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EXPLORING INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE UNITED STATES AND
KENYA

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EXPLORING INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE UNITED STATES AND
KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Intellectual freedom is essential for the intellectual development of children. One of the actions for enhancing intellectual freedom involves developing and providing access to diverse library collections, but this has been a challenge especially in school libraries due to book challenge attempts as evidenced by statistics from the American Library Association (ALA) and the implementation of laws and policies which are deemed to promote censorship. In school libraries, collection development policies are essential as they serve as the blueprint for the library's collection management tasks and therefore, they should protect and advocate for intellectual freedom. This qualitative research used semi structured interviews to understand school librarian's experiences and the perceived influences on intellectual freedom, their perceptions on existing collection development policies and recommendations for effective collection development policies that support intellectual freedom. Several school library collection development policies were also analyzed to identify whether they support intellectual freedom. The study identified several differences and similarities between the two contexts i.e. Kenya and the United States in terms of understanding the concepts of intellectual freedom and censorship, the approaches used by school librarians to navigate and advocate for intellectual freedom in an environment where censorship remains a challenge. The study also provides practical recommendations for school librarians facing book challenges and developing policies that advocate for intellectual freedom.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Censorship continues to impact access to diverse resources. Over the past several years, the number of book challenges within school libraries in the United States remains high (ALA, 2024). The censorship phenomenon is not experienced in the U.S. only. It is necessary to highlight the state of censorship and intellectual freedom in other parts of the world and therefore this dissertation also focused on Kenya. This dissertation sought to understand the perspectives of school librarians on intellectual freedom and censorship and the strategies that can be implemented in the formulation and implementation of collection development policies to enhance access to diverse resources in support of intellectual freedom.

1.1 The importance of school libraries and school librarians

Libraries have been identified as safe spaces that aim to cater to the information needs of users; thus, one of the core roles involves providing access to appropriate, relevant and timely information resources without judgement and in all formats available (Fletcher-Spear & Tyler, 2014). According to Todd (2003), the hallmark of a school library is not in the size of its collection, building design, or the type of technology in use but in the ability of school libraries and librarians to identify and incorporate actions that contribute to the construction of knowledge, fulfillment of the educational mission, and enhancement of student learning. Pattee (2020) states that school library collections should be developed from a “user-centered perspective” (p. 28) and support the school’s curriculum adhering to diversity and providing access across perspectives. Access to information resources in school libraries is therefore enhanced through the selection, evaluation, and acquisition of diverse resources in different formats to cater to the different needs of users, support the curriculum and promote the intellectual freedom of students. Pekoll (2019) further states that equitable access to information should also include equitable representation in that the

content of the information resources provided should represent different viewpoints. Information is one of the essentials for decision making and intellectual development; thus, it is difficult for democratic societies to exist without access to information. To make informed decisions, students ought to have information that is inclusive of different perspectives (Knox, 2011).

In an ever-changing society, the roles of school librarians continue to change radically. School librarians are not only concerned with the traditional roles of organizing information, but they have also taken the roles of technology leaders (Wine, 2016), literacy educators (Merga, 2020), and advocates (Woolls & Coatney, 2018), among others. Most importantly, they are the gatekeepers of intellectual freedom for students in schools. They have an obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas through effective collection development policies (Dawkins, 2021).

1.2 Librarianship and intellectual freedom

The responsibility of providing access to information is enshrined in the principle of intellectual freedom. The stand on intellectual freedom within the library profession has been inconsistent and the interpretation of intellectual freedom concepts has been controversial (Gregory, 2019). Fletcher-Spear and Tyler (2014) state that intellectual freedom within librarianship has been construed as a fight against banning books and book challenges. They urge that even though book banning and book challenges are the most visible aspects of intellectual freedom, the definition should not be limited to the two aspects. Knox (2014) further states that intellectual freedom is a socially constructed idea and people will define it based on a particular worldview. Fricke et al. (2000, as cited in Knox, 2014) also clarify that providing access to “dangerous” or “hurtful” information is not part of intellectual freedom; therefore, some information should not be provided in libraries.

Library associations play a key role by implementing initiatives that advocate for the development of the profession. Different library associations highlight intellectual freedom as a core value, thus attesting to its importance. The American Library Association (ALA) states that it is “the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. ALA advocates for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored” (ALA, 2007, para. 1). One of the common beliefs of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) states that “intellectual freedom is every learner’s right and that learners have the freedom to speak and hear what others have to say, rather than allowing others to control their access to ideas and information” (AASL, 2024, para. 5). To support lifelong learning, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) “calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of the user” (IFLA, 1999, para.5). The Kenya Library Association does not clearly outline the concept of intellectual freedom but one of its objectives is to ensure that all levels of the Kenyan society have access to information by formulating and enacting policies that promote access to information. While the draft National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries in Kenya (2018) does not define intellectual freedom, the policy advocates for school libraries to allow access to a wide range of literature and information that is up-to-date, unbiased, relevant and accessible in different formats.

Libraries uphold intellectual freedom by ensuring diversity in their collections, where library resources in a variety of formats provide different viewpoints. In the process of developing library collections, it is important for school librarians to be guided by and adhere to policies that promote intellectual freedom. While school librarians strive to develop collections that promote

intellectual freedom, there are several factors which hinder and continue to be a serious concern for effective collection development within school libraries in the 21st century. These factors include intellectual property and copyright, compliance with parent institution requirements and applicable legislation, censorship of books and other materials, restrictive policies, and limiting access to students based on their reading levels as identified by reading programs. Just like in other types of libraries, applying the principles of intellectual freedom in school libraries is not easy due to unsettling gray areas based on personal beliefs, self-censoring, interpretation, political climate, demographics, culture of the school, experiences, and what is stated in policies. School libraries do not exist in isolation, and therefore, internal and external policies that are developed at the school and district levels have an effect on the collection development process (Oppenheim & Smith, 2004). School librarians are in a social environment and through the interactions that happen in that environment, they may generate personal beliefs on controversial subjects which may result in self-censorship where they deliberately exclude certain materials from the library's collection.

Censorship involves the suppression of information resources either partially or entirely based on moral, political, security or other reasons (Gregory, 2019). While censorship mostly focuses on print resources, the emergence, adoption and growth of technology broadened the scope of censorship to include internet filtering where schools control the internet content that students can access. Book banning, which goes against the First Amendment, has been the most visible form of censorship within school libraries. Books are banned based on the content they cover, which include opinions on government, religion, sexuality, violence, and crime. There has been a surge in the number of book challenges between 2021 and 2023 (ALA, 2023a). The book challenges are frequently initiated by parents who believe that either the content in the books is

dangerous and will influence their children negatively, or that their children are not yet ready to learn about the topics that are being censored (Austen, 2018).

Intellectual development is an ongoing process that begins in one's childhood and continues into adulthood. Teenagers are at an age where they are learning, developing critical thinking skills, and challenging preconceived notions, hence the need for school libraries to provide access to resources in all formats and with diverse viewpoints (Moshman, 2003). Preventing teens from accessing, reading, viewing, and listening to materials stifles an opportunity for them to explore viewpoints or experiences outside the frame of influence created by their caregivers (Dawkins, 2021). Intellectual freedom is therefore central to the education and development of young students in promoting lifelong learning.

From her experience as a librarian, Jensen (2014) explains that promoting intellectual freedom in her school was not about informing teens and children about what to read or what not to read but was about helping them to understand that they have the right to make their own decisions. The Freedom to Read Statement (ALA, 2004) outlines the challenges faced when determining the type of information that students have access to. While parents, teachers and librarians are considered guardians of the freedom to read, there are private and public groups that strive to restrict access to reading materials. Apart from the states of Nebraska, Alabama and Mississippi, the statutes of other states in the U.S. consider anyone under the age of 18 as a minor. In Nebraska (NE 43-2101) and Alabama (AL Code 26-1-1, 2023), a person under the age of 19 is considered a minor while in Mississippi (MS Code 1-3-27, 2024), unless provided by law, persons under the age of 21 are considered minors. Cap. 33 of the Laws of Kenya (Age of Majority Act, 2012) identifies a minor as anyone below the age of 18 years. Since children in school mostly fall under the category of minors, there is a lot of parental or guardian involvement and control in

different aspects of their lives, including choosing the type of information resources they have access to. Most library policies support the idea that parents may choose what their own children read but they are not allowed to choose what other children read.

Children are growing up in an environment where they are exposed to social issues that affect people in society at a young age. In their interviews with children aged between 13 and 15, Lakus et al. (2024) found out that younger adolescents were aware of censorship and that they had learned about censorship through the internet, in school, from the TV, at home and the library. Several younger adolescents also admitted to reading books that were inappropriate for their age out of curiosity. Even though parents or guardians have legal control over their children, it is impossible to fully control what their children can access, especially in the digital era. The awareness of children on the issue of censorship is an indication that children should also be involved in the collection development process as well as the development of related policies.

1.3 Legislation on intellectual freedom

Within the United States, support for intellectual freedom originates from the First Amendment of the Constitution. Furthermore, the courts have made rulings related to intellectual freedom cases (e.g., *Evans v. Selma Union High School District of Fresno County*, 222 P. 801, Ca. 1924; *Right to Read Defense Committee v. School Committee of the City of Chelsea*, 454 F. Supp. 703 D. Mass. 1978; *Counts v. Cedarville School District*, 295 F.Supp.2d 996 W.D. Ark. 2003), which is an indication of the many challenges that intellectual freedom within schools has encountered and continues to encounter. In one of the pending lawsuits, *PEN America Center v. Escambia County School District*, case no. 3:23-cv-10385, 2023, PEN America Center and parents of students, among other plaintiffs, are challenging the removal and restriction of books written by or about people of color and LGBTQ. There are several historical court cases that have ruled in

support of intellectual freedom. In the Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico case (1982), which was a landmark case, the U. S. Supreme Court, ruled that based on the First Amendment, which guarantees free speech, students have the right to receive and read information. The court also ruled that “as centers for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas, school libraries enjoy a special affinity with the rights of free speech and press. Therefore, the Board could not restrict the availability of books in its libraries simply because its members disagreed with their idea content” (para. 3). Currently, legislators within different states in the United States have introduced or passed bills that are seen to go against promoting intellectual freedom. Even though it was not passed, Senate Bill 1142 of 2022 from the state of Oklahoma “Prohibiting Certain Schools and Libraries from Maintaining or Promoting Certain Books; Providing for Cause of Action” had outlined the consequences for school librarians who do not adhere to what is stated in the bill. Penalties included potential loss of the librarians’ jobs as well as lawsuits. In Texas, Bill H.B. No. 900 relating to the regulation of books sold to or included in public school libraries was passed. The legislation provides a definition of sexually explicit materials and requires book vendors to provide appropriate ratings to books acquired by schools. This therefore regulates materials to be included in public school libraries. In Utah, H.B. No. 29, “Sensitive Material Review Amendments” was also passed. The bill “amends provisions regarding the evaluation of instructional material to identify and remove pornographic or indecent material” (para. 2).

For a long-time, advocacy for intellectual freedom within schools and other entities within Kenya had not been as visible compared to the United States (Chege, 2009), even though the freedom of expression, freedom to hold opinions without interference and freedom to receive ideas and information were included in the first constitution of the country. This was due to the existence

of regimes that were deemed to be dictatorial. The lack of advocacy for the need for intellectual freedom had put access to information at risk. Despite the existence of several challenges, the enactment of a new constitution through a referendum in 2010 marked a milestone in the advancement of intellectual freedom and other human rights. The Constitution of Kenya advocates for the freedom to seek, receive or impart information or ideas (National Council for Law Reporting, 2022). The High Court in Kenya has upheld several rulings in support of freedom of expression. In *Katiba Institute vs the Director of Public Prosecution*, where an interested party was charged with the publication of a tweet that was seen as a potential threat to the security of the government, the court ruled that the freedom of expression and the rights to information are the cornerstone of any democratic state and that every person has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to seek, receive or impart information or ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research (Katiba Institute, 2023). In 2016, the High Court declared Section 29 of the Kenya Information and Communication Act (KICA) as unconstitutional. The section stated “(a) that a person who by means of a licensed telecommunication system sends a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or (b) sends a message that he knows to be false for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another person; commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Ksh. 50,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or both” (p. 25). The judge ruled that the section was vague and was against freedom of expression.

1.4 Advocacy

According to Oltmann et al. (2022), a certain proportion of school librarians allow their personal biases to affect the collection development process, thus not adhering to the spirit of

intellectual freedom. Also, as reported by Gregory (2019), self-censorship may occur on a conscious or subconscious level. Consciously, some school librarians would choose not to include certain materials in the library's collection since they are aware of the policies that monitor library information resources, and it is easy to fall into the trap of self-censorship on a subconscious level. When personal beliefs and strong opinions on controversial topics are ingrained in their minds, school librarians may end up avoiding materials about the controversial topics without consciously knowing. "Silent censorship," (p. 242), which emanates from fear (Gregory, 2019; Huston, 2003), has also been identified as another form of censorship which is increasingly being practiced among school librarians. When the frequency of book challenges within schools is high, school librarians may find it easier to avoid acquiring any challenged books because they do not want to go through the reconsideration process, which opens up discussions on the challenged books. At the same time, school librarians see silent censorship as a way of protecting their careers. Regardless of the different forms of censorship that may emerge in the changing times ahead, school librarians will always be affected (Steele, 2018).

School librarians need to be proactive in their role as advocates but Burns (2021) states that they do not have a clear understanding of what the concept of advocacy entails due to the multiple definitions, which lead to varied understandings and interpretations. Woolls and Coatney (2018) state that for the most part, advocacy has been associated with public relations and marketing. While marketing and public relations are aspects of advocacy, promoting library values and what libraries stand for provides a bigger picture of advocacy. Hicks (2016), therefore, defines advocacy as "a planned, sustained, and often political effort designed to raise awareness. The purpose of advocacy work is, in part, to build relationships with like-minded organizations and individuals to help champion an issue or cause" (p. 617). School librarians have the responsibility

of being advocates by lobbying, which involves creating an understanding among parents, school administrators and any other relevant or concerned parties on the impact that the library program and its collections have on the student's life-long learning. Lobbying also aims at seeking support on the positions made by the school libraries. The lobbying should start at the school level and advance to other levels, which include the school districts, the state and national level, since most of the legislation that affects intellectual freedom originates from legislators in the state and at national levels. Issues related to intellectual freedom are experienced globally, and therefore the library community should collaborate through global associations such as IFLA and the International Association of School Librarians (IASL) to advocate for the freedom to read and freedom of expression.

1.5 Collection development policies

According to Gregory (2019), collection development policies (CDPs) are at the heart of building a library's collection as they not only provide the blueprint for the selection, acquisition, and organization of the library's collections but also enhance consistency in the process. CDPs are effective communication tools that enhance accountability for the library by highlighting the relevance of the collection to all members of the school community. It is therefore necessary for the CDPs to be clear, up-to-date and advocate for intellectual freedom. Gregory (2019) further states that one of the key considerations in a good collection development policy involves having action statements that address the issue of protecting intellectual freedom. An example of an action statement highlighted by a public librarian in Oltmann (2016a) and which could provide guidance for school libraries when formulating their policies states that:

Resources representing different viewpoints on controversial issues will
be acquired or made available, including those that may have unpopular

or unorthodox positions. The library recognizes the importance of having a variety of viewpoints available, realizing that a resource which might offend one person, may be considered meaningful to another (Oltmann, 2016a, p. 27).

CDPs should also have sections that provide clear guidelines on handling complaints on controversial materials. Reconsideration procedures for challenged materials should be a part of the policies. ALA (2019b) emphasizes that, “it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources” (para. 1).

1.6 Theoretical framework: Marketplace of ideas

Even though he did not coin the term marketplace of ideas, John Stuart Mill’s ideas are utilized for the theoretical framework. Mill believed that the accumulation of knowledge comes from free thought, and he advocated for intellectual freedom by emphasizing that in a system where freedom of expression is observed, there is a flow of different opinions, and a person is left to select their most suitable option (Mill, 1859/1998). The idea was further developed in a court ruling, *Abrams v. United States*, 250 U.S. 616 (1919), where Justice Holmes stated that “the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out” (para. 61). Holmes believed that people have the autonomy to decide what is true and not the government. According to Oltmann (2016b), there are speakers and listeners in a marketplace of ideas, where speakers are equivalent to producers and sellers while listeners are equivalent to buyers and consumers. In the library profession, producers can be identified as librarians or any other information provider while buyers or consumers can be identified as library users in search of information. Even though there

are forces that may influence the emergence of truth in a marketplace, it is necessary to create an environment that has no interferences to ensure that buyers are provided with a variety of goods and services to select from based on their individual needs. Additionally, libraries should be institutions where ideas compete by providing access to a variety of resources with different perspectives. After surveying several landmark cases in the United States on academic freedom, Perrone (2023) argues “that academic freedom must reside in the marketplace of ideas” (p. 3), where academic freedom is necessary in the production of academic knowledge. For this study, the marketplace of ideas is a framework for exploring the status of intellectual freedom by investigating how school librarians are facilitating access to diverse information resources among students and analyzing whether policies support access to diverse information.

