

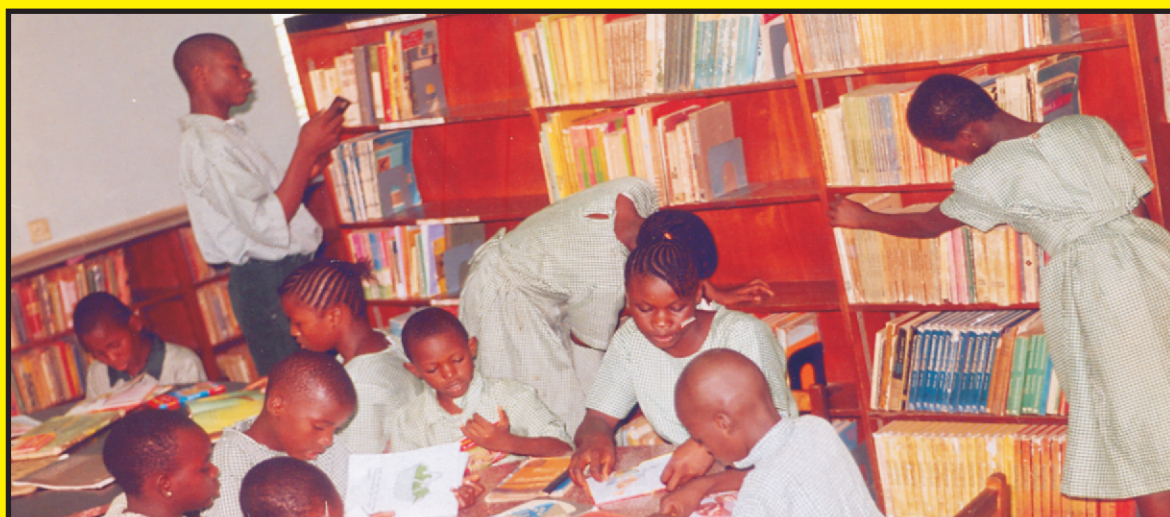
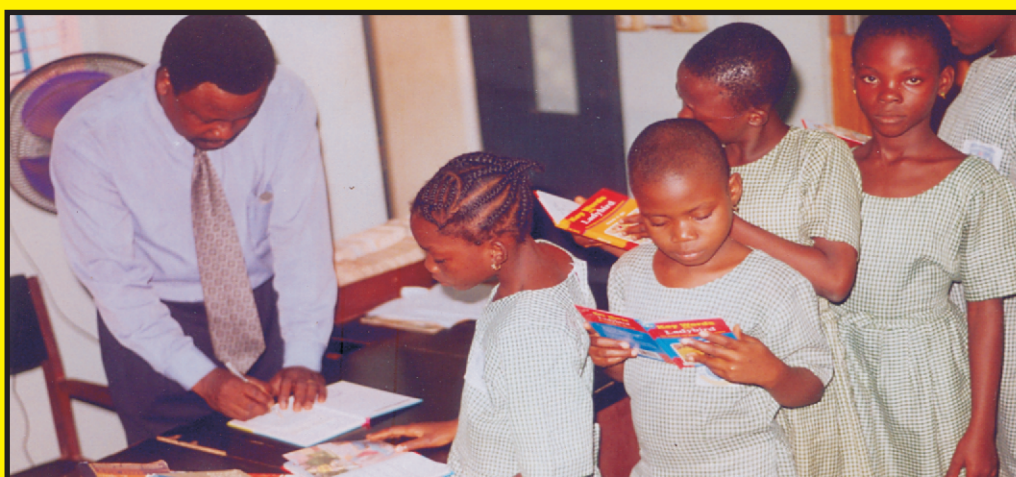
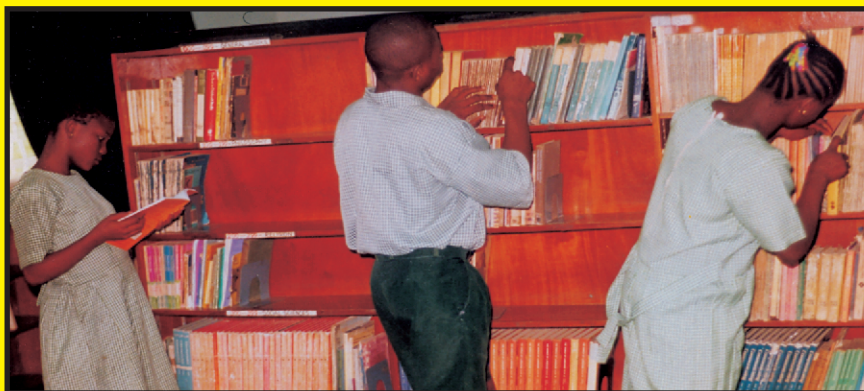


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Editorial

The March 2026 issue of the *Nigerian School Library Journal* brings together important studies that reflect the changing landscape of library and information services in Nigeria. The articles in this volume address pressing themes such as digital transformation, school library development, media literacy, virtual reference services, community engagement, equity, and ethical concerns in the use of technology. Collectively, they show that school libraries remain central to teaching, learning, and social development.

A major strength of this issue is its relevance to current realities. Several contributions examine the growing influence of digital tools in education and library practice, while also highlighting the risks that accompany them, including unequal access, weak infrastructure, privacy concerns, and algorithmic bias. These studies remind us that technological progress alone does not guarantee inclusion. Without proper support, policy guidance, and professional readiness, innovation may deepen existing inequalities rather than solve them.

This issue is also notable for its grounding in Nigerian experience. The papers on nomadic education, stakeholder support for school libraries, and rural library engagement show the conditions under which many libraries operate and the practical efforts required to sustain them. They point to familiar challenges such as poor funding, inadequate facilities, limited professional staffing, and weak institutional commitment. Yet they also demonstrate that improvement is possible through partnership, teacher preparation, community involvement, and deliberate policy action.

Another valuable feature of this volume is its broad vision of the library. The library is presented not simply as a storehouse of books, but as a space for literacy development, digital participation, cultural preservation, and community voice. This understanding is essential if libraries are to remain relevant in a rapidly changing society. The studies in this issue make it clear that the future of school librarianship in Nigeria will depend on equity, innovation, and sustained investment in both people and infrastructure.

As Editor, I commend the authors for their thoughtful and timely contributions. It is my hope that this issue will encourage further research, stronger advocacy, and practical action toward building school libraries that are inclusive, responsive, and fully equipped to support national development.

