

ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN LIBRARY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: THE INSIGHTS

By

Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha, CLN, Ph.D.

Department of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt
Juliet.alex-nmecha@uniport

Mary O. IG-Worlu CLN, Ph.D.

Donald Ekong Library
University of Port Harcourt
mary.ig-worlu@uniport.edu.ng

Abstract

Children are a special breed in the realm of things moreover when it has to do with education Raising children in this 21-century requires extra effort due to technological advancements which have brought about the war of devices like smartphones tablet computers, laptops e-readers, iPods etc. when it comes to reading and learning. The inculcation of reading habit is one aspect of life that must not be swayed and thrown abode because reading is important if a child must grow up to be stable mentally, intellectually, fit, sound in interactivity and contribute meaningfully in his or her society. This paper discussed an overview of children's libraries making use of the literature research method. The paper further identified some objectives and research questions that guided the work. Brief literature was written on the major concepts which the research questions put through some challenges possible solutions were identified and data were seated.

Key Words: Advocating Children, Academic Library, Advocacy, Children Library, Nigeria

Introduction

In this part of the world, in particular, public libraries from their functions care for children's side of the library maybe because they are located closer to the communities that they serve. This type of library is being funded by the government to ensure an open door for every child to uncounted opportunities to have fun learn discover, and share (Crossley. 2015). There is a need for children to visit libraries from the early stage of their lives. This will enable them to grasp it early enough the real to read and grow with it. The present time, characterized by technological advancement has led to the younger generation finding it difficult to go to the library to study, they may not have had the opportunity of visiting the libraries when they were tender. So, the need to advocate for children's libraries in academic libraries. It is an apt and thoughtful idea since the university is a community also, with lecturers, non-teaching senior and junior staff and others, they all have their children and if their children visit the libraries, it will create a lot of benefits the libraries and the children will learn how to use the library

early enough. Advocating for the children's library to be established in the academic libraries is a just cause.

The right to read and learn is for everyone whether old or young. The foundation of every building the beginning of the beauty of the building. This implies the status of who an adult male or female is Today in our societies as regards what academic Foundation was laid for the future. The children's library is important as it will assist the children to assimilate and inculcate the habit of reading and grow up to love the books as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge as a companion, writing and speaking skills are improved and the enhancement of their memories which will lead to boosting their intelligence.

Building, establishing, and incorporating a children's library in the academic libraries to eve communities inside and around the tertiary institutions is to bring about intellectual, language, social, and educational development of the children. From the encyclopedia of children's libraries, public libraries and their librarians have always focused on promoting the joy of reading and writing as well as fostering other emergent literacy skills of children like how to use language to express ideas thoughts, and feelings and to communicate with others through their readership promotion campaigns. Most countries including Nigeria integrate children's services into their public library systems, countries like India have children's libraries in several university libraries, so while the public libraries strive for the development of children, the academic libraries also need to join in his development in grooming of the children in Nigeria and its environs. According to Abas (2021), children need proper growth through reading for a brighter future and intellectual balance.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to carry out advocacy for the establishment of children's libraries in academic libraries. The specific purpose includes

1. To create awareness through advocacy that academic libraries can as well house children's libraries just like public libraries
2. To explain the meaning and importance of children's libraries
3. To describe what it takes to create a children's library
4. To ascertain whether the children's library needs a trained librarian
5. To state the benefits, possible challenges, and solutions of establishing a children's library

Research Questions

1. How would the use of advocacy is create awareness bring children's libraries to the limelight in academic libraries?
2. What are the meanings and importance of children's libraries?
3. What does it take to establish a children's library in an academic library

4. Does the children's library need a trained librarian?
5. What are the challenges, and solutions of a children's library?

Literature Review

Advocacy

Advocacy is a way of showing strong support for things, ideas, or activities that are important for people to align their support for. People advocate for something when they feel other people do not see the importance or benefits that thing has and so it spoke about showing strong facts about why it must be brought to use, practiced, or implemented. According to Aloysum. Ekanem-Esang and Chinyere (2017) advocacy is a means of public supporting or suggesting an idea, or developing a way of doing something. The authors further described advocacy as the act of pleading, recommending, and arguing in favour of something as regards a cause, idea, or policy. In all of these, they concluded that advocacy leads to sustainability.

