

Exploring Intellectual Freedom and Collection Development Policies in School Libraries: Perspectives from US and Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Information is one of the essentials for decision making and intellectual development, thus it is difficult for democratic societies to exist without access to diverse information (Knox, 2011). Within school libraries, access to information resources should be enhanced through the selection, evaluation, and acquisition of diverse resources in different formats to cater to the different needs of students, support the curriculum and promote their intellectual freedom. The fight for intellectual freedom in schools is not a recent development and the number of challenges and book bans is escalating and anticipated to continue rising in the years ahead (ALA,2022). While issues regarding intellectual freedom and censorship are global affairs, much is known about the US, but this study also focuses on Kenya, two countries with varying approaches on different issues thus addressing a significant research gap on intellectual freedom beyond the US.

Employing a mixed methods approach, the study involves semi structured interviews among school librarians (10 from the US and 10 from Kenya) and an analysis of the school's collection development policies. A qualitative thematic analysis of the data is being carried out to identify school librarians' perspectives on censorship and advocacy for intellectual freedom through policies. The study aims at creating an awareness of the social reality regarding intellectual freedom between the two contexts. School librarians, administrators and policy makers will be able to restructure existing policies to enhance intellectual freedom for students.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Intellectual freedom; censorship; information policy; Information needs; school libraries.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Diversity; book bans; collection development; U.S.A; Kenya.

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