1.7 Problem Statement

The fight for intellectual freedom in schools is not a recent development and the number of challenges remains high. In 2024, there were 821 attempts to ban or restrict library resources, and 2,452 unique titles were targeted in the United States (ALA, 2024). Even though the numbers may appear to be low, this is only a reflection of cases that are reported and therefore the figures could be higher. The year 2023 shattered censorship records where 4,240 unique titles were targeted for censorship since ALA started collecting book ban data. Regardless of several cases that advocate intellectual freedom in schools, librarians are still facing setbacks based on new legislation and policies that seem to restrict the advancement of intellectual freedom. Within the Kenyan context, there are no statistics on the status of censorship even though censorship still exists in the country as evidenced by several documented court cases that seek to advocate for the freedom of expression. If intellectual freedom for students is to be protected, it is necessary to identify feasible strategies that promote access to diverse information resources.

1.8 Research Questions

Through semi-structured interviews and analysis of school library collection development policies, this study sought the perspectives of 14 school librarians to understand their experiences and the perceived influences on intellectual freedom. The study also sought their perceptions on existing collection development policies and recommendations for effective collection development policies that support intellectual freedom. The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the understanding of intellectual freedom among school librarians and does their worldview affect their understanding of intellectual freedom?
2. How does the role of advocacy among school librarians impact and influence intellectual freedom and access to materials?
3. With the existing laws and policies on censorship, in what ways are school librarians ensuring that students' intellectual freedom is protected?
4. In what innovative ways can school library collection development policies be formulated or revised to promote intellectual freedom?

1.9 Purpose of the study

While most studies have provided a Western perspective with regard to intellectual freedom, this study focused on two countries that have vastly contrasting approaches on the issue of intellectual freedom and collection development: the United States, a more economically developed country, and Kenya, an economically developing country. The study findings create awareness and provide an understanding of the social reality regarding intellectual freedom between the two contexts. School librarians serve as the intermediaries between students and

information in the library, and therefore, it is important to understand the decisions they make and the challenges they face in the area of intellectual freedom.

Effective collection development policies are essential in the enhancement of intellectual freedom, and therefore, as a result of the study, school librarians, administrators and policy makers will be able to rethink and restructure their current policies. As the number of book challenges continues to increase and new legislation related to intellectual freedom continues to be implemented, it is necessary to continually emphasize the need for advocacy among school librarians.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept of intellectual freedom

Ratcliffe (2020) argues that the concept of intellectual freedom is rooted in the philosophies of the European Age of Enlightenment, also referred to as the Age of Reason, in the 17th and 18th centuries. The rights to have different opinions on religion and politics in Europe were previously restricted to a select group of people but during the Age of Enlightenment, the rights began extending to all members of society. It was a period in the history of Europe where Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant and Voltaire, among others, began to question traditional authority. The Enlightenment thinkers had different approaches but the general idea behind Enlightenment was that people could discover the truth about aspects of their society such as religion and politics through rational analysis. Enlightenment also emphasized the need for human rights and equality. Kant asserted that enlightenment is a process and not a phenomenon, of “man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity” (Ferguson, 1989, p. 246). According to Peters (2019), Kant characterized “immaturity” (p. 887) as a state in which people accept authority blindly, especially in situations where reason can be used. He therefore called upon people to overcome their overreliance on guidance from others and instead rely on their own judgement. It is through reasoning that people become free thinkers and trust their judgement. He believed that people should have the freedom to question authority and be involved in decision making, but at the same time, people should distinguish between freedoms and civic duties that are expected of them. Critics saw Enlightenment as undermining traditional authority and that the ideology influenced the American and French Revolutions. The freedom of expression found in American legislation is attributed to the two revolutions.

Intellectual freedom is a foundation for democracy and therefore it is protected by laws from different organizations and countries all over the world (Ratcliffe, 2020). The United Nations (n.d.) outlined that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (para. 34). In the United States, the freedom of speech and freedom of the press, as outlined in the First Amendment, advocate for the free expression of a person’s opinions and ideas as well as the freedom to information. The freedom of expression under the Bill of Rights in the Kenyan Constitution advocates for the freedom to seek, receive or impart information or ideas (National Council for Law Reporting, 2022). It is also important to note that intellectual freedom does not extend to the dissemination of resources that are libelous or incite violence, and therefore, any policy or legislation that is implemented should clearly set out the limits of the freedoms. With the shift in the information landscape, the concept of intellectual freedom will continue to evolve. Influences from politics, religion, events in society, social economic status, and life experiences continue to impact how we understand and interpret intellectual freedom (Nye, 2020). There are concerns about misinformation due to the amount of information available from different sources and in different formats. While intellectual freedom advocates for the inclusion of resources on different perspectives, Oltmann (2018) states that it is difficult to define fake news and therefore a library’s collection development policy should clearly outline the merits of evaluating information resources.

2.2 Intellectual freedom in libraries

Regardless of the type of library and the type of users served, upholding the values of intellectual freedom remains one of the core functions of libraries, but there are librarians who are reluctant to uphold these values. According to Ratcliffe (2020), the necessity and increasing

adoption of the concept of intellectual freedom in educational institutions as well as in the library and information science field began in the 20th century. Before that, freedom of expression was one of the terms used for intellectual freedom. The Library Bill of Rights, according to Magi and Garnar (2015), which draws from the First Amendment, affirms the commitment by all types of libraries to provide information resources that present all perspectives and the resolve to challenge all forms of censorship. Intellectual freedom should therefore not be considered only when book challenges happen or when legislation promoting censorship are formulated, but rather, it should be part of the responsibilities of information professionals as they carry out their daily duties. ALA (2019a) advocates for having regular discussions at the workplace with administrators, other relevant organizations, and legislators to develop common interests on issues related to intellectual freedom.

Dresang (2006) states that intellectual freedom impacts almost every aspect of librarianship, but there is a conflict between the principle of intellectual freedom and practice due to the many interpretations derived from legislation and conflicting social values. Eldred (2021) outlines three levels of engagement for librarians who would want to put into action the principle of intellectual freedom. The three levels include gathering information, implementing best practices, and educating and advocating. Gathering information involves librarians being aware of and exploring what is happening around them regarding policies or other legislation that affects intellectual freedom. Implementing best practices involves selecting library resources from reputable sources using the appropriate selection tools and formulating and updating collection development policies. Educating and advocating involves engaging with the community and administrators to educate them on the importance of safeguarding intellectual freedom. As

advocates, school librarians speak out about the importance of their work and the need for support in upholding the principles of librarianship, such as intellectual freedom.

2.3 The need for intellectual freedom in school libraries.

School libraries are essential in schools as they contribute to the learning process of students through the provision of vast resources. Selman's (1974) perspective taking model identifies that as children mature, their social cognition is reorganized, and at the ages of 13-18, they have an "in-depth social and conventional system perspective taking." (p. 29). Perspective taking is concerned with the ability to take into account different perspectives and compare them with one's own perspective, in order to develop an understanding of others and oneself. Unlike very young children, children between the ages of 13-18 are transitioning into adulthood, and therefore they can take more information into account and develop the ability to analyze different perspectives (Latrobe & Drury, 2009). Children in the 13-18 age bracket also develop various interests and curiosities through the influence of either their friends, family, media or from famous personalities. In an environment where children's freedom to think and explore is limited, they may not be able to pursue their interests or discover their capabilities. High school students fall into the 13-18 age bracket and therefore need to feel empowered. Within the school environment, empowerment can be achieved by facilitating access to diverse and appropriate information in the school libraries and in classrooms as well as encouraging students to pursue their various interests and curiosities (Gregory, 2019). Intellectual freedom therefore enhances the building and growth of knowledge among the students. The students have the opportunity to frame their own lines of inquiry from diverse viewpoints and exchange ideas freely, thus enabling their personal and intellectual development (Halpin et al., 2012).

Promoting intellectual freedom enhances critical thinking among students. While there is a debate on whether critical thinking is inborn or acquired through training (Wang & Zheng, 2016), the development of critical thinkers is one of the priorities in any educational setting. According to Scriven and Paul (2003, as cited in Petress, 2004, p. 463), critical thinking is “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from or generated by: observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (p. 463). Wang and Zheng (2016) further identify the major elements of critical thinking as understanding topics, explaining reasoning and solving problems. AASL (2018) states that “intellectual freedom is every learner’s right” (p. 3), and through the shared foundation of inquiry, learners display curiosity, engage with new knowledge, adapt, communicate, exchange learning products and participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process. By exploring and engaging with information from different sources and in different formats, students as learners are not stuck in an intellectual bubble and they are able to verify beliefs, support reasoning and make informed decisions on what, where and how to use information.

2.4 Intellectual freedom in the digital environment

Technology has become a necessity in schools not only as a tool that aids in learning but also as a communication, collaboration and research tool. With the continued evolution of technology, libraries have and continue to provide access to resources in electronic format, thus there is the need to expand intellectual freedom values to the digital environment. Apart from the electronic resources selected by librarians, users have access to the Internet which opens up a world of vast information. According to Maycock (2011), intellectual freedom issues in electronic resources arise at three levels. School librarians have a challenge in keeping up with emerging

tools and resources, identifying tools and resources that are best suited for the library, and identifying the best ways to make them accessible to students. The United Nations Children's Fund and International Telecommunication Union identifies that globally, approximately 1.3 billion children aged between 3 and 17 years do not have access to the Internet at home. The numbers differ between different regions of the world, where access to the Internet in first world countries is higher compared to other countries (UNICEF, 2020). School administrators, teachers and librarians should be aware that while some students will have unfiltered access to online content at their households' but under the guidance of parents or guardians, other students solely rely on the tools provided by the school or public library for online access. The school should therefore strive to enhance equitable access to electronic resources and online content for all students (Jansen, 2010).

To help students navigate through the Internet, schools have implemented internet policies internally, or they may adopt the policies set up at the district, state or national level. The Children's Act of Kenya (2022) outlines safety guidelines that parents and guardians should consider when children access the internet. The act states that children should not be exposed to pornographic content, online harassment or exploitation. The United States Congress enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in 2000, which requires schools and libraries to use filters to protect children from accessing harmful or obscene content online, with updates provided by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 2011. The act is only applicable to public schools that benefit from the E-rate program, meaning that private schools are not bound to the act and therefore can legally restrict materials to students. The E-rate program is a federal government funded program that aims to enhance equity by providing discounted costs for telecommunication and internet access services to schools and libraries upon certifying that the schools have internet

safety policies (Park et al., 2007). There is a fear that school librarians who do not adhere to the guidelines under CIPA may face criminal charges, or their schools will lose federal funding. At the same time, children are finding ways around the filters.

At the global level, the United Nations Human Rights office affirmed that the same rights accorded to people offline must be accorded online too and therefore consider access to the internet as part of human rights. The office acknowledged that the rapid pace in the advancement of technology has contributed to the promotion of the right to education as well as addressing the digital divide. The office further emphasized the need for the internet to remain open and accessible but also urges governments to combat any form of content that is discriminative or promotes violence online (United Nations, 2016).

2.5 School librarians' roles in promoting and protecting intellectual freedom.

School librarians are considered as gatekeepers as they make decisions on the selection, acquisition, organization, dissemination and weeding of information resources. Based on the theory of marketplace of ideas, Oltmann (2016b) states that librarians strive to be “neutral facilitators” (p. 162) by enabling the right to access information and intervening when that right is under attack from forces that would want to control the type of information made available in the market. The marketplace of ideas (Hopkins, 1996) is concerned with the freedom of speech, and it advocates for all ideas, including falsehoods, to be heard as they help an individual identify the best information based on their own judgement. With the emergence of technology and access to the internet, school librarians have the role of teaching students how to evaluate the vast amount of information and safely use online content guided by existing guidelines and legislation.

School librarians should be active participants in the political processes that affect their profession. Legislators at the local, state and national levels of government engage with their

constituents to get opinions on intended laws and policies; therefore, librarians should establish channels of communication with their legislators to give out any relevant information that could be of benefit to the legislative process. At the same time, school librarians, through professional associations, should move to block any legislation that may appear to go against the principles of librarianship (Woolls & Coatney, 2018). While adhering to school guidelines, school librarians should organize discussion groups, book reading and multicultural events beyond the confines of the school environment. Through such events, students are exposed to a variety of worldviews and experiences, giving them an opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Involving parents and the community in such events also provides an opportunity for school librarians to create awareness about the library's collections and the need for diversity (Jensen, 2014).

Physical books in the library are not meant to remain on the shelves without use but should benefit users either by use in the library or checking them out. School libraries have circulation policies that set limits on the number of books that students can check out, but school librarians should be flexible and allow students to check out several books based on their reading interests. There is a fear that some students are not responsible and therefore may lose library materials. Librarians should not let that fear deter them from undertaking their responsibility of providing library materials to the students with the goal of promoting a reading culture among students. In tandem with flexible borrowing of library materials, libraries that have adequate staff should also consider flexible scheduling throughout a school day to enable students to have access to a variety of library resources (Downes et al., 2017).

2.6 Censorship

Censorship is not a recent phenomenon because humans have experienced it for at least 2,500 years (Kemp, 2015). With the increase in the number of publications of both fiction and non-fiction literature, censorship is the most discussed and visible issue in intellectual freedom. There exist many definitions of censorship (Gregory, 2019; Knox, 2014; Steele, 2018) but the general idea remains suppressing access to books, words, ideas, films or images based on the content they cover. It is often carried out by individuals, organizations or the government. Items that are censored are deemed to contain pornographic content, profanities, items that address controversial topics such as racism and sexuality, or items aligning to specific political and religious ideologies.

Censorship is not limited to print resources but extends to electronic resources and the online platform in general. The internet is an important aspect of technology in the world today. It is becoming part of our daily lives for communication and research, but there are those who see it as a threat to mankind. Internet filtering is the most common form of online censorship, and it can be implemented at the national or organizational level where software is used to block access to specific online content considered to be unsafe or inappropriate (Oh & Auckerman, 2013).

2.6.1 Censorship in Kenya

Censorship in Kenya was present even before the attainment of independence. The British colonial state had imposed bans on any form of literature and literary expressions that were deemed to advocate for the independence of the country. Most of the books banned were written in the local languages and were considered to be inciting Kenyan citizens against the colonial government. While in recent years there has been an increase in the number of books published using the local languages, the bans imposed in the earlier years hampered the growth of traditional

knowledge because the resources that were made available were written by outsiders and mainly using the English language. Upon the attainment of independence, censorship continued to be prevalent in the regimes that were in power, where those in authority enforced bans on certain publications consisting of songs, dances, books, and newspapers (Thiongo, 2006). The presidents at that time exerted control over media outlets in the country, where several reporters who made publications criticizing the government lost their jobs. Individuals within educational institutions or anyone who participated in movements that were deemed to speak negatively of the regimes also ended up being detained. The penalties set up by the government were harsh and there were no opportunities to question the rulings made by the courts (Read, 1967).

Discussions on censorship in the current era have focused more on social media, music and film industries (Ndanyi, 2021, 2023). There are government agencies that were founded with the aim of regulating the creation, possession and distribution of content but there have been concerns that the agencies have been overstepping their mandate. The Kenya Films and Classification Board (KFCB) was mandated with the regulation of film content, but films or music based on controversial topics end up being banned. There were attempts to prevent students from Butere High School from performing a play “Echoes of war” even after the Supreme Court of Kenya made a ruling for the play to be performed (*Mango v Omondi*...KEHC 4565 (KLR) (8 April 2025)). The play was a depiction of the situation in the country in terms of corruption and extra judicial killings, but the government deemed the play to be inciteful.

2.6.2 Censorship in the United States

According to Steele (2020), race, ethnic background, and religion are some of the factors that contribute to censorship. In the past few years, several states in the United States have introduced and implemented controversial legislation on censorship in schools. The bills are meant

to restrict teachers from teaching issues related to racism or sexism that would cause discomfort among students. One of the controversial areas has been banning critical race theory from being taught in schools. H.B. No. 1775, 2021 from the state of Oklahoma, and H.B. No. 327:134, 2021-2022 from Ohio are some of the legislations regarding critical race theory. The bills also threaten to fine teachers and reduce state funding to their schools. Since the controversial subjects of racism and sexism are banned from being taught in schools, library collections are affected as librarians are forced to exclude information resources related to the controversial subjects (Morgan, 2022).

