

**STUDY SKILLS AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY STUDENTS OF
GOSPEL FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL,
IBADAN, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated how teaching of study skills and use of library resources can provoke effective utilization of available information resources in secondary schools. The survey research methodology was adopted for the study while the questionnaire and the experiment were used as data collecting instrument. Using the simple random sampling technique, the senior secondary students were grouped to two. Eighty (80) students were selected for the study. Each group comprised of 40 students i.e. the experimental group and the control group. The questionnaire instrument administration was twice, first as pre-test and later as post-test after subjects had undergone teachings on study skills and use of library resources. The study found out that over 38% of the respondents made use of some study techniques. Furthermore, 75% of students had had study skills training in school. The subjects also affirmed that study skill classes equipped them to effectively use library resources. However, environmental barriers, physical tiredness etc was found to have constituted hindrance to students not using the library resources effectively. Similarly, 85% of students affirmed study skills teaching enhanced their academic motivation. The study tested three hypotheses which were rejected and the alternate hypotheses accepted, implying there was a significant difference in all three cases. The study therefore concludes that teaching study skills and library use skills education is helpful and enables library users to effectively use the library resources and therefore recommended that teaching study skills be intensified in all schools at the elementary level.

Key Words:

Library Resources

Information Utilization

Study Skills

Ibadan

Librarians

INTRODUCTION

The academic environment is a place for teaching, learning, and research and knowledge creation. The library is a vital facility for enhancing learning, teaching, and research, and as the hub of all academic activities, is established for provoking intellectual excellence. The library is an information resource that provides and enhances personal and national development, and more so influence students' overall academic achievement. Thus, the effective utilization of information resources in the library is critical to students' overall academic achievement. The study skill(s) adopted determine to a large extent how well students utilize information resources culminating in academic success. Fayose (2001) points out that the library is essential to any educational development. Availability of adequate library facilities encourages passionate study behaviour in students early in life. It also helps students inculcate the attitude of self-inquiry and self-development. McPherson & Morton (1998) observed that educational standards are being revised and improved upon constantly, including educational competitiveness for high-achieving students. EMSTAC ((2002) asserts that Study skills are learning strategies that facilitate the processing of information. Johnston & Anderson (2010) citing Hyqal91 (2010) describe study skills as "conscious use of the processes of learning to achieve effective study practices". The ability to use information resources depends on individual's skills and study strategies. Anderson (200) observes that a study skills application involves thinking and metacognition, thinking and learning.

The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) in 1987 adopted an initiative called "The Dynamics of Effective Study" This was intended to equip students with study skills to enable them succeed academically in school. Secondary study skills courses were modeled through students' counseling services in Universities and Polytechnics to teach students how to learn. Thus, academic success of students depends largely on the learning platforms available to students including the library facility. Aanu & Olatoye (2011) noted that the quality of library collection has tremendous impact on student's academic performance and higher test scores and even more with a higher usage of the school library resources.

Elaturoti (1990) describes the school library as a place designed for provision of all kinds of learning resources. Fayose (1995) defined school library as the part of the school where a

collection of books, periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, films, filmstrip, videotapes, recording of different types and so on are housed.

Library resources refer to all input utilized in the library in order to provide a good learning environment for students, teachers and for the realization of educational goals. Library resources are in two major categories, the human and non-human resource. The human resources in the library refer to the library professionals, library officers and library assistants and others. They are responsible for the smooth running of the library and effective use of other resources. While the non-human resources include all print materials such as; reference books, dictionaries, etc and non- print materials such as ; videotape for instruction, slides and other software for instruction the print and non-print formats (Fakomogbon; Bada; and Omiola, 2012).

