

The Transformation Of Library Services in Preserving The Culture Of Reading Physical Books through The Integration of New Media

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has changed students' behavior in seeking information, resulting in a decline in the frequency of reading printed books at school. This situation has prompted libraries to innovate their services by integrating new media without eliminating the role of printed books as a means of in-depth learning and literacy. This study aims to develop a substantive theory regarding the transformation of school library services in preserving the culture of reading printed books through the integration of new media. This study employs a qualitative approach using a Grounded Theory design. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, which later evolved into theoretical sampling, and included school principals, librarians, teachers, literacy coordinators, students, and parents. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The results yielded six main categories: changes in information behavior, transformation of library services, strategies for preserving the culture of reading physical books, user satisfaction, supporting and inhibiting factors, and substantive theory. The findings indicate that new media expand access to information and enhance services, while physical books continue to play a key role in developing deep reading skills. The success of libraries is determined by the adaptive, innovative, and user-centered integration of new media.

Keywords: library service transformation, new media, physical book reading culture, school libraries, Grounded Theory, literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the way people acquire, access, and utilize information. Easy access via digital devices, the internet, social media, and e-reading apps has created patterns of information consumption that are increasingly fast, practical, and screen-based. On the one hand, this transformation expands opportunities for lifelong learning; on the other hand, it poses new challenges to the sustainability of the culture of reading physical books, which has long been the foundation for developing deep literacy skills. Libraries, as institutions that provide learning resources, are no longer merely faced with the issue of providing collections; they are also required to maintain a balance between the use of digital media and the preservation of the culture of reading printed books. Therefore, efforts to preserve the culture of reading physical books have become a strategic issue in the development of public literacy, particularly in elementary education settings.

The culture of reading physical books still holds an important position in the learning process because it provides a reading experience that is more in-depth, reflective, and less distracting compared to digital media. Reading comprehension in print media is generally higher than when reading on digital screens, especially for complex texts that require in-depth analysis (Retnasari et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the view that physical books still make a significant contribution to improving comprehensive reading comprehension. Similarly, Mangen, Walgermo, and Brønnick noted that students who read using printed books achieved higher comprehension scores than those who read the same text on a computer (Mangen et al., 2013). These research findings indicate that physical books remain relevant in supporting the quality of the learning process, even as digital technology advances rapidly.

Nevertheless, the increasing use of digital media has led to a shift in reading preferences from physical books toward short, instant digital content. This shift not only changes reading media preferences but also affects how individuals process information. Wolf (2018) explains that the habit of speed reading via digital media has the potential to reduce deep reading ability that is, the ability to think critically, reflectively, and analytically, as well as to establish connections between ideas within a text. This finding aligns with research (Breining et al., 2019) showing that print media offers a moderate advantage in reading comprehension compared to digital media. Thus, changes in reading preferences are not only related to changes in media but also impact the quality of students' thinking processes and literacy skills.

The decline in interest in reading physical books also contributes to the rise of a culture of superficial reading (surface reading) that is, the tendency to read quickly without deep reflection. This trend has the potential to diminish students' critical thinking skills, their ability to evaluate information, and their attention span. Baron (2021) explains that digital readers tend to skim information rather than read sequentially, resulting in a reduced ability to understand argumentative structures. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by heavy exposure to social media, which encourages the consumption of brief and fragmented information. Therefore, strengthening the culture of reading physical books is a key strategy for maintaining the deep literacy skills required in the 21st century.

Various studies indicate that reviving interest in reading physical books requires an integrative strategy involving multiple stakeholders. School libraries must do more than simply provide print collections; they need to develop innovative information services through literacy programs, group reading activities, book clubs, storytelling, reading corners, collection promotions, and integration digital media as a means of promoting physical books. Krashen's (2004) research indicates that access to a diverse reading collection is a key factor in fostering voluntary reading habits. Furthermore, Krashen argues that teachers' involvement as reading role models and the creation of a reading community at school can significantly boost students' motivation to read. This strategy suggests that digital media should not be positioned as a substitute for physical books, but rather as a supporting tool to strengthen a culture of reading (Krashen, 2004).

