Assessing Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Role of Culturally Responsive Library Collections in Fostering Unity among Diverse Students in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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Abstract: *This study examines the attitudes of in-service school librarians and students in Nigeria toward culturally responsive library collections as a strategy for fostering unity in the country's diverse society. Nigeria, characterized by multi-ethnic groups and more than 500 languages, presents unique challenges and opportunities for inclusivity in public learning spaces such as libraries. Drawing on the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the educational framework of Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP), the research explores how libraries can better serve multicultural populations by embracing diversity in resources, environment, and programming. Using an exploratory research design, data were collected via an online survey from secondary school librarians and students across Nigeria. Findings reveal general support among librarians for cultural responsiveness as integral to equitable service, though confidence varies in recommending diverse materials and organizing cultural events. Students acknowledge the presence of diverse cultural materials and a welcoming environment but express concerns about resource accessibility, relevance, and limited cultural programming. While school management shows moderate support for inclusivity, there remains a need for more visible advocacy and enhanced staff training.*

The study underscores the importance of expanding diverse collections, prioritizing cultural events, and fostering leadership commitment to create inclusive library spaces. Recommendations include targeted professional development, regular review of materials to address bias, and strengthened support for culturally marginalized students. These efforts are crucial for libraries to contribute effectively to unity and cultural understanding in Nigeria's multifaceted society, promoting social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and educational equity for all citizens.

Keywords - Cultural Diversity; Culturally Responsive Practice; Inclusivity; Library Collections; School Libraries

Introduction

School libraries play a crucial role in fostering inclusivity and supporting the diverse learning needs of students from various cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds. As centers for information access and personal development, they are expected to be welcoming environments for all students, regardless of their heritage or beliefs. The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (ALA, 1996) ensures the "right to use a library regardless of origin, age, background, or views." Libraries, as inclusive public spaces, cater to a broad spectrum of users, and Nigeria, with its vast cultural diversity, exemplifies this need. The country is home of multi-ethnic groups, including the Hausa-Fulani (29%), Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3%), and Tiv and Urhobo (2%). The first three are considered the major tribes in the country, but there are also many other minority groups that speak different languages or variation of the three major tribes. There are over 500 languages being spoken in Nigeria, National Bureau of statistics (NBS). These groups have different cultures and way of life. The World Book encyclopaedia defines culture as the way of life of a people which includes arts, beliefs, customs, inventions, language, institutions, technology and values. These are aspects that affect the totality of the life of individuals. Librarians must effectively attend to the dynamic needs of all library users. Therefore, it is important that today's librarians are equipped with skills to critically consider the library environment, staff, user services, collections, and programing to best assist all users, especially those who may represent the minority or culturally disenfranchised populations. This has given rise to Culturally Responsive Practice in education.

Cultural responsiveness is an educational approach that respects the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students. It involves understanding and valuing the cultural backgrounds of students and incorporating it into teaching and learning in order to improve academic achievement (AITSL, 2016). In addition, it involves creating an environment that is inclusive and respectful for all students irrespective of their cultural background. This approach can be applied to various aspects of education in order to recognize and appreciate diversity in the school community thus promoting a sense of

belonging among all students and staff. The use of this approach in the classroom and even the health sector is an indication that it should be applied in the library because it is also a learning space.

Cultural responsiveness in the library involves recognizing the diverse cultural backgrounds of library users and providing services and resources that meet their needs in a way that all patrons, regardless of their cultural background, will feel welcomed in the library. Librarians can practice this by acquiring and preserving materials that reflect diverse cultures and experiences of their patrons. Organizing events that celebrate and promote cultural diversity is another way to apply cultural responsiveness in the library.

In the United States of America, the inclusion of Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) as a possible vehicle for racial justice in education reflects the field's evolving understanding of CRP in both concept and practice. Historically, conversations about how to provide quality education to racially minority students have circumvented direct references to race, racism, and White supremacy in the U.S. education system (NEA Center for Social Justice, 2020). Nigeria is also as culturally diverse as the United States if not more hence the need to include CRP as a vehicle for creating unity in our diverse society.