Even with the many cases that impede students' First Amendment rights, there have been cases that have upheld the right of schools to choose which resources to include in their library collections. In *Evans v. Selma Union High School District* (1924), 193 Cal. 54 [222 P. 801, 31 A.L.R. 1121], the Supreme Court of California ruled that the purchase of a King James version of the Bible by a school board for library and reference purposes was not contrary to the constitutional provisions of the state. In *Right to Read Defense Committee v. School Committee of the City of Chelsea*, 454 F. Supp. 703 D. Mass. 1978, where the school committee intended to bar an anthology of writings entitled "Male and female under 18," the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts concluded that.

The library is "a mighty resource in the marketplace of ideas. There, a student can literally explore the unknown and discover areas of interest and thought not covered by the prescribed curriculum. The student who discovers the magic of the library is on the way to a life-long experience of self-education and enrichment. That student learns that a library is a place to test or expand upon ideas presented to him, in or out of the classroom" (U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts - 454 F. Supp. 703, 1978, Conclusion section).

2.7 Censorship within school libraries

The assumption is that school librarians strive to provide access to diverse information resources with an aim of promoting intellectual freedom among their library users. Since libraries are cultural institutions, it becomes difficult to enact intellectual freedom values in an environment with constant pressure and influence from both internal and external forces (Jamison, 2020). When states or national governments initiate legislation that is discriminative in nature based on gender, sexual orientation or race, it causes a domino effect to other institutions in society, resulting in the banning or restriction of access to certain information resources. Over the years, the external forces of censorship in school libraries include parents, external policies, political and religious groups, while internal forces of censorship include teachers, school administrators and internal policies (Steele, 2018). The belief is that information is coming at a fast rate and therefore limiting access or shielding students from certain information resources is best for their moral development. School libraries are more vulnerable to external forces based on the increase in the number of policies related to censorship that have been initiated as well as an increase in the number of parent complaints on school library resources (Emeka & Atanda, 2017). ALA (2022) indicates that in 2021, 44% of the book challenges occurred in school libraries, which is an increase from 19% in 2019. Thirty-nine percent of the challenges in 2021 were initiated by parents, which is an increase from 18% in 2019.

2.7.1 Book labeling

According to McNicol (2016), there is a divide between what librarians practice and what is advocated in the library principles from professional bodies such as AASL & ALA. One of the controversial practices within school libraries that is seen to create opportunities for censorship involves labeling of books. School librarians should have a clear understanding of the different

reasons for labeling. Labels can be used as a way of providing directions to library resources within the library building without influencing users to specific resources. Antell et al. (2012) argue that “labels do not censor choice but inform it” (p. 91). They state that there are diverse and many resources available in a school library, which may make it difficult and overwhelming for students to identify the resources to use. While there exist classification systems for the organization of library resources, having labels provides another layer of organization that facilitates ease of access. Adhering to Ranganathan’s (2006) principle of saving time for the reader, labeled books therefore act as a starting point or tools that help in making decisions on the resources students can use. Labeling of books also entails assigning reading resources to students based on a rubric using programs like Accelerated Reader and Read 180. Students may be restricted to specific resources or specific sections of the library based on their reading and Lexile levels (Martin, 2015). Cahill (2021) identified that the majority of school librarians do not agree with the practice as it goes against the freedom to choose books. Limiting specific titles based on a student’s reading or Lexile level stifles the opportunity for exploration and goes against the library principle of ensuring students have access to diverse resources freely.

2.7.2 Self-censorship

While undertaking their roles in library collection management, school librarians engage in self-censorship, where they dictate the composition of the collection based on their own judgements as a way of avoiding conflicts with parents and other concerned parties. School librarians who have experienced formal challenges also become cautious about the materials they’re choosing, resulting in the omission of certain materials. Baillie (2017) attributes self-censorship to the continued growth of libraries in the 19th and 20th century, where librarians saw themselves as the “protectors of knowledge and culture,” (p. 1), rather than providers of

information. When self-censoring, school librarians believe that they are best suited to decide what is appropriate for children under the assumption that children are not aware of the controversial issues discussed in the books. Rickman (2010) identified 23 librarians among 141 secondary school librarians in the states of Arkansas, Delaware, and North Carolina engaged in self-censorship. While the number is low, it is an indication that school librarians engage in some form of self-censorship. She also identified that those who lacked formal library and information science degrees of library media certification were more likely to engage in self-censoring. According to Moeller and Becnel (2020), school librarians felt that it was challenging for them when developing print collections in their libraries, and therefore they were hesitant and careful especially when developing graphic novel collections. Most of the school librarians further stated that their surrounding community was made up of conservative Christians and that they had experienced at least one book challenge before; therefore, they engaged in self-censorship to avert any future formal or informal challenges.

2.7.3 Internet filtering

The internet is a tool that expands students' knowledge beyond what is provided by teachers in the classroom and what may be found in the library resources. While internet filtering is meant to block unsafe material and deal with other issues such as cyberbullying and hacking, sometimes the software filters will either over block or under block content. Content which may have some educational value or content on controversial issues such as LGBTQ+ issues become inaccessible. When multiple people are involved in making decisions pertaining to filtering or when opinions from school librarians are overlooked, the result may be different variations on what should be filtered (Batch, 2015). The district court in Camdenton, Missouri ruled that it was unconstitutional for the school district to use a filtering software that blocked access to websites

advocating for LGBTQ+ rights but provided access to websites that condemn the LGBTQ+ community. The school district was further advised to stop blocking the websites (Chmara, 2015).

School libraries do not exist in isolation as they operate under the confines of the school, that is the parent institution. Depending on the type of school, there are expectations and values required of all members and departments in the school by the funding institution. Public schools are funded and operated by the state government, whereas private schools are mostly funded by religious institutions and charitable organizations. According to Broughman et al (2021), from 2019-2020, “66 percent of private schools in the United States, enrolled 76 percent of private school students” (p. 2), had a religious orientation. Among 30,492 private schools, 20,243 schools had a religious affiliation while 10,249 schools were nonsectarian. Among the 20,243 private schools with a religious affiliation, 6,449 were affiliated with the Catholic church. In Kenya, the Catholic church has played a significant role in education by sponsoring schools over the years. According to Kithinji et.al (2022), there are over 2183 Catholic sponsored schools in Kenya. A standard correspondent (2016), highlighted that the Catholic church operated 7,740 schools, representing 31 percent of all schools in Kenya. Students in a conservative Christian school may be deprived of access to certain resources which do not align with the Christian values of the school. Librarians are therefore faced with the challenge of creating a balance between adhering to the values of the parent institution and the values of librarianship, which include intellectual freedom (Oltmann, 2019).

2.8 Collection development in school libraries

Collection development for both print and electronic resources is at the core of librarians’ responsibilities. The proliferation of information and the paradigm shift in teaching and learning have impacted how school librarians develop their libraries’ collections. “The paradigm has shifted

from an emphasis on good teaching to an emphasis on enabling learning” (Hughes-Hassell & Mancall, 2005, p. 3), where educators provide students with pre-existing knowledge and the students develop an understanding and create new knowledge. The proliferation of information is proving to be a challenge to school librarians as they strive to keep up with new resources, and educate their users about new resources, as well as make changes such as policy amendments to reflect the new information environment.

Stephens and Franklin (2012) state that the basics of collection development in school libraries involve knowing the collection, collection mapping, knowing your curriculum, and knowing your students and school community. School librarians should have an idea of what is in their existing collection as it will help in providing access to resources in a timely manner. The librarians can browse through the shelves to identify the subjects covered in the collections and identify whether all viewpoints on different topics are represented. Using technology, school librarians analyze the collection to identify factors such as age of materials, frequency of use or the number of books on a specific subject. These factors would influence the decisions on collection development. Students have different interests and abilities and librarians can have in-depth knowledge of their students’ information needs through observations or interacting with the students. Since the library supports student learning, the collection should reflect the subjects taught in the school. Interacting with teachers for input will enable the librarians to identify the resources required to support the curriculum.

2.9 Collection development models

One of the criteria for developing library collections is centered on the users’ current and anticipated needs, demand and interests. Keeling (2019) asks whether there exists one best way for collection development. While some school librarians will implement the traditional collection-

centered model, others will utilize a learner-centered model. According to Hughes-Hassell and Mancall (2005), in the collection centered model the curriculum is the central focus of the model and therefore collection development should support the teaching mission. Selection and acquisition, policies, evaluation, removal and weeding are all necessary processes for the development of a quality collection. In this model, the school librarian is seen as an expert and has control over the collection development process. (See Figure 1.)

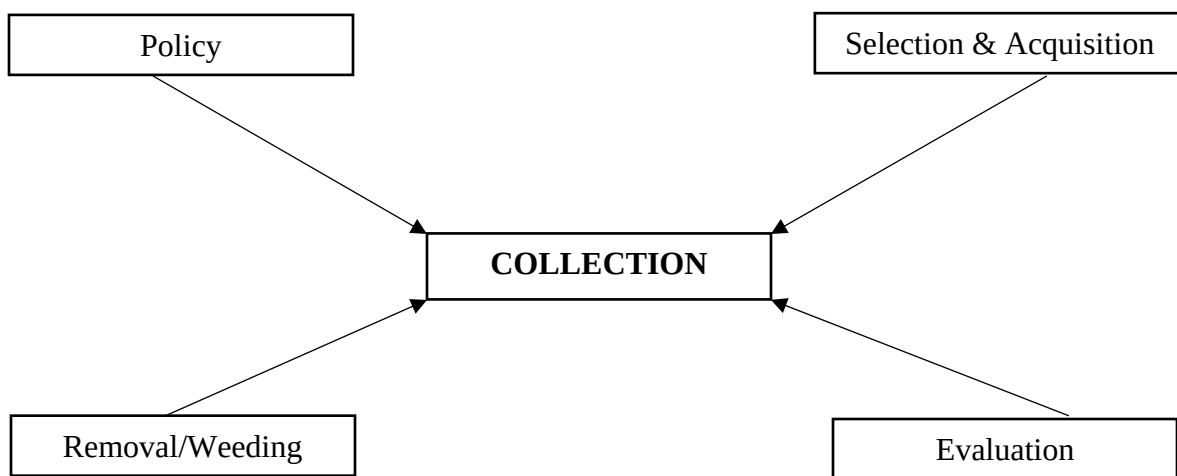


Figure 1. Collection-Centered Model (CCM) (Hughes-Hassell & Mancall, 2005)

As shown in Figure 2, a learner-centered collection places the learner at the center of the collection development process and is based on the idea that for a learner to develop intellectually, the librarian has to consider several factors when developing the library collection. Learners may prefer resources in one specific format to another and information disseminated through specific channels. The librarian should also identify the best knowledge base that would provide the necessary and adequate information to satisfy the learners' needs.

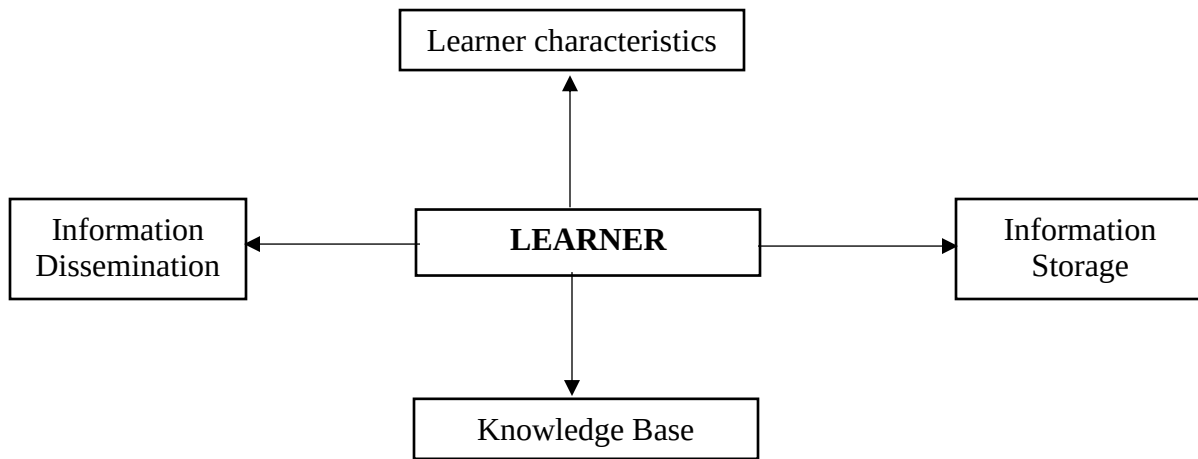


Figure 2. Learner-Centered Model (LCM) (Hughes-Hassell & Mancall, 2005)

Pattee (2020) further identifies developing a user-centered collection is based on the frequency of use in the library or checkouts and user feedback. Librarians identify circulating materials that reflect high usage in order to further develop the collection by purchasing more duplicate resources and upgrading to newer versions or formats of the existing collection. School librarians can also use data from library surveys or focus groups to gather suggestions for collection development.

2.10 Collection development and intellectual freedom

According to Evans and Saponaro (2019), collection development is the process of “identification and acquisition of information materials that address user interests/needs while staying within established policy guidelines and financial constraints” (p. 3). Franklin and Stephens (2014) further state that the collection should not only include print or electronic resources, but it should also include physical equipment such as globes and model skeletons. Collection development is a continuous process that involves the preservation and ongoing evaluation of the library’s collection to cater for the changing needs of users. A collection that supports intellectual freedom should be authoritative, authentic, have depth of coverage, and be appropriate to the target audience. An authoritative and authentic collection is a collection based

on professional reviews and sources and includes resources from credible authors or publishers. Subject specialists should review the information in the collection to determine validity. An appropriate collection should be geared to the maturity level of understanding of the students (Mardis, 2021).

Van Horn (1997) states that students have different expectations and strategies when reading books. Some students internalize and ask questions about what they are reading while others simply read without internalizing the context of the text. Apart from developing a collection that supports the school's curriculum, it is necessary to engage with students to develop collections that reflect their identities and interests as well as encourage exploration and inquiry therefore the collection should also include a variety of genres and subjects. When students have access to information resources from different genres such as fiction, non-fiction or fantasy, they can question ideas or arguments from the text, reflect on their personal experiences and in some instances, relate to what is written or the characters in the books. The ability of the students to evaluate a variety of information resources results in problem solving and better decision making.

To enhance intellectual freedom, some of the key components for collection development include diversity, currency and accuracy. When resources from ethnic minorities or people with disabilities are not included in the collection, the library may be considered biased and thus not adhering to the principle of inclusivity. One of the approaches for enhancing diversity in a school library's collection is through collaborative collection development with students, teachers and school administrators. Aggleton (2018) emphasizes that since the collections developed will have an impact on children's lives, they should be involved in the process but cautions against handing over the process entirely.

In the process of developing the collections, some students may be afraid of informing librarians of the information they need while others may say what they think the librarians would want to hear. Librarians should therefore utilize the appropriate and effective methods based on a specific situation. Some of the methodologies for getting opinions on library collections from the students include conducting interviews and surveys, use of focus groups, and using suggestion boxes (Farmer, 2001).

2.11 Collection development policies

According to Gregory (2019), a collection development policy serves as the blueprint for the library's collection management tasks, which include selection, acquisition, organization, dissemination and weeding. To avoid resistance, the policy should provide clear guidelines, responsibilities, controls and standards for all collection management tasks. The policy, which is also referred to as a selection policy, acquisitions policy or resource materials policy, helps to enhance efficiency and consistency by defining the process, providing guidelines as well as identifying roles for the librarians. The policy safeguards the users from biases that may be imposed by the collection development librarian. Gregory (2019) further states that a good collection development policy protects intellectual freedom. District policies as well as internal school policies will influence the collection development policy.

School librarians would normally use professional reviews from resources such as the peer reviewed School Library Journal, and online sources such as Follet Titlewave for the selection of library resources, however Mardis (2021) cautions against solely relying on vendors, wholesalers and distributors since their main objective is to sell their products hence the reviews may be biased. While the overreliance on one tool such as mainstream vendors may not be considered as self-censorship, it may result in the underrepresentation of certain resources, thus limiting the

knowledge base of their students. To promote intellectual freedom, the policy should outline a variety of selection tools that school librarians should utilize. To maintain the integrity of the library's collection and to keep up with the ever-increasing challenges in the information landscape, collection development policies should also be reexamined and updated periodically (Hoffmann & Wood, 2007). Society evolves from time to time and therefore amendments to the policy must be implemented to align with the changes in society.