The Gospel Faith Mission International Comprehensive High School (GOFAMICHS) is a mission private secondary school, and established September 1995. The school has a library with a collection of nonfiction books such as textbooks covering different subjects; novels, magazines, newspapers, past examination questions, pamphlets, newsletters, Christian literature, including some reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedia, and biographies and others. The School Librarian is solely responsible for managing the library collection including acquiring and organizing them. The Library patrons include students, teachers and the non teaching staff of the school. In the school class Time-Table, period/time is allocated for teaching library resources use skills by the school librarian. Thus, students are equipped with the necessary skills for effective utilization of library resources.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The Library is an organized (acquired, processed, preserved) collection of books and non-books materials available for retrieval and use by library patrons who seek for information, read, learn and research. Primarily academic libraries have a sole responsibility of ensuring there are relevant academic resources available for all members of the academic community including meeting national information needs. Thus, students and faculty should be armed with information sourcing skills for accessing information from available library resources. A situation of lack of study skills and information seeking strategies by library users is majorly due to absence of emphasis on teaching of study/information seeking strategies. The absence of

teaching helpful learning skills to students at the elementary school level is one of the reasons for low student academic performance. It is worth noting that some students in the secondary schools and in the universities lack appropriate skills for acquiring useful information from library materials. Consequently, there is the problem of high level of information (knowledge) poverty that has consequences for the mass failure witnessed in today's education. Therefore, all stakeholders must begin to pursue the much desired change. In other words, there is a need to promote academic excellence and success among students across all levels of education through an effective study skills training and information seeking strategies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of this study include:

1. To ascertain the study skills of participating students.
2. To ascertain students' previous study skills training classes.
3. To determine the impact of the acquired study skills on their academic success.
4. To determine the barriers to the students' study success/achievement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above objectives, the study will focus on providing answers to the following questions and hypotheses:

- What study skills do these students possess?
- Do they take lessons on study skills?
- What impact has the study skills on students' academic success?
- What are the barriers to their achievement of successful studies?

HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant relationship between the Experimental Group and Control Group on Impact of teaching study skills/access to information and Students' Academic Performance.
- There is no significant relationship between the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test in Teaching Study Skills and Utilization of Library Resources.

- There is no significant comparison between Experimental group and Control group in access to library resources by students through the catalogue.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY SKILLS

A good system of education must be backed by good policies, in addition to teaching effective study skills from elementary school level through secondary education. That is why Ford (1996) citing the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), emphasized the need to introduce study skills in the early years of education to continue throughout the student's educational experience. Furthermore, it is important to reinforce study skills learned in middle school in the secondary school. Some researchers found that study skills enhance students' academic achievements (Mutsotso & Agenga, 2010). To a very large extent lack of good study skills among other factors can contribute to students' poor achievement in schools. Seventy-five percent of students who perform poorly do so because of poor study habits and ineffective examination techniques (Elliott & Wendling, 1996). Tucker (1999) found that poor study skills can contribute to academic failure. Academic competence is the ability to apply effective study skills (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002). Study skills may be defined according to Crede & Kuncel (2008) as the ability to apply suitable strategies and methods for study while utilizing time and resources efficiently. There is no one-study method that works better for all persons. The secret lies in the ability to identify personal study methods that work for each individual in given environments, conditions and circumstances. This requires making good decisions on how and when to study, including knowing what study strategies to adopt. Onwuegbuzie (2001) found there is a relationship between academic success and study habit and reported a positive relationship between the two variables.

STUDY SKILLS STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT/MOTIVATION

The importance of understanding study skills related factors such as time management, procrastination, concentration, memory, study aid/note taking, test strategies/test anxiety, organizing/processing of information, motivation/attitude, reading/selecting the main ideas, materials/methods to achievement in academics of students cannot be over emphasized. Study skills are necessary for an excellent academic experience. The level of learning achieved by a

