Empowering through information literacy in secondary school libraries: a qualitative exploration of teachers' perceptions through school librarians

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Introduction

In the 21st century, adherence to the prevailing trend of ICT utilization for bolstering research efficiency and productivity across all domains of life is paramount. ICT has undergone a transformative evolution, turning conventional libraries into dynamic learning hubs. Consequently, members of university communities must cultivate the necessary competencies to leverage these advancements to their fullest potential. Similarly, a world-class university must prioritize the establishment of an optimal ICT infrastructure to facilitate connectivity and enhance teaching, research, and learning endeavors[1]. ICT stands as an indispensable tool for the effective management and service delivery of modern academic libraries, necessitating that its users possess information literacy (IL) skills. Information literacy encompasses the capacity to effectively locate relevant information, assess its credibility, analyze and synthesize data to construct personalized understanding, and apply it to informed decision-making. Proficiency in information literacy is pivotal for scholars to access and utilize information successfully. However, these skills are not innate but rather acquired through deliberate instruction and practice. It is through structured teaching and learning processes that individuals, including faculty and students, acquire information literacy competencies[2].

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1 Felicia Etim, *Elements of information literacy in an ICT age*. In: *Information literacy for library search*, edited by Felicia Etim, Friday Nssien. Uyo: ABAAM Publishers, 2007.

2 Hyejin Park; Han Sung Kim; Han Woo Park, *A scientometric study of digital literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy, and media literacy*, «Journal of data and information science», 6 (2021), n. 2, p. 116-138.

By fostering information-literacy skills, faculty and students can develop confidence in utilizing a diverse range of library and information resources essential for formal education, continuous learning, and active participation in society[3]. Information literacy encompasses the proficiency to effectively locate, process, and utilize information, irrespective of its delivery mechanisms or format, necessitating competence in both print and electronic mediums[4]. The authors further delineated information literacy as the adept utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to obtain information, incorporating computer literacy, network literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, and library literacy, alongside critical thinking skills for the discerning evaluation and ethical utilization of information resources.

Although Boekhorst and Britz[5] emphasized that mere familiarity with ICT does not equate to information literacy, it is imperative to acknowledge that ICT plays a pivotal role within the spectrum of information literacy, serving as a fundamental component without which access to information would be unattainable. This underscores the significance of information literacy, particularly in the digital age, as it serves as a critical catalyst for knowledge acquisition and dissemination, especially within academic circles and other pertinent sectors. Therefore, it merits paramount consideration and attention from stakeholders.

Academics require a deep dissection of the concept of information literacy and holistic acquisition of its skills to effectively and efficiently perform their duties and expand the frontier of knowledge.

Durodolu and Adekanye[6] noted that the success of what they refer to as academic enterprise depends on the quality of information processed, which invariably is dependent on the accessed information and the processing skills and abilities of the processors. Consequently, academics need to develop enough information literacy skills and capability in order not to experience what Bundy[7] termed information fatigue syndrome which may culminate in impairment of analytical ability. To effectively navigate and manage information, commonly known as information literacy, a set of crucial skills has been identified as pertinent. These encompass the ability to: recognize the pivotal role of accurate and comprehensive information in making informed decisions, acknowledge the necessity for information acquisition, formulate inquiries stemming from information requirements, discern potential outlets for information, devise effective search methodologies, access diverse information sources encompassing digital platforms and other technological mediums,

3 Christine Bruce, *Seven faces of information literacy*. Adelaide: Auslib press, 1997.

4 Oluwole O. Durodolu; Dennis N. Ocholla, *Search strategy, self-concept and metacognitive skills of secondary school teachers in selected cities in Nigeria and South Africa*, «Libri», 67 (2017), n. 2, p. 89-102.

5 Albert Boekhorst; Johannes Britz, *Information literacy at school level: a comparative study between the Netherlands and South Africa*, «South Africa journal of libraries and information science», 70 (2003), n. 2, p. 63–71.

6 Oluwole Olumide Durodolu; Elizabeth Adetoun Adekanye, *The perception of information literacy skill among the librarians: a survey of University of Lagos library*, «International journal of information processing and communication», 5 (2017), n. 1-2, p. 5.

7 Alan Bundy, *Information literacy: the key competency for the 21st century*, paper presented at the annual conference of the International association of technological university libraries, Pretoria, South Africa, 1998, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED434662.pdf>.

assess the reliability and relevance of information, structure information for pragmatic utilization, amalgamate newfound information with pre-existing knowledge, and employ information to foster critical thinking and address problems constructively[8]. In essence, an information-literate scholar must have the desire to know, use analytic skills to formulate questions, identify research methodologies and utilize critical skills to evaluate experimental results. Also, the scholar must possess the skills to search for answers to a variety of questions in increasingly diverse and complex ways. Finally, identification of what is sought must culminate in accessing the same[9]. This means that the users have the ability to sort, discriminate select and analyze bulk of messages that they encounter.