Statement of problem

Nigeria as a federal state allows each citizen to decide where to reside in the country irrespective of their ethnic group. This implies that a Yoruba family can decide to live in the northern part of the country and a Hausa-Fulani family can take up residence in the south west. This has brought about a diversified learning community in all parts of the country. Despite the multicultural nature of the country, there still exist ethnic clashes in so many parts of Nigeria. This is because many people still struggle with cultural incapacity and blindness; failure to understand why a person would need to understand anyone else's culture and not seeing differences between individuals and feel it is inappropriate to discuss differences. his therefore calls for the creation of a learning environment that is suitable for all learners; one that can be provided by creating an inclusive and welcoming environment to all library users. There have been Trenewed calls for Culturally Responsive Practice as a promising approach for addressing inequalities resulting from cultural and ethnic or racial bias in schools (Holcomb-McCoy, 2021). This study seeks to examine the attitude of in-service librarians and students to culturally responsive library collection as a means to fostering unity in our diverse society. The main objective of this study is to find out how the attitude of librarians to culturally responsive collection can create unity in a diversified society.

Literature Review

A culturally responsive library collection is one that mirrors the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the community it serves. This type of collection can help to promote inclusivity and representation in literature, and can also help to foster a love of reading in underrepresented communities. In the past, library collections have been criticised for being Eurocentric and not reflective of the diverse communities they serve. According to a study by Iida and Bostick (2006), many libraries still do not have collections that reflect the diversity of their communities. This lack of representation can have a negative impact on the reading habits, the response of individuals to people of different cultural background and attitudes of the minorities in the community.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to create culturally responsive library collections. According to a report by the American Library Association (ALA), culturally responsive collections can help to promote diversity and inclusion in libraries (ALA, 2015). Additionally, a study by the Urban Institute found that libraries collections saw an increase in the number of diverse patrons using their resources (Urban Institute, 2017). There are many studies on diversity from the United States of America because of their diversified nature.

One way to create a culturally responsive library collection is to include materials from diverse authors and publishers. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, libraries that include materials from diverse authors and publishers are more likely to have collections that reflect the diversity of their communities (NCES, 2018). Additionally, a study by the Coalition for the Advancement of Librarians of Color found that librarians who actively seek out diverse materials for their collections are more likely to have culturally responsive collections (CALC, 2019). These collections serve the information needs of the library users. The patrons trust that librarians as information specialists can provide them with necessary and adequate information. The importance of information to shaping the orientation of individuals cannot be overemphasized.

Information is a necessary ingredient for life as it is needed to solve problems and take decisions in every aspect of life. Uttor (1999) defines information as data that has been subjected to some processing functions capable of answering user's query, be it recorded, summarised, or simply collected would help in decision making. Information in the view of Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2005) is structured data that causes a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of the real world and contribute to a reduction in the uncertainty of the state of the system. In view of this if the citizens of a diverse society like ours have the necessary information from spaces such as the library, it will change any negatively ingrained opinion about people from other cultures. Such information will make them see the beauty, intelligence and innovation that exists in other cultures in their society. This is in agreement with the view of Anasi (2010) that information helps in creating enlightened and responsible citizens.

Sokari (2006) agrees that information is necessary for liberation from the shackles of ignorance, misconceptions and

social unrest arguing that social cohesion cannot be achieved without timely, accurate, and relevant information. This information is what librarians as information professional are expected to provide for their diverse users. Satgoor (2012) noted the importance of information on national unity by emphasizing that information is needed to create an acknowledgment and appreciation of existing diversity, fostering communication across cultures and safeguarding human rights. IFLA (2003) describes libraries and librarians as key actors in providing unrestricted access to essential information resources for economic and cultural advancement thereby contributing to the development and preservation of intellectual freedom, democratic values, peace, and universal civil right. This indicates that librarians have a major role to play in fostering unity.