learner is largely dependent on the success strategy deployed in the learning process. Shuell (1986) discusses the different ways used by individuals to process and organize information or to respond to environmental stimuli referred to as their learning styles. Haynes (1993) observes that study skills encompass a wide range of abilities, which facilitates academic achievement in diverse subject areas. He identifies common study skills strategies including motivational techniques, time management, and note taking, and test taking, organizational skills. Devine (1987) asserts that study skills are competences associated with acquiring, organizing, remembering, recording, synthesizing and using ideas and information found in school. According to Proctor, Prevatt, Adam, & Reaster (2006) students have challenges in school or college because they lack good study skills. Fazal, Hussain, Majoka & Masoon (2012) in a study found a significant correlation between overall use of study skills and academic achievement. The finding revealed a significant correlation for reading, time-management, and note taking with academic achievement, implying that these skills significantly affected students' academic achievement. Citing Hartley (1986) Fazal, Hussain, Majoka & Masoon (2012) noted that study skills courses focused on reading, writing, and note-taking skills the higher and secondary levels. Study skills include the following set of skills: reading, writing, note-taking, time-management, working with others, engaging in critical and analytical thinking, revising and remembering, in addition to information gathering (Johnston & Anderson, 2005).

An effective learner requires good thinking skill for a productive study. Gay (2002) asserts that Knowledge of the processes or thinking associated with bits of knowledge, adds a metacognitive component to it, increasing the network of connections made in the brain. The ability to ask questions, synthesize the new information with previous knowledge to provide answers is inevitable for a successful study. Academic competence is associated with the knowledge and application of study skills in the learning process (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002). While those experiencing academic difficulty are said to be lacking in effective study skills, students who have learnt to effectively imply the knowledge of study skills to their learning experience are regarded as academically competent (Fazal, Hussain, Majoka & Masood, 2012). Adam (2009) recommends note making (writing) is the outcome of a study process that is laden with high level of concentration and culminating in sound comprehension. He asserts that if concentration is related to attention then it means that concentration is achievable by becoming

more attentive. He supports the saying, that studying without concentration, is equal to filling a bucket with water when the bucket has a hole in its bottom. Marshall and Rowland (1998) opines that if concentration enables learning what you want to know, you are more likely to understand and be able to use it. Fazal, Hussain, Majoka & Masood (2012) discovered from their investigation that the use of a range/variety of study skills ultimately leads to high academic achievement compared to the use of a few or negligible study skills.

COMMON REASONS FOR POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS

Several factors have been found to influence students' overall performance in schools, such as socioeconomic background of students, family expectation, parents involvement in students' academics, study habits of students, students' traits and school factors, family socioeconomic status, family expectation (Conley, 1999), parents' academic involvement (Tucker, 1999; Yan, 1999) including poor study skills. In some studies students of high socioeconomic background have been found to perform better academically than students of low socioeconomic status. Family expectation is another factor that can affect students' academic achievement in school. Thus family support is one of the key factors affecting students' academic achievement. According to Goldberg and others (2006) self-discipline is a personality trait that is a strong indicator of good study habits, as students who are self-disciplined have the initiative to sit down and get their work done as compared to those students who are not very self-disciplined. Thus, underachievement is prevalent among students lacking in self-discipline. Sousa (2003) observed that a combination of factors both in the home and at school can cause students' underachievement. Reis and McCoach (2002) suggest that the impact of culture on academic performance should not be ignored when considering underachievement in schools, especially for foreigners. They maintain that these students face unique barriers to achievement, such as language problems. For example, minority students are frequently underrepresented in programmes, for gifted and talented students (Barbara, 2005). Further on reasons for students' lack of academic achievement, Agyemang (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both academic and professional qualification will undoubtedly have negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subjects. Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools from peri-urban areas in Ghana found that academic performance of students was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work.

STUDY SKILLS AND USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

The effects of study skills are associated with positive outcomes across multiple academic content areas and for diverse learners (Gettinger, & Seibert, 2002). Study skills refer to the student's knowledge of appropriate study strategies and methods and the ability to manage time and other resources to meet the demands of the academic tasks (Crede, and Kuncel, 2008). According to Zimmerman (1998) studying is a skill that requires training and practice. It involves the utilization of specific techniques to help a learner acquire, organize, retain, and use information. Students who are not armed with effective study strategies will have difficulty carrying out school or home assignments and even perform poorly in class test. Gettinger and Seibert (2002) citing Henley, Ramsey, and Algozzine (1996) and other works observed from their findings that students with weak study skills often experience problems. This implies that the better equipped students do well by using study skills, and therefore experience lesser problems.

