased accessibility. However, libraries with only one staff member often closed at night, limiting usability due to staffing constraints. These findings were contradictory with those of Chipana (2018), whose study observed that the students used personal study period in school time table to visit

the library and that school libraries had no standard time for opening the library on account that the teachers who were responsible in opening the libraries were also involved in classroom teaching at the same time, which resulted into irregular use of the school library. Yet, according to Kaushamalika and Weerakoon (2020), sufficient opening hours give library users open doors to learning whenever the timing is ideal.

The respondents concurred with the statement that the school libraries were spacious and provided comfortable reading areas (Mean = 4.02, SD = 1.09). Despite this finding, the seating capacities varied considerably across the schools. Specifically, school

SS1 had a seating capacity for 600 students out of a total enrollment of 2,000 while SS2 could accommodate 60 learners out of 900. SS3 had space for 100 students for a population of 1,200 whereas SS4 provided seating for 60 students out of 900. SS5 had the least provision, with only 20 seats for a student population of approximately 400. Comparatively, libraries in SS1, SS2 and SS3 offered more adequate seating relative to their student populations. In contrast, the libraries in SS4 and SS5 were characterized by insufficient seating space, which was notably disproportionate to the number of students. In particular, SS5 not only lacked adequate seating but also offered an uncomfortable reading environment, thereby hindering its suitability for extended study periods. Although SS 1 had ample seats and tables, the seats were not comfortable to support long hours of study. The seats in SS4 were also quite uncomfortable while those in SS5 were not only inadequate but were also very uncomfortable for users.

The inadequate seating capacity in SS3, SS4 and SS5 highlights a pressing issue of overcrowding, which likely reduces user satisfaction and limits the libraries' usability. According to Kaushamali and Weerakoon (2020), spatial provisions within a library are imperative to cater to the diverse requirements of its users. This encompasses the allocation of areas tailored for individual study, group collaboration, and facilities for users utilizing electronic devices, all with the main objective of fostering a conducive and comfortable working environment. Additionally, a library must allocate sufficient space to house its extensive collection, encompassing books, journals, audio-visual materials, alongside accommodations for staff. According to Rai and Zaveri (2018), library physical space has an important role in learning, teaching and research.

The findings further indicate agreement with the physical appeal of library facilities (mean=3.55, SD=1.09). From the study findings, some respondents from SS1, SS2 and SS3 were satisfied with the condition of the physical facilities while other respondents were not sure. The students who were satisfied with the library facilities took into account the well-organized setup of the library. The ventilation in most libraries was appropriate to allow circulation of air within the school libraries and most of the comfortable seats were found in SS 1, 2 and SS3.

Overall, libraries in SS1, SS2 and SS3 demonstrated relatively favorable environments compared to SS4 and SS5, which suffered from overcrowding, inadequate space and uncomfortable seating. Inadequate seating and discomfort, as observed in SS4 and SS5, could hinder prolonged use and overall satisfaction. From the study findings, a simple majority were satisfied with the physical condition of the facilities while a considerable proportion of the other respondents were not sure. According to Tetteh and Nyantakyi-Baah (2019), the quality of service and user satisfaction heavily depend on the library's environment and its physical amenities. Therefore, the study findings are consistent with those of Fagyan et al. (2023), which revealed a positive perception of the library as a physical space and its accompanying amenities. The findings underscore the significance of meticulously planned and effectively operated library facilities in enhancing the overall student experience. Hence the role of physical facilities in a library is of paramount importance in influencing user satisfaction levels.

However, the respondents disagreed with libraries having computers with internet connection to easily access the needed information as indicated by the (mean= 2.13, SD=1.53). This suggests absence of computers with internet connection, which is critical for accessing the needed information. These findings were corroborated by observations by the researchers that there were no computers available in the five libraries in all the school libraries under study. Consequently, digital resources, such as e-books and online databases were notably unavailable in all the school libraries under study. There was no provision of electronic catalog systems or online portals for resources and all the information resources were accessed in the traditional manual system. This was a significant gap, given the growing importance of digital resources in modern education. Observations confirmed that all libraries relied on traditional library systems, with no provision for digital resources, e-books, or online databases. According to Magara (2016), despite the recognition of ICT in Ugandan education system even as an examinable subject, the procurement process is silent on the use of digital /e-books, a strategy that needs to be addressed. Yet, without computers and internet access in school libraries, students may not have the necessary resources to conduct research, complete assignments, and access educational materials

online. Adebayo et al. (2018) noted that this is an era, when people need to access timely information with ease, and this can only be done through the application of ICT to library service.

