

Children as Readers and Information Users in Various Contexts: A Mini Review*

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ABSTRACT Children have the right to current, relevant and timely information. They need this information in order to solve problems, make decisions and to succeed in their schoolwork. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of children as readers and information users in various contexts. The paper further examines factors influencing rural children's needs and user behavior as well as their reading and information needs. Recommendations are made based on literature that learners should be encouraged to read more widely than narrow topics of school tasks. They should be trained in different techniques and effective ways of searching for information.

INTRODUCTION

There are different types of libraries and information services in South Africa. These services are as diverse as their aims and functions, and are influenced by the information needs and circumstances of their users. School, regional, public and community libraries are supposed to provide library services to children in rural areas.

The Reading and Information Needs of Children

Fourie (1991: 3) and Griffioen (2015) state that children and young people have the right to have correct and up-to-date information, which enables them to make decisions in matters concerning their personal needs. Yet, according to Fourie (1991: 3), Gross (2000:10-15) and Datta and Roy (2015), children lack information skills.

The Reading and Information Needs of Children during Various Cognitive Developmental Stages

In order to understand what children's information needs and usage behavior entail, it is

necessary to understand the reading and information needs that they have at various stages of childhood. Piaget (in Fourie and Kruger 1995) distinguishes various developmental stages in childhood, namely, the pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational stages. In addition, the various cognitive needs of the child are identified.

Pre-operational1 Stage (2-7 Years of Age)

The sensorimotor period is that period between birth and two years of age in which thought depends on immediate perceptions and motor action. The child starts to discover the world himself or herself. During the pre-operational stage, the child develops the following cognitive abilities:

- ♦ Egocentrism has to do with the child being unable to reflect on his own thoughts.
- ♦ Centration has to do with the child being able to assimilate all aspects of an object or event. The perceptual aspects appear to dominate any cognitive activity.
- ♦ Transformations take place among states of objects or events, which are not understood. The child is not aware of the relationship between events.
- ♦ Reversibility of mental operations is not yet attained at this stage (University of South Africa 1989; Fourie and Kruger 1995; Griffioen 2015).

The materials that a library can provide to meet the needs of children at this stage include both ordinary and educational toys. The child has to be given an opportunity to play with toys and objects such as building blocks, clay and

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plasticene where he/she physically manipulates them. In so doing, he/she develops the above-mentioned cognitive skills.

The Concrete Operations Stage (7–11 Years of Age)

Children between 7 and 11 years of age develop logical thought processes or operations that are necessary for understanding problems concerning concrete objects or events. These operations are concerned with cognitive functions, which are necessary for understanding information. An operation is a type of action.

The operations can be carried out directly by manipulating objects or internally as when the symbols representing things and relations are central to concrete operations. During this stage, the child develops the following cognitive abilities:

- ♦ Seriation, which is responsible for the child's ability to mentally arrange a set of things according to differences.
- ♦ Classification, which is necessary for mentally grouping objects according to their similarities (Fourie and Kruger 1995; Datta and Roy 2015).

Children at this stage should be provided with opportunities to order and classify objects and events, and books should reinforce this ability.

The Stage of Formal Operations (12 Years and Older)

The formal operational period is divided into two different stages as presented below.

"The first stage (ages 11-13) is the stage between concrete and formal operations. This stage is characterized by the transition from thoughts concerning reality to thoughts concerning possibility. During this stage, the child can reason and hypothesize about current and concrete experiences" (Fourie and Kruger 1995; Bello 2014).

"The second stage (ages 14-15) is concerned with the final restructuring of the mind before it reaches its full growth potential. At this stage, the adolescent's thinking starts to be dominated by experimentation, hypothesis making, synthesis and analysis of cognitive materials and exploratory ideas. The adolescent eventually reaches his or her full intellectual growth potential and has the same capacity as that of an adult"

(Fourie and Kruger 1995; Bello 2014; Brown 2015; Stepanovic et al. 2015).

Personal and School-related Information Needs of Children

Apart from basic information needs, there are personal or individual needs that arise as a result of the situation in which the child finds himself or herself (Fourie 1991; Foundation Phase Child Development Assessment 2011). The child is motivated to seek goal directed information related to his or her situation, since he or she is aware of a gap in trying to solve problems encountered in everyday life within the family environment.