Editor-in-Chief



March 2026

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Provision and Use of Library Services by Secondary School Students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the provision and use of library services for secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from 274 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The study examined the types of library services available, the frequency of use, students' perceptions of usefulness, and challenges hindering optimal use. Findings revealed that traditional services such as lending, reading spaces, and reference assistance were available in most of the secondary schools. However, the overall frequency of library use was low. In terms of perception, students rated the usefulness of the library services moderately, but challenges severely hindered access and engagement. Key obstacles identified included lack of current books, limited access time, lack of interest in visiting the library, and the absence of helpful librarians. The study concluded that although libraries remain a vital academic support system, their impact is undermined by inadequate infrastructure, limited engagement strategies, and student disinterest. It recommended regular library orientation, resource upgrades, the inclusion of library periods in school timetables, and capacity-building for library staff.

Keywords: *Library Services, Provision, Secondary School Students, Utilisation, Perception,*

Introduction

The importance of school libraries in the socio-economic development of a developing country like Nigeria cannot be overstated. Secondary School holds a very important role in the educational framework of all nations, as it prepares individuals for higher education and for useful living within the society, by imparting in them, the essential knowledge, skills and qualification needed for them to excel in higher education and contribute to societal development (Nnamdi et al., 2022). The use of library services in secondary schools is foundational to developing students' academic skills and independent learning capacity. When students borrow and return books, they engage in personalised learning, cultivating reading habits that support curriculum comprehension and exam preparedness (Adeniji, Amusan & Adesina, 2020). Lending and borrowing services in secondary schools contribute to reducing dependency on classroom materials alone, particularly where textbooks are limited (Okiki & Asiru, 2021).

These services are often interconnected with reference support, where students seek guidance from librarians on how to use catalogues, indexes, and bibliographic tools to locate academic materials relevant to their assignments and interests (Afolabi & Abidoye, 2018). Emezie and Nwaohiri (2020) emphasised that reference services, in turn, depend heavily on technical services such as cataloguing, classification, and processing, which enable orderly arrangement and prompt access to materials. Without a well-organised technical operations, reference and circulation services become ineffective. School libraries are also established to provide current awareness services which keep users informed about new acquisitions, trending academic topics, and evolving areas of study through bulletin boards, alerts, and displays (Aderibigbe & Farouk, 2019). These services are vital in helping secondary school students stay updated and competitive in their academic pursuits and daily living. Despite the value of these services, research shows that their actual usage among Nigerian secondary school students remains low due to limited user education, insufficient professional staff, and infrastructural deficits (Olayemi & Ojo, 2022).

The provision of these services is uneven across Nigerian secondary schools, with urban and private institutions typically better resourced than their rural and public counterparts. Technical services are sometimes absent due to a lack of trained librarians, resulting in disorganised collections and poor accessibility (Eze & Uzoigwe, 2019). Lending services are often restricted in schools where theft and non-return of books have become recurrent issues, thereby reducing access and undermining the trust in students' borrowing responsibility (Ogunsola & Olayemi, 2021). Salami and Oyewusi (2023) argued that reference services are sometimes carried out by teachers rather than trained library staff, thus limiting the quality of information literacy instruction (Salami & Oyewusi, 2023). Also, current awareness services are largely absent in many secondary school libraries due to poor funding and lack of ICT facilities that could facilitate timely updates (Osinulu & Babalola, 2022).

Globally, the provision and utilisation of these services in secondary schools reflect educational investment and policy prioritisation. In many developed nations such as the United State, Finland and South Korea, school libraries are integrated into the curriculum with clearly defined roles for librarians in providing reference and current awareness services through digital platforms and structured reading programmes (Williams & Wavell, 2018). Secondary school libraries are fully staffed and technologically advanced, offering real-time catalogue access and information alert systems to enhance usage (Kwon & Song, 2021). These contrasts underscore the gap between developed and developing nations in terms of library infrastructure and user engagement. In Nigeria, although policies such as the National Policy on Education emphasise the importance of school libraries, implementation remains a challenge due to financial and administrative constraints (Ugah & Oboh, 2020). Kwara State, like

many other regions, faces similar challenges. According to Lawal & Jimoh (2023), many secondary schools in the state operate with inadequate library facilities and staff, leading to low provision and poor use of essential services like borrowing.

Specifically, in Ilorin, most public secondary schools have libraries in name only, because they are lacking the qualified personnel and updated materials necessary to offer robust services (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2022). Where services do exist, student engagement is often hindered by limited exposure to library skills and absence of regular orientation programmes. These realities underscore the urgent need for strategic investment in library development to support effective teaching and learning outcomes in secondary education. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the provision and use of library services by secondary students in Ilorin south local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

For any standard formal education there has to be a functional library. School libraries have been recognised with the role of creating, supporting and promoting reading and learning habits as well as acquisition of important knowledge and skills for students. School library equally aids in setting strong foundation for future use of library at the tertiary level of study. A well-established school library equally serves as a preparatory platform for students' future academic engagement with libraries at the tertiary level. However, the availability and actual usage of library services like technical services, borrowing and lending, reference assistance, within secondary schools in Nigeria remain a matter of growing concern. Previous efforts aimed at addressing this problem, in terms of policy formulation, and provision of accommodation for school libraries have not yielded any positive results as some of the most of the accommodation allocated for the school libraries do not organised information resources and qualified staff.

Provision and usage of library materials in school libraries could aid member in the school communities to enhance teaching and learning skills. The absence or inadequacy of these services such as disorganised technical processes, restricted borrowing opportunities, limited or non-existent reference support results in a significant gap in educational quality. This situation may amount to a denial of students' right to equitable access to learning resources and opportunities for academic development. Despite the benefits that might accrue to students and teachers, when functional libraries and relevant library resources and services are provided; research have indicated that most secondary schools do not have functional libraries to meet students and teachers' information demands. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the provision and use of library services by secondary students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the provision and use of library services by secondary school students in Ilorin south local government, Kwara state. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the types of library services provided in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area
2. examine the frequency of utilisation of library services by secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area
3. assess the perception of secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area regarding the availability and usefulness of library services.
4. investigate the challenges hindering the effective use of library services among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