Students, who are unequipped with good study skills, lack the capacity to utilize available school learning resources especially the library resources. For example the lack of skill in concentration will make it impossible for a student to engage in any meaningful study and utilization of library resources at any given time. The skill of concentration demands that a student is able to focused on a given activity per time. Grave (2010) carried out an investigation on student time management and distribution patterns, and their influence on undergraduates' grades and discovered that attending class, finishing high school with a high GPA, and participating in social sciences or engineering sciences lead to higher grades. In 1991, Britton & Tesser investigated on effects of time management practices on college grades and found that 2 time-management components were significant predictors of cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

Procrastination on the other hand is the outcome of poor time management and steals away students' time including hindrance of achieving their set goals (Mercanlioglu, 2010). Thus the mastery of the skill of goal setting (short term goals and long term goals) is enhanced by effective time management skill. For instance, lack of time management will make it practically impossible for students to visit the library much less use the library facilities. For students, good time management involves the ability to spread course work over a semester/session for those in

higher institution or over a term/session for those in primary and secondary schools and avoid stressful workload at a time. Time management is the ability to plan ahead and strategically prioritize all tasks to be done. In prioritizing, a good student must set aside time to utilize library resources as no individual student has all the required resources (print materials, electronic materials and resources in other formats). To successfully prioritize a student must develop weekly and long term time management plans. Many students have long, medium and short term plan for their study. Planning ahead actually saves time, stress and energy (The Learning Centre, 2001).

Thus ability to effectively use library materials is a function of the skills students possess. Informed library users know that academic libraries hold research resources that are more comprehensive and scholarly than most Web sites provide. Libraries provide access to scholarly literature that, as a rule, is not freely available on the Web, or may not be online at all (Waldman, Micaela, 2003). Waldman did not only discover in his study that students (67%) visit the library weekly, 80% of the students responded they actually used the library for studying. While it is good for students to do well in school, it is also very essential that they understand that they can achieve more or do better by acquiring the skills that enable them effectively utilize library resources available in the school. However, the ability to effectively utilize these resources heavily depends on students' ability to deploy all the study skills acquired in their educational journey. The skill of scanning through books and other publications in the library is critical to discovering useful and relevant materials without wasting precious time on irrelevant document. The note taking skill is so important during the process of reading or studying a material and cannot be over emphasized. It is helpful in jotting down key points and summaries of the topic/subject being read while there is plenty of time to go through the bulky document, thus saving the time students would spend going back to the material. The goal setting skill helps a student know how to plan, strategize and apportion time for the courses and subjects to be covered both for the semester and for the entire session. The skill of concentration is mostly needed at point a student is under studying a specific material. The depth of understanding of such a student reveals the depth of concentration of that student. That is the deeper the understanding the deeper the concentration of that student.

Lee (2011) citing Kuh & Gonyea (2003) note that student persistence and frequent use of the library is a positive effect of library. Thus authors are of the opinion that library faculty have a have beneficial effect on student engagement and success. The number of hours spent in the library is a predictor of student retention (Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987).

RESEARCH DESIGN/SAMPLING

A sample of eighty (80) subjects was randomly selected from the senior secondary school arms of the Gospel Faith Mission International Comprehensive High School, Ojoo-Ibadan. The sample population was grouped into two. The experimental and control group by random assignment of subjects. Selection of population sample was limited to the senior students of the school purposely to ensure they can understand the instructions passed unto them.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire designed by the researchers was used for the gathering data. It was designed to obtain data on personal bio-data and data relating to study skills, study techniques and ability to access relevant information from library resources and other academic materials.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The two groups, the experimental group and the control group were divided into two separate classrooms and the questionnaire was administered first as pretest. After administering the questionnaire, subjects in the experimental group were taken through teachings on library resources, study skills and how to access information and utilize these resources more effectively. This is purposely to determine whether the teaching of study skills can help improve students' study skills and their ability to access relevant information from library resources and other academic materials within a week of practically using the newly acquired study skills. The questionnaire was administered a week after as post-test. All 80 questionnaires were retrieved back.