However, efforts to preserve the existence of physical books still face various complex challenges. These challenges include shifting preferences among the digital generation, budget constraints for acquiring print collections, the growing dominance of digital platforms, low library visit rates, and the rise of a culture of instant information consumption. Additionally, some libraries still face difficulties in integrating conventional services with digital innovations, leading to a decline in user interest in physical books. These conditions indicate that the success of preserving the culture of reading physical books depends not only on the availability of collections but is also influenced by the quality of library services, literacy promotion strategies, school policy support, teacher involvement, and family participation in fostering reading habits from an early age.

Based on this discussion, it is clear that digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for the sustainability of the culture of reading physical books. Previous studies have primarily compared the effectiveness of print and digital media on reading ability, while research integrating library service strategies with efforts to preserve the culture of reading physical books amid the development of digital media remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze library strategies for preserving the culture of reading physical books as an effort to strengthen deep literacy among students in the digital age. The research findings are expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of library services while also serving as a foundation for formulating school literacy policies capable of integrating digital innovations without undermining the strategic value of physical books in the learning process.

Theory of Reading Interest

An interest in reading is one of the psychological aspects that plays a crucial role in shaping a person's reading habits. From an educational perspective, an interest in reading is understood as an affective tendency that motivates individuals to voluntarily engage in reading activities due to a sense of enjoyment, a need, and an interest in reading materials. Reading interest does not arise spontaneously but develops through the interaction between internal factors such as motivation, curiosity, and reading ability and external factors, including the family environment, school, libraries, and the availability of engaging reading materials.

Theoretically, Guthrie and Wigfield explain that reading interest is part of reading engagement theory that is, the reader's active engagement, which is influenced by intrinsic motivation, reading strategies, social interaction, and the literacy environment (Guthrie et al., 2012). The higher a student's intrinsic motivation, the greater their tendency to read voluntarily, thereby increasing reading frequency and leading to improved literacy skills. This concept positions reading interest not only as an affective factor but also as a predictor of lifelong learning success.

This theory is supported by Wigfield and Guthrie, who found that reading motivation has a positive relationship with reading intensity and the breadth of reading materials chosen by

children. Students with high reading motivation tend to read more frequently, choose a wider variety of reading materials, and achieve better comprehension compared to students with low reading motivation (Wigfield et al., 2016).

From the perspective of interest development, Hidi and Renninger proposed the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development, which explains that interest develops through four stages: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest, and well-developed individual interest. For elementary school children, teachers and librarians play a crucial role in fostering situational interest by providing an enjoyable reading environment, age-appropriate collections, storytelling sessions, and other literacy activities. As positive reading experiences accumulate, situational interest can evolve into a more permanent form of individual interest.

Recent research on Indonesian elementary school students shows that reading interest is positively correlated with reading literacy skills. The higher a student's reading interest, the higher their language literacy skills (Dewani et al., 2024). These findings indicate that fostering reading interest is a key strategy for improving students' literacy.

Furthermore, Ama and Widyana demonstrated that reading self-concept has a very strong relationship with reading interest among elementary school students (Ama S Widyana, 2021). The more positive a child's perception of their reading ability, the higher their motivation to engage in independent reading activities. Therefore, fostering reading interest requires both a psychological approach and the provision of a supportive literacy environment.

Theory of Information Behavior in Elementary School Children

Information behavior refers to all activities an individual engages in to identify information needs, search for, select, evaluate, use, and share information to achieve specific goals. In the context of elementary education, children's information behavior develops alongside the development of their cognitive abilities, learning experiences, and the available literacy environment.

One of the most widely used theories in the study of information behavior is the Information Search Process (ISP) developed by Carol C. Kuhlthau. This model explains that information seeking is a constructive process that unfolds through six stages: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. At each stage, individuals experience simultaneous changes in cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Elementary school students generally experience uncertainty in the early stages of information seeking but gradually gain confidence after finding appropriate information sources (Kuhlthau, 1995).

Kuhlthau further explains that the school library functions as a learning environment that helps students build knowledge through the information-seeking process. Teachers and librarians not only provide information sources but also guide students in formulating their information needs, evaluating reading materials, and developing critical thinking skills throughout the information-seeking process (Kuhlthau, 1995).