Developing the policy is a collective process that should involve teachers, school administrators, parents and even students. Depending on the school management, the policy can be approved at the district or school level. Mardis (2021) outlines a summary of the steps to be taken in the formulation and revision of the policy:

1. An ad hoc committee that includes students, teachers, librarians, administrators, legal counsel and subject specialists is appointed.
2. The members are assigned responsibilities and deadlines for the process are set. A draft policy is then formulated and discussed among the committee members.
3. The draft is then distributed to legal personnel, parents' association, teachers' association and any other relevant parties within the school to solicit suggestions.
4. A review of the recommendations is done where changes are included.
5. A formal written statement is approved and adopted as policy.
6. The policy is then implemented by disseminating it to library staff and teachers who will most likely handle queries that are related to the library's collections. (p. 53).

Whenever possible the community should also be made aware of the policy. From then on, the policy should be reviewed periodically, and the review changes documented. The process of developing a collection development policy may take a long time depending on the approach the

policy makers use. External forces may affect the period in which the policy is developed until it is ready for the implementation stage. (See Figure 3.)

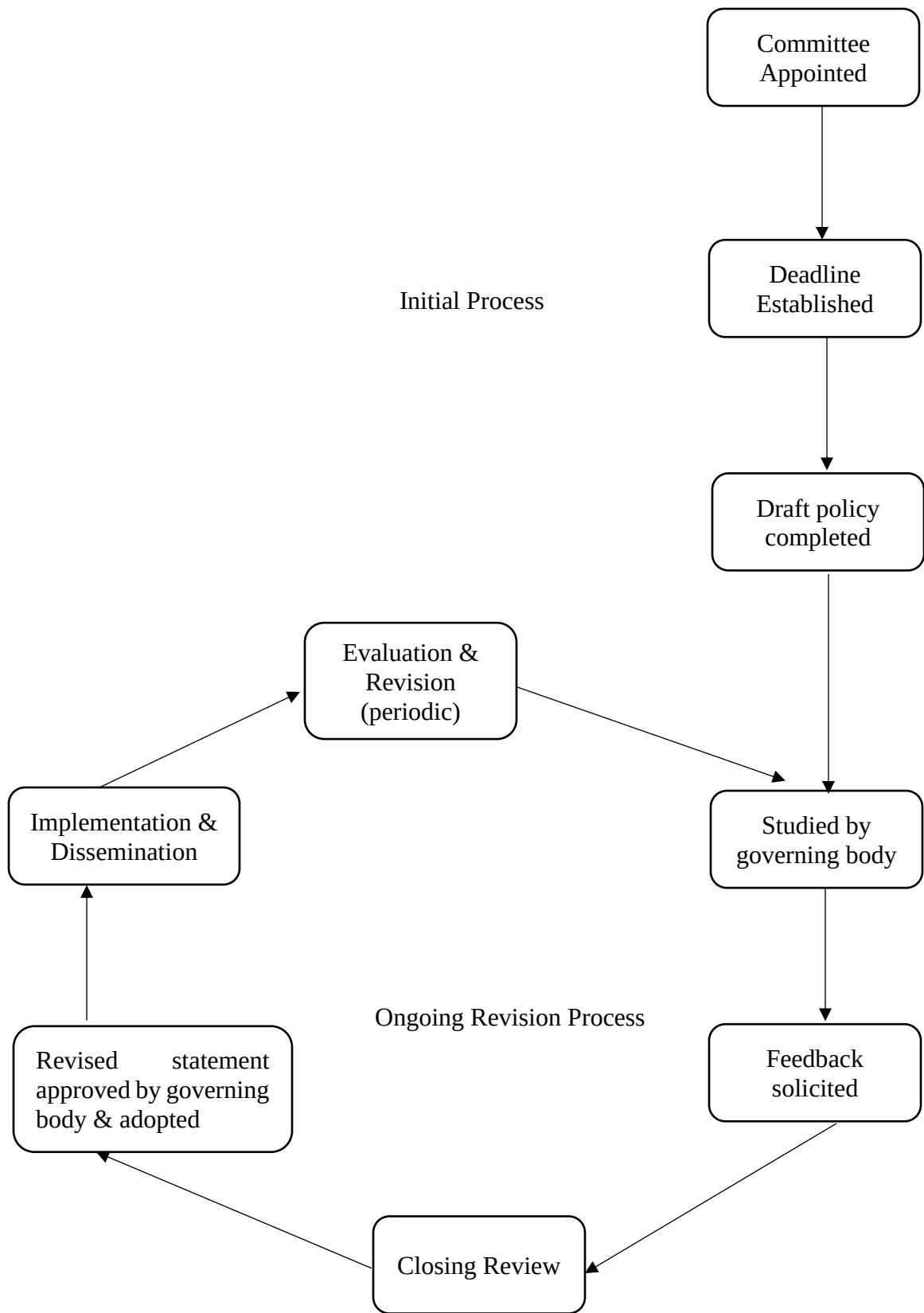


Figure 3. Process of policy formulation and revision (Mardis, 2021, p. 52).

Dawkins and Eidson (2021) identified that out of 99 school districts, 19 did not have a selection policy on their websites and that there was no indication the responsibility of developing the policies had been delegated from the district down to the school level. While several existing school library collection development policies advocate for intellectual freedom through their selection processes, there are schools whose policies do not provide clear guidelines on the selection of resources that promote intellectual freedom. One of the core values for the Norman Public Schools libraries in Oklahoma is intellectual freedom. Norman Public Schools library policy on the selection of instructional and library resources states that factual unbiased material on controversial topics such as religion and science will be considered in the selection process. The instructional and library media materials selection policy from Lake Region School District, Maine states that the selection of materials will seek to provide texts that are diverse and multicultural. The instruction resource selection policy of Tulsa Public Schools, Oklahoma states that the selection process will consider representation of differing viewpoints. Huffman and Thurmann (2007) state that it is necessary for the selection policy to highlight the importance of intellectual freedom by including statements that reference the positions taken by library bodies such as AASL or the statements from the Library Bill of Rights and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Reconsideration procedures are necessary for inclusion in the collection development policy as they play an important role in navigating through formal and informal complaints. ALA (n.d.) outlines the procedures for school librarians to follow when handling formal complaints. The procedure begins with the complaint being referred to the school principal and includes the appointment of a reconsideration committee at the school level; if the decisions made are unsatisfactory to the complainant, the complaint is forwarded to a reconsideration committee at

the district level. ALA (2018) further states that “the reconsideration process should be completed in its entirety and not subverted or ended prematurely, leaving the library open to legal challenge” (para. 11).

School librarians are obligated to be thoughtful and proactive in their professional duties. With the current events where diversity is under threat, the future of intellectual freedom and censorship remains uncertain and ethical concerns related to library resources in all formats will continue to be prevalent. School librarians should therefore be aware and ready to tackle the issues whenever they arise. When school libraries have effective, up-to-date collection development policies that promote intellectual freedom and uphold the values of librarianship, confidence is instilled among school librarians when undertaking their roles knowing that the policy provides answers to some of the difficult questions. As they make decisions on material selection, school librarians should be cognizant of the First Amendment rights of the students they serve. In an ever-changing information environment, there should be continuous discussions on the concept of intellectual freedom.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines components of the study that include the research design, sample size and data collection tools. The study was carried out to address the following questions.

1. What is the understanding of intellectual freedom among school librarians and does their worldview affect their understanding of intellectual freedom?
2. How does the role of advocacy among school librarians impact and influence intellectual freedom and access to materials?
3. With the existing laws and policies on censorship, in what ways are school librarians ensuring that students' intellectual freedom is protected?
4. In what innovative ways can school library collection development policies be formulated or revised to promote intellectual freedom?

3.1 Research design

The research utilized a qualitative approach. Qualitative research lies within the interpretivist paradigm, which does not focus on testing hypotheses but rather focuses on understanding patterns of behavior and the meaning people assign to their actions in specific social contexts. Qualitative research examines how people make sense of their experiences and how they construct meaning from them. The how, what and why research questions in qualitative research elicit data that helps in identifying any effective interventions that may be applicable in a specific social context (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this case, the qualitative data will enable us to understand experiences and in-depth insights by identifying themes and patterns on the concepts of intellectual freedom and censorship from the school librarians' perspectives and experiences in two contexts, Kenya and the United States. This will in turn help in identifying probable and

effective strategies in the development of library collection development policies to help mitigate the issue of censorship and promote intellectual freedom.

3.2 Data collection methods

3.2.1 Interviews

The research utilized a semi-structured interview, which involves having a guided open-ended conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. The goal is to gather the respondents' firsthand account of the situation while elaborating on key points of interest. Even though there are other methods that enable respondents to express themselves, e.g., arts-based research, a researcher's facilitative interaction during interviews creates a conversational space where respondents share rich information about things that cannot be observed with ease (Pezalla et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews are flexible and may lead to unexpected insights which may be valuable to the research. The interviews were carried out via Zoom except for one interview which was conducted via Teams. The interview guide contained predetermined questions and prompts. The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 50 minutes depending on additional probing questions that were asked. Even though Zoom has a transcription feature, the recorded interviews were uploaded to the University of Oklahoma (OU) My Media platform to complete the transcriptions. The transcripts from My Media also required further scrutiny to ensure they matched with what was said by the respondents.

3.2.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is the process of comprehensively reading through texts to identify themes or patterns as well as identify whether the text adheres to a set of guidelines (Krippendorff, 2019). The collection development policies provided by the school librarians interviewed in the study were analyzed based on the collection-centered model and learner-centered model. The learner-

centered model places the student at the center while the collection-centered model places the curriculum at the center. The policies were analyzed to identify whether the policy text advocates for the development of collections that uphold intellectual freedom of students. As directed by the respondents, some of the school library policies in the United States were easily available online through the school district websites. The policies from Kenya are not available online since public schools and most private schools do not have websites. For private schools where websites exist, certain school documents are not publicly available. Since Kenya does not have a national school library policy yet, public schools mostly adopt guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Curriculum Development as policy. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is a government agency established in 2013, whose mission is “to provide curricula and curriculum support materials through research and engagement to nurture every learner’s potential for sustainable development” (para. 4). One of their main responsibilities is evaluating, vetting and approval of curriculum support materials. For this study, two documents were analyzed: the Kenya National Curriculum Policy (2018) and the National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries in Kenya (2018) which is a draft policy. Even though it has not been passed as policy by the Kenyan government, the draft policy was analyzed since it is the only available document specifically related to school libraries and efforts are being made through the Kenya Library Association (KLA), among other similar library organizations, to have the policy passed and adopted.

The policies were analyzed guided by ALA’s Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School and Academic Libraries. The toolkit was established by ALA as a guide that can be adopted by libraries during their collection management tasks that include selection, deselection and reconsideration. The toolkit is important as it includes different elements (see

appendices) that advocate for intellectual freedom such as “support for intellectual freedom”, “selecting controversial materials” and “reconsideration procedures”. Dawkins and Eidson (2021) utilized the toolkit to investigate the status of selection policies in school libraries across the United States and whether they include key components from the toolkit. For this study, the analysis process involved creating a checklist by identifying elements from the ALA toolkit that align with the elements of the learner-centered model and collection-centered model as demonstrated in the figure below.

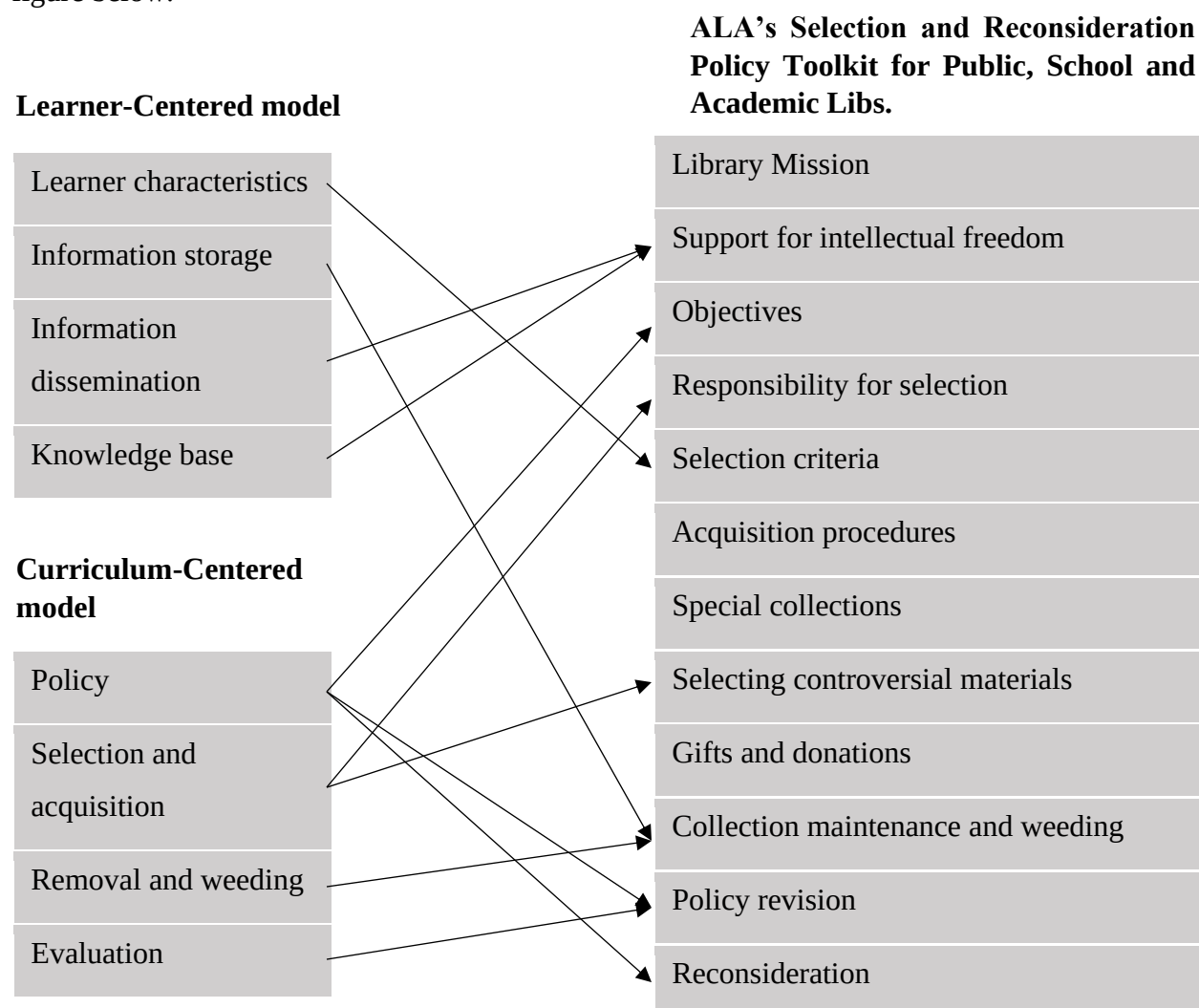


Figure 4: CDP models vs ALA selection & reconsideration policy toolkit

3.2.3.1 Learner-centered model analysis

The learner-centered model has four elements, which include learner characteristics, information storage, information dissemination and knowledge base. The elements from ALA's toolkit that align with the model are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Learner-centered model

Model components	ALA toolkit components
Learner characteristics	Selection criteria
Information storage	Collection maintenance and weeding
Information dissemination	Support for intellectual freedom
Knowledge base	Support for intellectual freedom

The selection criteria provide guidance to school librarians in the collection development process by considering certain attributes such as the age of the users and diversity of user needs. Other selection criteria include resources that represent diverse viewpoints on controversial topics, materials by authors from different cultures to provide global perspectives on issues, and resources in a variety of formats such as print and non-print. In collection maintenance and weeding, the policy outlines procedures for preserving and removing the library's resources. The policies should also have statements that are in support of intellectual freedom.

3.2.3.2 Collection-centered model analysis

The collection-centered model has four elements, which include policy, selection and acquisition, removal and weeding, and evaluation. The elements from ALA's toolkit that align with the model are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Collection-centered model

Model components	ALA toolkit components
Policy	Objectives Reconsideration procedure
Selection and acquisition	Selecting controversial materials Responsibility for selection
Removal and weeding	Collection maintenance and weeding
Evaluation	Policy revision

According to the toolkit, objectives are broad statements that clearly state the purpose of the policy. The policy should also outline the reconsideration procedure, which might include the process of filing complaints, documents to use and the people involved in the process. Even though school librarians may experience challenges when selecting controversial materials, the policy should emphasize the need for acquiring diverse resources, which may include controversial topics. The model also identifies the school librarian as an expert in collection management. Since external forces may impact the effective functioning of existing policies, it is necessary for the policy to include revision procedures such as when it should be done and who should be involved in the revision process.

The analysis checklist as seen in Table 3 below focused on elements related to intellectual freedom and therefore it includes selection criteria, collection maintenance and weeding, support for intellectual freedom, objectives of the policy, reconsideration procedures, selecting controversial materials, responsibility for selection and policy revision.