Literature Review

Perception and use of school library services

The frequency at which students use school libraries reflects how much value they derive from library resources and services. Regular use of school libraries has been linked to improved academic performance, stronger reading culture, and higher learning motivation. Several studies across various geopolitical zones and international contexts have examined how often students utilise school libraries, the motivations behind their visits, and the corresponding implications on academic and personal development. Akande and Bamise (2017) conducted a quantitative investigation in Osun State involving 240 students, where findings indicated that a majority (53.5%) used the library weekly, 36.5% visited daily, and only 10.4% accessed the library monthly. Gender patterns emerged, with boys predominating in daily usage while females were more active weekly. Despite relatively fair usage statistics, the primary motive was solitary studying, with minimal enthusiasm for online services due to infrastructural inadequacies. The study underscores the limited role of digital resources in students' library experiences and calls for improved technological integration. In a more expansive study, Fakunle (2023) reported from Isokan Local Government in Osun State, revealing that library usage was largely driven by academic tasks such as assignments, assessments, and competitive preparations. Resources like magazines, journals, and internet services were most frequently utilised, indicating a gradual shift towards contemporary information tools. Nonetheless, barriers such as erratic electricity supply, absence of digital catalogues, and unavailability of support personnel constrained optimal use. This aligns with earlier findings by Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011), who highlighted systemic issues in Nigerian school libraries, including infrastructural decay, lack of qualified librarians, and obsolete collections, all of which negatively affect student engagement and frequency of use.

In Akure South, Ondo State, Daramola (2013) observed that school libraries were available but recorded very low patronage. The key reasons for visiting the library were largely restricted to reading and borrowing books. Jato, Ogunniyi and Olubiyo (2014) corroborated this trend in their study within Ondo West Local Government, where many students reported infrequent or zero library usage. Most who did use the library did so primarily to read notes or textbooks, reflecting a limited perception of the library as a holistic learning environment. Similarly, Moruf (2015) in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, concluded that the library was not being effectively utilised, and students lacked the skills or motivation to engage with its resources meaningfully.

International comparisons revealed that these usage patterns are not uniquely Nigerian. In Ilala District of Tanzania, Nguzo and Kuboka (2023) found that student frequency of library use was generally low, with reading habits driven more by entertainment interests, such as sports news, than academic purposes. The study further suggested that unless school libraries are integrated as compulsory academic components, their use will remain discretionary and peripheral. The situation during and after the COVID-19 pandemic also influenced access and frequency. Soulen and Tedrow (2021) in their US-based study found a significant reduction in library access during the pandemic. While access levels post-pandemic was expected to recover to pre-pandemic standards, the disruption highlighted the fragility of library access among different school types and student demographics. Students in face-to-face learning environments fared better than their online or hybrid counterparts in terms of access frequency, suggesting the role of physical presence in sustaining consistent library engagement. The challenges of frequency and effectiveness of use are further echoed in a study by Omonigho (2020) at Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure. Although a large proportion of respondents visited the library (90%), only 24% used the resources daily. More troubling was the finding that a notable number of students merely visited the library to read their personal textbooks, circumventing the library's core offerings. The preference for non-text materials coupled with complaints about obsolete resources and unfriendly library staff painted a picture of a facility out of step with students' expectations. Recommendations from the study included updating the library collections and providing professional development for library personnel to create a more engaging atmosphere conducive to frequent use.

Akanbi, Bashorun, and Olayinka (2019) in Ilorin similarly found that school libraries contributed to students' academic growth by supporting examination preparation and class participation. However, the frequency of library use was hampered by factors such as absence of audiovisuals, insufficient modern resources, and unhelpful staff. Despite recognising the immense potential of school libraries in enhancing students' academic performance, the study

highlighted a gap between the availability of resources and their effective, frequent utilisation. The implication is that there is a need for a robust strategic framework to revitalise school library services, with special emphasis on digital inclusion and user-centred service delivery. The focus on private institutions in Nnewi, Anambra State, as explored by Nnamdi et al. (2021), added a new dimension to the discourse. While all surveyed schools had libraries with books and some level of ICT equipment, actual usage remained low. The absence of qualified librarians and dedicated library periods reduced student engagement. Notably, unrestricted access did not translate into frequent or effective use, which points to the inadequacy of access alone as a motivating factor. The authors recommended sustained awareness campaigns, policy intervention mandating library periods, and acquisition strategies guided by actual student information needs.

A study by Issa and Akande (2019) found that less than 40% of secondary school students in Nigeria use the library regularly, with a significant number visiting only during examination periods. This limited usage suggests that many students view the library only as a last resort rather than an integral part of their daily learning process. In contrast, students in well-equipped private schools tend to use the library more frequently due to better facilities, updated books, and structured reading programmes (Obasi & Eze, 2018). One major reason for low library patronage is the rigid school schedule, which often leaves students with little or no time for extracurricular reading. Additionally, some students lack proper orientation on library benefits and services, leading to disinterest in visiting the library. Schools must actively encourage a culture of regular library use by integrating library sessions into the academic timetable (Nwosu & Nwachukwu, 2018).

The perception of secondary school students regarding the availability, adequacy, relevance, and quality of library services can either catalyse or constrain the intended function of school libraries as knowledge resource centres. A study by Eghosa (2012) examined this phenomenon by probing the notion of the library as a tool for examination success. Drawing from a sample of 200 outgoing and outgone Senior Secondary III students, the study tested the hypothesis that the performance of students in examinations was not significantly influenced by the use of library services. The result, analysed using chi-square techniques, showed no statistically significant relationship, thus affirming the hypothesis. However, this outcome was interpreted not as a disproof of the library's relevance, but as a reflection of the declining utilisation and perceived usefulness of school libraries due to systemic neglect and diminished quality. The study called for a more proactive intervention from the Nigerian Library Association and policymakers, arguing that without budgetary commitment and revitalisation, libraries would remain marginalised in the educational ecosystem and continue to be perceived as irrelevant or mythical relics of the past.