From the perspective of modern information behavior, Wilson argues that information behavior is influenced by information needs, individual characteristics, the social environment, and barriers to obtaining information. For elementary school students, information behavior is influenced not only by reading ability but also by support from teachers, parents, the school library, and access to both digital and print information sources. Thus, the success of literacy learning is greatly influenced by the quality of the available information environment.

Reading interest serves as the foundation of students' information behavior. This study integrates the theories of Reading Engagement, the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development, and the Information Search Process, thereby demonstrating that reading motivation, the literacy environment, and information-searching skills mutually influence one another in shaping a reading culture.

The Concept of the School Library as a Modern Learning Center

Advances in information technology have shifted the paradigm of the school library from merely a repository of collections to a learning center that supports active, collaborative, and literacy-based learning. The concept of a modern library is no longer focused solely on book management but on providing a learning ecosystem that integrates print and digital information sources, information technology, collaborative spaces, and literacy services. This transformation aligns with the paradigm shift in 21st-century education, which positions students as active agents in constructing knowledge through exploration, collaboration, and problem-solving.

From a constructivist perspective, the school library is a learning environment that enables students to construct knowledge through interaction with various information sources. This concept has since evolved into the "learning commons" a library model that integrates physical spaces, digital technology, information services, and collaborative activities into a unified learning process. Holmgren (2010) explains that the learning commons represents a shift in the library's function from an information provider to a facilitator of student-centered learning. In this model, the design of the space, services, and technology is developed based on learning principles to enhance students' engagement in the learning process (Holmgren, 2010).

This concept is reinforced by Hussong-Christian, Rempel, and Deitering (2010), who state that modern libraries must do more than simply provide a dedicated learning commons space; rather, the entire library must be designed as a flexible, collaborative, and adaptive learning environment that meets users' needs. According to them, libraries must be spaces that foster creativity, discussion, research, independent learning, and interdisciplinary collaboration so that learning experiences can occur naturally in every part of the library (Hussong-Christian et al., 2010).

In the context of school libraries, the concept of a "learning commons" has broader relevance than that of a conventional library. Modern school libraries not only provide print

and digital collections but also function as literacy centers, innovation hubs, collaboration spaces, learning laboratories, and venues for developing 21st-century skills. An effective school library environment is a dynamic learning space that connects students, teachers, librarians, technology, and information sources within a mutually supportive learning system. Therefore, the quality of a library is not measured solely by the size of its collection but by its ability to create meaningful learning experiences for students. (Schultz-Jones et al., 2021)

Changes in the library's functions have also been influenced by the emergence of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) concept. In this approach, the library is viewed as a learning resource center that provides various types of information in a range of formats, both print and digital. Library services are no longer limited to book lending but include reference services, information literacy, training in the use of digital resources, basic research assistance, and the development of critical thinking skills. This transformation demonstrates that modern libraries play an increasingly significant pedagogical role in supporting the achievement of educational goals.

In addition to promoting literacy, modern libraries are also designed as social spaces that support collaborative learning. (Lorraine E. Maxwell and Raechel French, 2016) demonstrate that school library designs based on the "learning commons" model increase the frequency of library use and encourage students to collaborate more actively in learning activities. A flexible, comfortable learning environment that supports social interaction has been shown to increase students' engagement in both academic and literacy activities. Thus, the library is no longer viewed as a passive space for individual study but has become a collaborative space that fosters the creation of a learning community within the school.

Although digital transformation has expanded access to electronic information, physical book collections remain a vital element in the concept of a modern school library. An ideal library does not replace printed books with digital technology but rather integrates both in a balanced manner. The hybrid library model allows students to leverage the strengths of each medium according to their learning needs. Physical books continue to play a role in supporting deep reading, while digital resources accelerate access to up-to-date information and broaden students' learning experiences.