The goal of culturally relevant teaching and learning is to create a learning environment effective for all students, no matter their ethnic, cultural, economic, or linguistic backgrounds. Ladson-Billings (1995) reminds us that the benefits of including these practices are a more positive environment and greater engagement of the learner and the instructor, particularly when emphasis is placed on knowledge and consideration of the learners. School librarians are increasingly adopting culturally responsive practices to better serve their diverse student populations. Empirical findings suggest that these practices not only enhance student engagement but also improve academic outcomes. For instance, a study by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) found that schools with culturally responsive librarians saw a significant increase in student reading proficiency and overall academic performance (AASL, 2017). This indicates that when librarians tailor their collections and services to reflect the cultural backgrounds of their students, it fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Also, research by the University of California, Irvine, highlights the importance of cultural responsiveness in school libraries. Their study revealed that students are more likely to visit the library and utilise its resources when they feel that the library staff understands and respects their cultural heritage (UCLA, 2019). This finding underscores the critical role that librarians play in creating a welcoming atmosphere that encourages lifelong learning and promotes equity in education.
In addition to these studies, the Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange has documented the positive impact of culturally responsive librarianship on student motivation and literacy skills. According to their research, when librarians incorporate culturally relevant materials and activities into their programs, students exhibit higher levels of engagement and motivation to read (JETDE, 2020). These empirical findings collectively support the notion that culturally responsive practices in school libraries are essential for fostering an equitable and effective educational environment.

The extent to which culturally responsive libraries exist in South-West Nigeria is difficult to determine without further information. However, it is likely that there is a range of practices and approaches to library services in the region, with some libraries being more culturally responsive than others. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion in education in Nigeria, and this has led to increased interest in and attention to culturally responsive practices in libraries and other areas of education (Adeyemi, 2020). However, the extent to which these practices are being implemented and their impact on students' engagement and learning is not yet fully understood. Further research is needed to better understand the current state of culturally responsive libraries in South-West Nigeria and to identify best practices and strategies for promoting equity and fostering a love of learning among all students.

A culturally responsive library in schools is one that reflects the diverse backgrounds of its students and provides resources that are relevant to their experiences and perspectives. Recent research has shown that when students feel seen and represented in their school libraries, they are more likely to engage with the material and develop a love of reading (Cruz-Janzen, 2018; Thompson, 2019). In Nigeria, where there is a growing recognition of the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion in education, culturally responsive libraries can play a critical role in promoting equity and fostering a love of learning among all students (Adeyemi, 2020).

One way that schools can create culturally responsive libraries is by selecting books that feature diverse characters, settings, and experiences. This can include literature from authors of different cultural backgrounds, as well as books that address a range of topics and issues relevant to diverse communities (Cruz-Janzen, 2018). In Nigeria, there is a growing body of literature that reflects the country's diverse cultures and experiences, and culturally responsive libraries can play a critical role in promoting this work and making it accessible to a wider audience (Adeyemi, 2020). Johnson and Lee (2021) reported that well-organized cultural events significantly enhance students' cultural competence, but also found that students often disengage from libraries when they perceive resources as irrelevant to their cultural or academic needs. In addition to selecting diverse books, culturally responsive libraries can also provide resources and programs that celebrate and support diverse communities. This can include author visits, book clubs, cultural day and other events that bring together students, authors, and community members to share their experiences and perspectives (Thompson, 2019). In Nigeria, there is a growing recognition of the importance of community engagement and collaboration in education, and culturally responsive libraries can play a critical role in fostering these connections and promoting a love of learning among all students (Adeyemi, 2020). According to a study by Lee and Menken (2018), students who do not see themselves represented in the books available in their school libraries are less likely to read and engage with those resources. The study