In education environments, the significance of information literacy cannot be overstated. Acquisition of information literacy skills confers numerous benefits to individuals and society as a whole. Among these benefits are the cultivation of critical thinking skills, which provide information literate individuals with a distinct advantage over their non-literate counterparts. By engaging in critical thinking, scholars can effectively employ questioning techniques to assess existing knowledge and identify areas requiring further exploration. Additionally, information literacy fosters the capacity to recognize key terms, concepts, and information, along with the ability to assess the validity, relevance, and potential bias of various sources. Furthermore, information literate individuals are adept at comparing, contrasting, and synthesizing diverse information sources, enabling them to present information effectively tailored to specific purposes and audiences[10].

More so, information literate scholar automatically is a lifelong learner by developing a confidence that stimulates the desire to learn and be in control of the learning encounter, cognitive skills that are required for problem solving, research expertise, ability to use any library anywhere in the world, enablement for self- organizing, independent and critical of self-learning. In addition to the foregoing, an information literate, acquires differentiation abilities by use of a large range of resources that cater for different learning situations, opportunities that assist learners in determining their own preferred learning styles and strategies that expand their portfolio of styles. According to Etim[11], the advantage lies in nurturing the effective use of ICT tools. However, school libraries are expected to broaden their focus far beyond ICT education to embrace and accommodate Media, Information, and Digital Literacy (MIDL). Adopting this inclusive method empowers students with the critical thinking, technical skills, and ethical awareness ability required to steer today's intricate information environment. This change aligns with global educational trends and supports findings from recent research[12].

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8 See note 1.

9 Scottish information literacy project (SILP), *Literacy across learning: information and critical literacy skills CPD for early and first level. The right information: information skill for a 21st century Scotland*, 2013, <http://scotinfolit.squarespace.com/realrelevant-importanceof/;jsessionid=71E033BADC67D7D81AA031F8CC1AA9C8.v5-web019>.

10 Christine Bruce, *Seven Faces of Information Literacy* cit.

11 See note 1.

12 IFLA School libraries section; International association of school librarianship, *IFLA school library manifesto*, «International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions», 2021, <https://repository.ifla.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1079984f-500e-4d8e-92ab-b5ef0815e6ff/content>.

The guidelines for school library development are centred on the core principles bordered on the IFLA School Library Manifesto,[13] and revealed the dynamic role of school libraries in promoting lifelong learning, literacy, critical thinking, and equity, encouraging investment and provision to guarantee and serve as inclusive hubs for education and personal development. Furthermore, the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for founding and managing school libraries, stressing their role in nurturing literacy, critical thinking, lifelong learning, and educational excellence by introduction of clear vision, essential services, ICT integration, professional standards, and continuous evaluation. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)[14] also shows the significance of school libraries in education and calls on governments and other stakeholders to produce policies that support these principles. The guidelines aim to provide decision-makers at both national and local levels with strategies to strengthen school libraries worldwide, offering practical advice for library leaders. They emphasize the need for local adaptation due to variations in school libraries across different regions and countries.

Significance of the study

This study significantly enhances the existing body of knowledge in four key dimensions. Firstly, review of literature was conducted in an attempt to unearth novel insights and identify research gaps. Secondly, it meticulously analyzes and evaluates existing research to delineate the strengths and weaknesses of the subject matter. Thirdly, the study presents a set of recommendations poised to enrich Library and Information Studies (LIS) practices concerning information literacy among secondary school teachers. Lastly, it offers suggestions that could catalyze policy changes, thereby circumventing the cumbersome bureaucratic processes typically associated with governmental policy alterations. This study thus provides a pathway for effecting meaningful changes without the impediments of government bureaucracy.

Problem Statement

In contemporary society, the ability to effectively access, evaluate, and utilize information is increasingly recognized as a crucial skill set. This skill, known as information literacy, not only enables individuals to navigate the vast sea of information available but also empowers them to make informed decisions, participate meaningfully in civic life, and succeed in their educational and professional endeavours. Within this context, libraries and librarians play a central role as facilitators of information literacy which provides resources, guidance, and support to patrons seeking to enhance their information literacy skills. As observed by Saryanto [*et al.*],[15] understanding the practices and perspectives of librarians is essential for improving information literacy initiatives within library settings. This is because librarians are at the forefront of information provision and play a crucial role in guiding patrons toward developing

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13 Erika Smith; Renate Kahlke; Terry Judd, *Not just digital natives: integrating technologies in professional education contexts*, «Australasian journal of educational technology», 36 (2020), n. 3, p. 1-14.