Table 3: Collection development policy checklist

Selection criteria
Collection maintenance and weeding
Support for intellectual freedom
Objectives of the policy
Reconsideration procedures
Selecting controversial materials
Responsibility for selection
Policy revision

3.3 Sampling frame

For this study, purposive sampling was used to select participants for the interviews. Purposive sampling improves the rigor of the study and trustworthiness of the data since the sample is considered to match the aims and objectives of the study. Participants were recruited guided by specific attributes which were highlighted in the recruitment template (see appendix 1). The main attribute was demographics, which included anyone working as a teacher librarian or school librarian and in the geographical locations of Kenya and United States. Purposive sampling is also an effective approach for “selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively” (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 2). Fourteen school librarians from both private and public schools were interviewed for the study, seven from Kenya and seven from the United States, representing the different regions from each country. The participants were selected purposefully due to their understanding of intellectual freedom and censorship and therefore generated a range of views. Snowball sampling was also utilized where participants who had already participated in the interview helped in the recruitment of other participants.

Within the United States, research participants were recruited by sending out email requests through professional associations’ listservs related to school libraries such as the American

Association of School Librarians (AASL). Since most of the schools in Kenya do not have libraries, the researcher sought assistance from the head librarian, Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY) organization in the recruitment of school librarians. KEY is a private organization based in Kenya that invests in turnkey school libraries across Kenya's regions. The organization has expanded to other countries in Africa and so far, has managed to set up 45 school libraries. To maximize the number of possible participants, the recruitment email was also sent out to the personal emails of school librarians whose addresses were publicly available on their school library websites. Out of the 20 anticipated respondents, only 14 participated in the study, a 70% response rate.

3.4 Challenges

Even though most of the respondents from Kenya and the United States showed interest in participating in the study after the first callout was made through listservs and personal emails, they did not respond to follow-up requests for participation and scheduling of the interviews. The study anticipated having participants from multiple states of the United States and from different counties in Kenya; however, this goal was not achieved, therefore the findings of the study are not representative of all school librarians from the two contexts. In the United States, participants were from the South central, Midwest and Northeastern regions. In Kenya, which has 47 counties, the participants were from three urban area counties. Most of the counties in Kenya are considered rural characterized by underdevelopment and therefore the school infrastructure is in poor condition.

Most of the respondents in rural Kenya do not have access to technology and therefore the respondents were from schools in urban cities, except for one who was from a rural school. Even though access to technology in the urban areas is possible, some interviews had to be rescheduled

and two ended up being cancelled due to conflicting time differences. Only two publicly available policy documents were analyzed from Kenya since most of the public schools in Kenya do not have policies at the school level and therefore, they rely on guidelines or policies provided by the government. It was also difficult to get the policy from one of the private Christian schools in Kenya.

3.5 Ethical considerations

It is important to consider the well-being of the research participants by implementing strategies that protect them throughout the research process as they will be informed of the nature and purpose of the research work. Since data collection involved interaction with human beings, approval was sought from the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since the study involved participation of respondents from a different country, a Letter of Cultural Appropriateness (see appendix 3) was also required. The letter is meant to ensure that the research is feasible in the country and that the researcher adheres to laws and policies that protect human subjects participating in the study. The Letter of Cultural Appropriateness was signed by an Associate Professor from Kenya after reviewing the study documents on the appropriateness and feasibility of the study. No potential harm was anticipated to the participants who were involved in the study. Participation in the research was completely voluntary, and the participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants' privacy was ensured by using pseudonyms in the data gathering and analysis processes.

3.6 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and data from the interview transcripts were coded using NVivo, a computer-aided data analysis software. Coding "is a process that involves categorizing, thematically sorting and providing an organized platform for the construction of meaning from

data” (Williams & Moser, 2019, p. 45). The coding consisted of a two-step process, open and axial coding. Open coding is the process of analyzing data by breaking it down, examining it, comparing it, conceptualizing it, and categorizing it in order to discover, name, and categorize phenomena and to develop categories based on the properties and phenomena of the data (Denscombe, 2003) while axial coding is a comparative process that seeks to identify relationships between the categories developed in open coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). O’Connor and Joffe (2020) state that intercoder reliability is important to enhance consistency in the coding process. To establish intercoder reliability, it is necessary to have a minimum of two independent coders. After the initial coding was done using an already established codebook (see appendix 7), the second coding was done by the supervisor where some minimal recommendations were made. The codes were reviewed more than one time, and some changes were implemented to the code book for clarity e.g. the parent code “laws and policies” was viewed to be general and therefore changed to “laws and collection development policies.” The data was also reviewed more than one time and some of the transcript excerpts were categorized into more than one code.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings, which are organized based on research questions and categorized into four sections, which include intellectual freedom, advocacy, laws and policies, collection development and collection development policies. The findings will also highlight the similarities and differences between Kenya and the United States.

4.1 Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is one of the core principles of librarianship when providing access to information resources and therefore it is important to identify how school librarians define and understand the concept and the factors that influence their understanding. The research questions that guided this study are presented first, followed by the findings from the data.

4.1.1 RQ 1. What is the understanding of intellectual freedom among school librarians and does their worldview affect their understanding of intellectual freedom?

1. What is your understanding/definition of the concept of intellectual freedom?

Themes that emerged from the school librarians' definitions include the right to access information, freedom to read, ethical use of information and providing access to resources in a variety of formats covering different topics. One of the respondents also highlighted the emotive issues that affect intellectual freedom i.e. race, gender, sexuality and religion.

My understanding of that concept is that students, people, however we want to word it depending on I guess the location, have the right to access materials in a variety of formats and that that should not be limited in access because of any reason, whether it is because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion,

all of these things should be incorporated into the sort of all access as well as materials, of course should cover a wide range of topics, themes (United States).

I think I would define intellectual freedom as the ability to the right of every individual to be able to seek, receive and to seek and receive information without any restrictions (Kenya).

Building upon their definitions, which also focused on the right to access information, two of the respondents, one from Kenya and one from the United States included the concept of intellectual property in their understanding of intellectual freedom.

Intellectual freedom, intellectual freedom. I think this is when you say, let me say the ownership of information and sharing information. You see, it's like the mind. I use my mind to write a book and then this book when I put it right there, I have to own it. But then again, we also want it to be shared this information, you want to reach many people. Like in Korea, there's always the freedom of speech. We have a right to the information, but then intellectual freedom is, how much, how far should we go with this information? How far should we use this property? (Kenya)

So, I would say my understanding of the concept of intellectual freedom is that it is the idea that we as people have the freedom to pursue our own intellectual interests. Regardless of what other people think about them, I guess. So, you know, our ability to seek information and try to learn about things that interests us, and that I think protection of the work that you put into the world sometimes gets involved with intellectual freedom as well, right? That our ideas that we

publish, and share can be a piece of our intellectual property. And so, I think sometimes that relates to the idea of intellectual freedom, but not always. I kind of depends on the situation (United States).

2. What factors influence your understanding of intellectual freedom?

Some of the factors identified were unique to respondents from each country while certain factors were common in both countries. Respondents from the United States identified ALA resources, laws and policies as the factors influencing their understanding of intellectual freedom, while responses from Kenyan respondents identified culture, religion and age of students. Even though the school librarians have personal influences on their understanding of intellectual freedom, some respondents acknowledged the need for setting aside personal biases or influences to uphold the principle of intellectual freedom while undertaking their roles. (Refer to Table 4.)

Table 4: Factors influencing understanding of intellectual freedom

Factor	Excerpt
ALA resources	<i>“I think most of the information I get for intellectual freedom comes of course through ALA and AASL.....”</i> (United States)
Laws & Policies	<i>“I would say that there are, that there are laws that are sometimes proposed that I believe threaten intellectual freedom. And so, when that happens, I review my understanding of intellectual freedom, so that I can best explain why certain policies that are proposed do violate intellectual freedom</i> (United States)
Culture	<i>“The environment where I find myself in, in terms of culture influences my understanding of intellectual freedom....”</i> (Kenya)
Religion	<i>“Well, so I mean, I think we all like to think that our concepts of intellectual freedom are just wide open, but we all have implicit bias and things like that. And so, I'm sure that my concepts of intellectual</i>

	<i>freedom are influenced by, you know, growing up in a Christian household.....” (United States)</i> <i>“..Religion in our country maybe, right now there are things that we will not be able to access because, you know, we feel like we feel like our religion doesn't allow us to” (Kenya).</i>
Age of students	<i>“My view on intellectual freedom more so because I work with students, I'm very sensitive with the content with the age. (Kenya)</i> <i>“I think in context of being a school librarian, we do have to be aware our age groups and all of that..” (United States)</i>

3. What barriers do you encounter when providing access to diverse resources in the school library?

One of the key components of enhancing intellectual freedom among students is through the provision of diverse resources in different formats and on diverse topics. Participants highlighted several challenges encountered as they strive to provide access to diverse library resources. While there are differences in the barriers identified from the two countries, accessibility issues were common barriers in both Kenya and the United States. (Refer to Table 5).

Table 5: Barriers when providing access to diverse resources

Kenya	United States
Language barriers	Lack of enough resources on diverse issues
Biases during collection development	Book challenges
Parent institution policies	Inadequate financial resources
Parents decisions	

Language barriers: One of the school librarians from Kenya indicated that their lack of knowledge on different languages which are taught in the school affects the development of a diverse collection. Even though the librarians involve teachers when acquiring resources in different languages, it is difficult for them to evaluate whether the resources will cater to the needs of the students.

For example, we offer foreign languages. We have Mandarin, we have German, we have French. So, when you offer such kind of foreign languages, the materials come in those languages. Yeah. When I need to share the right content with the students, it becomes a challenge because I don't know whether I'm giving the right information or I'm just giving information for the sake (Kenya).

Biases during collection development: One of the Kenyan respondents indicated that the school management is involved in the collection development process to approve resources to be included in the library and that the content in most of the resources mainly focuses on the curriculum. Teachers in the school also have their biases and at times have requested the librarian to remove items from the shelves due to the content. Personal biases among one of the respondents resulted in self-censorship.

Okay, I wish we could reduce on stocking or resourcing revision books for our students only schools, the school management and the school management entirely are investing more on revision books for subject studies, and everything, they forget about leisure....., I think I've had a challenge with some teachers who may come and get a book and say, they asked me to get the book out of the shelf because of the content (Kenya).

So, with the policies of the Christian school, I can say my collection development policy censors. Yeah, I do censor the information I keep in the library (Kenya).

Parent institution policies: One of the respondents from Kenya works in a Christian school and therefore some policies in the school align with Christian principles. This affects the acquisition of resources on controversial topics since the library must adhere to the policies of the parent institution.

....Yeah. Yeah, but luckily for me, the school I'm working in currently is a Christian school. So, with the policies of the Christian school, I can say my collection development policy censors. Yeah, I do censor the information I keep in the library (Kenya).

Lack of enough resources on diverse issues: School librarians from the US stated that the lack of or limited availability of published resources on diverse issues limits the number of resources they can acquire.

.... I think, you know, the constraint I have is just what is actually like physically available from publishers (United States).

I would say that several years ago it was difficult to find diverse materials because they were not always published (United States).

Inadequate financial resources: School librarians from the United States indicated the lack of sufficient budget impedes the development of a diverse collection.

I've definitely seen where that is not the case that you might have someone who doesn't have that knowledge or education to know how to navigate intellectual freedom and to support students in that they do support they certified professionals, but they just don't have money to even purchase things (United States).

But, other barriers, and I don't know if this is what you're looking for, but there are other barriers that don't relate to intellectual freedom like budget and things like that. (United States).

Book Challenges: When book challenges are initiated, the library collection is affected as the resources being challenged are removed from the collection until a decision is made. Also, it is a challenge when other stakeholders in the school, e.g., parents, are involved in the selection process as they may have opinions on resources to be excluded during the acquisition process.

So yeah, our biggest issue in my particular district is that I know that there has been a couple of book challenges that have come through.... (United States).

Accessibility issues: The librarians from Kenya indicated that most students do not have access to any form of technology beyond the library and they only rely on the print resources provided in the library, thus limiting their access to diverse resources. Computer illiteracy and the lack of enough technology resources are barriers in that as much as technology might be available, users lack knowledge on how to use computers to access electronic resources.

Yeah. We have databases that our district pays for and we have eBooks and audiobooks and things like that, but the kids don't always have a method to access them once they leave the building. So yeah, our biggest issue in my particular district is that I know that there has been a couple of book challenges that have come through, in regards to that type of lack of access (United States).

Okay. Number one, I can say that let's say the lack of computer literacy. You can find that most of the people want to access information from the computers don't really know how to use their computers. They don't even know how to start a computer..... For example, I can say in my school, we have four computers that the students usually use, and we have a population of 400 students. So, you can imagine, that is a ratio of one to 100. So again, that is, it's a big barrier. (Kenya).

Parents' decisions: Since the students are still considered minors, parents still have control in making decisions on different aspects of their lives including what they can read:

There are a lot of barriers. We all come from different backgrounds. There are parents who are very sensitive on what their children read and there are parents who won't mind. So, most of the time you find yourself in the middle (Kenya).

4. How do you create awareness among students on their rights regarding intellectual freedom?

While several respondents from both countries identified different strategies used in creating awareness on intellectual freedom among students, one of the respondents from the United States stated that they have not informed students of their intellectual freedom rights.

I don't know that I have ever really explained to students about their intellectual freedom, but I've provided, I've always considered their intellectual freedom in mind when developing collections and when looking at policies. But I don't know that I've ever actively encouraged, taught that concept to students (United States).

Some of the strategies used to create awareness include:

Collaboration with teachers: School librarians recognized the need for collaboration and involving other professionals within the school in library related issues. With regard to intellectual freedom, the librarians make teachers aware of the importance of intellectual freedom and the teachers help in creating awareness among the students.

We work hand in hand with the teachers and other librarians to ensure that students, when they first come to the resource center, or when we're doing an orientation on e-resources, we make them aware of this, the rights that they have (Kenya).

Actually, it's the same thing when students have that question of like, are we allowed to read this and have this? I have to have that same conversation

with teachers or other adults who might think like, oh, this is too much for students... (United States).

Information literacy sessions: School librarians create awareness through book talks and literacy sessions. As stated by one school librarian from Kenya, the instruction sessions not only teach students how to access and use information, but they also take time to convey the importance of intellectual freedom to the students, respond to their concerns on controversial topics and get students' feedback.

We do this through orientation and through other sessions that we normally have especially when we do citation and referencing, that part normally comes in and we cover it there (Kenya).

I probably could be more intentional about it actually. But the way that I try to convey that students have the right to seek information and have intellectual freedom is by providing a lot of materials and by speaking about them. I do a lot of book talking in my role as a high school librarian, sharing suggestions and titles with big groups of kids (United States).

Utilizing the students' library council: The library council is a body comprising of members from different levels and departments of the school. The members include representatives from library staff, teachers, students and parents. They are charged with different responsibilities which involve monitoring library operations and reporting any concerns or recommendations to the school management to ensure that the library functions effectively. When creating awareness on intellectual freedom, the librarian from Kenya indicated that they educate student members in the council about intellectual freedom related issues. The student members then create awareness of intellectual freedom to the larger student community.

Okay, so, number one, we usually use the library council. So, the library council usually like they have these days whereby they go and educate the rest about how

they should be able to use the library, how they can access the materials from the library, how they can access, how they can use the computers. So, we usually create awareness through the library council majorly (Kenya).

Publicity: The use of posters was identified as a publicity strategy for creating awareness among students in Kenya. Posters with different messages such as the rights of students to access information are displayed in the library and in other buildings of the school.

...then again, we usually put some posters about how to, you know how to use the library. So, I think with that, you're also creating awareness that they are allowed to borrow books, they are allowed to come use their computers (Kenya)

Encouraging student autonomy: One librarian from the United States indicated that in their library they encourage students to be explorative and make judgements on what is appropriate for them.

Though, I don't. I think it's a privilege when it comes to intellectual freedom to work with high school students. I know that my colleagues who work with every younger group, middle school, elementary school, do feel that sometimes they have to make decisions about appropriateness and things like that. But I have students who are nearing adulthood, if not technically in adulthood, according to the law. And we put some trust in their ability to make some decisions about what is right and appropriate for them (United States).

4.2 Advocacy

4.2.1 RQ 2: How does the role of advocacy among school librarians' impact and influence intellectual freedom and access to materials?

- 1. What strategies do you use to advocate for the access to diverse resources in your school library?**

Creating awareness on intellectual freedom to all: One respondent from the United States acknowledged that there is misunderstanding of intellectual freedom and therefore communicating

and creating awareness among different stakeholders in the school on the importance of intellectual freedom enhances the acquisition and access of diverse resources.

