

Teacher's utilization of secondary school libraries in Idah Local Government Area, Kogi State

Omera Johnson O.

Kogi State University, Anyigba.

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ABSTRACT

This study is centered on the utilization of secondary school libraries by teachers and students in Idah Local Government Council of Kogi State. A survey method was adopted for the study with questionnaire constructed, validated and used for the collection of data related to the research questions formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was 182 teachers and library staff from the seven (7) secondary schools and colleges in the Local Government Area. There was no sampling procedure as the population was considered small. Interview and observation was also used to collect data where questionnaire could not be used. Simple percentage and means were used for data presentation and analysis, the researcher in the course of this study found out that the school libraries have limited resources, by way of personnel, library material resources, funding and accommodation and that most of the teachers do not patronize the school libraries despite their claims as to the importance of school libraries.

Keywords: Utilization, school libraries, education, human resources, communication.

E-mail: omera.johnsono@gmail.com. Tel: +2348061562954.

INTRODUCTION

The library is the heart of education because the library is the centre of activity of any educational enterprise. School libraries contribute to the total development of the teachers and students. It enlarges their knowledge and stimulate critical, imaginative and creative facilities. The development of any meaningful educational programme greatly depend on the library. Thus, the quality of the library in terms of the holdings determines the product of any socio economic and political development. Dike (1998), applauding the gradually evolving educational practice which tends to shift emphasis from the teacher to the learner, sees in the school library as a reliable instrument for actualizing this much derived educational reform. The power of the library lies in the resources and through interpretation: the resources can influence, modify, affect and even destroy the socioeconomic, political and physical parameters of the environment (New Standard Encyclopedia, 2005)

Libraries have not enjoyed universally accepted definition. For this reason, library users and scholars have the liberty to define the library based on the use they are able to make of it. The early idea of a library was

that of collection of books containing knowledge and information that must be chained together and preserved for consultation only. Harold's Librarians' Glossary (1995) defines library as collection of books and other library materials kept for reading, studying and consultation. Also, the Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science (2003) defines the library as an organization or a system designed to preserve and facilitate the use of graphic records.

The library is mass communication agency just as the galleries, museums and archives, is also a mass media, the library is an institution of learning that is intimately linked to the environment. It is the only institution that shares, contributes and functions as a developmental process and historical documents. Therefore, a library can be defined as an organized collection of books and other materials used for study, research and recreation.

According to Achebe (2008) library can be defined in terms of the nature of book or non-book production. For example, a library is also a collection or set of books, records other items, all produced in the same style or about the same subject e.g. the penguin, Shakespeare

library.

Problem statement

The place of school libraries in the overall development of Secondary School education cannot be over emphasized because as a resource centre, it is expected to acquire and organized print and non-print materials suitable for the needs of the users and more so, as a learning laboratory. It is expected to provide materials to support teaching and encourage students to find out things for themselves. In the past, government has sunk large sum of money into the provision of library material resources for both teachers and students of the state.

Regrettably, observation indicates that government efforts have not led to effective utilization of school libraries by teachers of Idah LGA. If the teachers do not use the library, it will be difficult for them to prepare their lesson notes very well which affect their teaching and productivity generally. Moreover, the situation will have a cycling effect on the quality of students as the teachers will be breeding half-backed graduates from the schools. The consequence of this sad development could be that these young school leavers will be ill-equipped and will not be able to face their future academic challenges. Beyond this, no research has really been undertaken on teachers' utilization of the school library for teaching and learning in the local government is. In view of this, the researcher decided to embark on this study to find out specifically the use made of school libraries by secondary teachers in Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The early concept of library was that of store house of books and librarians being custodians of them. But this concept has changed over time with changing trends in educational reform to assume its present status to match with the present realities. Correa (1997) rates the school library as an information centre where teachers and students come into contact with the world that is where they acquire knowledge, which forms the basis for all further learning. The concept is widened further when the library as information centre is clearly related either in organization or also in location to the spaces allotted to the schools other resource activities – reprographic, graphic audio visual for use in the library complex and throughout the school in this way, the other resources or media share with books the common purpose of providing information and appealing to the imagination. Morris (2000) views school library as having evolved into school media. It has become an integral part of the school, and the librarian as once the keeper of books and warehouse supervisor has become an instrumental consultant, curriculum developer and a teacher, viewed

as a media centre.