Learners' information needs arise from tasks set by the teacher as well as the requirement for additional reading matter and media that should be provided in schools (Fourie 1991; Foundation Phase Child Development Assessment 2011). Moreover, the critical perspective of the world among older children awakens the child's ability to think in a realistic way.

Children are also expected to undertake independent studies such as homework, assignments and self-study projects. Moreover, aspects arising in the classroom environment and the urge to expand knowledge concerning a topic could motivate the child to seek additional information on his or her own, and this can arouse the inherent curiosity of the child.

According to Sieder (1991) and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2014), the information needs of children change as they develop. At ten years of age children are especially receptive to information that will give them mastery over an uncertain world. They are also able to learn critical thinking skills that will enable them to evaluate information.

Children's and adolescents' information books should include the presentation of principles and theories, which lead to interpretation and evaluation. Walter (1994) and Bigler et al. (2013) state that children, as part of a rural society, are perceived as human beings who need socialization and education. Children have their own self-determined information needs (Gross 2000) and self-generated questions imposed on them by other children and adults. They do not only have a very limited world experience, but they are also not fully developed physically, cognitively or socially.

As pointed out by Ogundipe (1994) and Bigler et al. (2013), a considerable number of people in developing countries cannot read and write because of low education levels. They depend on their memories as their storehouse of knowledge. They cannot use written texts since they cannot read. As a result, they cannot use books. Because of their inability to read and write, they depend mostly on the human mind instead of recorded knowledge. In addition, a contributing factor to their ignorance is that most of them neither know that they have information needs nor can they even express these needs.

In developing countries, information needs expressed mostly relate to agriculture, other economic activities, healthcare and sanitation (Sturges and Chimseu 1996; Stromquist 2007). Some communities are renowned for their skills and abilities in bone therapy, mental health and childbirth problems. The nature of traditional African learning is oral. It is learner-centered, where learning has much to do with the home, farm and play. Experts of the traditional African learners are “walking encyclopedias” who depend on the human memories as their libraries without shelves. One can assume that rural children who learn by example from their parents will develop similar means to those of adults to store information.

On the other hand, in developed countries most people are educated to a certain level, and they are able to read and write. They depend on written or recorded texts in that they keep diaries to remind them of events and issues. They realize that information will help them do their work, further their studies, and find information for leisure purposes (Sturges and Chimseu 1996; Stromquist 2007).

THE INFORMATION BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN

Dubber (1999: 121) states, “Behavior is an attempt to communicate a need”.

According to Wilson (1999) and Bitso (2011), information behavior refers to human behavior in relation to sources, channels of information, as well as information seeking and use. Information behavior relates to how people need, seek, manage, give and use information in different contexts.

“Reading is described as a form of human behavior, namely, interpretation behavior” (Oosthuizen 1989: 317). Reading is one aspect of user behavior. The usage behavior of children is closely

related to their information needs. Considering the background against which rural children live, it can be assumed that their environment will influence their information needs and usage behavior. Therefore, these needs may differ from that of children in cities and towns (Bitso 2011). Library usage is another facet of user behavior. Dubber (1999: 121) says, “Library usage behavior can be affected by things such as school morale, learners’ attitudes, the teaching and learning style and additional social factors”. Adults are expected to identify and fill most of their children’s information needs. For example, they should make the children know that fire is hot, that they have to look both ways before crossing the street, and that they need to understand the changes that take place during puberty (Fourie 1991: 3-4; Sieder 1991: 3-4; Walter 1994: 116; Fourie and Kruger 1995: 225-226; Gross 2000: 10-15; Bitso 2011).

Information-seeking Patterns

Information-seeking patterns refer to the manner in which children read and how they find or obtain information that they need for personal or school-related purposes.

The initiation of the search process can be clouded by children’s uncertainty about defining or articulating an information need (Kuhlthau 1993; Okonoko et al. 2015). They can also experience particular difficulties in as far as formulating their information needs is concerned. They are also likely to experience needs, which are not yet met.

According to Moore and St George (1996), Lehman (2014), Crow (2015) and Okonoko et al. (2015), older children still experience difficulties in formulating search strategies although the object of the search has been predetermined. Moreover, children have an insufficient knowledge base to enable them to narrow or broaden their search strategy appropriately. They also experience difficulties in as far as finding and interpreting information about books in the catalogue as well as locating specific books on the shelves. Recognition memory develops before recall memory, and as a result, children are more likely to recognize a search term independently. This means that children can have difficulties in articulating their information needs but they can recognize one if it is suggested to them (Soper 1990: 2; Borgman et al. 1990; Walter and Borgman 1991; Crow 2015; Okonoko et al. 2015).