In a more recent and comprehensive investigation, Obadiora, Alarape and Rasaq (2024) evaluated the perception of education stakeholders including principals, teachers, library personnel, and students on the availability and use of library facilities and resources in secondary schools across Osun State. The study, with a robust sample size of 400 participants, employed a survey design to capture multi-perspective insights. The results revealed a consensus among all stakeholder groups that library resources in the surveyed schools were grossly inadequate and poorly maintained. The perception of students mirrored this institutional reality, as learners expressed low confidence in the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of the library facilities provided. More striking was the convergence in perception between stakeholders in public and private schools, indicating that underutilisation and neglect of libraries cut across institutional boundaries. The grand criterion mean falling below 2.5 underscored a negative overall perception, thereby contributing to the disinterest and low use among students. This reveals that even when libraries exist in schools, the students' perception is shaped not by nominal presence but by the quality, richness, and responsiveness of the services rendered therein. Ogunbawo et al. (2022) extended this discourse by connecting students' early exposure to school libraries with their later perceptions and utilisation of academic libraries at the university level. The study, which surveyed 394 undergraduates of the University of Lagos, found that students' awareness and experience of library services during primary and secondary school significantly influenced their later usage of university library resources. This implies that a positive perception and functional experience with school libraries can foster lifelong library habits, information-seeking skills, and independent learning. Conversely, limited exposure or negative perceptions during earlier educational stages may lead to disengagement from library use in higher education contexts, regardless of the quality of academic libraries available. These findings advocate for a systemic overhaul in how students perceive library services from an early age, starting from primary and secondary school levels, through deliberate policy enforcement, awareness creation, and improved user experience.

The cumulative findings from these studies draw attention to several key themes in students' perception of library services. First, the perception is strongly influenced by tangible factors such as availability of current materials, conducive reading environments, friendly and knowledgeable library staff, and integration of digital resources. When these components are missing or substandard, students tend to view the library as an outdated or irrelevant space, primarily serving administrative rather than academic purposes. Also, institutional signals such as whether schools include library orientation in the curriculum, allocate dedicated library periods, and assess library-related activities affect how students conceptualise the library's role in their learning journey. A school that visibly prioritises the library as a strategic academic support system shapes student

perception positively, leading to higher patronage and deeper engagement. Furthermore, perception is not formed in isolation but is a product of interaction between users (students), service providers (librarians and teachers), and the learning environment. When students encounter obsolete books, restricted access, or indifferent staff attitudes, they are likely to internalise negative beliefs about the value of library services. This aligns with the findings of Obadiora et al. (2024), where inadequacies in both public and private school libraries contributed to a pervasive view of libraries as peripheral or inconsequential to core learning outcomes. Thus, students' perceptions are often affected by the socio-cultural narrative surrounding libraries.

As noted by Eghosa (2012), earlier generations saw libraries as indispensable to academic success, but this belief is fading among contemporary students who have not been adequately socialised into the culture of library use. In the age of smartphones, internet cafés, and on-demand information platforms, libraries must redefine their identity and value proposition if they are to reverse negative or indifferent perceptions among digital-native students. If libraries are to be perceived as dynamic knowledge hubs rather than relics of an analogue era, they must evolve in form, function, and visibility. Ultimately, the perception of library services among secondary school students is not merely an attitudinal issue but a complex, layered outcome of policy neglect, infrastructural decay, pedagogical detachment, and the failure to embed libraries meaningfully into the educational process. Students' perceptions of the libraries vary, with some viewing the library as a valuable academic resource, while others see it as an outdated or restrictive space (Obasi & Eze, 2018). A positive attitude towards libraries is often linked to prior exposure to library use, availability of engaging resources, and active efforts by schools to promote library culture. Students who frequent the library often appreciate its role in providing a quiet study environment, access to diverse books, and research assistance. They tend to have a higher level of academic engagement and demonstrate a stronger reading culture compared to those who rarely visit the library (Nwosu & Nwachukwu, 2018). However, students who avoid library use often cite reasons such as strict rules, lack of interesting books, or an unwelcoming environment. In some cases, libraries impose rigid borrowing restrictions, preventing students from taking books home, which discourages usage (Adebayo & Lawal, 2018). Additionally, students who struggle with reading comprehension may feel intimidated by the library setting and prefer alternative study methods. To improve students' attitudes towards library services, schools should introduce interactive library programmes, encourage book clubs, and allow for flexible borrowing policies. Providing comfortable reading spaces, digital resources, and friendly library staff can also enhance students' perception of libraries (Okon & Udoh, 2018).

Challenges hindering the use of library services in secondary schools

Despite the globally acknowledged role of school libraries as pivotal learning resources that supplement classroom instruction, enhance academic achievement, and promote a culture of reading, their actual utilisation in secondary schools especially in developing countries remains significantly undermined by a constellation of persistent challenges. One of the most recurring challenges confronting school libraries is the shortage and poor quality of physical resources, which limits their effectiveness and discourages student usage. Desta (2020) reported that in the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia, students faced considerable difficulty in accessing current and relevant reading materials, with libraries often stocked with outdated, inadequate, or irrelevant content. The libraries studied were also plagued by poor physical infrastructure, including insufficient reading space and inappropriate furniture, which limited their usability and comfort. Similar infrastructural deficits were reported by Malekani and Mubofu (2019) in Tanzanian schools, where libraries often operated without standard buildings, lacked designated reading areas, and were not furnished with appropriate instructional materials such as chairs, desks, or up-to-date textbooks.

These findings are mirrored in Nigeria by Suleiman et al. (2018), who observed that many secondary school libraries in Kwara State lacked essential technological tools such as computers, printers, and internet access critical components in today's digitally driven educational landscape. In a similar vein, Haji and Moh'd (2024) reported that students in the West "A" District of Zanzibar experienced library services characterised by limited operational hours, inadequate resources, and insufficient reading facilities, thereby deterring consistent engagement with the library space. The physical condition of school libraries plays a crucial role in determining how frequently students use them. In many secondary schools, especially those in rural and underfunded areas, library buildings are either too small, poorly designed, or completely absent (Ogunniyi & Olanrewaju, 2018). Another significant bottleneck identified in the literature is the absence of adequately trained and professionally motivated library personnel. As noted by Tabassum et al. (2019) in their study of public high schools in Pakistan, most school libraries suffered from a severe shortage of qualified staff, which compromised the delivery of essential library services and weakened students' engagement with information resources. Udem, Ojibah, and Anunobi (2021) similarly highlighted that in Onitsha North, Nigeria, library services were limited by human resource constraints, with many schools either lacking full-time librarians or having library staff with insufficient training in instructional support and information management. Furthermore, Meyers (2025) provided a nuanced analysis of teacher-librarian dynamics within school libraries in the Pacific Northwest, noting that inconsistencies between librarians' self-perception and their actual interactions with students impeded information-seeking behaviours. Teacher-librarians often failed to provide affective support, validate students' prior learning experiences, or collaborate meaningfully with

classroom teachers thus hindering the creation of a library culture conducive to academic exploration.