14 IFLA-UNESCO, *School Library Manifesto: The School Library in Teaching and Learning for All*. The Hague: IFLA, 1999.

15 Saryanto Saryanto [*et al.*], *The analysis of lecturers' information literacy skill to support competence in teaching learning activities*, «Journal on education», 5 (2023), n. 4, p. 10754-10762.

information literacy skills. Despite the recognized importance of information literacy in empowering individuals, there remains a gap in understanding how librarians effectively employ information literacy practices to empower their patrons. However, while the importance of information literacy and the role of librarians in promoting it are widely acknowledged, there remains a gap in understanding the specific practices and perspectives of librarians in empowering individuals through information literacy. Going further, there is a need for a qualitative exploration that provides deeper knowledge into librarian practices and perspectives regarding information literacy empowerment. Given these, this study investigated how librarians perceive and implement information literacy practices to empower students.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate how librarians perceive and implement information literacy practices to empower students.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the library conducive for teachers' professional development and instructional support?
2. How do teachers perceive the role of libraries and librarians as partners in classroom activities?
3. To what extent do teachers independently utilize library and information resources?
4. What is the level of satisfaction among teachers regarding library services?
5. To what extent do teachers perceive the library as a resource capable of fulfilling their information requirements?
6. To what extent are teachers proficient in information literacy skills?
7. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding the responsibilities of the library?

Methodology

The research methodology employed was a qualitative approach, utilising interviews to gather responses from school librarians. The study was conducted in Lagos metropolitan city in Nigeria and data collection started in 2015, with a sample drawn from six out of twenty local government areas using stratified random sampling. All local government areas were divided into subgroups known as primary sampling units (PSUs). The entire state was first divided into six educational districts (EDs). The sampling process involved three stages: First-Stage Sampling: One local government area was selected from each educational district, which typically comprised three or four local government areas. Second-Stage Sampling: A few secondary schools were randomly chosen from all schools within the selected local government areas. Third-Stage Sampling: A few librarians were selected from the chosen secondary schools. For the selection of secondary schools within each educational district, simple random sampling was used. Ultimately, six schools were selected, and their school librarians participated in the interviews. Due to limitations such as funding and time constraints, it was not feasible to reach the entire population. Therefore, a multistage sampling technique was employed to select respondents from the six educational districts.

Interview Questions and responses:

The interview conducted and direct responses empowering through information literacy: librarian practices and perspectives: a qualitative exploration has generated several notable responses. The analysis of the responses is below:

1. Is the library suitable for teachers?

This section indicates whether or not the school library is suitable for secondary school teachers.

The provided excerpts from the focus group discussion offer insights into the perception of secondary school teachers regarding the suitability of the school library for their needs. Let's analyze these statements and draw conclusions:

- quiet atmosphere for lesson preparation: The statement suggests that teachers view the library as a suitable place for preparing lesson notes due to the quiet atmosphere it provides. This reflects a positive perception of the library as a conducive environment for focused work.

- Reading and writing lesson notes: The fact that teachers use the library for reading and writing lesson notes indicates that they find it a productive space for academic activities. This aligns with the intended purpose of a library as a resourceful and study-friendly environment.

- Avoidance of noise: The mention of teachers coming to the library to avoid noise highlights the importance of a quiet and peaceful environment for teachers' work. This could imply that the library serves as a refuge from distractions, contributing to a positive perception of its suitability.

- General suitability for teachers: The overarching theme across the statements is that teachers generally find the library suitable for their use. This is a positive sentiment and suggests that the library is meeting the needs and preferences of the teachers in the context of lesson preparation and academic activities.

- Source Evaluation: Assess the teachers' skills in critically evaluating the credibility, reliability, and relevance of information sources they access within the library.

- Information Synthesis: Examine teachers' capability to synthesize information from various sources to create comprehensive and well-informed lesson plans and educational materials.

- Citation and Referencing: teachers' proficiency in correctly citing and referencing sources in their lesson notes, ensuring academic integrity and adherence to citation styles.

- Digital Literacy: Consider teachers' competence in utilizing digital tools and electronic resources available in the library, including online databases, e-books, and educational websites.