Satisfaction with Reliability of Library Services

The study investigated satisfaction with reliability of library services. This related to the library staff's ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. Details are in table 2.

The study findings indicated agreement with timely provision of library services, (mean=3.79, SD=1.23). This indicates a moderate level of satisfaction with the provision of the library services. This implies that most of the library services were provided on time on account that the time of the users was not

being wasted hence allowing them to accomplish many of their other responsibilities. From a service delivery perspective, the score indicates that the students perceive that their needs and expectations to be adequately fulfilled. Although the study results suggest that students were satisfied with the timely delivery of library services, findings from observations showed that most library tasks were performed manually, which could have had an impact on the efficiency of the services provided. These findings are in agreement with those of Verma and Lalrokhawma (2018) whose study found out that majority of respondents were mostly satisfied with the services which is rendered by the library.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Library Reliability

Statement	M	SD
Library services are provided in the promised time	3.79	1.23
The library collection is sufficient to meet my needs	3.70	1.07
The reference services provided in the library are satisfactory	3.91	1.07

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Library Responsiveness

Statement	M	SD
The staff are always available to respond to requests	3.55	1.27
The library staff are always willing to help	3.67	1.16
The library staff show sincere interest in solving users' problems	3.58	1.16

The study findings further reveal agreement with the libraries' collection's sufficiency to meet users' needs (mean=3.70, SD=1.07). This suggests that the reading materials were adequate to cater to their needs for the different subjects offered. The opinions of the respondents were divided with some agreeing with the statement while others were not sure. This implied that the reading materials were fairly adequate to cater for their needs for the different subjects offered. These findings are in agreement with those of Fagyan et al. (2023), which indicated that students were satisfied with the library information resources, implying that libraries were satisfying students' academic needs and providing relevant, accessible, and useful materials. According to Kaushamalika and Weerakoon (2020), a sufficient collection of library resources, encompassing both printed and online formats, serves as the cornerstone for information provision and is intricately linked to users' perceptions of library efficacy. However, the collections in all the libraries in the present study were mainly print

format, which implied that there was still room for integration of online or electronic resources.

Further, the respondents agreed with the satisfactory provision of reference services (mean=3.91, SD=1.07). This suggests that librarians helped users find information, answering questions and locating resources within the library's collection. These findings corroborate those of a study by Ekwueme et al. (2020), which found out that respondents were satisfied with the reference services showing that the reference librarians were competent in their work, always available to attend to users' needs, communicated effectively and work with users to help meet their information needs.

Satisfaction with Library staff Responsiveness

The study examined user's satisfaction with the library staff responsiveness. This related to the promptness and willingness of library staff to assist users. Details are found in table 3.

The study findings indicate respondent's agreement with the availability of staff to respond to users' requests (Mean =3.55, SD = 1.27). This implies that

they were moderately satisfied with how accessible, present and responsive library staff are in offering support, answering questions, guiding users, and fulfilling information needs. These findings are consistent with those of Gyau et al. (2021), whose study findings indicated that users were satisfied with library staff who were dependable to respond to their requests, willing and ready to assist users. Ahmad et al. (2022) underscores the availability of staff to respond to users requests of library as very important and critical for their satisfaction.

The study findings further indicate agreement with willingness of staff to help (Mean=3.67, SD=1.16). This was demonstrated from the readiness with which they responded to users' needs. The majority of respondents were satisfied with the kind of help rendered to them by library staff. These findings were collaborated by those from observation which indicated that the library staff in SS, 2 and 3 were always present to attend to users needs during operating hours. However, for SS 4 and 5, it was noted that the staff were not always present since they were the only ones manning the library in which case they would leave the libraries in charge of the teacher or prefect in charge of the library. These findings are consistent with those of Amarasekara and Marasinghe (2020), who conducted a study on user satisfaction with library resources and services at the main library of the

Remote University of Sri Lanka and found that users were satisfied with the willingness of library staff to help solve their problems.

The respondents agreed with the statement of library staff showing sincere interest in solving the users' problems (Mean=3.58, SD=1.16). The librarians showing interest in solving users' problems was reflected from their ability to actively listen to their concerns and questions, asking clarifying questions, and providing helpful and relevant information or resources. However, a few respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the librarians' responsiveness towards them, which implies that this particular aspect is not yet up to the expected standard. These findings corroborate those of Gyau et al. (2021) who observed that users of academic libraries were satisfied with library staff who were dependable to solve their problems, willing and ready to assist them in meeting their information needs.