Its human and physical resources are uniquely equipped to build on the interest and enthusiasm of the learner and stimulate new interest and new enthusiasm. That we use the focus changed from teaching to learning and we see the joy that comes to students with the shift. That is undoubtedly one of the very best places if not the best for learning how to learn - with the availability of the great variety of materials and the assistance of the librarians/teacher. That has available resources to truly individualize instructions.

With the rich exciting resources that have an excellent opportunity to help in young people a genuine love for learning, which can and should become lifelong. That has a perfect place for a child to read- and reading is the most important skill to be developed in secondary school. A quality school library must have three quality library resources which include:

- (a) Personnel: Adequate in numbers with essential knowledge and professional competencies.
- (b) Materials: Rich and varied and many to meet individual needs, interests and activities.
- (c) Facilities: Which are functional? Readily accessible and which are flexible and expandable to meet the increasing role of the school library.

According to Dike (2000), school library is defined as the learning laboratory for excellences where teachers and students find the world of knowledge and interact directly with the resources, acquire information literacy and develop research skills for lifelong learning. It is a workshop for carrying out projects on individual or small group assignments. It leads itself to active and participatory methods, enquiry, team work and problem solving. As a learning laboratory, the school library should be buzzing with activity, not silent as a tomb. The school library is also a place for sharing and creating a gallery for art work, an opportunity for relaxation, a comfortable pleasant environment with information, seating quiet atmosphere for pleasurable reading but also with occasion for socialization and creative expression.

According to Ezenwa (1993), the school library is called a media centre, resource centre, or instructional material centre to reflect to the expanded role of the school library in education. It may be call also a learning resource centre or media centre with somebody in charge who may call director, media specialist or librarian. The person in charge should be called librarian because the word has a connotation to books, the sound of poetry, culture and beauty of knowledge and understanding. The content of each school library determines its nature, hence the name book library, film library, picture library, artifact library, slide and film strips library, record library etc. She maintains that the person in charge, the teacher and adviser, the person who works with students and teacher still a librarian.

Alemna (1988), state that school libraries contribute to the total development of the students and teachers and enlarge their knowledge and stimulate their imaginative, critical and creative facilities. He also points out the main purpose of the modern school library is to support the educational aims of the school, supplement students 'classroom or broaden their horizons. Library use study as an aspect of user's studies is vital aid for effective planning and management in academic libraries. Amkpa (2000) in his evaluative studies on the library use have always concentrated on students' use of academic libraries (Amkpa, 2000; Ikokoh, 1999; McCarthy, 1995; Fawowe, 1989; Unomah, 1988).

Though students are an important part of the set up of academic institutions and perhaps the major users of academic library facilities, nevertheless, the staff of academic institutions, particularly the academic staff also uses the library.

Significance of the study

The study will be undoubtedly of immense help to a good number of local government areas in the states. This is because it encourages them to develop and equip libraries in secondary schools having seen its needs. Also, the states as well as the local government education authorities in the country will benefit from innovative ideas applied for effective and efficient library services in the schools. The teacher in the local government areas, the state and the secondary schools will have a better orientation toward the use of libraries. This study will help the teachers to demand for the improvement of the school libraries so that teachers and students can benefit from it. It will also enhance teachers' better attitude towards utilization of school library and the teachers job will be made much easier if they consult the materials in the library and the students will perform better in school.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the use of libraries by secondary school teachers in Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State. Specifically, the study intend to:

1. Identify the resources available for use in school libraries in Idah Local Government Area.
2. Find out teachers benefit from the use of school libraries?
3. Ascertain the use made of school libraries by secondary school?

Research questions

The following questions were formulated from the

problem statement:

1. What type of resources (man, materials and money) are available in the secondary school Libraries in Idah Local Government Area?
2. What are the benefits to be derived by teachers in using the school library?
3. To what extent do the teachers in Idah L. G. A. make use of the resources in the school library?