So, I think the main advocacy that I do is communicating with school district and building administrators about what intellectual freedom is because there is a lot of misunderstanding outside of the librarian profession about what intellectual freedom is. By communicating often and explaining policies to those administrators, we have been able to make sure that our students have access to the resources that they want and need (United States).

Open mindedness: One respondent from the United States stated that being open to all viewpoints from a personal level translates to being open to library user needs on diverse issues.

So, I don't try to push anything on anybody. I always try to remain kind of open to what they're interested in and offer a lot of different viewpoints so there's something for everybody (United States).

2. What approaches do you have in place or use to deal with book challenges and parental concerns on certain library resources in your school library?

Only two school librarians from the United States have experienced some form of book challenge so far. The challengers initiate the book challenges by either reaching out to the librarians or school principal. The librarians recommended an alternative resource for use by the student whose parent had initiated the challenge. None of their experiences resulted in the challenged item being removed from the shelf.

Yeah. I have had one real book challenge, which was in 2021. Yes. 2021. Yeah. On the early end of all of this madness. And so that was a, that was a true challenge that was addressed to my principal and came to me and things like that. I can tell you about it if you want. Prior to that, I had just had my first year here, so 16 years ago. I had a parent reach out to me via e mail saying, my son is reading this book, and I do not approve of it, and I think you should take it

out of the library. But I contacted the parent back and said, you know, I'm sorry, I guess that book's not for your child. I would be happy to find him something else. And they said, Okay, great. Thank you. And that was the end of it. So, You know, that one, I don't really count. It was resolved and it didn't before it went to any formal process, and it did not result in removing a book from the library or even really strongly attempting to do so... (United States).

None of the school librarians from Kenya has experienced a book challenge and therefore their responses were hypothetical. They stated that they would withdraw the item from the shelf first, then go through the item with other stakeholders in the school to identify whether the issues of concern are genuine.

When we get such concerns, what will first of all, we'll withdraw that particular resource from the shelves and have our own, maybe I haven't read the book entirely, but we can sit down as a team and say, we go through the content so that we get a full understanding of what that resource is about. And then once we do that, we can also share the same with our colleagues from other parts of the world on the same, once we get all these concerns from the student who raised our own interpretation of the text and what other librarians have experienced, from there we'll now have a meeting with the parent, the student and us and then now come up with the way forward about this resource, whether to limit or to totally remove it from the library collection. Also, I think we'll also involve government agencies in the country that when we're doing this, they're also aware that it doesn't happen in another place again (Kenya).

Okay. I think first, of course, we'll have as teacher librarians who are there, of course, we'll have to go scrutinize the book first, we see their concerns. Is it really legit? Is it genuine? Then after that, I think we can contact those who, you know, gave us the library and at least alert them on that. Then after that, maybe they'll be able to know what is the way forward (Kenya).

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the approaches you use when dealing with book challenges?

Since some of the librarians from the United States have not experienced any book challenges yet, they were not able to assess the effectiveness of the policies. Only two librarians from the United States have had complaints that indicated the effectiveness of the policies.

The ones that we have in place now, the formal and, um, well, I haven't gone through a challenge with those things in place. And so it's hard for me to concretely say (United States).

So, I feel mostly that the policies support me in pursuing the student's right to intellectual freedom because I feel like the policies back me up if I ever have somebody who takes that drive to intellectual freedom the wrong way (United States).

4.3 Laws and Policies

This section identifies the awareness among school librarians about policies and laws on censorship as well as the policy formulation process.

4.3.1 RQ 3. With the existing laws and policies on censorship, in what ways are school librarians ensuring that students' intellectual freedom is protected?

1. What are your views on the existing laws and policies on censorship either at the country, district or school level?

Some respondents from Kenya were not aware of policies and laws on censorship at the country level but were aware of the policies at the school level.

At the moment. not so much, so much conversant, but I think I've come across a few, few types, few laws (Kenya).

Okay, so I'm not aware of any country. I'm not really sure, but they may be in our school if its anything relating to nudity, and let's say something to do with homosexuality? Something of the sort, I think that will not be allowed into the library, so it will be prohibited (Kenya).

Respondents from the United States are conversant with the laws at all levels. Their knowledge is also not limited to the states they are in, but they are also aware of laws and policies from other states. One of the respondents also questioned the legitimacy of some state policies and stated that there may be other reasons for initiating and implementing policies on censorship.

So okay. I believe that a lot of the laws that we're seeing being proposed at the state level, and in other states, not just in our state, are really looking for a problem that does not exist. Yeah. I think they are oftentimes used for attention and for political gain (United States).

I have heard lots of things on the news about other states where policies and laws have been put in place in both directions.... One state I know, I feel like Texas and Tennessee are the ones that jump to mind where they've had legislators and in some cases, the governor involved in trying to make decisions about in a legal sense about what kids can access in schools. But I know I think Illinois has done some proactive legislative work in support of intellectual freedom, trying to limit banning censorship (United States).

2. What are some laws and policies regarding intellectual freedom that have impacted your work as a school librarian?

In Kenya, the policies implemented by the parent Christian institution affect the work of the school librarian, who is limited on the type of library resources to acquire. Only one librarian

from Kenya stated that the requirement to adhere to Christian principles when selecting library resources makes the work easier as they do not have issues on controversial topics.

....Yeah. Yeah, but luckily for me, the school I'm working in currently is a Christian school. So, with the policies of the Christian school, I can say my collection development policy censor. (Kenya).

According to one respondent from the United States, the lack of clear definitions on some concepts brings about confusion to the librarians. Even though the definitions are provided in policy, it becomes difficult to categorize items as the definitions might be interpreted differently by people.

Yeah. So, I know in the state of Michigan, you know, that's where I am. There are laws about pornographic material. Because a lot of the complaints that have been received have accused materials of being pornographic. Yeah. But the law, the legal definitions of pornography do not fit the books that have been called pornographic.

3. What is your level of involvement in the process of formulating laws and policies on intellectual freedom either at the national, district or school level?

From their responses, it was evident that school librarians in the United States are active participants in the formulation of laws and policies at different stages of the process. Participation can be through library associations where the librarians provide suggestions and feedback as well as updating existing policies at the school level.

Specifically, in my district, the three of us updated and put those policies together, procedures. They're procedures when we do it. And then we took them to the previous assistant superintendent who said he was going to put them into board policy. And then he left and didn't do that. And so now we have a new person, and so last year, we finally kind of got hold of him and asked him about it, and he finally got them updated and put into the board policy like a month ago. So yes, we were involved in that (United States).

So, I am an active member of our state library association, and we do have an advocacy committee within our association. I am an active member of that committee. My role within that community or that committee is to make sure that other types of librarians, those legislative liaisons that we work with, understand the needs of school libraries (United States).

In Kenya, there is minimal participation among the school librarians since most of the schools rely on policies formulated at the government level. One librarian mentioned that they are only consulted once the final policy at the school level has been formulated while another librarian stated that they are only involved during the data collection stage.

Most of the time is you get a copy of the policy that has been developed. and maybe you ask to give a concern or an input on this (Kenya).

When they're doing the survey, they're asking about maybe collection and the rules so that they can come up with the policies, they need to know the rules and everything about the library so they end up asking. So, I'll be consulted at that point when they're collecting data. Yeah (Kenya).

4. How do you create a balance between promoting intellectual freedom while adhering to the existing laws and policies regarding intellectual freedom?

It takes a lot of communication with our policymakers to make sure that they understand that we do take their concerns seriously if they have concerns, but that we already have steps in place to address those concerns. Again, the vast majority of those policy makers do understand that (United States).

4.4 Collection development and collection development policies

The questions in this section sought to identify strategies used to develop diverse collections in the school libraries and recommendations for effective policies.

4.4.1 RQ 4 In what innovative ways can school library collection development policies be formulated or revised to promote intellectual freedom?

1. What criteria do you use in the development of a diverse school library collection?

Collaboration: The school librarians stated that they engage other members of the school community including teachers, students and external experts in the collection development process. This process involves soliciting their feedback and recommendations on the type of resources to acquire.

Number one, we do involve the staff, then the students, then we involve experts from, especially most of our resources are from overseas. What we do with them, we'll give them our suggestions and they will also look at their collection and give us a suggestion of what maybe they have and we may not be having in our collection (Kenya).

Recommendations from professional reviews: Librarians identified strategies, which include consulting experts and using professional reviews and systems to ensure effective selection of diverse library resources.

We are using a system called Follet Destiny, So Follet, they have their own publications. Every time you're going to acquire, they will look at the list and make sure whatever they are giving to us is not in our collection at the moment (Kenya).

It's professional journals like *Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, *Publishers Weekly Book List*. A lot of those award winners, things like that (United States).

We use professional review resources when we're developing our collection and we make sure that we are consulting those as often as we can we review those resources ourselves. Of course, it's impossible to actually review everything that a

library purchases individually but we can use those professional resources to guide us (United States).

Needs Assessment: Students have different informational needs and therefore the school librarians use surveys to get feedback from students and other departments.

I use the needs assessment and then there's a departmental suggestion, where there's a form that goes around and the department, if they, they really need a certain resource they request and then there's student request of certain resources, then the marketing of the, the books when they come go through and then we market and then if they choose, we buy it. Yeah (Kenya).

First and foremost, make sure that we are addressing the academic needs of our schools. We make sure that our collection does address those subject area standards that our teachers teach. We also want to make sure that we are providing resources that help students connect to literature and to access information for their own personal needs (Kenya).

2. What recommendations do you have for the creation or revision of school library collection development policies to support intellectual freedom?

Formulating well-defined policies: The policies which are formulated and implemented should clearly define various aspects of the library e.g. selection criteria and budget requirements.

Definitely having a policy in place for having, just a general policy on how you go about ordering them. So, like I like ours because it has like two professional reviews, age group, all of that. It's not too specific to where like, I couldn't buy things, but it's also not overly vague to where it lets me buy whatever I want that could maybe not be appropriate for my collection (United States).

Inclusivity: One school librarian from Kenya indicated that since the policies are meant to serve members of the school community, especially students, it is imperative that all stakeholders who might be affected by the policy to be involved in the formulation process.

I believe, first of all, we need to have what is called inclusivity in the development. My view will be even students need to be involved, because these are policy that's going to regulate our services unto them, the resources that we give unto them. So, they need to be involved in the development of the policy so that when the policy is out, it actually caters for every need of the library community (Kenya).

Policy reviews: According to one of the respondents from Kenya, the ever-changing information ecosystem requires librarians to keep up-to-date, and therefore, they need to continuously review and update policies.

We also need to have a tendency of doing regular revision of these policies because things change regularly in the information world. So, we need to have that regular update (Kenya).

One respondent from the US stated that they review their policy often due to frequent concerns. Even though the review is done often, the respondent emphasized the need for having timelines for which policy reviews should be done.

Great question. It feels like we've been reviewing them like every six months for the last three years because they keep coming into question. But we probably need to decide now that they are board policy. Yeah. Probably need to put a time for review on those right away so that we can make sure that they stay up to date (United States).

Engaging with library associations: Librarians from the United States recognized the impact of library associations, especially ALA which provides resources such as guidelines and sample policies which can be modified for use by school libraries.

The American Library Association does a very good job of providing sample policies. They do review those policies. Often if I were to advise a librarian, I would say to consult with that association to look at their recommendations. Consult with state association to look at their recommendations

for policy policies. Spell out how we develop our collection and our commitment to intellectual freedom. Yeah, I think that's really all I can say about that. It's like there are resources out there written by library professionals that can help us do that (United States).

Yeah. I guess if it was somebody who was undertaking the process, and they asked me for advice, I would probably point them to ALA. ALA has intellectual freedom documents, they have sample policies (United States).

4.5 Content analysis findings

4.5.1 Learner-centered model

Seven policies were analyzed, five from the United States and two from Kenya. Table 6 below indicates the number of policies that have statements aligning with the ALA checklist and aligning with the learner-centered model.

Table 6: Checklist using learner-centered model

Checklist	USA (n=5)	KENYA (n=2)
Selection criteria	5	2
Collection maintenance and weeding	5	1
Support for intellectual freedom	5	1

Selection criteria

In the Kenyan policies, the criteria used for developing collections should consider cost, inclusive resources that cater for people with disabilities, currency of the resources, curriculum support, student needs, resources in different formats, adherence to international standards and book to student ratio. “A collection development plan shall form the basis of the school library’s

selection and acquisition of up-to-date, unbiased, reliable and relevant collections, bearing in mind the ever-changing needs of the school community” (National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries in Kenya, 2018, p. 16). “It is recommended that 60% of the library collection (excluding textbooks) support curriculum content. For collection management guidelines for textbooks, schools should refer to the existing government policy” (National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries in Kenya, 2018, p. 17).

All policies from the United States had clear guidelines on the selection of library resources. “Areas that are considered in developing the media collection include the educational goals of the district, individual student learning styles, teaching styles, curricular needs faculty and student needs, and existing materials” (Policy C, United States). Some of the specific criteria for selection of library resources include format, curriculum needs, student needs, quality of writing, permanence, reputation of publisher, objectivity and integrity of the material, reflection of societal problems, aspirations, attitudes and ideals.

Collection management and weeding

Of the two documents from Kenya, the draft policy includes some of the best practices for collection management. The practices include ongoing development, evaluation, improvement and weeding of library resources as school needs change. The policy does not provide clear guidelines on the weeding process. There are various aspects of collection management in the United States policies. One policy indicates labeling books based on genres like romance, history, humor and science fiction. Only one of the policies from the United States provides the criteria and procedures on weeding of library resources. “The collection is an active collection and is not an archival place for the school. Weeding is an on-going process and is an integral part of book selection” (Policy C, United States).

Support for intellectual freedom

Even though none of the Kenyan policies specifically define or have the term “intellectual freedom,” the draft policy has statements which support intellectual freedom specifically on the rights of library users. “The rights of the users of the school library shall be guided by the constitution where all users shall have the right to freedom of speech and debate. It is important to guarantee the right of every user to access the school library without favor or discrimination as this is in line with every person’s constitutional right to access information” (National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries in Kenya, 2018, p. 13).

Just like the Kenyan policies, none of the policies from the United States defined intellectual freedom but there were statements in support of intellectual freedom. One of the policies stated that “The district does not promote censorship and will challenge efforts at censorship in order to maintain district’s responsibility to provide information which is educational and enlightening” (Policy B, United States). While another policy included the Library Bill of Rights Statement.

4.5.2 Collection centered model

Table 7 below indicates the number of policies that have statements aligning with the ALA checklist and aligning with the collection-centered model.

Table 7: Checklist using collection centered model

Checklist	USA (n=5)	KENYA (n=2)
Objectives of the policy	0	2
Reconsideration procedure	5	0

Selecting controversial materials	5	0
Responsibility for selection	5	1
Policy revision	0	0

Objectives of the policy

The Kenyan policies have clearly defined objectives. The National Policy and Guidelines Framework for School Libraries outlines seven objectives focused on ensuring that schools have libraries that meet global standards, promote lifelong learning, promote indigenous cultures and raise the quality of education to school-going children by providing adequate resources. The objectives of the National Curriculum Policy are geared towards supporting school curriculum, and one of the objectives involves establishing mechanisms for enhancing access to curriculum delivery materials. General school policies from the United States are formulated at the district level and therefore most library policies are included as part of the general district policy. Among the policies analyzed from the United States, only one was a stand-alone policy. Even though the policies have mission and vision statements, none of the library policies from the United States have a section that clearly outlines the objectives.

Reconsideration procedures

None of the Kenyan policies provided guidelines on the procedures to follow whenever any book challenges occur. All policies from the United States provide the procedure and other relevant documents such as sample letters of complaints and a request for reconsideration form. “The district will make every effort to provide library materials that will be appropriate for the community’s values and the students’ abilities and maturity levels. However, there will be times

when questions or challenges will arise from parents or District patrons regarding books or other library materials. In the event that there is a disagreement with or concern over the content of library materials, the following procedures shall be followed” (Policy B, United States).

The reconsideration sections of the policy also outline the members who will be involved in the process and there are different levels to the procedure starting from the building (school) level. If the matter is not resolved at the first level, then it advances to the district level. “If the issue cannot be resolved through a meeting of the parties, the principal will assemble a building level review committee. The building level review committee will be composed of the principal, a librarian, and three other faculty members” (Policy B, United States).

Selecting controversial materials

None of the policies from Kenya has any statement or guidelines on selecting controversial materials. According to the policies from the United States, librarians may select library materials which provide various points of view on controversial subjects, and which are intended to meet the needs and interests of the students. One of the policies from the United States highlights the criteria for selecting nonfiction materials on controversial topics like religion. “Factual unbiased materials representing all major religions may be included. Bibles and other sacred writings are acceptable. Publications from religious bodies may be selected if they have general value or appear in magazine indexes” (Policy A, United States) On ideologies, “factual information about ideologies or philosophies of current or continuing interest may be included” (Policy A United States).