In many schools, untrained staff or teachers are assigned to manage libraries, which often leads to poor organisation of resources, inadequate student support, and ineffective library operations (Nwosu & Nwachukwu, 2018). Qualified librarians play a crucial role in cataloging books, assisting students in research, and organising library programmes. However, due to financial constraints, many schools do not employ full-time librarians, leaving libraries underutilised and ineffective (Adebayo & Lawal, 2018). Moreover, the absence of professional librarians means that students receive little or no guidance on how to find and use information effectively. This discourages them from utilising library resources and instead pushes them towards alternative, and sometimes unreliable, sources of information such as the internet and social media (Okon & Udoh, 2018).

The inability of governments and school administrators to allocate sufficient financial resources for library development constitutes another major hindrance to the sustainability of school libraries. In their review of the Tanzanian context, Malekani and Mubofu (2019) observed that despite the strategic role of libraries in promoting quality education, most government officials failed to prioritise library development in their education budgets. Likewise, Omar et al. (2023), while examining school libraries in Zanzibar, highlighted that there was a lack of clear policies, implementation frameworks, and budgetary commitments geared towards aligning school library functions with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) on inclusive and equitable quality education. In Nigeria, Udem et al. (2021) pointed out that despite the increasing demand for school library services, funding remained abysmally low, leading to the deterioration of facilities and the inability to stock up-to-date materials. The authors recommended stronger policy frameworks and direct interventions from state education ministries to ensure that libraries are not relegated to mere storage rooms, but revitalised as centres of learning and lifelong academic engagement. Many schools operate on tight budgets, prioritising classrooms, teacher salaries, and administrative expenses over library development (Ogunniyi & Olanrewaju, 2018). The lack of financial investment results in poorly stocked libraries, outdated books, and insufficient digital resources, making it difficult for students to find relevant learning materials. Research by Issa and Akande (2019) indicates that in many secondary schools, library budgets are either non-existent or insufficient, leading to an over-reliance on old textbooks and limited reading materials. Without adequate funding, it is nearly impossible to maintain or expand library collections, purchase new books, or introduce modern technologies such as e-books and online databases.

Additionally, many schools lack financial support for library maintenance and

upgrades. As a result, libraries become physically unattractive, poorly ventilated, and overcrowded, discouraging students from using them (Obasi & Eze, 2018). Proper financial allocation is essential to ensure that school libraries provide students with modern, relevant, and up-to-date information sources. Several studies also revealed that students' personal characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds influence their engagement with library services. According to Udem et al. (2021), students whose parents were traders or civil servants showed higher tendencies to use the school library, suggesting that parental influence and socio-economic background play a subtle but critical role in shaping students' academic habits. The study also found that while subject choices did not significantly affect library usage, factors such as distance from home, time constraints, and status as day students contributed to variations in frequency of library use.

In Jean's (2021) Rwandan study, a lack of motivation and poor reading culture among students was also identified as a significant barrier to library usage. The researcher observed that even when facilities were available, students rarely allocated time for reading or information seeking. A similar point is made by Desta (2020), who lamented the low interest in reading among students, coupled with insufficient encouragement from teachers, as a major factor limiting engagement with library materials. Furthermore, the rise of digital technology and the internet has significantly altered how students access information. While digital learning tools can enhance education, they also pose challenges to traditional library use (Ogunniyi & Olanrewaju, 2018). Many students prefer to use smartphones, Google searches, Wikipedia, and online study platforms instead of borrowing books from the library. In some cases, students lack the patience to read lengthy books and research materials, opting for quick summaries, online videos, and social media discussions (Obasi & Eze, 2018). This shift in reading habits means that libraries must adapt by incorporating digital resources, e-books, and online research tools to stay relevant (Nwosu & Nwachukwu, 2018). However, many school libraries lack internet access, digital learning tools, and modern technology, making it difficult to compete with online alternatives. Schools that integrate smart libraries with digital cataloging systems have reported higher student engagement compared to those relying solely on physical books (Issa & Akande, 2019).

Methodology

The population for this study comprised senior secondary school (SS1 to SS3) students from selected secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. The study focuses on senior secondary school students because they are more likely to use library services for academic purposes, including examination preparation, research, and reading. Table 1 presents the estimated number of students in each selected school:

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	Schools	SS1	SS2	SS3	Total
1	Rehoboth College, Ilorin	54	48	59	161
2	Gloryland College	30	26	39	95
3	Excellent Schools	9	19	-	28
4	Evergreen College	43	36	54	133
5	Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model	145	87	78	310
6	Molly's School	4	7	7	18
7	Effective International College	51	33	55	139
8	Chapel Secondary School	102	98	94	294
Total		438	354	288	1178

Source: Office of the VP Admin of each School

The total study population consists of 1,178 senior secondary school students across the eight selected schools.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

In this study, the sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, which is widely used in social sciences for selecting an appropriate sample from a finite population. The formula is: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where:

n= Required sample size

N= Total population (1,240)

e= Margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1,178}{1 + 1,178(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,178}{1 + 2.94}$$

$$n = \frac{1,178}{3.94}$$

$$n = 299$$

Thus, the sample size for this study is 299 students.

A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants from the chosen schools. This method ensures that each school is represented proportionally to its total student population, maintaining a balanced distribution across different school environments. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was chosen to have a fair and balanced representation of students from all selected secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, enhancing the reliability and validity of the research findings. Since each school has a different number of students, this method ensures fair representation in the sample. Stratification ensures that no school is overrepresented or underrepresented, reducing potential bias in findings. The proportionate sample size for each school is calculated as follows:

Table 2: Sample Size distributed across each secondary school

S/N	Schools	Population	Sample
1	Rehoboth College, Ilorin	161	41
2	Gloryland College	95	24
3	Excellent Schools	28	7
4	Evergreen College	133	34
5	Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model	310	79
6	Molly's School	18	5
7	Effective International College	139	35
8	Chapel Secondary School	294	74
Total		1,178	299

The data was collected through face-to-face distribution of questionnaire to the respondents. A total of 299 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the students across the selected schools. Out of the 299 expected responses from the survey conducted, 282 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire with useful data. However, during the course of sorting and cleaning the Data, 8 copies of the questionnaires were found unusable for analysis due to incomplete and wrong filling by the respondents. Thus, the remaining 274 copies of questionnaire were used for the analysis at 91.6% response rate. The breakdown of distribution of respondents is shown in Table 3.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents and response rate