Respondent of the study

The scope of this study is limited to seven secondary schools and colleges in Idah L. G. A. of Kogi state. The seven secondary schools are: Government Girl's Secondary School, Government Day Secondary School, Idah Secondary Commercial College, Dickson Memorial College; others are Ogah Memorial Grammar School, St Peter's College and Holy Rosary College. It is also limited to teacher's utilization of secondary school libraries as it concern secondary schools teachers of Kogi State.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents in all the schools. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents through the school principals. The respondents were given two days to complete and return the questionnaire to the principal of their schools. After the stipulated days, the researcher visited the school principals to collect the questionnaires. This approach was adopted in order to enhance the safety and complete return of the questionnaires. Oral interview was also conducted by the researcher on the library staff in the various schools. The researcher also used the period of distribution and collection of questionnaire to personally visit the school libraries to observe for him the activities, collection and condition of school libraries. This tool was used to collect information face to face where questionnaire could not be used. The researcher analyzed the data using frequency tables and mean.

RESULTS

The results in Table 1 show that schools under investigation have only two (2) teacher librarians on the staff list. Other library staffs as can be seen from Table 1 above are library assistants; which formed the major part of the libraries with 77.7%. The result shows that other categories of library staff were absent except student helpers that are available in school libraries with 100%.

Table 2 shows that the available resources include books, pictures, charts, graphs and maps others are motion pictures and related projectors, display or chalkboard, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, dictionary, encyclopedia, globes and atlas. On the other hand, slides, films, filmstrips, transparencies, record and record players, television, audio-tapes cassettes, and cassette recorders are not available in the school libraries.

Table 1. Available human resources in school library.

S/N	Available human resources	F	%
1	School librarian	-	-
2	Teacher librarian	2	22.2
3	Library officers	-	-
4	Library assistants	7	77.8
5	Library attendants	-	-
6	Clerical staff	-	-
7	Typist	-	-
8	Cleaners	-	-
9	Student keeper/library prefect	7	100
10	Security	-	-

Table 2. Available material resource in school library.

S/No	Available materials resources	Available	Not available
1	Relevant books	Yes	
2	Pictures, charts, graphs and maps	Yes	
3	Slides, films filmstrips and transparencies		Yes
4	Motion picture and related projection equipment	Yes	
5	Display or chalkboard	Yes	
6	Magazine, pamphlets and newspapers	Yes	
7	Record and record players		Yes
8	T V		Yes
9	T V and radio lesson		Yes
10	Tapes, cassette and cassette recorder		Yes
11	Computer assisted in structural materials		Yes
12	Dictionaries, encyclopedia, globes and atlas	Yes	

Table 3. How do teachers benefit from the use of school libraries?

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	The school library help to get information	148	21	4	-	3.83
2	Aids the execution of school programmes	103	36	77	7	3.36
3	Provides services that are meaningful towards the growth and development of individual teachers	61	68	36	8	3.05
4	Helps in preparation of teaching notes	136	15	19	33	3.64
5	Gives you an opportunity to study alone	96	38	25	10	3.23
6	Assists in your research work	61	68	36	8	3.05
7	Provide for leisure purposes and curriculum development	106	35	23	9	3.38

SA = strongly agree, A = agree, D = disagrees, SD = strongly disagree.

In Table 3, the overall percentage of teachers' responses to the items indicates that teachers rate the importance of library high. This is base on the various mean responses to items in Table 3. The high positive responses in general shows that teachers know the importance of school libraries but unfortunately are not using the library effectively as suppose base on their negative responses to the school libraries on other

tables.

How effectively are the teachers making use of available resources in the secondary school libraries?

In Table 4, the result of the data analyzed shows that teachers accept that they do not patronize the school library. The six questions on teachers' use of available resources in the school library reveal that the means is below the cut-off point of 2.50. The lower responses in

Table 4. Frequency of using the school libraries by teachers.

S/No	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Means
1	How often do you read in the library?	100	153	164	15	2.49
2	How frequently do you borrow books and other materials from the library?	68	126	146	41	2.20
3	How many times do you take your class to the school library?	48	69	202	17	2.05
4	How often do you utilize library materials in the class?	36	45	112	93	1.65
5	How regular do you read in the library for recreation?	24	36	78	116	1.4
6	How frequently do you go to the school library to update your knowledge?	60	69	156	67	2.03

Table 5. Teachers' opinion on books and opening hours.

S/No	Item	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	I do not know	Mean
1	What is opinion on the availability of books and other library resources in your library?	20	63	202	16	1.91
2	What is your opinion on library opening hours?	384	102	50	18	3.20

general, negate the idea of effective use of library resources by teachers in Idah LGA of Kogi State. From Table 4, it can be seen that most teachers in the LGA do not patronize the school library either for leisure or update their knowledge. This is confirmed by the mean that is less than 2.50 accepted as being high enough to be satisfactory variable.