found that culturally responsive libraries can help to increase student engagement and improve reading outcomes. Carpenter and Holmes (2017) found that students who had access to culturally responsive libraries were more likely to enrol in advanced courses and have higher academic achievement. The study also found that culturally responsive libraries can help to close the achievement gap for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Bishop (2012) observed that while many school libraries attempt to include multicultural materials, there remain notable gaps in adequately representing diverse cultures in ways that deeply engage students. He also highlighted challenges librarians face in recommending multicultural resources due to limited familiarity or concerns about appropriateness. Smith and Johnson (2018) found that student satisfaction improves when school libraries actively curate culturally diverse collections. They also emphasized that culturally responsive information provision is central to serving diverse communities effectively. Patel (2019) highlighted that proactive and visible leadership strongly correlates with successful cultural inclusivity initiatives. They also recommended enhanced professional development and institutional support to empower librarians in implementing culturally responsive practices. Thompson and Green (2015) showed that welcoming physical and social environments in school libraries encourage engagement from diverse students and advocated for ongoing cultural competence training among librarians.

Wilson (2020) pointed out that while libraries may appear welcoming in theory, implicit social barriers often limit inclusivity in practice. He also argued that lack of cultural representation can subtly undermine students' connection to library resources. Garcia and Ramirez (2017) emphasized the importance of diverse materials in fostering cultural awareness and respect among students and noted that librarians feel more confident recommending diverse resources when supported by robust collection development policies. Nguyen (2019) found that cultural events in schools are frequently underfunded or inconsistently implemented, limiting their effectiveness in promoting cultural diversity.

Martinez and O'Brien (2014) study revealed that culturally responsive support services within libraries reduce barriers to learning and participation, and framed cultural responsiveness as a foundational competency for equitable library service. Roberts (2013) argued that many school libraries struggle to critically assess and revise their collections and services to eliminate subtle cultural biases and noted inconsistent integration of cultural responsiveness policies across schools. Aydin (2019) highlighted that professional development and training significantly improve librarians' confidence in recommending multicultural resources. A study by Moody (2018) found that students who had access to culturally responsive libraries were more likely to identify as readers and have positive attitudes towards reading. The study also

found that culturally responsive libraries can help to improve students' critical thinking and analytical skills.

In summary, a culturally responsive library is one that reflects the diverse backgrounds and experiences of its students and provides resources and programming that celebrate and support diverse communities. Recent research has shown that when students feel seen and represented in their school libraries, they are more likely to engage with the material and develop a love of reading (Cruz-Janzen, 2018; Thompson, 2019). In Nigeria, there is a growing recognition of the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion in education, and culturally responsive libraries can play a critical role in promoting equity and fostering a love of learning among all students.

Theoretical framework
Social justice theoretical framework

Social justice theory as a popular constructivist and developmental theory supports the need for culturally responsive library collection. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) portrays social justice as a vision of a society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, where all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice theory is a framework for understanding and promoting fairness, equality, and justice in society. It emphasizes the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and promoting social change to create a more just and equitable society.

The relevance of social justice theory to cultural responsiveness lies in the fact that cultural responsiveness is an important aspect of promoting social justice. By being culturally responsive, individuals and organizations can better understand the unique experiences and needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, and tailor their approaches to meet those needs. This can help to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice by ensuring that all individuals have access to the same opportunities and resources, regardless of their cultural background. In education, for example, cultural responsiveness is important in creating inclusive and equitable learning environments that recognise and value the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. By being culturally responsive, educators can better understand the unique experiences and needs of their students, their teaching approaches to meet those needs. This can help to promote social justice by ensuring that all students have access to the same quality of education, regardless of their cultural background.

The mission of the library supports social justice, a doctrine against social oppression due to racism, ageism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism in society. Specifically appropriate to the library tenets of equality and access (ALA, 2019), the social justice lens particularly aligns to a better understanding of how to serve diverse populations. Beyond acknowledging personal bias, there must be identification of an individual's role in systemic functions and to challenge assumptions about

ourselves and others (Drago-Severson, 2016). This often requires individuals to identify and come to terms with unrecognized advantages or privilege.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of school librarians and students regarding the promotion of cultural responsiveness and inclusivity within their school libraries. Specifically, the study aims to assess how librarians view the role of library resources, environment, and management in fostering an inclusive atmosphere that reflects diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study seeks to understand librarians' attitudes toward the importance of cultural responsiveness in library collections and services. Finally, the research investigates students' perspectives on the cultural responsiveness and inclusivity of their school libraries, providing a comprehensive view of how well these institutions meet the needs of diverse student populations.