“The Board will allow the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues, as part of curriculum or course of study, provided that their use in the instructional program: is

related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students, does not tend to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view; and encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry” (Policy E, United States).

Responsibility for selection

The Kenyan draft national policy clearly outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders within the school but places the school librarian at the center of collection development. The policy states that all school stakeholders have an input, but collection development is “guided by the Orange Book, with additional titles from local and international publishers determined by the school library staff” (2018, p. 16).

Policies from the United States also identify librarians as experts in the collection development process. “The policy has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of school library resources to the school library professional staff” (Policy B, United States). In another policy, selection of resources is an inclusive process that may include other stakeholders. “Materials for the library resource centers are selected by the library media specialists with the cooperation of faculty, administration and, when feasible, the students” (Policy A, United States).

Apart from relying on school librarians only, collaboration is a key aspect when developing collections as stated in one of the policies from the United States. “The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that appropriate instructional materials are selected and provide an opportunity for the professional staff and community to participate and be informed on the selection and use of instructional materials” (Policy D, United States).

Policy revision

ALA's toolkit advocates for regular reviews of selection policies to make necessary revisions. Even though the Kenyan draft policy is yet to be implemented, none of the Kenyan policies give any timelines or guidelines on when and how revisions of the policies should occur. In the United States, some of the statements and guidelines on policy revision were as follows.

Bylaws and policies shall be adopted, amended, repealed, or suspended by a majority vote of the Board. Periodically, it may be deemed necessary to make technical corrections to policies that have already been adopted through normal procedures. These technical corrections may include statutory references, scrivener's errors, renumbering, grammatical corrections or additions including, but not limited to, punctuation or typographical errors, as well as alterations and omissions not affecting the construction or meaning of any sections, subsections, chapters, titles, or policies as a whole. Technical corrections may also include the updating of the named individuals in these policies where the originally named individual no longer works for the District or no longer works in the applicable position. Should the Board choose to make such technical corrections, it may be accomplished by resolution without going through the normal policy adoption procedures" (Policy E, United States).

The Board shall update, amend, delete, and add policies as necessary to comply with changes in the law and to meet the needs of District and its students. Suggestions and proposals for policy development should be communicated to the Superintendent.....Upon adoption, policies and amendments to policies shall be effective immediately unless a specific effective date is provided. When circumstances require, the Board may waive the above procedures for adoption and may take immediate action to adopt, delete, or revise any policy" (Policy B, United States).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Intellectual freedom

The understanding and definition of intellectual freedom provided by the school librarians aligns with the definitions provided by ALA (2023b), AASL (n.d.) and other scholars (Dawkins, 2021; Pekoll, 2019), where the right to access information, freedom of human thought and ownership of one's personal ideas are some of the key central themes for intellectual freedom. As human beings, there are factors that influence how we understand and perceive things. Knox (2014) states that intellectual freedom is a socially constructed idea and people will define it based on a particular worldview. The school librarians interviewed identified several factors that influence how they understand and interpret intellectual freedom as a social issue. The factors identified include religion, culture, ALA resources, age of students, laws and policies.

5.2 Religion and intellectual freedom

The intersection between religion and intellectual freedom has been contentious, where on one hand, religion is seen to deny or limit access to resources on certain topics while on the other hand, it is seen to advocate for morality in society. Immanuel Kant, one of the Enlightenment thinkers, challenged overreliance on existing political and religious authorities and advocated for rational analysis (Peters, 2019). As stated by Oltmann (2019), students in conservative Christian schools may be deprived of access to certain resources which do not align with the Christian values of the parent institution. Apart from the librarian who worked in a Christian institution and was required to consider the Christian principles set out by the parent institution when acquiring library resources, other librarians also mentioned that religious factors impact how they understand intellectual freedom and limits their access to certain resources. Kenya has been described as a Christian country due to the dominance of the Christian religion where 85.5 percent of the

population is Christian (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2023). The dominant denominations of Christianity in Kenya include protestants and Catholics. Christianity has an influence in various entities of the government, including the education sector and the government has continuously stated that issues that do not align with Christian values, principles and beliefs are illegal. One of the main issues is on sexuality and gender recognition where the current president in one of his speeches stated that “..boys must remain boys, men must remain men, women must remain women and girls must remain girls. We thank God that this year, the very first news from the United States in the new administration is to confirm what the bible says, what our faith believes in and what our tradition is firmly grounded on” (Citizen TV Kenya, 2025, 0:49).

5.3 Age of students and intellectual freedom

In the context of schools, librarians interact with students who have not attained adulthood and therefore they assume some parental responsibilities and involvement in the students’ lives. Just like teachers, school librarians acted “in loco parentis” (Spear, 2018, p. 504) to protect the welfare of students within the school premises. Even as the librarians continuously advocate for access to diverse resources in their libraries, the age of students mattered when thinking about intellectual freedom, and they always consider age-appropriate materials. The intellectual development of children progresses as they mature into adulthood. Piaget identified four stages of cognitive or intellectual development, which include sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage (Halpenny & Pettersen, 2013). High school students are likely to fall under the last two stages, where they are able to understand concepts, generate hypotheses and solve problems. The students are at a stage where they are exploring ideas, and hence the school librarians were very vigilant when evaluating information resources to ensure age appropriateness.

5.4 Barriers to providing access to diverse resources.

Accessibility issues

One aspect of advocating for intellectual freedom involves providing access to diverse resources with different viewpoints. However, school librarians encounter challenges as they undertake that responsibility (Pekoll, 2019). Even though the adoption of technology in school libraries is meant to provide opportunities for access to information in different formats, there are accessibility issues that hinder access. Computer illiteracy presents a major challenge when students lack the skills to use technology. In Kenya, 67 percent of children between the ages of 12 and 17 have access to technology (UNICEF, 2022). Most of the librarians interviewed from Kenya were from schools in rural areas and they noted that students in urban schools of the country have greater access to technology compared to students in rural schools, who have minimal or no access to any form of technology. The rural areas are underdeveloped with limited infrastructure and resources. In the United States, even though the school librarians provide access to electronic resources, students are often not able to access the resources beyond the library (UNICEF, 2020). Technology devices are expensive to acquire and maintain (Maycock, 2011) and with inadequate financial resources, school libraries have to prioritize what to include in their budgets.

Bias during collection development

One of the librarians in Kenya stated that they censor information in their library. This reflects bias in their collection development process, which is a form of self-censorship. Tudor et al. (2023) state that self-censorship can occur consciously or subconsciously, in that the librarian does not acquire or removes items from the shelves due to their content, especially on controversial topics. In this case, the self-censorship was influenced by the policies of the Christian school. Students who enroll in the school are aware of the Christian principles they must abide by and therefore the librarian never anticipates any book challenges. Even though this is an easy approach

that avoids any confrontations with parents or other challengers, it limits the diversity of resources that students can access.

Schools offer a structured environment where students acquire knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge in schools should not only be “curriculum centered” (Pattee, 2020, p. 21) but it should also be user centered to cater to students’ information needs beyond the classroom. One of the Kenyan schools invests more in curriculum focused resources. While the selection and acquisition of resources focusing on the curriculum is the responsibility of librarians in collaboration with teachers, any other information resources for leisure must be approved by the school management. This equates to bias in collection development as students are denied access to resources on topics that are not covered in the curriculum.

Language barriers

To help prepare students for their future personal, professional and social lives, the Kenyan government has been identifying strategies to better equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge. One way of preparing students and growing their knowledge base and skills was the introduction of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), to replace the previous 8:4:4 system of education (Ogembo, 2025). The 8:4:4 system of education which has been in existence since Kenya attained its independence, is a system where students attend primary school for eight years, proceed to high school for four years and to a university or tertiary institution for another four years. The system was deemed to be “exam driven” (p. 63), focusing on preparing students to pass exams and not imparting skills that are necessary for the modern economy hence the shift to CBC (Muchira et.al, 2023). Apart from indigenous languages such as Kikamba, Maragoli, Kibukusu, Kigirima, Ekegusii and Dholuo, which were included in the new curriculum, foreign languages included are French, Chinese, German and Arabic (KICD, 2024). The lack of multilingual skills

and awareness of the foreign languages, as identified by one of the librarians, has hindered the development of foreign language collections beyond what is approved by the government. When students in the library also request additional foreign language resources, the librarians solely rely on teachers to recommend foreign language resources.

Book Challenges

Even though none of the librarians in the study have experienced a book challenge that has undergone the full formal process, the removal of items from the shelves due to complaints from parents results in censorship as it impedes access to the item by other users. One of the practices of censorship as identified by Knox (2017) includes removal of items. Over the years, parents have challenged library materials more than any other group (ALA, 2019) and from their experiences, librarians stated that parents were the initiators of the complaints received so far. Children are presumed innocent and since they are still considered as minors, parents have authority on aspects of their lives, including what they can read, and can endeavor to protect their children's innocence.

5.5. Advocacy and collection development

Hicks (2016) states that the “purpose of advocacy work is, in part, to build relationships with like-minded organizations and individuals to help champion an issue or cause” (p. 617). Library associations at all levels are organizations with the responsibility of advocating for librarians and libraries by influencing policy, setting guidelines and standards as well as providing collaborative and professional development opportunities.

ALA, AASL and other subsidiary groups within the associations, such as the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), have had an impact in the United States as school librarians stated that they utilize intellectual freedom resources provided by such bodies. The bodies also provide sample policies, which have been helpful to librarians in the development of their own policies.

Some librarians also indicated that they have served and still serve on some of the advocacy committees in the associations. This further emphasizes the importance of having effective library associations and the need for school librarians to be active members and participants in the associations. Participation provides an avenue for the school librarians to voice their concerns and contribute to advocacy activities such as formulation of policies.

For the longest time, the library profession in Kenya did not have an effective library association and this likely influenced the lack of advocacy efforts on issues of the profession in general. With the revamping of the Kenya Library Association, there have been visible efforts to advocate for the profession in the country. One of the missions of the recently launched strategic plan of 2025-2030 is “to advocate for and adopt the best international practices for the management of library and information services in Kenya” (p. 6). Some of the goals include “advocating for ‘supportive legislation and increased investment in library and information services’” (p. 6).

While library associations exist to advocate for intellectual freedom, advocacy should also start at a personal level. Gregory (2019) demonstrates how easy it is to fall into the trap of self-censorship on a subconscious level, especially when personal beliefs and strong opinions on controversial topics are ingrained in the mind. Therefore, there are school librarians who highlighted the need to put aside personal biases and have an open mindset to accommodate different viewpoints. As experts and custodians of information, when the librarians are open-minded, they can recommend other beneficial information resources to their users. One of the key components in advocacy involves creating awareness to the entire school community on their rights to access information. School librarians may not be able to individually reach out to every member of the school community; therefore, there is a need for collaboration. The strategy of

utilizing a students' library council works well since members of the council take a trainer's role to educate members of the school community.

The marketplace of ideas framework advocates for an environment where several options are provided for the user to select the best option depending on their needs. For libraries, this involves developing a collection with diverse viewpoints. Due to their age, students may have little or no input when collections are being developed, thus librarians ensure that the resources acquired will cater to their informational needs. Therefore, the librarians indicated that they use professional resources to develop their collections, such as Follett Destiny. Follett Destiny is a proprietary system that is mostly used by school libraries worldwide to help manage their collections.

5.6 Laws and Policies

The lack of library policies at the public-school level in Kenya is a cause for concern. Overreliance on policies from the government creates some form of stagnation as it may be challenging for the schools to adapt to changing needs and circumstances while they wait on government directives. Additionally, the lack of awareness of any censorship policies among librarians in Kenya can be attributed to the lack of active participation in the formulation process of the policies. Mardis (2021) outlines a comprehensive ongoing process of policy development that starts with the appointment of a committee and includes soliciting feedback, dissemination and evaluation of the policy. Even though one librarian stated that they are involved during the survey process to gather data, and another librarian stated that they are only given the final product for review, these stages of participation only represent a fraction of the full process of policy formulation.

School librarians in the United States demonstrated their awareness of the status of censorship and laws regarding censorship. This can be attributed to the awareness created by the

media and through library associations. ALA continuously provides resources on the status of censorship every year, including the number of books banned and their titles, categories of people initiating book bans, and other statistics (ALA,2024). At the same time, there has been a lot of research on censorship and intellectual freedom focusing on school libraries in the United States (Jamison, 2020; Dawkins, 2021; Cahill, 2021). Based on their experiences with book challenges, school librarians in the United States indicated that the policies at the district level, especially on reconsideration of library items, have been effective and support them in pursuing students' right to intellectual freedom.

5.7 Learner centered model

One of the beliefs of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) states that “intellectual freedom is every learner’s right and that learners have the freedom to speak and hear what others have to say, rather than allowing others to control their access to ideas and information” (AASL, 2024, para. 5). AASL (2018) further states that “intellectual freedom is every learner’s right” (p. 3), and through the shared foundation of inquiry, learners display curiosity, engage with new knowledge, adapt, communicate, exchange learning products and participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process. Based on the components of the model as highlighted below, it is evident that the policies analyzed for the study place the learner or student at the center of the collection development process.

Collection management and weeding are part of the learner-centered model. Classical information resources are necessary in understanding the foundational knowledge of concepts, and school libraries need to also keep relevant resources that are up-to-date. In Kenya, most of the school libraries do not have enough physical space and the lack of enough or no technology resources requires the school librarians to maximize the available space. This, therefore, calls for

weeding. Weeding should also be done using a criterion and not based on the age of an item. While the Kenyan policy states that school libraries should weed their resources, it does not provide clear guidelines on the process, unlike one of the United States policies which provides the criteria for weeding.

5.8 Collection-centered model

One of the components in the collection-centered model is reconsideration procedures. None of the school librarians from Kenya has experienced any book challenges. The lack of any formal complaints about resources available in the library could be a reason for the lack of reconsideration procedures in the Kenyan policies. School librarians from Kenya indicated that parents' involvement in their children's school affairs is minimal due to the nature and type of school. In boarding schools, parents rarely see their children except during visiting days or during breaks. They may not be aware of whether their children are accessing resources on controversial topics unless their children inform them.

Mardis (2021) states that policy development should be a collective process that includes students, parents, teachers and school administrators. While the school librarians agreed on an inclusive process of policy formulation, it is also necessary to have defined roles and responsibilities of all members to avoid biases, especially from parents who may influence what their children should access. As gatekeepers of intellectual freedom (Dawkins, 2021) and experts on information selection, acquisition and dissemination, librarians should be at the helm of the policy formulation process. All policies from the United States and one from Kenya place the ultimate responsibility of selection upon school librarians, but with the help of other stakeholders.

Another component in the model is selecting controversial materials. The lack of inclusion of controversial materials in Kenyan school libraries can be attributed to the prevalence of

Christianity and political interference in the country. As stated by Thiongo (2006), the attainment of independence in Kenya did not end censorship, as regimes and legislators who came to power have banned or attempted to ban books. In 2024, one of the Kenyan legislators recommended for a ban on *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, which is a popular American children's book. The cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Education made assurances that the book would be banned (Kimuyu, 2024).

Policy impacts practices and sometimes the environment influences policy. From the analysis of the collection development policies, it is evident that policy impacts practice as the school librarians rely on what is in the policy during the collection development policy even though involvement in the formulation process may be minimal as indicated by one of the school librarians from Kenya. One of the librarians mentioned that they reviewed their policy quite often indicating that changes in the social environment influenced the frequent changes in the policy thus inviting the question on how often policy reviews should be done. Hughes-Hassell and Mancall's (2005) collection development models are essential as they focus on the student, the librarian and in relation to the ALA toolkit, they are applicable to ensuring a diverse collection that promotes intellectual freedom. However, the current social political environment calls for the rethinking of the models since there are other factors that impact collection development of diverse resources. Political agendas and ideologies as well as influences from parents and other pressure groups affect the advancement of intellectual freedom. Collection development policies are not only formulated at the school level but also at the district, state and national levels. At the same time laws that affect intellectual freedom are formulated at all levels of government. It is therefore necessary to revisit the models to incorporate other factors that impact collection development of diverse resources.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Intellectual freedom is a principle that needs to be protected, and therefore school librarians should continuously advocate for and provide access to diverse information resources that enhance the intellectual development and critical thinking skills among students. This study aimed at understanding the current state of intellectual freedom, censorship and collection development policies in Kenya and the United States. While in the United States school librarians are making progress to protect the intellectual freedom of students, Kenya still has a long way to go. This chapter provides recommendations for school librarians and policy makers as they undertake their responsibilities in an era where censorship is increasingly becoming rampant. The chapter also provides potential areas for future research.