- Information Ethics: Assess teachers' understanding of ethical considerations related to information use, such as respecting copyright, avoiding plagiarism, and promoting responsible information sharing.

- Collaborative Information Use: Explore the extent to which teachers engage in collaborative information use, such as sharing resources with colleagues, participating in professional learning communities, and utilizing collaborative tools available in the library.

- Adaptability to Technology Changes: Evaluate teachers' adaptability to technological advancements and changes in library resources, ensuring they can effectively utilize new technologies and platforms as they become available.

- Problem-Solving Skills: Assess teachers' ability to solve information-related problems, such as overcoming obstacles in accessing specific resources or finding alternative materials to support their teaching.

- Feedback and Reflection: Encourage teachers to provide feedback on the library resources and services, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring that the library meets the evolving needs of educators.

By incorporating these dimensions into the evaluation of teachers' information literacy skills, the assessment becomes more comprehensive, addressing not only the physical suitability of the library but also the educators' proficiency in navigating and utilizing information resources effectively. This approach contributes to the development of well-rounded and information-savvy educators.

2. Do teachers perceive the library and librarians as partners in classroom activities? The reason for this question was to establish how teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of the library and librarians in assisting their teaching.
The responses to the interview questions provide valuable insights into the perceptions of teachers about the library and librarians as partners in classroom activities. Let's analyse each response:
a. The library as a conducive environment for preparing lesson notes and consulting books:
Positive Perception: This response indicates that teachers view the library as a supportive and conducive environment for their professional activities. It suggests that teachers appreciate the resources and atmosphere the library provides for their work, such as preparing lesson notes and deepening their knowledge.
b. Library and teachers working hand in hand; teachers borrowing books:
Collaboration and Interaction: This response highlights a positive partnership between the library and teachers. The fact that teachers borrow books from the library indicates an active engagement with the resources available. This collaboration suggests a dynamic relationship where both parties contribute to each other's roles.
c. Library basically for students, not really for teachers:
Potential Misalignment: This response indicates a perception that the library is primarily focused on students rather than teachers. It may suggest a potential misalignment in understanding the full range of resources and support the library can offer to both students and teachers. There might be an opportunity to bridge this perception gap and showcase the library's relevance to educators.
d. Yes, they do:
Affirmative Response: This response is brief but affirmative, indicating that teachers acknowledge and recognize the role of the library in their classroom activities. While it doesn't provide specific details, it suggests a general agreement that librarians play a part in supporting teachers.
General Implications:
Positive Collaboration: The responses generally reflect a positive collaboration between teachers and the library, with teachers utilizing the library's resources for their professional development and classroom activities.
Opportunity for Communication: The perception that the library is primarily for students presents an opportunity for librarians to communicate more effectively about the diverse resources and services available to teachers. This could involve promoting teacher-focused initiatives, workshops, or tailored support.
Acknowledgment of Librarian's Role: The affirmative response suggests that teachers do acknowledge the role of librarians in supporting their activities. This acknowledgment can be leveraged to strengthen the partnership further and explore additional ways in which librarians can assist teachers in their educational goals.
In summary, these responses provide a nuanced view of how teachers perceive the library and its role in their professional lives. Addressing any misalignments in perception and actively promoting the varied services available to teachers could enhance the collaboration between teachers and librarians.

3. To what extent do teachers use the library and information resources independently?

The responses provide insights into the extent to which teachers use the library and information resources independently. Let's analyze each response:

> The teachers can use information resources independently because the shelves are well labelled. But if they cannot get the book they need, they usually request it from the librarian.

Analysis: This response suggests that teachers have the capability to use the library independently due to well-labeled shelves, which facilitates easy access. However, it also acknowledges that there are instances where they may need assistance from the librarian, such as when a specific book is not readily available.

> No, they don't have the ability to use the library independently.

Analysis: This response takes a more negative stance, indicating that teachers generally lack the ability to use the library independently. However, the reasons for this limitation are not specified.

> Many of the teachers don't come to the library unless they want to choose a book that will be used by students or set exam questions.

Analysis: This response suggests that teachers primarily visit the library with specific purposes, such as selecting books for students or preparing exam questions. It implies that their use of the library is task-oriented rather than exploratory or independent.

> Well, teachers come to the library and use the information available, but they often request the help of the librarian to access information.

Analysis: This response acknowledges that teachers do utilize the information available in the library but frequently seek assistance from the librarian. It suggests a collaborative approach, where teachers engage with the resources but rely on the librarian for support.