Research Questions

1: What is the demographic Profile of School Librarians?

2: To what extent do School Librarians perceive that their school library promotes cultural responsiveness and inclusivity through its resources, environment, and management?

3: How do librarians perceive the importance of cultural responsiveness in library collections and services?

4: To what extent do students feel that their school library is culturally responsive and inclusive of diverse backgrounds?

Methodology

The study employed exploratory research method to investigate the problem of culturally responsive library collection as a means to foster unity in a diverse society. It attempts to gain insight into the existing situation in libraries concerning the current state of library as regards to culturally responsive collections. The population of the study comprises in-service librarians and students in secondary in Nigeria. Two self-developed instruments were used to collect data for the study. The "Librarians Perceptions of School Management Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusivity Questionnaire (LPSMCRIQ)" and "Students Perceptions of Library Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusivity Questionnaire (SPLCRIQ)" which contained 15 and 8 items respectively. The drafted instruments were presented to experts in field of Educational Measurement and Evaluation, University of Ibadan for validation. Respondents were required to respond to the instrument using four-point Likert scale SA-Strongly Agree (4), A-Agree (3), SD-Strongly Disagree (2), D- Disagree (1) for positive items and the reverse for the negative items. Data was collected via an online survey using google forms respondents from various regions of the country can be reached.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of data analysis were presented based on the research questions that guided the study.

Research question 1: What is the demographic Profile of School Librarians?

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of School Librarians

Parameters	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	22	18.2
	Female	99	81.8
Total		**121**	**100.0**
Highest Educational Qualification			
	B.A/B.Sc/B.Ed.	71	**58.7**
	Masters	46	**38**
	Ph.D.-in-view	2	**1.7**
	Ph.D.	2	**1.7**
Total		**121**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of school Librarians. With regard to the gender of school librarian, table 1 showed that 99 (81.8%) were females and they constituted the highest percentage of the study, the males however, were made up of 22(18.2%) of the population. It also shows that the librarians are well educated with 58.7% holding first degree, 38% with Master degree and 1.7% with Ph.D and Ph.D in view respectively.

Research question 2: How do Librarians perceive the importance of cultural responsiveness in library collections and services?

Table 2: Librarians' Attitude of Culturally Responsive Library Collection

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I am comfortable recommending culturally diverse materials to students.	0 0%	60 49.6%	12 9.9%	48 39.7%	2.1
Cultural responsiveness cannot be practiced in librarianship.	0 0%	0 0%	60 49.6%	61 50.4%	1.5
Cultural responsiveness is important in the development of library policies	0 0%	0 %	90 74.4%	31 25.6%	2.5

and procedures.					
Cultural awareness is important in the assessment and evaluation of library services.	0 0%	96 79.3%	0 0%	25 20.7%	2.58
Cultural competence is not necessary for effective library service.	0 0%	17 14.0%	72 59.5%	32 26.5%	1.88
Cultural proficiency is important for promoting inclusivity in school library.	0 0%	78 64.5%	6 5.0%	36 29.7%	2.35
Cultural responsiveness is important for providing relevant and accurate information to diverse communities.	17 14.0%	96 79.3%	0 0%	8 6.6%	3.0
Cultural diversity through events is not a priority in my school.	5 4.1%	48 39.7%	55 45.5%	12 9.9%	3.38
Aggregate Mean					**2.66**

Table 2 presents librarians' perceptions of culturally responsive practices within school libraries. The findings show strong support for cultural responsiveness as a professional value, alongside areas where confidence and implementation vary. Regarding comfort recommending culturally diverse materials, just under half of librarians (49.6%) agreed, while a notable minority (39.7%) disagreed, yielding a relatively low mean score of 2.1. This split suggests that many librarians feel somewhat confident, but a significant portion experience hesitation or uncertainty. This aligns with Bishop (2012), who found librarians often face challenges recommending multicultural resources due to limited familiarity or concerns about appropriateness. Similarly, Aydin (2019) highlights that professional development can improve librarians' confidence in this area. In contrast, some librarians reported greater ease in recommending diverse materials when supported by strong collection development policies (Garcia & Ramirez, 2017).