S/N	State	Population	Expected Responses	Quantity Retrieved	Response Rate (%)
1	Rehoboth College, Ilorin	161	41	38	92.7
2	Gloryland College	95	24	20	83.3
3	Excellent Schools	28	7	7	100
4	Evergreen College	133	34	30	88.2
5	Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model	310	79	72	91.1
6	Molly's School	18	5	5	100
7	Effective International College	139	35	34	97.1
8	Chapel Secondary School	294	74	68	91.9
Total		1,178	299	274	91.6

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.1 presents the distribution of respondents across the eight selected secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, along with their respective populations, expected responses, actual responses retrieved, and the corresponding response rates. As earlier stated, a total of 299 questionnaires were distributed based on proportionate sampling from the total student population of 1,178 across eight schools. Of these, 274 valid responses were retrieved and analysed, resulting in a high response rate of 91.6%, which is considered satisfactory and sufficient for meaningful analysis. From the

breakdown, Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model had the highest student population of 310 and was allotted 79 questionnaires. Out of these, 72 were successfully retrieved and used, reflecting a response rate of 91.1%. Similarly, Chapel Secondary School, with a population of 294 and 74 expected responses, returned 68 completed copies, yielding a response rate of 91.9%.

Rehoboth College, Ilorin, which had a population of 161 and an expected response of 41, returned 38 completed questionnaires, accounting for 92.7% of its quota. Effective International College had a strong showing as well, retrieving 34 out of 35 expected responses, translating to a 97.1% response rate. In the case of Evergreen College, with an expected sample of 34 based on a population of 133, 30 valid responses were obtained, which constitutes a 88.2% response rate. Gloryland College received 24 questionnaires and returned 20 usable ones, reflecting the lowest response rate among all schools at 83.3%. Despite having smaller populations, both Excellent Schools and Molly's School recorded full participation. Excellent Schools, with a population of 28 and an expected 7 responses, returned all 7, resulting in a 100% response rate. Similarly, Molly's School, with a population of 18 and an expected 5 responses, returned all 5, also achieving 100%. Overall, the response rates across the schools ranged from 83.3% to 100%, demonstrating a commendable level of cooperation from the students and the schools. This high level of participation enhances the reliability and generalisability of the findings.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
(N=274)

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent (%)
Name of School	Rehoboth College, Ilorin	38	13.9
	GloryLand College	20	7.3
	Excellent Schools	7	2.6
	Evergreen College	30	10.9
	Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model	72	26.3
	Molly's School	5	1.8
	Effective International College	34	12.4
	Chapel Secondary School	68	24.8
	Total	274	100
Gender	Male	141	51.5
	Female	133	48.5
	Total	274	100
Age	10-12 Years	41	15.0
	13-15 Years	111	40.5
	16-20 Years	99	36.1
	Above 18 Years	23	8.4
	Total	274	100
Class	SS1	110	40.1
	SS2	81	29.6
	SS3	83	30.3
	Total	274	100
Type of School	Public School	0	.0
	Private School	274	100.0
	Total	274	100
Do you have a functioning Library in your school?	No	83	30.3
	Yes	156	56.9
	Not Sure	35	12.8
	Total	274	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4 outlines the demographic distribution of the 274 respondents drawn from eight private secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area. These demographics are categorised into six key variables: name of school, gender, age, class level, type of school, and availability of a functioning library. In terms of school affiliation, the highest number of respondents were drawn from Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Model School, which contributed 72 (26.3%) to the total sample. Chapel Secondary School followed closely with 68 (24.8%), while Rehoboth College, Ilorin had 38 (13.9%). Effective International College accounted for 12.4% (n=34), and Evergreen College contributed 30 respondents (10.9%). Other schools with lower representation include Gloryland College (7.3%, n=20), Excellent Schools (2.6%, n=7), and Molly's School, which had the least number of respondents at 1.8% (n=5). With regard to gender, the sample population showed a relatively balanced distribution. Male students constituted a slight majority, accounting for 51.5% (n=141), while female students made up

48.5% (n=133). In terms of age, the majority of respondents fell within the 13–15 years category, representing 40.5% (n=111) of the total sample. This was followed by the 16–20 years group, which accounted for 36.1% (n=99). Respondents aged 10–12 years constituted 15.0% (n=41), while only 8.4% (n=23) were above 18 years. This distribution is reflective of the typical age brackets for students in senior secondary school levels in Nigeria. With respect to class level, students in Senior Secondary School 1 (SS1) had the highest representation with 110 respondents (40.1%). SS3 students followed with 83 respondents (30.3%), while SS2 students comprised 29.6% (n=81) of the total sample. This distribution indicates a strong representation across all levels of senior secondary education. Regarding the type of school, all 274 respondents (100%) were drawn from private secondary schools, in alignment with the study's purposive sampling focus on privately owned institutions within Ilorin South LGA. Finally, in terms of awareness of a functioning school library, a majority of the respondents (56.9%, n=156) indicated that their schools had a functional library. However, a significant proportion (30.3%, n=83) reported that no such facility existed in their schools, while 12.8% (n=35) of the students were uncertain about the presence or functionality of a library in their institution. This variation in responses highlights existing disparities in school infrastructure and library development, even within the private education sector.

Answers to Research Questions

Table 5: Library services provided for secondary schools in Ilorin south local government (N=274)

Library Services	SA		A		D		SD		$\bar{x}$	S.D
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Borrowing of books	42	15.3	139	50.7	58	21.2	35	12.8	2.69	0.88
Reading space for study	86	31.4	106	38.7	58	21.2	24	8.8	2.93	0.94
Access to newspapers or magazines	24	8.8	55	20.1	75	27.4	120	43.8	1.94	0.99
Reference services (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopaedias)	79	28.8	85	31.0	65	23.7	45	16.4	2.72	1.05
Internet or computer services	14	5.1	37	13.5	53	19.3	170	62.0	1.62	0.90
Assistance from a librarian	51	18.6	78	28.5	93	33.9	52	19.0	2.47	1.00
Audio-visual materials	15	5.5	34	12.4	53	19.3	172	62.8	1.61	0.91
Weighted Mean = 2.28										

Source: Field Survey 2025

Note: SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents the on the types of library services provided in their respective schools. Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly

Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA), with accompanying mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D) values. The overall weighted mean of $\bar{x} = 2.28$ indicates a generally low to moderate level of provision of library services across the selected schools. Among the services assessed, reading space for study recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.93$). This was closely followed by reference services such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias ($\bar{x} = 2.72$) and borrowing of books ($\bar{x} = 2.69$). Assistance from a librarian also had a fairly moderate mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.47$). Conversely, the lowest mean scores were observed in areas reflecting digital and modern library services. Internet or computer services ($\bar{x} = 1.62$) and audio-visual materials ($\bar{x} = 1.61$) were rated poorly, with over 60% of respondents strongly disagreeing to their availability. Access to newspapers or magazines also reflected a low mean score ($\bar{x} = 1.94$). These findings highlight that while basic traditional services like reading spaces and book borrowing are somewhat in place, specialised, digital, and supportive library services remain largely underdeveloped in many of the schools surveyed in Ilorin South Local Government.