In summary, the responses indicate a range of behaviors among teachers regarding independent use of the library and information resources. While some teachers are comfortable using resources independently, others may rely more on librarian assistance or visit the library for specific tasks. The overall picture suggests a potential need for further exploration of teachers' information literacy skills and the support provided by the library staff.

4. Are teachers satisfied with the library services?

The question wished to establish the degree of satisfaction of teachers with the information services rendered by the library.

The analysis of these responses suggests a generally positive sentiment regarding teachers' satisfaction with library services. Let's break down the key points:

1. Acknowledgment of Individual Differences:

The statement "It is impossible to satisfy every human being" recognizes the inherent diversity among individuals and their preferences. This is a realistic perspective, as people have different expectations and needs.

2. General Positive Sentiment:
The phrase "to a large extent teachers are satisfied and often commend the library services" indicates a positive overall sentiment. This suggests that, in general, the majority of teachers are content with the library services provided.

3. Affirmative Responses:
The responses "Yes, they do" and "Yes" straightforwardly confirm the satisfaction of teachers with the library services. These responses align with the positive sentiment expressed in the initial statement.

4. Partial Satisfaction:
The response "Yes, to some extent" suggests that while there is satisfaction, it may not be universal or absolute. This acknowledges that there might be room for improvement or that certain aspects of the library services may not fully meet every teacher's expectations.

5. Consistent Positive Tone:
Overall, the responses convey a consistent positive tone, indicating that teachers generally appreciate and commend the library services. This positive feedback is valuable for the library staff and administration.

6. Constructive Feedback Potential:
While the responses are positive, the acknowledgment of some teachers being satisfied "to some extent" opens up an opportunity for the library services to gather specific feedback on areas that might need improvement. This could lead to constructive changes and enhancements.

In conclusion, the analysis suggests a predominantly positive perception of teachers towards the library services, with an understanding that complete satisfaction may not be achievable for everyone. The feedback provides an opportunity for the library to continue meeting the needs of teachers while considering areas for improvement.

5. Do teachers consider the library a place that can meet their information needs?
The reason for this question was to establish whether teachers understand the role and responsibility of the library in meeting their information needs.
Teachers understanding of the library as a place to meet information needs:

> Not exactly, many of them come to the library with a personal computer to be able to access information from the internet.

This response indicates that some teachers may not fully recognize the library as a primary source for meeting their information needs. Instead, they seem to rely on personal computers and the internet for information access. It suggests a potential disconnect between the teachers and the traditional role of the library.

> Very soon the library will get better, based on the promises of the government.

This response suggests optimism about the future of the library, attributing improvements to government promises. However, it doesn't necessarily reflect the current understanding of the library's role. It might indicate a perception that the library needs enhancement or that there are expectations for improvements in the near future.

> Yes

This response is concise and affirmative, suggesting that some teachers do acknowledge the library as a place that can meet their information needs. However, it lacks detail, making it difficult to gauge the depth of understanding or the specific ways in which teachers see the library fulfilling their information requirements.

> No.

This response is straightforward and suggests a negative view, indicating that some teachers may not perceive the library as meeting their information needs. It could be due to a lack of awareness, satisfaction, or acknowledgment of the library's capabilities.

> Yes, I suppose they do.

This response is somewhat uncertain, as the use of "suppose" implies a degree of speculation. It indicates a tentative agreement that teachers may consider the library as a place to meet their information needs, but the certainty is not clearly expressed.

In summary, the responses reflect a spectrum of awareness and opinions among teachers regarding the library's role in meeting their information needs. Some express a lack of recognition or reliance on alternative sources, while others show optimism about future improvements or a positive acknowledgment of the library's role. The varied responses highlight the need for further exploration and clarification on teachers' perceptions and expectations related to the library.

6. Do you think teachers are information literate?

The reason for this question was to independently confirm the extent of information literacy of teachers from the librarians who are expected to be information managers. The responses to the question on whether teachers are information literate reveal a range of perspectives. Let's analyze each response:

> Many teachers don't usually want to read these days because of the availability of information on the internet; the teachers do not need to be guided to know what to do.

This response suggests that some teachers may not be inclined to read due to the ease of accessing information on the internet. It implies that teachers might feel less motivated to engage in traditional reading practices. However, it also suggests that teachers may feel confident in navigating information independently.

> No, they don't really know how to navigate the resources.

This response indicates a belief that teachers lack the necessary skills to navigate informational resources. It suggests a potential gap in information literacy among teachers, highlighting a need for improvement in their ability to access and utilize various information sources.

> No.

This is a straightforward and concise response, suggesting a negative view on teachers' information literacy. The respondent does not provide additional details or reasons for this stance.

Yes, I suppose they are.