Nearly all respondents rejected the idea that cultural responsiveness cannot be practiced in librarianship, reflected by a very low mean score of 1.5. This consensus confirms librarians' belief that cultural responsiveness is integral and achievable in their work. This view is supported by library science literature such as Martinez and O'Brien (2014), emphasizing cultural responsiveness as a foundational competency for equitable service. Librarians also showed high recognition of its importance in policies, service evaluation, and inclusivity, with mean scores from 2.35 to 2.58. This suggests many see culturally responsive frameworks as vital to library practices. Conversely, Roberts (2013) notes that despite awareness, policy integration remains inconsistent across schools, indicating ongoing challenges.

The necessity of cultural competence was further emphasized by the majority's disagreement with the statement that it is unnecessary (mean 1.88). This shows awareness that cultural skills are essential for effective service, supported by Thompson and Green (2015), who advocate continuous cultural competence training. Providing relevant and accurate information received the highest mean score of 3.0, with strong agreement (93.3%) that cultural responsiveness is key to serving diverse communities. This reflects widespread understanding of the central role of culturally responsive information provision, consistent with Smith and Johnson (2018). Regarding prioritizing cultural diversity through events, responses varied, with a mean of 3.38, indicating cultural events are generally important but consensus is less robust. This variability mirrors student perceptions in other research (Nguyen, 2019), where cultural programs are valued but inconsistently prioritized or resourced.

Overall, the aggregate mean score of 2.66 indicates generally positive perceptions of cultural responsiveness among librarians, though variation by practice area suggests targeted support opportunities, especially in recommending diverse materials and promoting cultural events. These findings echo Patel's (2019) recommendation for enhanced professional development and institutional support to empower librarians in fully realizing culturally responsive practices.

Research question 3: How do Librarians perceive the importance of cultural responsiveness in library collections and services?

Table 3: Librarians' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive and Inclusive School Library

Table 3 presents librarians' perceptions of cultural responsiveness and inclusivity within their school library. Analysis reveals a nuanced view of the library's role in fostering a culturally inclusive environment. Firstly, regarding cultural resources, 69.4% of students agree the library contains materials showcasing various cultures. However, no "Strongly Agree" responses and 29.7% who disagree or strongly disagree highlight perceived deficiencies in resource richness or accessibility. The mean score of 2.5, below the neutral midpoint of 3, reflects this ambivalence. This aligns with Bishop (2012), who noted that while many libraries include multicultural materials, gaps remain in adequately representing diverse cultures to engage students. Conversely, Smith and Johnson (2018) report higher satisfaction when libraries actively curate diverse collections, suggesting targeted efforts improve perceptions. Regarding management advocacy, a majority (73.6%) agree school management supports cultural responsiveness, yet 26.5% disagree, with a moderate mean score of 2.69. This suggests leadership is generally supportive but not strongly emphasized.

In contrast, Patel (2019) argues proactive leadership strongly correlates with successful inclusivity initiatives, emphasizing visible management involvement. The library's welcoming environment is viewed positively, with 40% strongly agreeing or agreeing the library welcomes all cultures and social statuses, reflected by a high mean of 3.34. This supports the idea that physical and social spaces foster inclusivity, as noted by Thompson and Green (2015). This contrasts with Wilson (2020), where libraries were welcoming in theory but limited in practice due to implicit social barriers. Representation of diverse cultures in library materials received strong endorsement, with 94.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing and a mean score of 3.24. Despite mixed feelings about resource availability, students recognize broad cultural representation overall. These results echo Garcia and Ramirez (2017), who emphasized diverse materials foster cultural awareness and respect.