Based on these various perspectives, the concept of the school library as a modern learning center can be understood as an institutional transformation that positions the library as the hub of the learning ecosystem. Libraries not only serve to provide collections but also facilitate active learning, develop information literacy, support collaboration, leverage digital technology, and preserve the culture of reading physical books as the foundation for building deep literacy. Thus, the success of a modern school library is largely determined by its ability to integrate collections, technology, services, human resources, and the learning environment into a single system oriented toward students' needs.

The Role of New Media in the Transformation of Library Services

Advances in information and communication technology have given rise to new media that fundamentally transform how libraries provide, manage, and distribute information services. New media encompass various interactive, internet based digital platforms that enable two-way communication, such as social media, websites, mobile apps, digital libraries, cloud computing, and virtual reference services. The key characteristics of new media are interactivity, convergence, user participation, connectivity, and real-time information dissemination. Consequently, libraries are no longer viewed merely as institutions that house collections but as providers of information services that adapt to changes in user behavior.

The concept of transforming library services through new media is rooted in the Library 2.0 paradigm an approach that positions users as active partners in the creation, utilization, and evaluation of library services. In this paradigm, library services are developed collaboratively through the use of web-based technologies, social media, and digital applications, enabling dynamic communication between librarians and patrons. The implementation of the Library 2.0 concept encourages libraries to provide services that are more open, responsive, personalized, and user-centered rather than merely providing access to information collections.

Social media is one of the most widely utilized forms of new media in the transformation of library services. Through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and X, libraries can disseminate service information, promote their collections, organize literacy activities, provide virtual reference services, and build more intensive communication with users. Research by (T A et al., 2025) shows that the integration of social media significantly increases user engagement and expands reach of services, and strengthens the relationship between libraries and the community. The study also identified four stages of social media implementation in libraries: needs analysis, technology adoption, service implementation, and evaluation of user interactions.

The transformation of library services through new media not only changes communication channels but also alters the characteristics of information services. Reference services, which were previously conducted face-to-face, have now evolved into virtual reference services via social media, messaging apps, email, and video conferencing. These changes allow users to access information assistance without being limited by time or place. A case study at the National Library of Indonesia shows that the digitization of reference services via social media can improve service accessibility, speed up librarian responses, and expand the reach of services to the public (Prabowo et al., 2025).

In addition to improving service access, new media also play a role in supporting library promotion strategies. In the Society 5.0 era, library promotion no longer relies on conventional media but leverages interactive, community-based digital media. The results of a Systematic Literature Review conducted by (Cristyne Anggraeni S Laksmi, 2025) indicate that promotional strategies based on social media, websites, email, webinars, user orientation, and various digital literacy programs can increase library visibility while strengthening community engagement in utilizing information services. However, the success of these strategies is

influenced by librarians' digital competencies, content quality, consistency in communication, and institutional support.

In the context of school libraries, new media play a strategic role in creating services that are more appealing to the digital generation. Today's students are a generation accustomed to obtaining information through digital devices; therefore, libraries need to develop services that integrate print collections with electronic information sources. The use of online catalogs (OPAC), digital libraries, social media, educational videos, QR codes, and library apps enables students to access information more quickly while still being guided to utilize physical book collections as learning resources that support deep reading skills.

Nevertheless, various studies indicate that the transformation of services based on new media also faces a number of challenges. These obstacles include limitations in technological infrastructure, low digital literacy among librarians, budget constraints, the lack of established social media management policies, and the digital literacy gap among users. The success of new media implementation is greatly influenced by organizational readiness, the availability of human resources, and continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of digital services (T A et al., 2025).

Thus, new media should not be positioned as a replacement for conventional library services, but rather as a tool for transformation that expands access, improves service quality, and strengthens interactions between libraries and users. Modern library service models tend to move toward the concept of a hybrid library that is, the integration of physical collections, digital information sources, in-person services, and virtual services. This approach enables libraries to maintain their educational function in fostering a culture of reading physical books while simultaneously meeting the information needs of an increasingly digitized society. Therefore, the success of library service transformation depends on the ability to integrate digital technology with the library's core mission as a center for learning, information literacy, and the development of a reading culture.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a Grounded Theory design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to develop a substantive theory regarding the transformation of school library services in preserving the culture of reading physical books through the integration of new media. The study was conducted in elementary school libraries that have implemented digital technology-based library services without eliminating the function of physical book collections as the primary learning resource.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, which was then expanded through theoretical sampling as required by the Grounded Theory analysis. Informants included the school principal, librarian, classroom teachers, the school literacy program coordinator, students, and parents.

Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously throughout the data collection process, following the Grounded Theory procedure developed by Strauss and Corbin, which includes open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Findings

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The analysis process yielded six main, interrelated categories that explain the transformation of school library services to preserve the culture of reading physical books in the digital age.

a. Shifts in Students' Information Behavior

Interview results indicate that nearly all students use smartphones but do not yet rely on them as a primary source of information when searching for academic materials. Nevertheless, students understand that information can be obtained through search engines, social media, and educational videos. Physical books are still used, typically under the guidance of teachers or librarians.

Observations show that students tend to use the library to access information sources only when instructed to do so by a teacher. This phenomenon indicates a shift in information-seeking behavior from seeking information based on need rather than internal motivation.

This shift has affected the frequency of library visits. Visits are no longer dominated by reading activities but are more often undertaken to work on group assignments or to utilize study facilities.

b. Transformation of Library Services Based on New Media

School libraries have responded to these changes by developing various digital services. Social media is used to promote new collections, share information about literacy activities, and provide book recommendations to students.

In addition, libraries have begun to provide online catalogs, app-based borrowing, QR codes on collection items, literacy videos, and consultation services via digital communication platforms. This transformation has improved access to information without eliminating print collections as the primary learning resource.

c. Strategies for Preserving the Culture of Reading Physical Books

Data shows that libraries are implementing various strategies to preserve the culture of reading physical books, including: (1) a fifteen-minute reading program before class; (2) monthly reading challenges; (3) classroom reading corners; (4) book review contests; (5) storytelling; (6) book recommendations via social media; (7) collaboration between librarians and teachers in literacy activities.

These strategies demonstrate that digital media are used as a promotional tool, while physical books remain the primary medium for reading activities.

d. User Satisfaction with Library Services

Most students expressed satisfaction with the changes to library services because access to information has become faster and the collection is easier to find. Teachers noted that digital services support the learning process, while librarians pointed out that the use of social media enhances communication with students.

Nevertheless, some informants highlighted the need to increase the number of new additions to the collection, improve internet connectivity, and provide digital literacy training for librarians.

e. Supporting and Hindering Factors

Factors supporting the transformation of services include: (1) support from the school principal; (2) librarian competence; (3) school literacy programs; (4) teacher involvement; (5) availability of information technology.

Conversely, barriers include: (1) budget constraints; (2) print collections that are not regularly updated; (3) low digital literacy among some teachers; (4) the predominant use of social media for entertainment.

f. Substantive Theory

The selective coding stage yielded one core category from the study on the Integration of New Media as an Adaptive Strategy for School Libraries in Preserving the Culture of Reading Physical Books.

The resulting substantive theory explains that the success of school libraries in preserving the culture of reading physical books is not determined by the size of the collection, but by the ability to integrate new media into all library services, thereby creating a learning experience that is engaging, easily accessible, and continues to encourage students to read printed books in depth.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the transformation of library services occurs in response to changes in students' information behavior. Elementary school students are more accustomed to obtaining information through digital media than through print collections. This aligns with Kuhlthau's concept of information behavior, which posits that the information-seeking process evolves in response to changes in the learning environment and technology. These changes do not eliminate the need for libraries but rather alter the form of services users expect.

This study found that new media serve as a supplement, not a replacement, for library services. Social media, online catalogs, literacy videos, and digital services enhance information accessibility while expanding communication between libraries and users. These results reinforce the concept of the modern library as a "learning commons" that integrates learning spaces, technology, and information sources into a single learning ecosystem.

Other findings indicate that the culture of reading physical books can still be sustained if libraries are able to develop creative literacy programs. The use of digital media as a promotional tool actually increases students' interest in print collections. Thus, digital transformation does not lead to the loss of reading culture but rather changes libraries' strategies for fostering reading habits.