Satisfaction with Library Staff Empathy

The study was further interested in investigating the extent of satisfaction with empathy of library staff. This particular aspect related to library staff offering personalized support to students, understanding their individual needs, and demonstrating genuine care. The details are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for library staff empathy

Statement	M	SD
The librarian understands the users' specific needs	3.67	1.22
The librarian gives personal attention	3.52	1.27

The study findings indicate that the respondents agreed that the librarians understood users' specific needs (Mean=3.67 SD= 1.22). This suggests that the librarians in the study were perceived as effectively understanding and catering to the specific needs of the library users, which implies that the libraries were likely providing a user-centered and responsive service. These findings align with a study by Reyes (2019), which observed that the libraries ought to expand their collection by considering materials that could satisfy the specific information need of the students.

The study findings revealed that respondents indicated agreement that the librarians offered personal attention (Mean=3.52 SD=1.27). This suggests that library staff were going beyond standard duties to ensure students find what they

need. These findings suggest that although the majority agreed that the librarians offered personal attention, it was not fully optimized and that the level of attention was not yet up to the expected standard and therefore, there was still room for improvement to make this service better. According to Barfi et al. (2023), the library personnel must be encouraged to show a readiness to assist library users or customers and to provide them with attention. Although the study was conducted in an academic library setting, personal attention is paramount for all library users regardless of the type. While respondents appreciated staff efforts, the low mean for these findings suggest room for improvement in areas of librarians' personal attention in addressing specific user needs and giving personal attention.

Satisfaction with Library Staff Assurance

The study further investigated the library staff assurance was linked library staff's knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Details are presented in table 5.

The study findings indicate that on the dimension of assurance, the respondents were undecided on the statement about library staff being knowledgeable to answer their questions (Mean =3.45, SD=1.26). These findings are consistent with those obtained from the open-ended part of the questionnaire, where students expressed doubt about the knowledgeability of library staff to assist them in their various subjects, therefore they didn't consult them on specific academic matters. This suggests that the students did not express trust in the library staff's knowledge to answer academic questions. They perceived them as custodians of information materials but not as individuals with knowledge to

contribute to their academic pursuits. Users viewed staff as library attendants rather than academic moderators, undermining the library's role as a center for academic support. These findings contradict with research by Amarasekara and Marasinghe(2020), which showed that users were satisfied with the expertise of library staff. They contradict the findings of Roy and Mandal (2021), who indicated that users were satisfied with the way the library staff supported their study and research work which was attributed to the fact that these library staff were highly qualified with capacity to contribute meaningfully to the academic endeavors of students in that particular study. This underscores the importance of competent staff who have knowledge, skills and expertise in various subjects as this obviously contributes to user satisfaction in the library environment.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for library staff assurance

Statement	M	SD
The library staff are knowledgeable to answer my questions	3.45	1.26
The library staff are effective and helpful	3.99	0.94

The study findings further indicated agreement with the statement about library staff effectiveness and helpfulness as indicated from the (Mean=3.99, SD=0. 94). The effectiveness and helpfulness of library staff related to the ability of the library's personnel to efficiently and courteously assist users with their various information needs and library-related tasks. These findings resonate with Amarasekara and Marasinghe, (2020), whose study on user satisfaction on library resources and services found out that respondents were satisfied with the helpfulness, approachability and the knowledge of the staff members. The finding further suggests that having effective and helpful staff in a library is an essential factor for user satisfaction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that while some government-aided secondary schools in Kabale District have made commendable efforts in providing library services, significant gaps remain in digital access, physical facilities, staffing and service delivery. Libraries often lack computers and internet connectivity, making it difficult for students to access digital resources. Physical infrastructure, particularly seating arrangements, were found to be inadequate in some schools. Staffing challenges,

including insufficient personnel hinder the consistent library service provision. Inconsistencies in library operating hours and limited reference services also affect user satisfaction. Additionally, issues such as poor sanitation, unappealing environments, and limited empathy and personalization from staff were reported. In light of these findings, it is recommended that schools and the Ministry of Education prioritize the integration of ICT in libraries, improve infrastructure and seating comfort, recruit and train adequate library personnel, and standardize operating hours to enhance accessibility. Regular staff development in user-centered services, expansion of library collections and ongoing maintenance of library spaces should be undertaken to create a more supportive and engaging learning environment. Implementing these measures will significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of library services in secondary schools.

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