ANALYSES OF DATA

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' According to the Study Techniques Adopted

Study Techniques Used by Students	Survey	Questioning	Reading	Recitation	Summarizing	Memorizing	Mnemonic	Note taking	Concentration
N	14	14	20	8	20	20	10	26	17
%	35	35	50	20	50	50	25	65	42.5

Table 1 shows reveals the distribution of study techniques employed or used by students in their study exercises. The analysis clearly reveals that most respondents do employ some study techniques as shown above. However, the study technique employed/used most by majority of respondents is the note taking technique, followed by reading, review and memorization technique.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Teaching of Study Skills

TEACHING OF STUDY SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
I was taught study skills in my school	30	75	10	25
I never attended study skills classes before	6	15	34	85
Study skills classes equipped me to effectively use lib. Resources	30	75	10	25
Would like study skills classes in my higher education	34	85	6	15

Table 2 shows that 75% of the respondents affirmed they had been taught study skills in school, while 85% had never attended classes. Also 75% admit that study skills classes actually equipped them to effectively use library resources and 85% of students would like study skills classes in their higher/tertiary education. What is the implication of this outcome

TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE STUDY

Barriers to students' effective study	Distractions from environment	Tiredness	Lack of interest for study	Lack of understanding	Hunger for food	Others
N	28	24	12	4	2	8
%	70	60	30	10	5	20

Table 3 above shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' responses to the barriers they encounter. The most serious of all barriers is environmental distractions 70%, closely followed by tiredness 60%. This implies that more than any other barriers, students experience distraction from the environment and personal tiredness.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Impact of Teaching Study Skills on Students' Academic Motivation.

Impact of Study skills Teaching on Academic Motivation of Students	Enhanced my academic motivation	Made no impact on my academic motivation at all	Affected my academic motivation negatively	Improved my study habit greatly
N	34	4	-	16
%	85	10	-	40

Table 4 above reveals the impact of study skills teaching on the academic performance of respondents. Eighty five percent (85%) of respondents agree that teaching study skills impacted their academic motivation positively. The implication of this result shows that teaching study skills does improve students 'academic drive for higher performance.

TABLE 5: There is no Comparison between the Experimental and Control Group on Impact of Teaching Study Skills/Access to Information Resources and Students' Academic Motivation.

Variables	Group	N	X	X-x	t-cal	DF	P(0.05)	Remark
Teaching study skills on	Exp. Group	40	55.025	10.517	3.22	78	0.0019	*S

information access to library materials	Control Group	40	47.8	9.3841				
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Hypothesis one states that there will be no significant difference on impact of teaching access to information in textbook/other materials on students' academic motivation. Table one result analysis shows that there is a significant difference between experimental group and control group. Table one result analysis ($t=-3.22$, $Df=79$, $P=0.0019$) revealed that teaching this study skills for accessing relevant information from textbooks or other materials was effective, thus indicating that study skills teaching on the use of library/study materials will increase student's academic motivation.

TABLE 6: T-test Comparison of Experimental and Control Group Using CATALOGUE to Access Library Resources.

Variables	Group	N	X	X-x	t-cal	Df	P	Remark
Access to library resources via catalogue cabinet/OPAC	Exp. Group	40	31.125	6.7944	-2.23	78	0.0283	*S
	Control Group	40	28.175	4.8563				

Hypothesis two which states that there will be no significant difference between the treatment group (who used CATALOGUE) and the control group (who did not use CATALOGUE) with respect to library resources. The result shows that there is a significant difference, thus the hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. Table 6 result analysis, ($t=-2.23$, $Df=78$, $P=0.028$) shows that teaching students how to access information from library resources via the catalogue is a worthwhile venture. This implies that the difficulties faced by students while searching for information in the library can be reduced to some extent simply by training/teaching how to use the catalogue.