This response is somewhat ambivalent, using the term "suppose," indicating a level of uncertainty. It suggests that the respondent may not have a strong conviction regarding the information literacy of teachers. More information or clarification on the basis for this supposition would be helpful for a comprehensive understanding.

In summary, the responses indicate a mixed perception of teachers' information literacy. While some believe that teachers may not actively engage in reading due to the internet's availability, others express concern about teachers' ability to navigate informational resources. The ambivalent response further highlights the diversity of opinions on this matter. To address these perceptions, it may be valuable to conduct a more in-depth study, involving direct assessments of teachers' information literacy skills and exploring ways to enhance these skills if necessary.

7. How do teachers perceive the responsibilities of the library?

The reason for this question was to ascertain how teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of librarians and libraries generally in information management.

The responses to the interview question on how teachers perceive the responsibilities of the library provide varied perspectives. Let's analyze each response:

1. The library as a controlled area devoid of distraction:

Analysis: This response suggests that teachers view the library as a focused and quiet space, possibly emphasizing its role in providing an environment conducive to studying and learning. It implies an understanding that the library serves as a controlled and disciplined setting, allowing students to concentrate on their academic pursuits.

2. Yes, teachers understand the role of a library because it responds to them at any time they request:

Analysis: This response indicates a positive perception of the library's responsiveness to teachers' needs. Teachers seem to appreciate the library's ability to provide resources and support whenever they seek assistance. It suggests a recognition of the library's role in meeting the educational requirements of both teachers and students.

3. I don't know:

Analysis: This response reflects uncertainty or lack of awareness about the roles and responsibilities of the library. It could indicate a need for better communication or information dissemination regarding the library's functions and services. Further exploration might be required to understand the reasons behind this lack of knowledge.

4. I am not sure of their perception:

Analysis: This response suggests that the interviewee is unsure about how teachers perceive the responsibilities of the library. It could be an acknowledgment of the diverse perspectives among teachers, indicating that there may not be a universally shared perception. This response highlights the importance of conducting further research to gain insights into the varied views held by teachers.

General Analysis: The responses reveal a range of perceptions among teachers regarding the responsibilities of the library. While some see it as a controlled and focused environment, others appreciate its responsiveness to their needs. However, the presence of responses expressing uncertainty or lack of awareness underscores the importance of communication and education about the roles and benefits of libraries in the educational process. To enhance the understanding of teachers regarding library responsibilities, there may be a need for targeted initiatives, such as workshops, informational materials, or collaborative efforts between teachers and librarians.

Discussion

The findings indicate that secondary school teachers perceive the library as suitable for tasks such as lesson preparation, reading, and writing lesson notes, and avoiding noise. These perceptions agree with the findings of Oseghale[16] who indicates the importance of libraries as conducive environments for academic work and research. Supporting this, studies by Martzoukou[17] and Saryanto [*et al.*][18] have shown that libraries provide quiet spaces that support focused learning and productivity, which are essential for educators to prepare lesson plans and engage in scholarly activities. The study reveals mixed perceptions among teachers regarding the role of the library and librarians as partners in classroom activities. While some teachers view the library as a supportive environment and acknowledge collaboration with librarians, others perceive the library primarily as a resource for students. This finding validates the study of Hicks[19] who found the importance of fostering partnerships between teachers and librarians to enhance information literacy and support academic endeavors. However, the findings indicate varying levels of independent use of library resources among teachers. While some teachers demonstrate the ability to utilize library resources independently, others rely more on librarian assistance or visit the library for specific tasks. This finding is in tandem with the study of   Zhao [*et al.*][20] who discovered that teachers with strong information literacy skills are better equipped to integrate library resources into their teaching practices and promote student learning. Furthermore, the study suggests a generally positive sentiment among teachers regarding their satisfaction with library services. While some express complete satisfaction, others indicate partial satisfaction or room for improvement. These results indicate the importance of soliciting feedback from teachers to continuously improve library services and meet their evolving needs. The finding agrees with the study of Kankam[21] who revealed that libraries that actively seek feedback from users are better able to address concerns and enhance service quality which leads to increased satisfaction among patrons.
The findings reveal diverse perceptions among teachers regarding the library's role in meeting their information needs. While some teachers recognize the library as a valuable resource, others rely more on personal computers and the internet for infor-

16 Osagie Oseghale, *Digital Information Literacy Skills and Use of Electronic Resources by Humanities Graduate Students at Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*, «Digital Library Perspectives», 39 (2023), n. 2, p. 181-204.