Reading Habits

Children use different sources to obtain information as they have self-identified information needs and wants. Most of the information, which is provided to them, is that type of information that they have not asked for (Walter 1994; Erdem 2014). In developed countries children receive information from well-meaning adults and from other sources such as television and their peers. These are their two main sources. Some children regard other children as their most important source of information. On the other hand, adults are also regarded as information providers in children's lives. For example, the teacher will provide the child with information concerning world geography, the police officer will concentrate on information about the dangers of drug abuse, the nurse provides them with information concerning AIDS, and the church minister will provide them with information concerning ethics or morals (Erdem 2014).

Young people tend to get their books from whatever source they can easily obtain at that moment (Totterdell and Bird 1976; School Resources 2015). In advantaged schools, where both class and school libraries exist, pupils have the opportunity to borrow from both libraries. On the other hand, in disadvantaged communities where no school library exists, the class library was supposed to take its place.

Carter (1986) and Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) (2009) reported the findings of a study on children's reading habits in developed countries. More girls are found to prefer fiction than boys. On the other hand, more boys are found to prefer non-fiction than girls, with the most popular non-fiction topics varying with age and gender. Moreover, girls show an interest in cookery, followed by an interest in pets, puzzles and ballet. In as far as fiction books are concerned, teenage boys prefer more violent stories, while the ghost stories and mysteries are found to be favored by both boys and girls between seven and eleven years of age (Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) 2009).

Library Usage

Since most people in developed countries are educated, they make use of libraries in order to obtain information that will meet their information needs. Children become used to the habit of visiting and using libraries to find information to assist them in their homework, and for

recreational reading. These circumstances give rise to the improvement in the provision of library services in developed countries that meet the needs of library users. Several researchers (Ogundipe 1994; Uhegbu 1997; Tawete 1998; Abu 2014) endorse this viewpoint. Uhegbu (1997: 86) specifically states, "In developed countries information has become so vital that it has assumed the same status as land, labor, and capital as production elements."

Children and adolescents form a large proportion of public library users. Children who live near the library arrive on foot, while those who live far away depend on parents and other older people for transport. Children between three and eleven years of age visit the library with their parents or older people. The use of a library service assumes that the user is literate and knows how to find information in the library stacks. As a result, in literate communities, people have realized the importance of libraries to house their written texts (Carter 1986; Auman 2015).

They are familiar with libraries since they have grown up with library services. However, rural children often do not know what a library is because they have never been exposed to one before. They do not know how it works or its importance.

FACTORS INFLUENCING RURAL CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND USER BEHAVIOR

The user behavior of children in Western societies differs from the user behavior of children in developing countries, particularly that of rural African children. In order to understand the information needs and usage behavior of rural children, it is important to understand the environment in which they grow up and its impact on their handling of information.

Most viewpoints refer to conditions in a society where reading (use of printed media) is the norm. It is only a few (for example, Camble 1994; Machet 2004) who refer to the impact of culture (in rural areas) on reading habits.

According to Camble (1994) and Mahwasane (2008), "newspapers and magazines are rarely used by rural people". Children's reading, information needs and usage behavior are influenced by different factors such as biological and hereditary factors, personal factors, sociocultural factors and economic factors, the information environment as well as various record-related

factors, namely, record content, record form, availability and accessibility of information.

Biological and Hereditary Factors

Certain biological and hereditary factors such as visual and listening abilities influence a child's ability to read. Intelligence, visual and listening skills, and reading abilities are interdependent factors influencing the user behavior of children and adolescents. Intelligence also determines their preferences for certain categories of fiction and non-fiction. The information needs and usage behavior of a gifted child will differ from that of a slow learner (Marshall 1975).

Personal Factors

Children's information needs differ at different developmental stages since these needs change, as they grow older. As already explained, cognitive, physical and psychological developmental needs determine a child's media needs and interests at different stages. The reading interests of children change as they mature (Marshall 1975; Foundation Phase Child Development Assessment 2011).

