

ABSTRACT

Community libraries are located in communities to serve those specific communities through providing free, low cost access to books and other information materials to people of different ages. This study examined the contribution of community libraries to the development of reading culture among children in Uganda specifically at Nambi Sseppuuya Community Resource Centre (NSCRC). The objectives of the study were to: establish the children's reading needs and habits; examine the children's reading activities; examine how the children have benefited from the reading promotion activities offered; determine factors hindering reading culture development among children and propose a framework that could optimize the reading culture of children at NSCRC.

This study adopted a case study research design with a qualitative approach. Convenience sampling was used. Methods of data collection included observation, focus group discussions, interviews and document review. Data quality control was ensured through piloting of the data collection instruments and data validation among others. Major findings on the children's reading needs and habits included access to books, reading materials in their mother tongue, engaging and attractive reading materials, regular reading time and routines, opportunities for reading aloud, reading regularly, reading with parents or guardians among others. The children's reading activities included read aloud opportunities and educative games among others. The major benefits that children got from engaging in the reading promotion activities at the community resource centre included provision of reading materials, provision of public space, and literacy promotion. The factors that were affecting the development of reading culture among children included inadequate reading materials and English-indigenous language ambivalence among others.

The study concluded that children are exposed to information materials in different formats such as fiction and digital media so that they are encouraged to read. It is also important to establish regular reading times and routines since these help children to develop a reading culture. The study recommends that parents should support the children to make reading part of their daily routine and also ask for books from the librarians and other adults. As regards the children's reading activities, parents should engage more in storytelling sessions for their children. They should also adopt the Community Library-Driven Reading Culture Framework (CL-DRCF) to optimize the reading culture at NSCRC. The study developed a Community Library-Driven Reading Culture Framework to optimize the reading culture of children at NSCRC.