17 Konstantina Martzoukou, *Empowering Information Literacy and Continuing Professional Development of Librarians: New Paradigms for Learning*, in: *Worldwide Commonalities and Challenges in Information Literacy Research and Practice: European Conference on Information Literacy, ECIL 2013 Istanbul, Turkey, October 22-25, 2013 Revised Selected Papers*, vol. 1. New York: Springer International Publishing, 2013, p. 647-654.

18 See note 15

19 Alison Hicks, *Reframing Librarian Approaches to International Student Information Literacy through the Lens of New Literacy Studies*. In: *Critical Literacy for Information Professionals*. London: Facet, 2016, p. 43-56

20 Shuzhen Zhao [*et al.*], *The effect of information literacy training on graduate students' ability to use library resources*, «College & research libraries», 84 (2023), n. 1, p. 7.

21 Philip Kwaku Kankam, *Information literacy development and competencies of high school students in Accra*, «Information discovery and delivery», 51 (2023), n. 4, p. 393-403.

mation access. This finding implies that there is a need for libraries to adapt to changing information landscapes and promote their relevance to users. This aligns with the findings of Stricevic and Rubinic[22] who observed that libraries that offer a range of resources and services tailored to users' needs are more likely to be perceived as valuable and effective information providers.

The study presents mixed perspectives on teachers' information literacy skills, with some respondents expressing confidence in teachers' abilities, while others highlight areas for improvement. This finding further indicates the perceived essence of ongoing assessment and professional development to enhance teachers' information literacy skills. The findings of the study agree with the results of Ylipulli [*et al.*][23] who revealed teachers with strong information literacy skills are better able to integrate technology and information resources into their teaching practices which will further result in improved student learning outcomes. The findings indicate varied perceptions among teachers regarding the responsibilities of the library. While some view the library as a controlled environment for focused learning, others appreciate its responsiveness to their needs. This finding implies the perceived multifaceted roles of libraries in supporting teaching and learning. These findings support the report of Marsh[24] who found libraries as hubs for information access towards providing resources for teaching and research activities.

Conclusion

The analysis of the interview questions and responses has provided valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of the responsibilities of the library. The findings suggest a nuanced understanding among teachers, with various perspectives emerging regarding the role and significance of libraries in supporting educational endeavours. Firstly, the responses indicated that teachers generally view the library as a suitable environment for their professional activities, particularly for tasks such as lesson preparation and academic research. The recognition of the library's quiet atmosphere and resourceful environment highlights its importance as a conducive space for focused work.

Furthermore, the responses revealed a positive collaboration between teachers and the library, with teachers acknowledging the library's role as a partner in classroom activities. While some teachers expressed concerns about the library's focus on students rather than teachers, the overall sentiment was one of appreciation for the support and resources provided by the library.

However, there were also indications of potential areas for improvement, such as the need for better communication about the diverse services offered by the library and the importance of promoting information literacy skills among teachers. Some respondents expressed uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding the responsibili-

22 Ivanka Stri evi ; Dora Rubini , *Librarians' assistance to students in the information seeking process: perspectives of higher education teachers and librarians*, «The journal of academic librarianship», 49 (2023), n. 1, p. 102629.

23 Johanna Ylipulli [*et al.*], *Public libraries as a partner in digital innovation project: designing a virtual reality experience to support digital literacy*, «Future generation computer systems», 149 (2023), p. 594-605.

24 Frances Marsh, *Unsettling information literacy: exploring critical approaches with academic researchers for decolonising the university*, «Journal of information literacy», 16 (2022), n. 1, p. 4-29.

ties of the library, suggesting a potential gap in understanding that could be addressed through targeted initiatives and educational efforts. Finally, the findings underscore the significance of libraries in supporting teachers' professional development and enhancing educational outcomes. By addressing any misalignments in perception and actively promoting the diverse services available, libraries can continue to serve as invaluable resources for teachers in their quest for knowledge and academic excellence. Further research and collaborative efforts between teachers and librarians are recommended to ensure that libraries remain dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of educators and students alike.

Implications and Recommendations:

- Positive perceptions: the positive feedback indicates that the library is fulfilling its role as a conducive space for teachers. Recognizing and promoting this positive perception can contribute to the continued use of the library by teachers.
- Quiet atmosphere: emphasizing and maintaining the quiet atmosphere in the library is crucial, as it seems to be a key factor contributing to its suitability for teachers. Consideration could be given to implementing measures to preserve this quiet environment.
- Promotion of library use: based on these positive perceptions, there may be opportunities to encourage even more teachers to utilize the library. Schools could explore ways to promote the benefits of the library for teachers and provide any necessary resources or support.
- Feedback loop: Regular feedback from teachers can help assess and enhance the suitability of the library. This could involve periodic surveys or focus group discussions to gather input on any improvements or additional resources that teachers might find beneficial.