Social and Cultural Factors

Individuals read to satisfy their needs for enjoyment, for utility and escape (Marshall 1975). The child is profoundly influenced to use the media and the library by different socio-cultural factors. For example, peer group will influence the child's choice of books. Children in rural areas where there are no information services or computers spend most of their time participating in other activities rather than reading. But children in developed countries have the opportunity to experiment with information technology.

Socio-cultural circumstances have an effect on children's information needs and their way of handling information. According to the Library and Information Services Council (England) (1995) and Horton (2008), children are vulnerable and dependent on adults. The changing family structure, particularly as a result of poverty, may lead to a lack of privacy for children studying at home, which contributes to a poor environment for developing information skills. Moreover, high unemployment rates among young adults in most areas result in an

increase in leisure time. Young children depend on adults to visit the library, and as a result, their access to libraries is determined by the leisure and work patterns of adults.

Machet (2003) and Jochmann-Mannak et al. (2010) state that in order to develop reading habits, children must be provided with types of books that are interesting. In this way, they will be able to meet their information and recreational needs. Libraries and publishers should base their selection of books and other information media on what corresponds to the culture in their country.

Oral Culture

An important factor influencing the usage behavior of children is that they should have access to an information system (Durrani 1990). In modern developed societies, institutions such as libraries and schools provide for the different information needs of children. However, Ogun-dipe (1994) and Poveda et al. (2009) suggest that in African countries it is not the libraries, but rather the oral tradition of indigenous knowledge systems that can be regarded as synonymous with the term "storehouse of knowledge". The oral system of knowledge is different from the written system. In African societies, much knowledge is learned, stored and disseminated through the oral tradition.

Although the influences of the oral tradition may still be very strong in the rural areas of African countries, people are also exposed to the modern way of life. However, poor literacy and other socio-economic conditions are not conducive to the development of reading habits and more modern means of obtaining information. This situation could be problematic for rural children who can no longer depend on the learning resources of the traditional way of life. In order to compete in the modern society, they have to become familiar with reading to be able to access information in textual records (Singh et al. 2015).

According to Adimora and Ugoji (1997) and Maryati (2015), in the rural areas children are mostly from families that are not educated, and are therefore, not interested in learning. Developing groups on the whole do not have a reading culture. They do not enjoy reading. The home is made up of a house, which is used to shelter family members, the household, livestock such

as chickens and goats, as well as the harvest. There is also a lack of the necessary facilities that can stimulate and encourage children to read. These include proper lighting, privacy and a quiet place. The types of books found are old, used exercise books of previous classes, usually found in the pit toilets and used for toilet paper. Newspapers and magazines are only found in the homes of the so-called elite group in the rural areas where the father is the only member of the family who can read (Singh et al. 2015).

Economic Factors

The socio-economic status and the home environment play a part in encouraging reading (Marshall 1975:20-33). For example, children who have opportunities to visit libraries and other cultural institutions will read more than children who do not have the opportunity to visit the library. Fasick (1998: xiv) asserts that the large number of children in high schools who dropped out in the past will be encouraged to be in school until they receive education, which will enable them to work in this new society. People are reluctant to pay taxes to affect social change. This results in the ever-increasing pressure to cut costs in all social agencies such as schools, museums, libraries and universities (Fasick 1998: xiv; Marshall 1975: 20-33). These circumstances have serious implications for the abovementioned agencies to provide for children's information needs. They are also not conducive to the development of a positive attitude towards using the library.

Information Environment

Ogundipe (1994) and Mariga et al. (2014) state that it was the European travellers with their tales of Africa as the dark and mysterious continent who recognized that this information environment was interesting and complex. Moreover, literature and personal observation indicate that the African village has a self-contained, holistic system of knowledge and beliefs. This system has succeeded in opposing the spiritual pressure of colonialism and the modern African state. Knowledge of history, religion, the creation of the imagination, agricultural lore, and traditional herbal medicines were stored in the human memory, and was orally transmitted. All

these contribute to the indigenous knowledge system on which the people of the African village depend. This type of system determines both the nature of people's information-seeking patterns and perceptions of their information needs. A large proportion of the population does not know that they have information needs, whereas some cannot express their information needs. Information needs, which are expressed, are mostly related to agriculture, economic activities, healthcare and sanitation (Ogundipe 1994; Mariga et al. 2014).