DISCUSSION

The above analyses reveal that most students are not sufficiently equipped to engage in effective study. However, 65% of students prepared their own notes, while 50% of the students engaged in memorizing, summarizing, reading and reciting when they study. Regarding, how

teaching of study skills and access to information resources affected students' academic motivation, it was revealed that teaching study skills enhanced students' motivation academically, thereby making them academically more determined to succeed than others. This is confirmed in table 4 result analysis, where 85% of respondents admit study skills teaching actually contributed and helped in their academic drive or determination. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post- test scores of the experimental group, indicating there was a significant improvement in students' academic motivation after the training session. Students who participated in the study skills training in relation to accessing information from library materials through the Catalogue recorded significant improvement in their test scores than those who did not. Several factors have been found to contribute to students' inability to settle down to serious studies, some of which were identified in this investigation. The barriers or factors found to hinder students' effective study include environmental factors, physiological challenges such as tiredness and other unidentified factors.

The implication of not engaging students in effective study skills training as in the case of the (control group) can be very damaging and highly regrettable. The experimental group participants who were adequately exposed to training had advantage, while the control group was disadvantaged. One of the reasons for the underachievement and poor motivation of students witnessed in schools today as exemplified in this study is absence of study skills training policy on the part of government from elementary education through tertiary education. A Progressive strategic study skills policy is thus imperative for students at all levels. Such a study skill acquisition policy should effectively sustain students' performance throughout their educational pursuit. The finding of this research brought to the fore the importance teaching study skills in higher institution. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1984) recommends that study skills be introduced to students very early in the schooling process and continue throughout a student's educational career.

IMPLICATION FOR LIBRARIANS

Librarians have the sole responsibility of ensuring that library materials are not only available to patrons but are accessible and also fully utilized, especially when they are needed. In an academic setting, librarians work to complement the effort of lecturers/teachers in educating

and instructing students on diverse study techniques and use of library resources via orientation programmes, seminars etc, from elementary school level to tertiary level. Inability to use library resources by students could be attributed to lack of proper study skills such as test-taking, note-taking, time management, concentration, comprehension, and others. Nkiko (2005) highlighting the functions of libraries in national development, noted that libraries serve as catalyst for continuing education. He observed that there are people who for one reason or the other dropped out of school at various stages. But many more continued to study on their own to pass different examinations. Many however, succeeded and got to the zenith of their career and now contribute to the high level manpower requirements of the nation. Past interaction with some of this people revealed that personal engagement in self-study and use of the library resources made the difference. The ability to further education was made possible because they had acquired relevant study skills which enabled them effectively study even after dropping out of school.

The library professionals must therefore ensure the library is conducive for all categories of patrons. There must be adequate provision of diverse kind of resources including electronic resources and print versions. Orientation and training programmes should be designed and segmented to meet the needs of different patrons, especially those users who may not be familiar with the library resources and how they are used. Patrons should be given proper orientation on the guiding rules of the library, including the dos and don'ts of the library. Furthermore, library patrons should be carried along in the library book selection processes. The librarians and library officers should undergo training and retraining to learn ways of relating and rendering better services to library users. The librarians should be warm and polite to all users. They must observe and adhere to the professional code of ethics.

CONCLUSION

Continuous improvement is the primary objective of every good education system. No nation is happy when her students keep failing and experiencing poor academic achievement, particularly in major national examination. Research over the years has shown how poor study skills and methods are among many reasons why students perform poorly in school. Teaching study skills as revealed in this investigation is of great benefit and advantage to individual students' academic pursuit and much more for national advancement. Furthermore, students are better equipped to maximize the use of library resources and access relevant information more

effectively. It also protects students from undue exposure to the ugly challenges brought about by underachievement such as inferiority complex, feeling of a failure and inadequacy, lack of confidence among other things.

Moreover, the library becomes a place of attraction for all lovers of knowledge and academics, thus attracting all types of patrons to the library. Government will be more interested and willing to invest more resources in the development of libraries. Students having mastered the study skills will be able to continue in personal self development long after graduating from school. It is therefore important that, all Stakeholders (Librarians, teachers, school administrators and Government) must initiate policies and executable actions steps to achieve the desired change/goal of academic excellence.

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