From Table 5, both the teachers and the students are not satisfied with the stock and other library resources in school libraries in Idah LGA on the other hand they are satisfied with the library hours in all the schools.

DISCUSSION

School libraries as an aspect of education which provides learning resources and good environment that are flexible, dynamic and also being capable of responding to a wide variety of needs and learning styles, has not created the deserved impacts in many secondary schools in Idah Local Government Area.

Findings were identified making it obviously necessary to relate or consider their implications on the staff and students of these schools.

The situation where all the library staffs are trained revealed among other things, that the provision in the National Policy on Education (1998) that librarians and library assistants be trained for school libraries and other institutions, is yet to be implemented in Idah LGA. State Ministry of Education, school administration and authorities should cooperate to purchase and send instructional materials current and relevant textbooks that

are adequate in quantity and quality to school libraries. Oversight in this will crunch our educational system as this is the central reference point and the heart of any educational system. Success and good performance in schools depend greatly on the school libraries

Conclusion

It is clear from Table 1 that professionals are not employed in most of the schools under this study; that can in effect have advert effect on the library usage by teachers and students of these schools because the library require professional knowledge in terms of acquisition, processing and organization. Obi (1977) reiterates that the teacher librarian should be senior member of the teaching staff actively involved in the classroom but who has received additional training in librarianship. A school teacher librarian without interest and love for books, enthusiasm for the library will transmitted to the students and teachers negative ill feeling towards the use of library, and these will sadly bring below the expectation of the teachers and students in the school programme, in the same way beautiful classrooms and excellent textbooks are lifeless without capable teachers and qualify librarians.

Aguolu and Agoulu (2002) opined that no aspect of school library management is as critical to the development of school libraries as the employment of appropriate personnel to promote teaching and learning activities in the school. They noted that the work in a school library requires staff of various categories and

levels of education and training. These include qualified librarians, teacher librarians, library officers, library assistants, clerical staff and student helper or library prefects with the cooperative efforts of other staff such as media specialist technicians and graphic artists to bring efficient service to teachers and students

On the available resources in the library, contrarily to the teachers claim that there are resources in the library, the researchers' visit to libraries revealed that there are no library resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines and display boards were not found most of these libraries, where you can find a few text books, they are all outdated. It was also noted that materials such as slides, films, filmstrips, transparencies, record and record players, TV and Radio lesson, tapes and cassette recorder and computer assisted instrumental materials were totally absent. The absence of these resources may lead to inefficiency in achieving the goals of qualitative education advocated for in Nigeria. Also, the absence of instrumental materials made teachers to teach in abstract and this makes learning difficult for students and teaching difficult for teachers.

Although teachers rated high the need for library in secondary schools based on vital roles played in facilitating teaching, learning and others such as information dissemination, helping teachers to fully bring home their lesson, etc, it see from the responses of teachers, they do not make efficient use of the school library. This negative attitude of teachers toward the use of library can have effect on the students who are always looking their teachers as role model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conditions of school libraries development in secondary schools in Idah LGA as seen in this study are yet to meet the standard of Federal Ministry of Education. Having been starved of funds and qualified personnel to manage school libraries, it becomes impossible for the library to function properly as an integral part of the total educational programme of the school. Teaching and learning in schools under this condition will undoubtedly employ the traditional chalk and talk method. This in fact, affects individual learning differences in learning abilities. There is therefore an urgent need to improve the quality of school libraries in secondary schools in Idah LGA in order to take advantage of modern instructional techniques in education toward quality teaching and learning to our teachers and students.

To facilitate the effective utilization of school library resources, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendation:

1. There should be employment of adequate number of trained staff for school libraries in Idah LGA.
2. Based on my observation during the distribution and collection of questionnaires, the present stock in most of the school libraries is inadequate in terms of quantity and quality. The data supplied below the government recommendation that a school with an enrolment of 500 students or less should have at list have 1,500 titles.
3. The state branch of Nigeria Library Association (NLA) should organize development and training courses for librarians, media specialists to enhance their effectiveness in the running of the school library.
4. The stock of the school library should be good enough and adequate in quantity and quality and varied in resources so as to reflect the school curriculum.

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