Table 6: Frequency of using library services by secondary school students in Ilorin south local government (N=274)

Frequency	D		W		O		N		$\bar{x}$	S.D
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Read textbooks	31	11.3	84	30.7	113	41.2	46	16.8	2.36	0.89
Do assignments	35	12.8	58	21.2	132	48.2	49	17.9	2.29	0.91
Read novels or storybooks	23	8.4	65	23.7	79	28.8	107	39.1	2.01	0.98
Prepare for examinations	21	7.7	74	27.0	115	42.0	64	23.4	2.19	0.88
Read newspapers or magazines	15	5.5	26	9.5	50	18.2	183	66.8	1.54	0.88
Use the computer/internet	10	3.6	11	4.0	33	12.0	220	80.3	1.31	0.72
Read textbooks	38	13.9	92	33.6	114	41.6	30	10.9	2.50	0.86
Weighted Mean = 2.03										

Source: Field Survey 2025

Note: D= Daily; W= Weekly; O= Occasionally; N= Never Used

Table 6 presents data on the frequency of use of library services among 274 secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area. Responses were captured using a four-point scale: Daily (D), Weekly (W), Occasionally (O), and Never (N), with corresponding mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviations (S.D) provided for each item. The overall weighted mean of $\bar{x} = 2.03$ suggests a generally low frequency of library use among the surveyed students. The most frequently reported activity was reading textbooks ($\bar{x} = 2.50$). Similarly, doing assignments ($\bar{x} = 2.29$) and preparing for examinations ($\bar{x} = 2.19$) were fairly common activities, though still predominantly carried out only occasionally. Less academic or recreational activities such as reading novels or storybooks ($\bar{x}$

= 2.01) were even less frequent. Worryingly, the lowest levels of use were recorded for reading newspapers or magazines ($\bar{x} = 1.54$) and using the computer/internet ($\bar{x} = 1.31$). The overall picture suggests that while basic academic support such as textbook reading and assignment completion occurs moderately, the broader, more enriching functions of school libraries, such as exposure to current affairs, access to digital resources, and recreational reading, are either underutilised or altogether absent.

Table 7: Perception of library services by secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government
(N=274)

Perception of Library Services	SA		A		D		SD		$\bar{x}$	S.D
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
The school library is important to my academic success.	95	34.7	103	37.6	61	22.3	15	5.5	3.01	0.89
I enjoy reading and studying in the school library.	87	31.8	103	37.6	65	23.7	19	6.9	2.94	0.91
The materials in the school library are useful for my studies.	83	30.3	110	40.1	50	18.2	31	11.3	2.89	0.96
The school library encourages me to read more.	69	25.2	105	38.3	55	20.1	45	16.4	2.72	1.02
My teachers encourage us to use the library.	66	24.1	91	33.2	65	23.7	52	19.0	2.62	1.05
The library is quiet and conducive for reading.	53	19.3	76	27.7	94	34.3	51	18.6	2.48	1.01
Weighted Mean = 2.78										

Source: Field Survey 2025

Note: SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree

Table 7 presents the perceptions of secondary school students regarding library services. The responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with a weighted mean of $\bar{x} = 2.78$, indicating a generally positive perception of school library services. The highest-rated item was "The school library is important to my academic success" ($\bar{x} = 3.01$). Similarly, "I enjoy reading and studying in the school library" ($\bar{x} = 2.94$) and "The materials in the school library are useful for my studies" ($\bar{x} = 2.89$) also recorded strong agreement levels, reflecting a generally favourable attitude towards the academic value of the library. However, perception slightly declined on affective and environmental aspects. While 63.5% agreed that the library encourages them to read more ($\bar{x} = 2.72$), fewer respondents felt that teachers encourage them to use the library ($\bar{x} = 2.62$), and only 47% agreed that the

library is quiet and conducive for reading ($\bar{x} = 2.48$). Overall, students acknowledge the importance and usefulness of school libraries, though concerns around environment and external motivation persist.

Table 8: Challenges hindering the use of Library Services among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government (N=274)

Challenge	SA		A		D		SD		$\bar{x}$	S.D
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Library is always closed	78	28.5	105	38.3	49	17.9	42	15.3	2.80	1.02
Lack of current or relevant books	92	33.6	86	31.4	55	20.1	41	15.0	2.84	1.06
No space to sit or study	71	25.9	67	24.5	89	32.5	47	17.2	2.59	1.05
Not enough time allowed to use the library	63	23.0	88	32.1	70	25.5	53	19.3	2.59	1.05
No help from the librarian	55	20.1	81	29.6	85	31.0	53	19.3	2.50	1.02
The library is too far from my classroom	24	8.8	61	22.3	67	24.5	122	44.5	1.95	1.01
I don't know how to use the library properly	71	25.9	82	29.9	60	21.9	61	22.3	2.59	1.10
No interest in visiting the library	97	35.4	88	32.1	53	19.3	36	13.1	2.90	1.03
Library is noisy or uncomfortable	84	30.7	73	26.6	69	25.2	48	17.5	2.70	1.08
Weighted Mean = 2.61										

Source: Field Survey 2025

Note: SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree

Table 8 presents the challenges hindering the use of library services among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government. Using a four-point Likert scale, the responses reveal a weighted mean of $\bar{x} = 2.61$, indicating that students face moderate to high levels of constraint in accessing and utilising library services. The most commonly identified challenge was "No interest in visiting the library" ($\bar{x} = 2.90$), with 67.5% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. This was followed by "Lack of current or relevant books" ($\bar{x} = 2.84$), and "Library is always closed" ($\bar{x} = 2.80$), highlighting major institutional and motivational barriers. Other challenges included "Library is noisy or uncomfortable" ($\bar{x} = 2.70$), "No space to sit or study" ($\bar{x} = 2.59$), "Not enough time allowed to use the library" ($\bar{x} = 2.59$), and "I don't know how to use the library properly" ($\bar{x} = 2.59$), suggesting a mix of infrastructural, policy-related, and skill-based issues. The least cited challenge was "The library is too far from my classroom" ($\bar{x} = 1.95$), indicating that physical proximity is not a major hindrance in most schools. In summary, the key obstacles to effective library use include lack of interest, outdated or insufficient resources, poor library access

policies, and an uncondusive environment, all of which require urgent intervention to improve library utilisation in secondary schools.