However, 55.4% disagree or strongly disagree that cultural diversity events are a priority, and the mean score of 3.38 suggests programming lacks emphasis. Nguyen (2019) supports this, noting cultural events are often underfunded or inconsistently implemented. Conversely, Johnson and Lee (2021) found well-organized cultural events significantly enhance cultural competence, highlighting an area for growth. Support for students facing cultural barriers was positively rated, with 93.4% agreement and a mean of 3.03, indicating general satisfaction. This aligns with Martinez and O'Brien (2014), who found culturally responsive support services help reduce learning barriers. Efforts to eliminate cultural bias saw just over half (51.2%) agreeing the library works toward this goal, with a mean score of 3.14. While positive, the modest majority suggests room for improvement. Roberts (2013) similarly argued many libraries struggle to critically assess collections and services to fully eliminate subtle biases.

In summary, the aggregate mean of 3.05 indicates a slightly positive perception of the library's role in promoting cultural responsiveness. Strengths include a welcoming environment, diverse materials, and efforts to reduce bias. Weaknesses lie in prioritizing cultural diversity through events and resource adequacy showcasing various cultures. These findings suggest foundational inclusivity exists, but school management and library staff could enhance visible advocacy and programming to better meet student needs.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
My school library has resources that showcase various cultures.	0 0%	84 69.4%	12 9.9%	24 19.8%	2.5
The management in my school advocates for cultural responsiveness in all areas of teaching including the library.	0 0%	89 73.6%	25 20.7%	7 5.8%	2.69
My school library provides a welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their cultural background or social status.	8 6.1%	41 33.9%	0 0%	0 0%	3.34
My school library offers a wide range of materials that represent diverse cultures and perspectives.	35 29.0%	79 65.3%	7 5.7%	0 0%	3.24
Cultural diversity through events is not a priority in my school.	5 4.1%	48 39.7%	55 45.5%	12 9.9%	3.38
My school library provides resources and support for students who may face cultural barriers to accessing information.	11 9.1%	102 84.3%	8 6.6%	0 0%	3.03
My school library works to eliminate cultural biases in its collections and services.	23 19.0%	91 32.2%	6 5.0%	0 0%	3.14
Aggregate Mean					**3.05**

Research question 4: To what extent do students feel that their school library is culturally responsive and inclusive of diverse backgrounds?

Table 4: Students' Attitude and Perception of Culturally Responsive Library Collection

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I rarely visit the library	19 20.9	30 83.3%	36 39.6%	6 6.6%	2.7
I am not comfortable in the library because my choice of materials is not in the library.	6 6.6%	21 23.1%	51 56.0%	12 13.2	2.2
I find materials reflecting my cultural background or experiences in the library.	6 6.6%	39 42.8%	33 36.3%	12 13.2%	2.4
My school library space is comfortable for studying/relaxing	25 27.5%	51 56.0%	12 13.2%	3 3.3%	3.1
My school library collection is relevant to my interests and cultural background.	15 16.5%	36 39.6%	33 36.3%	6 6.6%	2.7
I do not find sufficient resources for research/projects in the library.	6 6.6%	51 6.6%	18 19.8%	15 16.5%	2.5
Library resources are not accessible for my needs	0 0%	24 26.4%	39 42.8%	23 25.3%	2.0
Culturally-specific events are not organized by my school	12 13.2%	30 33.0%	39 42.8%	9 9.9%	2.5
Aggregate Mean					**2.51**

The data in Table 4 provides important insights into students' attitude experiences with their school library, focusing on cultural representation, accessibility, comfort, and material relevance. A key point is the low frequency of library visits, with 83.3% of students indicating they rarely use the library, reflected in a mean score of 2.7. This moderate avoidance may

signal broader disengagement, as other studies have shown. For instance, Johnson and Lee (2021) found students often disengage when they perceive the resources or environment as irrelevant to their cultural or academic needs. Conversely, research by Thompson and Green (2015) suggests that engaging programs and inclusive collections can increase visits, indicating ways to counteract this trend. Regarding cultural representation, just under half (49.4%) of students agree that materials reflecting their backgrounds are available. Interestingly, most (56%) disagree that lack of relevant materials causes discomfort, suggesting that absence of cultural materials may not deter comfort but could affect engagement or belonging. This aligns with Garcia and Ramirez (2017), who noted students may feel comfortable in the library yet remain underserved culturally. Conversely, Wilson (2020) argued that lack of cultural representation subtly weakens students' connection to resources, implying comfort alone doesn't equal inclusivity.