Sturges and Chimseu (1996: 135-137) state that rural communities depend mainly on visual and oral aids for communication. This implies that they do not make use of written sources of information. Ogundipe (1994: 239) suggests that traditional African learning plays an indefinite role in as far as the oral culture is concerned. It is also unable to generate new ideas and remain faithful to the oral corpuses of work, localized names and history (Sturges and Chimseu 1996:135-137; Ogundipe 1994: 239). These conditions have serious implications for the use of information sources in text (Locke and Kimmel 1987: 365).

Record-related Factors

Record Form as a Factor

The use of different types of recreational media meets the children's needs for information. Reading is one such activity. However, according to the Library and Information Services Council (England) (1995) and Swist et al. (2015), the decline in reading among teenagers is as a result of the increase in video games, 24-hour television and other sophisticated leisure activities, as well as the commercial hard-sell and media-hype, which go together with these. As a result, many children no longer make use of libraries for recreational purposes. There is awareness that teenagers have a diversity of needs, which are separate from those of young children and adults. In addition, the reading activity has to compete with the attractions of commercial operators for the attention of teenagers. On the other hand, public libraries do not match the ambience of entertainment premises (Library and Information Marshall 1975; Services Council 1995; Campbell et al. 2015).

Record Content as a Factor

The smooth functioning of LIS to the user population requires the availability of a relevant collection. It is noteworthy that there are not enough copies of fiction books in the former National Library of the Venda Government. Large parts of the collection comprise of mostly English materials. There is a general lack of books in the mother tongue (Tshivenda). As a result, the collection is not relevant to the needs of its users. Teachers do not have enough reference books for either teaching or learning. There is a limited choice of books. The collection consists of books in which the language is too difficult, while the type size and illustrations are inappropriate. There are no appropriate resources in the collection such as newspapers, magazines and journals. The collection mainly consists of outdated materials (Mahwasane 2009).

Availability of Appropriate Books and Other Media as a Factor

Considering the circumstances in rural areas in developing communities (where many people cannot read and write), the provision of library services to children may be affected by the type of sources provided. As a result of Black children's background of oral culture, they do not read books for pleasure (Mohammed 1994; World Literacy Foundation 2015). Moreover, books for these rural children also contribute to their dislike of reading. If the books are in a language that the rural children cannot understand, and even if the information is relevant to them, the books will be of no use to the children. Since parents of rural children in developing communities are not literate, they cannot teach their children how to obtain information from books. In addition, books provided by a library and information services sometimes contain subjects at a level that the rural child cannot understand. The size of the print in books for rural children who are not familiar with reading is also of importance (Cree et al. 2012).

Most of the illustrations in books are also not appropriate for rural children originating from an African culture (or African tradition) where people are primarily dependent on an oral culture in the absence of literacy. Libraries and information services in developing communities normally lack supporting literature comprising

simple large print texts in the local language (Tawete 1988; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2013).

Geographic Factors

Rural communities in Africa are in a crisis because they are unable to sustain and generate themselves economically, which also has an impact on the information needs of rural children (Wiley 1995: 4). Views by Sturges and Chimseu (1996) are applicable to a study of the usage behavior of rural children since they deal with circumstances in remote rural areas that differ from those in urban areas. Sturges and Chimseu (1996) and UNESCO (2013) see the African village as poverty-stricken, neglected and frequently isolated by its geographical situation, language and culture. This village represents an extreme in the global information environment, which regresses from virtual reality through to the painful hard reality of lack of information.

DISCUSSION

Children in developed countries have many appropriate sources of information such as parents, extended family members, teachers, and helping professionals of all kinds. However, most of these information providers do not have accurate information or the ability to communicate information effectively to children. Even information-literate parents do not have time to communicate all the information needed by children. This is consistent with literature that some of these information needs are sensitive and difficult for many parents to talk about to their children, with sex being the most sensitive (Carter 1986; Walter 1994; Horton 2008; School Resources 2015).

On the other hand, unlike in developing countries, library services for children in developed countries, where both the children and their parents can read and write, provide for their needs. These libraries are well equipped with suitable reading materials. Usually the materials are in different forms, for example auditory, visual and audio-visual materials. It is therefore understandable that children in developed countries can read to obtain appropriate information for their schoolwork and for recreational and vocational purposes (Mohammed 1994; Machet 1994; Cree et al. 2012; UNESCO 2013).

