

Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of School Libraries in Supporting the Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the role of school libraries in supporting the curriculum. A qualitative approach was used to collect data from teachers at various educational levels in several schools. Data were collected through interviews and direct observations in school libraries. The results indicate that teachers view libraries as a vital element in supporting the learning process, providing additional learning resources, and enhancing students' information literacy. Collaboration between teachers and librarians was identified as key to designing and implementing effective learning activities. However, several challenges such as limited resources, time constraints, and a lack of training for librarians were identified as major obstacles. This study underscores the importance of investing in improving collections, facilities, and librarian training, as well as allocating sufficient time for library use. In conclusion, school libraries play a crucial role in supporting the curriculum and improving the quality of education; with the right support, libraries can become dynamic and integral learning centers.

INTRODUCTION

The school library is a vital component of the educational environment, serving as a learning resource center for students and teachers. School libraries are expected to be fully utilized by the entire school community in the educational process (Huda, 2020). Libraries are expected to meet students' information needs, keeping pace with advancements in information technology to align with students' needs and providing high-quality services to support the library's objectives (Usholicchah et al., 2024). More than just a place to store books, school libraries provide access to a variety of reading materials, media, and information technology that support the learning process. Most of the library's responsibilities have changed due to advancements in information technology. These include the processes of selection, acquisition, organization, storage,



and maintenance of the collection, as well as the provision of information services to library users (Maulinda & Mustajib, 2024).

Within the curriculum context, the library plays a role in enriching the learning experience, promoting information literacy, and facilitating independent and collaborative learning. The school library serves as a hub for integrating all educational activities and various sources of instructional materials, information, and entertainment that support the implementation of the curriculum (Syahdan et al., 2021). The role of the school library in supporting the curriculum has become increasingly important in the digital age, where information is easily accessible but requires strong information literacy skills to utilize it effectively. Teachers, as the primary educators and facilitators in the educational process, have a unique perspective on how libraries can support the school's curriculum goals. Teachers' perceptions of the school library's role provide valuable insights into the library's effectiveness and contribution within the educational context.

This study aims to explore and understand teachers' perceptions of the role of school libraries in supporting the curriculum. The primary focus of this study is how libraries can enhance the quality of learning, support literacy activities, and facilitate collaboration between teachers and librarians. Additionally, this study aims to identify the challenges faced in maximizing the role of the library and to offer recommendations for improving school library services. By understanding teachers' perceptions, school libraries can develop more effective strategies to support curriculum needs and enhance their contribution to the educational process. The results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for decision-makers in optimizing the function of school libraries as dynamic and integral learning centers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore teachers' perceptions of the role of school libraries in supporting the curriculum. The study participants were teachers from various educational levels (elementary, middle, and high school) who were purposively selected based on criteria such as actively using the library and having at least three years of teaching experience. Data were collected through interviews and direct observation in the school library. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' experiences and views regarding the library's contribution to learning, collaboration with librarians, and the challenges they face. Observations were conducted over several weeks to document activities and interactions in the library. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, beginning with interview transcription, coding, categorization, and ending with the interpretation of key themes. All research processes adhered to ethical principles, including obtaining written consent from participants and maintaining the confidentiality of the information provided. This approach is expected to provide a deep understanding of teachers' perceptions of the school library's role in supporting the curriculum and to generate recommendations for the development of school libraries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Role of Libraries in Learning

Interviews with teachers revealed that the school library is considered to play a vital role in supporting learning. The majority of teachers stated that the library provides additional learning resources that are very helpful in enriching the curriculum. Some of the key points raised included:

1. **Diverse Information Sources:** Teachers appreciate the diversity of the library's collection of books and reference materials, which includes textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, and magazines. This allows students to access a broader range of information than what is available in textbooks alone.
2. **Support for Independent Learning:** The library is considered an ideal place for students to study on their own. Students can search for the information they need for assignments or projects, which fosters research skills and critical thinking.
3. **Facilitating Interdisciplinary Projects:** Teachers note that the library supports interdisciplinary learning by providing relevant resources for various subjects. This helps students develop a more holistic understanding of specific topics.

B. Collaboration Between Teachers and Librarians

Collaboration between teachers and librarians has been identified as a key factor in maximizing the library's role in supporting the curriculum. Some forms of collaboration identified include:

1. **Planning Learning Activities:** Teachers and librarians collaborate to design learning activities that incorporate the use of library resources. These include research projects, presentations, and literacy activities.
2. **Information Literacy Instruction:** Librarians help teach students information literacy skills, including how to effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Teachers believe these skills are essential in today's digital age.
3. **Technical Support:** Librarians often provide technical support for using the tools and technologies available in the library, such as computers, software, and online databases. This makes it easier for teachers and students to access the information students need.

C. Collaboration Between Teachers and Librarians

Although many benefits have been observed, this study also identified several challenges in maximizing the role of school libraries:

1. **Limited Resources:** Some school libraries face limitations in terms of book collections, facilities, and technology. This hinders the libraries' ability to provide optimal services to teachers and students.
2. **Limited Time:** Teachers often face time constraints when it comes to incorporating the library into their lessons due to their busy schedules. This limits the frequency and intensity of library use.
3. **Lack of Training:** The lack of training for librarians in supporting the curriculum and the use of information technology poses a barrier to effective collaboration with teachers.

Research findings indicate that school libraries play a significant role in supporting the curriculum by providing additional learning resources, facilitating independent learning, and supporting interdisciplinary projects. Teachers' positive perceptions of the library's role suggest that libraries can become dynamic learning hubs if they are well-managed and supported by strong collaboration between teachers and librarians. Collaboration between teachers and librarians has proven effective in integrating library resources into learning activities. Proactive librarians trained in information literacy can help students develop the skills necessary for success in learning and research. However, to maximize these benefits, adequate support is needed in the form of improvements to the collection, facilities, and librarian training.

Challenges such as limited resources and time constraints require special

attention. Schools need to consider investing in libraries, both in terms of budgeting for collection and facility updates, and in providing sufficient time for teachers and students to utilize the library. Additionally, ongoing training for librarians in skills relevant to the curriculum and information technology is crucial to ensure that libraries can continue to make a significant contribution to supporting education. Overall, this study underscores the importance of school libraries as an integral component of the educational process. With the right support, libraries can serve as resource centers that foster academic success and the development of students' information literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that teachers view the school library as a vital component in supporting the curriculum and the learning process. Teachers regard the library as a rich resource, providing a variety of supplementary learning materials that enrich classroom instruction and support students' independent learning. Collaboration between teachers and librarians has proven effective in designing and implementing relevant and beneficial learning activities, with librarians playing a key role in teaching information literacy skills and providing technical support. Nevertheless, several challenges such as resource constraints, limited time, and a lack of training for librarians were identified as major barriers to maximizing the library's role. Therefore, investment is needed in improving collections, facilities, and librarian training, as well as allocating sufficient time for library use. With the right support, school libraries can function as dynamic and integral learning centers, contributing significantly to the quality of education and the development of students' literacy skills.

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