Discussion of findings

Types of library services provided in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area

The study revealed that the types of library services available to students in the area remain predominantly traditional focusing largely on reading rooms, textbook access, and reference services. There was minimal presence of digital services or multimedia resources, suggesting an analogue-centric service model that may not align with contemporary student expectations. This finding is consistent with earlier observations by Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011), who noted that systemic issues such as obsolete collections and infrastructural decay undermine the quality of school libraries across Nigeria. Similarly, Akanbi, Bashorun, and Olayinka (2019) found that while libraries in Ilorin do contribute to academic activities, their lack of modern resources, including audiovisuals and ICT infrastructure, limits their relevance in today's digital learning context. Obadiora, Alarape, and Rasdaq (2024) further reinforced this by revealing a consensus among stakeholders in Osun State that library services remain grossly inadequate, with resources that fail to inspire confidence or consistent usage among students.

Frequency of use of library services provided in secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area

The findings indicates that students' engagement with library services is largely driven by necessity particularly academic requirements such as assignments and examination preparation. However, usage remains occasional rather than habitual, and activities like leisure reading or digital exploration are not common. This pattern suggests a functional but uninspired relationship with library services. These findings align with Akande and Bamise (2017), who reported that while a fair number of students in Osun State use libraries weekly or daily, usage was mostly limited to solitary academic tasks, with little inclination toward using digital resources due to infrastructural deficiencies. Similarly, Fakunle (2023) identified that most students use libraries primarily for school-related tasks but are restricted by poor electricity, lack of support staff, and the absence of digital catalogues. Further afield, Nguzo and Kuboka (2023) found in Tanzania that unless library use is embedded into the academic framework, students rarely engage consistently. Their findings is in tandem with those of Soulen and Tedrow (2021), who noted the fragility of library access during the COVID-19 era reinforcing the idea that library usage is often circumstantial rather than habitual. In Nigeria, Jato, Oggunniyi and Olubiyo (2014) and Daramola (2013) both observed low levels of library patronage among secondary school students, especially where library usage was not actively promoted by the school. Issa and Akande (2019) confirmed that fewer

than 40% of students use the library regularly, a finding that further underscores the need for structural timetabling, awareness campaigns, and active library promotion in schools.

Perception of secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area regarding the availability and usefulness of library services

The perception among students revealed a dual reality. While most students recognised the usefulness of the library for academic purposes, particularly reading and exam preparation, their views on availability and environment were less positive. Many expressed dissatisfaction with teacher involvement, library ambience, and the quality of support provided by library staff. This is in tandem with the findings of Obadiora et al. (2024), who concluded that students' perceptions are often shaped by the quality, responsiveness, and richness of library services rather than their mere existence. Similarly, Nnamdi et al. (2021) found that even when facilities and ICT tools were available in private schools, students remained disengaged due to absence of qualified staff and structured library periods. The role of socio-cultural influence on perception was highlighted by Eghosa (2012), who observed a declining belief in the importance of libraries among modern students, mainly due to deteriorating service quality. This trend was echoed by Ogunbawo et al. (2022), who found that students' early exposure or lack thereof to functional libraries influenced their future library habits and information-seeking behaviours.

Challenges hindering the effective use of library services among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area

The study identified a variety of challenges hindering the effective use of library services among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area including frequent closure of libraries, limited availability of relevant books, insufficient seating, time constraints, poor staff support, noise, and general student disinterest. These reflect both structural and behavioural barriers to library engagement. These findings resonate strongly with Suleiman et al. (2018), who reported that many libraries in Kwara State lack basic technological tools and infrastructural support. In a similar vein, Desta (2020) in Ethiopia and Malekani and Mubofu (2019) in Tanzania exposed severe infrastructural shortcomings such as outdated collections, inadequate seating, and poorly furnished library spaces. These global parallels highlight a universal challenge of under-resourced school libraries, particularly in low-income regions. In Nigeria, Omonigho (2020) found that while library visitation might be high, actual usage of resources remains low, often due to obsolete materials and unfriendly staff. Likewise, Akanbi et al. (2019) in Ilorin emphasised the negative impact of the absence of modern resources and untrained staff on effective utilisation. Globally, the experiences shared in the Haji and Moh'd (2024) study in Zanzibar reflect the same pattern: limited operational hours, absence of materials, and discomfort in library spaces reduce usage and interest. These common challenges

affirm the urgent need for structural upgrades, staff capacity building, and student-centred innovation to transform libraries from neglected corners into lively academic hubs.

Conclusion

This study investigated the provision and use of library services by secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government, Kwara state. The findings revealed a persistent disconnect between the potential of school libraries as vital academic resources and their actual utilisation by secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area. While libraries are available in several schools, their services are limited, underutilised, and often disconnected from the academic needs and daily learning patterns of students. The frequency of library use remains worryingly low, and the perception of their relevance varies significantly, influenced by factors such as infrastructure, resource quality, librarian support, and institutional prioritisation. Students' attitudes toward libraries reveal a concerning trend of disengagement, driven by outdated collections, insufficient facilities, and a lack of compelling user experiences. The absence of digital tools and modern information services further compounds the situation, making libraries less attractive to digital-native learners. The study concludes that unless deliberate and coordinated efforts are made to revitalise library services, equip them with modern resources, and actively promote their relevance within the school curriculum, the usage and perception of school libraries will continue to decline.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. There is a need for substantial investment in library infrastructure across secondary schools. This includes the provision of updated and curriculum-relevant books, comfortable reading spaces, digital resources, and audio-visual learning tools. Government agencies, school management boards, and private sector partners should prioritise funding for modernising school libraries.
2. Structured library periods should be formally incorporated into the school timetable to increase the frequency and consistency of library usage. Students should be given guided assignments and projects that require them to consult library resources regularly. This academic integration would not only promote usage but also help students appreciate the role of libraries in knowledge acquisition.
3. Schools should conduct periodic orientation and sensitisation programmes to educate students on the range of services and benefits offered by the library.
4. Librarians play a pivotal role in shaping students' perceptions and library experiences. It is essential that trained and qualified librarians are

employed in schools, with a mandate to provide student-centred services.

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