6.1 Limitations

While the study provided valuable contributions, insights and realities on the state of intellectual freedom, censorship and collection development policies in school libraries, the sample size of this study was small; thus, the findings are not representative of all school librarians in Kenya and the United States as experiences and perceptions may vary. Despite the challenges encountered, the responses from the 14 participants were rich and detailed. No new themes emerged from the data. In the United States, participants for the study were from six states. In Kenya, all the respondents were from the urban region except for one who was from a rural region of the country since most of the schools in the rural regions of the country have poor infrastructure. The geographical limitations of this study therefore indicate that if the research is to be expanded to other regions of the two countries, the findings may be different from the current findings. Additionally, the lack of adequate literature or studies on intellectual freedom from the library and

information science field within Kenya necessitated the use of resources from other fields such as communication and politics.

6.2 Recommendations for practice

Policies are foundational and essential in safeguarding students' rights to access information. Therefore, it is important to formulate and implement library policies that advocate for intellectual freedom. Policy formulation should be a collaborative process involving members of the school community but recognizing librarians as experts in information management, thus assigning them the leadership role in the process. To avoid misinterpretation and confusion, the policies should clearly outline procedures for developing diverse library collections, processes for handling book challenges, and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in reconsideration committees. The policies should be evaluated from time to time to identify any gaps and ascertain their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Additionally, the policies should also be updated to maintain relevance.

In an ever-changing information ecosystem, school librarians should keep up to date with what is happening regarding censorship not only in their school but in the district, state, country and globally, too. This awareness broadens their understanding of intellectual freedom issues and enables them to be well-versed in readiness for any potential challenges. Some key aspects to be aware of include laws in place, such as the First Amendment, national association policies, such as the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and legislation from governments or other related international bodies.

School librarians should participate in professional development programs or opportunities that advance their knowledge on intellectual freedom issues. Preliminary findings from an analysis of the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programs in several institutions in the

United States have revealed that some institutions offer intellectual freedom in their curricula as a stand-alone course while other institutions have incorporated the concept as a topic in other courses. In Kenya, preliminary findings from analysis of several MLIS programs did not yield results of institutions that offer intellectual freedom as a course. While intellectual freedom has been part of curricula in institutions of higher learning, the availability of technology has made it possible to access free online programs and resources on the topic. Intellectual freedom continues to be an issue of concern and therefore library schools should revisit their curriculum and identify whether there is a need for implementing intellectual freedom courses in their programs. Library associations play a crucial role in advocating issues affecting libraries and library professionals. Apart from providing free resources, they organize conferences, which are great avenues that school librarians can utilize to meet, discuss and share resources on intellectual freedom. Furthermore, school librarians should create awareness among students about their rights to information. School librarians should be open-minded by setting aside any personal biases.

6.3 Future Research

The continued attacks on intellectual freedom, as evidenced by the increase in book bans and formulation of policies hindering access to diverse information resources, necessitates the continuous investigation of the status of censorship to collect school librarians' perspectives on how they are navigating in such an environment. Intellectual freedom and censorship are global phenomena and while ALA provides yearly statistics on the status of censorship in the United States, quantitative studies can be carried out in other contexts (countries) to highlight the number of books banned, the categories of people initiating the bans and the type of institutions where censorship occurs. ALA (2023c) states that 76 percent of books and graphic novels were targeted for censorship and most censorship attempts, 54 percent, took place in public libraries while 39

percent censorship attempts took place in school libraries. Twenty-eight percent of library patrons-initiated censorship attempts, while 24 percent of parents-initiated censorship attempts. It is also crucial to understand how school librarians advocate for intellectual freedom of their students in other countries, whether there are any policies that support intellectual freedom, and analyze the policies to determine their effectiveness. Depending on the feasibility of the studies in other contexts, it is also fundamental to understand perspectives from young adults on their awareness of the concepts of intellectual freedom and censorship and how the concepts have impacted their access to information.

The evolving information landscape is affecting how and what information we access. The continuous growth of digital technologies is providing different avenues through which library users in schools can access information; however, the digital divide still exists within different contexts. At the same time, the emergence of artificial intelligence and the explosion of information are impacting access to information, causing concerns about privacy, misinformation and bias. Therefore, research on whether and how school librarians are adopting AI in their work and how they are navigating the complex information landscape to promote digital literacy and ensure access to diverse information among young adults is important.

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APPENDIX 1: Research Recruitment Template

Research Recruitment Template

My name is Moses Munyao, a doctoral candidate at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma. I am conducting a research study among school librarians in Kenya and the US to explore their perspectives on Intellectual freedom and collection development policies. There has been an increase in the number of book challenges and censorship of information materials that cover controversial subjects such as race, religion, sexuality and politics within school libraries. The formulation and implementation of policies related to censorship and intellectual freedom at the national, state and district levels has hindered the provision and access to diverse resources in school libraries. School librarians have a responsibility of ensuring and promoting access to diverse resources within their libraries and therefore the goal of the research project is to 1) identify the understanding of intellectual freedom among school librarians, 2) identify strategies that can be used to advocate for students' intellectual freedom rights, 3) identify innovative ways to formulate or revise existing collection development policies to promote intellectual freedom among students.

Your participation in an approximately one-hour interview over zoom video conferencing is voluntary and there is no compensation for participating in the research. Please contact the principal investigator Moses Munyao through, - moses.muendo.munyao-1@ou.edu for more information or any questions about the research at any time.

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.



IRB NUMBER: 16222
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 09/05/2023

APPENDIX 2: Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in Research University of Oklahoma

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Moses Muniyao from the School of Library and Information Studies; Dodge Family College of Arts & Sciences and I invite you to participate in my research project entitled **Exploring Intellectual Freedom and Collection Development Policies in School Libraries: Perspectives from US and Kenya**. This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a school librarian. **Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions you may have BEFORE agreeing to participate in my research.**

What is the purpose of this research? This research will create an awareness and provide an understanding of the social reality regarding intellectual freedom between Kenya and the US. Diverse library resources and effective collection development policies are essential in the enhancement of intellectual freedom and therefore through the study, school librarians, administrators and policy makers would be able to rethink and restructure their current policies and laws to advocate for intellectual freedom. As the number of book challenges continues to increase and new legislature related to intellectual freedom continues to be implemented, it is also necessary to continually emphasize the need for advocacy among school librarians. **How many participants will be in this research?** About twenty school librarians from both Kenya and the US will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will be asked to participate in a virtual video recorded interview that will consist of about fifteen questions.

How long will this take? Your participation in the interview may be up to an hour.

What are the risks and benefits if I participate? There is a risk of accidental data release if we collect your data using audio and video recordings. If this occurred, your identity and statements you made would become known to people who are not on the research team. To minimize this risk, the researchers will transfer data to, and store your data on, a secure platform approved by the University's Information Technology Office.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.

Who will see my information? There will be no information in research reports that will make it possible to identify you. Research recordings will solely be used for the research project. The recordings will be stored securely, and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

You have the right to access the research data that has been collected about you as a part of this research. However, you may not access this information until the entire research has finished and you consent to this temporary restriction.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any questions that you do not want to and can stop participating at any time.

Will my identity be anonymous or confidential? Your name will not be retained or linked with your responses unless you agree to be identified. **Please check all of the options that you agree to:**

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I agree for data records to include my identifiable information. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to be quoted directly, without the use of my name. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to have my name reported with quoted material. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree for my research to be archived for scholarly and public access. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Data collected online or by a device and transmitted electronically:

You will be asked to participate in a zoom interview as part of this research. The organization (Zoom) hosting the data collection platform has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. There is a risk that the external organization, which is not part of the research team, may gain access to or retain your data or your IP address which could be used to re-identify you. No assurance can be made about their use of the data you provide for purposes other than this research.

Audio or video recorded data collection:

There is a risk of accidental data release if we collect your data using audio and video recordings. If this occurred, your identity and the statements you made could become known to people who are not on the research team. To minimize this risk, the researchers will transfer data to, and store your data on, a secure platform approved by the University's Information Technology Office.

What will happen to my data in the future?

After removing all identifiers, we might share your data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional consent from you.

Audio Recording of Research Activities To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty.

Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Video Recording of Research Activities To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on a video recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording.

Please select one of the following options:

I consent to video recording. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will I be contacted again? The researcher might contact you to gather additional data or recruit you for new research.

I give my permission for the researcher to contact me in the future. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Who do I contact with questions, concerns, or complaints? If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at

Moses Munyao, (Student researcher), moses.muendo.munyao-1@ou.edu, 405-325-3921

Dr. June Abbas (Faculty advisor), jmabbas@ou.edu, 405-325-3921

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as



a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

By providing information to me, you are agreeing to be a research participant.



APPENDIX 3: Letter of cultural appropriateness

University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus
Office of Human Research Participant Protection

Letter of Cultural Appropriateness

Institutional Organization: University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus, through the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (OU)

Federalwide Assurance (FWA): 00003191

Name of Principal OU Lead Investigator: Moses Muniyo

Name of Person Providing the Review of Cultural Appropriateness: Dr Arnold Mwanuzi

Affiliation and Credentials of Person Providing Review: Aga Khan University, PhD, MLIS, MSc

Specify Research Covered by this Agreement:

- (1) The Investigator acknowledges and agrees to cooperate in the IRB's responsibility for initial and continuing review, record keeping, reporting, and certification for the research. The Investigator will provide all information requested by the IRB in a timely fashion.
- (2) The Investigator understands and hereby accepts the responsibility to comply with the standards and requirements stipulated in the above documents and to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research conducted under this Agreement.
- (3) The Investigator acknowledges that he is primarily responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of each research subject, and that the subject's rights and welfare must take precedence over the goals and requirements of the research.
- (4) The Investigator will comply with all other applicable federal, international, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies that may provide additional protection for human subjects participating in research conducted under this agreement.

Country Where the Research is Being Conducted: Kenya

- (1) I have advanced training in the conduct of human subjects' research, have completed human subjects' research training, and have conducted human subjects research similar to what the OU Researcher is proposing.
- (2) I attest that I am familiar with and have conducted research in the country where the study is being conducted.
- (3) I have reviewed the research design that has been submitted to the OU IRB and have reviewed the consent document(s) that will be used for the above referenced study for cultural appropriateness.
- (4) I confirm that the study is designed within the bounds of social norms of the country where the research will be conducted, and that there are no legally mandated reporting requirements.



Signature

22-08-2023

IRB NO. 16222
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 09/05/2023



APPENDIX 4: Graduate student as principal investigator

University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus
Office of Human Research Participant Protection
Graduate Student as Principal Investigator

Title of the IRB Submission: Exploring Intellectual Freedom and Collection Development Policies in School Libraries: Perspectives from US and Kenya.

Name of the Graduate Student who is the Principal Investigator: Moses Munyao

Graduate Student's Degree Program: Masters ☒ Doctoral

Name of the Faculty Advisor overseeing the research: Dr. June Abbas

Submitting this document confirms that the graduate student is qualified to conduct independent research based on the following credentials. Check all that apply:

- ☒ has completed a graduate research methods course
- ☒ has completed the training in Responsible Conduct of Research
- ☒ has experience as an independent or closely supervised research team member.
Describe below and include the name of the researcher who supervised your activities.

I have gained experience through research undertaken for different classes and through membership in research projects undertaken by my supervisor Dr. Abbas

Other—describe below

On this date 7/19/2023, the graduate student and faculty advisor have reviewed and discussed the IRB submissions materials and have determined that the scope, anticipated risks and benefits, and methodology are appropriate for this research.

Please indicate which documents were reviewed by the graduate student with the faculty advisor. Check all that apply:

- ☒ Online IRB Application
- ☒ Recruitment Document(s)
- ☒ Consent Document(s)
- ☐ Debrief Document (if applicable)
- ☒ Data Collection Document(s)
- ☐ Referral List for Studies with Psychological Risks (if applicable)
- ☒ Student as Principal Investigator Form

Revised November 2021



IRB NUMBER: 16222
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 09/05/2023

GRADUATE STUDENT'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as a student principal investigator on this application, I assure that:

If I am using IRB-provided document templates, I have checked the IRB website to ensure that I am using the most up-to-date document templates.

I have met with my faculty advisor, discussed the research design and the IRB submission documents, and have received their permission to submit this application to the IRB.

I will meet with my faculty advisor regularly to monitor study progress.

I will monitor the data collection process to assure that I do not over-enroll participants and that the compensation is paid appropriately (if applicable).

I will promptly report unanticipated problems or protocol deviations to my faculty advisor and the OU-NC IRB. I will also adhere to all requirements for submitting protocol deviations, modifications, continuing review, and study closures.

I will work with the OU-NC IRB to close the study or change my researcher status once the research is complete or I leave the university, whichever comes first.

Student PI Signature <i>Mosaa Munyao</i>	Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 07/19/2023
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FACULTY SPONSOR'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as sponsor on this research application, I certify that the graduate student is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this study following the research protocol. Additionally,

I have met with the graduate student, discussed the research design and the IRB submission documents, and have given them permission to submit this application to the IRB.

I will meet with this graduate student regularly to monitor study progress.

I will oversee the data collection process to assure that the graduate student does not over-enroll participants and that the compensation is paid appropriately (if applicable).

I will make sure the graduate student promptly reports unanticipated problems and protocol deviations and adheres to all requirements for submitting protocol deviations, modifications, and continuing reviews.

If I am unavailable, e.g., sabbatical leave, vacation, or resignation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the OU-NC IRB of such changes.

If the graduate student leaves the university, I will work with the OU-NC IRB to close the study or change my researcher status to continue data collection or analysis.

Faculty Sponsor Signature <i>Jane Abbas</i>	Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 7/20/2023	 IRB NUMBER: 16222 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 09/05/2023
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APPENDIX 5: Interview Questions

Interview Guide

Research Questions

1. What is the understanding of intellectual freedom among school librarians and does their worldview affect their interpretation of intellectual freedom?
2. How does the role of advocacy among school librarians' impact and influence intellectual freedom and access to materials?
3. With the existing laws and policies on censorship, in what ways are school librarians ensuring that students' intellectual freedom is protected?
4. In what innovative ways can school library collection development policies be formulated or revised to promote intellectual freedom.

Introduction

My name is Moses Munyao, a doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma and I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation which focuses on intellectual freedom and collection development policies within school libraries as outlined in the recruitment template that you received. Thank you for agreeing to be part of the research. I am going to ask you a few questions and if you don't feel comfortable about any of the questions at any time of the interview, you can skip the question. I will start off with some demographic information questions.

What is your gender?

What is your race?

How many years of library experience do you have?

If you don't mind, what is your age?

Intellectual freedom

What is your understanding/definition of the concept of intellectual freedom?

What factors influence your understanding of intellectual freedom?

What barriers do you encounter when providing access to diverse resources in the school library?

How do you create awareness among students on their rights regarding intellectual freedom?

Advocacy

What strategies do you use to advocate for the access to diverse resources in your school library?

What approaches do you have in place or use to deal with book challenges and parental concerns on certain library resources in your school library?



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How do you assess the effectiveness of the approaches you use when dealing with book challenges?

Laws and policies

What are your views on the existing laws and policies on censorship either at the country, district or school level?

What are some laws and policies regarding intellectual freedom that have impacted your work as a school librarian?

What is your level of involvement in the process of formulating laws and policies on intellectual freedom either at the national, district or school level?

How do you create a balance between promoting intellectual freedom while adhering to the existing laws and policies regarding intellectual freedom?

Collection development and collection development policies

What criteria do you use in the development of a diverse school library collection?

What recommendations do you have for the creation or revision of school library collection development policies to support intellectual freedom?

Conclusion

Is there anything else you would like to share regarding intellectual freedom, censorship and collection development and its policies in school libraries?

Thank you so much for your participation. I will contact you again to let you see the interview results so that you can validate them.



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APPENDIX 6: Codebook

1. Demographic information

Position/Title

Years of Library Experience

2. Intellectual freedom

Understanding of intellectual freedom

Factors influencing understanding of intellectual freedom

Barriers to providing access to diverse resources

Creating awareness among students on intellectual freedom

3. Book challenges

Experiences

Process for handling book challenges

4. Advocacy for intellectual freedom

5. Laws and Collection Development Policies

Awareness of laws and policies

Effects of laws and policies

Formulation process of laws and collection development policies

6. Recommendations

APPENDIX 7: ALA Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries

Basic Components of a Selection Policy

Library Mission

Support for Intellectual Freedom

Objectives

Responsibility for Selection

Selection Criteria

Acquisitions Procedures

Special Collections

Selecting Controversial Materials

Gifts and Donations

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Policy Revision

Reconsideration

Reconsideration Procedure

Guiding Principles

Statement of Policy

Informal Complaints

Request for Formal Reconsideration

Sample Reconsideration Form

Sample Letter to Complainant

Reconsideration Committees