User satisfaction is influenced by service quality, ease of access to information, librarian competence, and the comfort of the library environment. These results support the SERVQUAL model, which identifies service quality as the primary determinant of library user satisfaction.

The research findings also indicate that reading physical books still provides a more in-depth learning experience compared to reading via digital media. Students find it easier to understand the content of lengthy texts when using printed books, whereas digital media is more frequently used for quick information searches. These findings align with the results of a meta-analysis (Capellán-Martín et al., 2025), which showed that print media is more effective in supporting reading comprehension and deep reading.

Based on the overall categories identified, this study proposes a substantive theory that a successful transformation of school library services is not one that replaces physical books with digital media, but rather one that integrates new media as a means to strengthen access to information, enhance user satisfaction, and revitalize the culture of reading physical books through innovative library services. This model demonstrates that modern school libraries need to function as learning centers that are adaptive to technological developments while maintaining the educational function of printed books in building students' deep literacy.

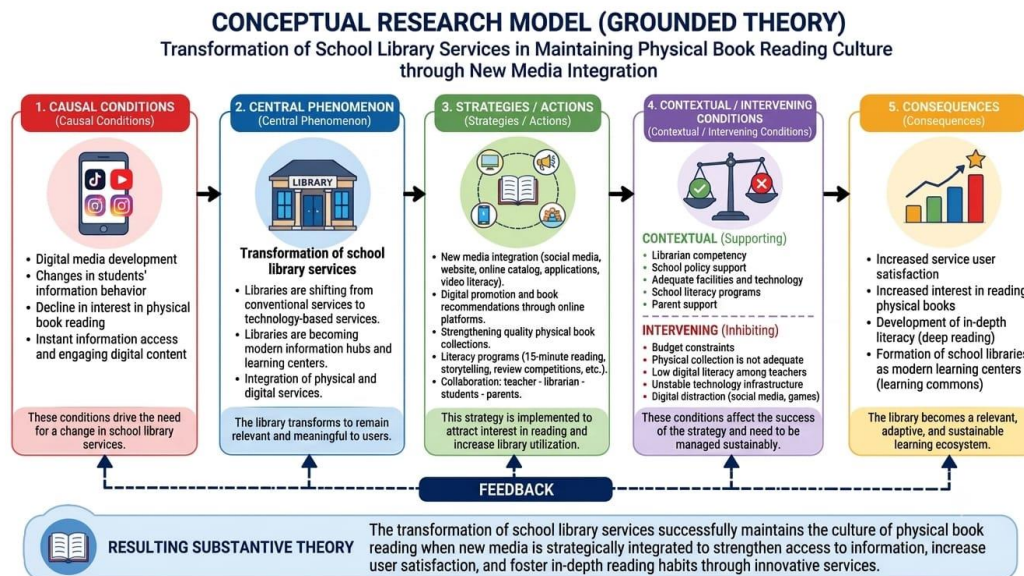


Figure 1. Grounded Theory Model

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the transformation of school library services is a strategic response to changes in students' information behavior, as they increasingly rely on digital media. These changes do not diminish the importance of libraries but demand service innovations capable of integrating digital technology with the library's educational function as a center for literacy.

The research findings confirm that new media do not serve as a substitute for physical books, but rather as tools that expand access to information, improve the quality of communication, and strengthen the promotion of a reading culture. Various innovations such as social media, online catalogs, digital services, literacy videos, and QR codes have been proven to enhance service accessibility without undermining the role of printed books as the primary medium for developing deep reading skills.

The study also found that the success in maintaining a culture of reading physical books is influenced by synergy among school leadership, librarian competence, teacher involvement, parental support, sustainable literacy programs, and the appropriate use of information technology. Conversely, budget constraints, low digital literacy among some educators, suboptimal collection updates, and the dominance of social media for entertainment remain major challenges in the transformation of library services.

Through the Grounded Theory process, this study produced a substantive theory that the integration of new media is an adaptive strategy for school libraries in maintaining a culture of reading physical books. The success of library transformation is not measured solely by the level of digitization, but by its ability to build hybrid library services that integrate print collections, digital services, literacy innovations, and collaboration among the entire school community in fostering a sustainable reading culture.

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