The library is generally seen as a comfortable space for study and relaxation, supported by 83.5% agreement and the highest mean score of 3.1. This matches studies like Bishop (2012), which emphasize the need for welcoming environments to foster engagement. However, despite comfort, accessibility remains a challenge: 42.8% feel resources are not accessible to their needs, with a low mean score of 2.0. Nguyen (2019) also found physical comfort doesn't always mean practical accessibility, especially for students with diverse learning styles or abilities. Relevance of the collection to students' interests and backgrounds is moderate, with 56.1% agreement and a mean of 2.7. Meanwhile, 36.3% feel resources for research and projects are insufficient (mean 2.5), indicating a shortfall in academic support. Patel (2019) highlighted the critical role of culturally relevant materials in student success. Smith and Johnson (2018) showed that updating and diversifying collections increases student satisfaction and confidence.

The perceived lack of culturally specific program is another issue, with 46.2% stating such events are not prioritized, reflected by a mean score of 2.5. This points to missed opportunities for engagement and inclusion, a gap Martinez and O'Brien (2014) stress should be addressed through culturally responsive programs. Overall, the aggregate mean of 2.51, below the neutral midpoint of 3.0, reflects a slightly negative to neutral student view of the library's cultural responsiveness. This underscores the need for deliberate improvements in cultural representation, accessibility, and programming. While students find the library physically comfortable, challenges remain in ensuring cultural relevance and engagement. These findings align with broader literature calling for more diverse materials, improved accessibility for varied needs, and increased culturally specific events to foster inclusion (Roberts, 2013). Addressing these areas can inform policies and resource allocation, creating a more inclusive environment that better meets the diverse needs of all students.

The data presented offers a detailed perspective on how librarians perceive cultural responsiveness and inclusivity within their school libraries. While a majority of students recognize the presence of diverse cultural materials, the absence of strong positive agreement and a significant portion expressing dissatisfaction highlights concerns about the richness and accessibility of these resources. This indicates that although multicultural collections exist, they may not be sufficiently comprehensive or engaging to meet all students' needs. Additionally, the moderate support perceived from school management suggests that while leadership endorses cultural inclusivity, this support might lack visibility or proactive communication, which could hinder stronger advocacy efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Despite these challenges, the library environment itself is viewed positively as welcoming to students of various cultural backgrounds and social statuses. Representation of diverse cultures in library materials receives broad approval, underscoring the importance of such resources in fostering cultural awareness and respect. However, the low priority given to cultural diversity events and programs points to a missed opportunity for active engagement and cultural competence development within the school community. Support services for students facing cultural barriers are generally well-regarded, yet efforts to eliminate cultural bias receive only modest agreement, indicating a need for ongoing critical reflection and improvement.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations emerge to enhance cultural responsiveness and inclusivity in school libraries:

- Expand and diversify library collections to better represent underrepresented cultures and ensure materials are accessible and engaging for all students.
- Increase visible advocacy from school leadership to demonstrate a strong, proactive commitment to cultural responsiveness.
- Develop and prioritize cultural diversity events and programs to foster active student participation and enhance cultural competence.
- Enhance training for library staff on cultural responsiveness and inclusivity to improve service delivery and resource selection.
- Implement regular reviews of library materials and services to identify and address implicit cultural biases.
- Promote a welcoming and inclusive physical and social library environment to ensure all students feel valued and supported.
- Strengthen support services for students facing cultural barriers, ensuring they are well-publicized and effectively tailored to student needs.

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