The study suggests that the school library is perceived as suitable for secondary school teachers, particularly for tasks such as lesson preparation in a quiet environment. The positive sentiments expressed in the statements underscore the importance of maintaining and promoting the library as a valuable resource for teachers.

When evaluating the information literacy skills of teachers in using the library, it's important to consider a broader range of factors beyond the physical environment and suitability for specific activities. Here are several dimensions to consider when assessing information literacy skills:
- Information Seeking and Retrieval: Evaluate teachers' ability to effectively search for and retrieve relevant information from the library's resources, including books, databases, and other materials.

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**Il miglioramento attraverso l'information literacy nelle biblioteche delle scuole secondarie: una
ricerca qualitativa sulla percezione degli insegnanti nei confronti dei bibliotecari scolastici**
Questo studio qualitativo indaga le prospettive degli insegnanti delle scuole secondarie riguardo ai
ruoli e ai servizi delle biblioteche e dei bibliotecari nel soddisfare le loro esigenze informative. Attraverso
le interviste effettuate e l'analisi delle risposte emergono diversi temi chiave, tra cui l'utilità delle
biblioteche per gli insegnanti, la percezione dei bibliotecari come partner in classe, l'utilizzo autonomo
delle risorse della biblioteca, la soddisfazione per i servizi bibliotecari, la comprensione del ruolo della
biblioteca nel soddisfare le esigenze informative, la percezione dell'alfabetizzazione informativa degli
insegnanti e le opinioni sul ruolo della biblioteca.
L'analisi rivela un sentimento complessivamente positivo verso le biblioteche da parte degli insegnanti,
che le percepiscono come ambienti favorevoli per attività come la preparazione delle lezioni. Tuttavia,
ci sono percezioni contrastanti riguardo al rapporto di collaborazione tra insegnanti e bibliotecari, così
come differenze nel grado di utilizzo autonomo delle risorse della biblioteca. Mentre alcuni insegnanti
esprimono soddisfazione per i servizi bibliotecari, altri suggeriscono aree di miglioramento. Inoltre,
esistono opinioni divergenti sul ruolo della biblioteca nell'affrontare le esigenze informative, evidenziando
la necessità per le biblioteche di adattarsi ai contesti informativi in evoluzione.
La ricerca evidenzia anche prospettive diverse sulle competenze di alfabetizzazione informativa degli
insegnanti, e enfatizza la necessità continua di formazione e di sviluppo professionale. Infine, le
percezioni relative ai compiti della biblioteca differiscono tra gli insegnanti, e vengono messi in luce i
ruoli multiformi che le biblioteche svolgono nel supportare l'insegnamento e l'apprendimento. In sintesi,
questa indagine qualitativa offre preziosi dati sulle percezioni degli insegnanti riguardo alle biblioteche
e ai bibliotecari, sottolineando l'importanza di comprendere e soddisfare le loro esigenze e aspettative
per migliorare la collaborazione e il supporto agli educatori.

**Empowering through information literacy in secondary school libraries: a qualitative exploration of
teachers' perceptions through school librarians**
This qualitative study investigates the perspectives of secondary school teachers regarding the roles and
services of libraries and librarians in fulfilling their information needs. By conducting interviews and
analyzing direct responses, several key themes emerge, including the suitability of libraries for teachers,
perceptions of librarians as partners in the classroom, independent utilization of library resources,
satisfaction with library services, understanding of the library's role in meeting information needs,
perceptions of teachers' information literacy, and views on library responsibilities. The analysis reveals
an overall positive sentiment towards libraries among teachers, who perceive them as conducive
environments for tasks such as lesson preparation. However, there are mixed perceptions regarding the
extent of partnership between teachers and librarians, as well as variations in the degree of independent

use of library resources. While some teachers express satisfaction with library services, others suggest areas for improvement. Additionally, there are differing views on the library's role in addressing information needs, highlighting the necessity for libraries to adapt to evolving information landscapes. Furthermore, the study underscores mixed perspectives on teachers'; information literacy skills, emphasizing the ongoing need for assessment and professional development. Lastly, perceptions of the library's responsibilities vary among teachers, emphasizing the multifaceted roles libraries play in supporting teaching and learning. In summary, this qualitative exploration offers valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of libraries and librarians, stressing the importance of understanding and addressing their needs and expectations to enhance collaboration and support for educators.