In the oral tradition, individuals, families and groups within the society specialize and gain great accreditation in chosen areas of knowledge through both formal and informal methods of training. The continuity of the oral tradition from generation to generation is possible as a result of a self-reviewing and self-perpetuating system. There are, for example, communities that are renowned for their skills and abilities in bone therapy, mental health and childbirth problems (Ogundipe 1994; Jonsson and Olsson 2007). Against this background, it is understandable that children in areas where traditional life still prevails do not have so much exposure to institutions like libraries that are developed to provide for the needs of a modern literate society. This can have serious implications for the conventional library and information services to rural children in an African context.

Therefore, it is not strange that Ogundipe (1994) and Turin (2013) show curiosity about both the relevance of books in an African context and what the best mode of knowledge transfer should be. The nature of traditional African learning is oral. It is person-to-person centered, voluntary, lifelong and free. It is also learner-centered, where learning has much to do with the work-a-day world of home and play. Traditional learning is both compassionate and equalizing while mastery is demonstrative and originated in informal convivial circumstances (Ogundipe 1994; Maryati 2015). Since they do not depend on recorded information, teachers of traditional African learning are “walking encyclopedias”, who depend on their collective memory—the so-called elastic human contents—as they are libraries without shelves. This results in some important issues being overlooked or forgotten.

Preservation in the traditional African learning is in the local language, whereas its intellectuals are priests, wise old men or griots. Oral communication takes place by means of storytelling, witty remarks and proverbs, riddles and tongue-twisters, ritual incantations, poems and responses, the beating of drums, smoke signaling and mnemonic devices, which result in lack of reading materials or recorded information, since information is stored in the human memory. The dissemination of the above information takes place through parents, priests, singers, elders and griots. They transmit both their customs and social ethics by means of religion and political ceremonies (Ogundipe 1994: 239; Turin 2013).

Awareness of the lack of literacy in rural areas, and the role that parents can play in the development of early literacy skills in their children gave rise to family literacy projects and interventions to promote reading (Aitchison 2006; Singh 2015). Although these types of projects are few and far between, they are evident of an attempt to bridge the gap between the two information systems that pose enormous challenges to rural children. Children in remote rural areas are caught between modern and traditional systems, and this problematic situation has not been addressed properly.

CONCLUSION

This paper deals with the reading and information needs of children in rural areas, their usage behavior and factors influencing this. During various stages, children need information that is at their own level of understanding. There are factors that influence their information needs and their information usage behavior, such as biological and hereditary factors, socio-cultural, recreational and economic factors. In this way, libraries can fill the gap. However, children as users have their own ways of obtaining information that they need in order to meet their reading and information needs. Oral culture, geographic isolation and the information environment have been found to be factors that affect the learners’ reading habits. Libraries can provide the type of information that cannot be provided by parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Learners should be encouraged to read more widely than the narrow topic of a school task. The Bible, magazines, posters and newspapers should be used as additional reading materials.

Learners should be trained in different techniques for searching information in effective ways. This will enable them to find the information they need for school tasks quickly, regardless of whether it is in books, journals or other sources.

Learners should be taught to use the school library extensively so that they will be able to use a library under any conditions. Learners should be taught how to search for and to retrieve a book, and also how to search for information in a book making use of different methods.

Learners should be taught to indicate the page number, date, year and the author of a reference book in a task. The teacher should then read the reference books cited by a learner for a project. Learners who have cited more references than others should be rewarded. The learner who comes second should have a silver star, while the learner who comes third should have a bronze star. This will motivate learners to use the library properly so that they will be able to get a gold star pasted in their books.

Learners should be provided with different reading materials like storybooks, magazines and posters so that they will develop love for reading. Learners should not only read when doing homework, but should be encouraged to read out of interest.

LIMITATIONS

Teacher-librarians are not trained for their tasks in the school library, and therefore, cannot do their work properly. This also results in them failing to properly train the learners in the use of a library or how to search for information in library materials. For learners to be readers and users of information, they need to have knowledge of how to search and retrieve information on their own. As a result, library education should be encouraged since it is lacking, especially in rural schools.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the study regarding children as readers and information users in various contexts, it can be suggested that the field of library service that is rendered to children in rural areas can be further studied because not enough has been done in this field in rural areas.

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