Alex-Nmecha and Bassey (2020) advocacy is an activity that brings brightness and upliftment to what a sector, an organization, a profession, or any other business does. The authors pinpointed that it valves an idea of talking up the value of what a group person, or profession stands for. In advocacy, there is no need to fake the information of message that is being passed by the public of responsible authorities. When advocacy is put towards what causes it's pursuing according to Ndlovu (n.d) it leads to promotion of ourselves and our services, respect for the profession, informing our public, getting the message across, etc. In all, advocacy is a means to educate those who want to know, impart on the cause, put the right message across, intervene where things are not done the right way, and take the advocacy ideas, thoughts or programmes to another level. The use of advocacy is a strong strategy to pull this library through if everyone is concerned in the campaign and continuously speaks on the need for a children's library

Methodology

To drive this paper, the Literature research method is employed for this paper. Using literature methodology is to read through, analyze and sort literature to identify the essential attributes of the study.

Children library

Early stage of life is when learning begins and gets stuck into one's memory. Children learn very well when they are exposed to an environment readily stocked with what they want like the library where they see books, magazines, television programmes, storytelling time, and moils extractions for children. Children's library according to Genen, Temiz, and Akbas (2015) is no environment for the advancement of development skills, raising children who have a liking and responsibility for reading with a positive library perception.

The International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) describes the children's library as a hub that equips children with lifelong learning and literacy skills enabling

them to in society. This shows that as big as IFLA as an association they created children's section because they are aware that their library will create The best start in their reading and learning lives and also meet the needs of the children since the library equips them, and encourage them to use the library from an early age to become better users in future.

Children's library is an asset. Exposing the children early to the use of the library is a special gift that will take them to heights in their life endeavours.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt is a major library and cultural center. The major library described the children's library as a place or library that provides educational, recreational, and cultural resources for children aged 6-11. In it are picture book storybooks, nonfictional books, and multimedia materials this great library highlighted some objectives of the children's library as to develop children's reading, research, and creativity skills which they learn through different programmes and activities.

What is the importance of a children's library?

The library is a place for many activities namely research, acquisition of knowledge, Information searching skills, discovering new things, etc.

The children's library when established in the academic libraries will help children to:

- improve their vocabulary which will enable them to use the right words
- love books
- Improve in reading.
- help to shape new ideas
- give children access to media, books, and relate with librarians
- Children are encouraged to become confident and competent people growing up.
- read for free
- enjoy quiet me

What it takes to establish/build a Children Library in Academic Library

Advocating for the establishment building of children's libraries in academic libraries is worth it. There is gain in catching our children young Tucker (2020) stated that now more than ever creating library for our children has become incredibly important. Tucker, therefore, itemized some simple and budget-friendly ways to establish a children's library.

- A good space for establishing a children's library, space is needed. The building, hall, or apartment should be space to accommodate the children and that will be needed to set the library up.
- Furniture napping beds, television, among materials,

- Of course, a library of this magnitude will need gifting. This requires gifts from friends, family members to purchase some acquired books and other materials that they may deem fit.
- Through thrift books also a children library is established, thrift books is a website that gives out large collections of fairly second-hand books
- Trained children librarian(s) and caregiver/minder.

The Children Librarian

The children librarian is trained personnel to run or oversee what happens in the children's library which includes promoting and nurturing the habit of reading, empowering and motivating young people, collaborating with other educators, choosing resources to enhance the library collection and designing, and providing engaging activities that The people develop their creativity, interests, and talents (American Library Association, n.d).

Programmes at Children Libraries

- Celebration of children's day
- Children Reading Competition
- Games Competition
- Storytelling competition/picking out moral lessons from the stories presented
- Quiz contests
- Writing and Reading of Poems, Rhymes, Comic strips, etc
- Drawing

Challenges that may hinder the establishment children's library

The establishment of a children's library in academic library may face some challenges despite the importance it will exhibit when built. The challenges according to Obe (2012) include

- Funds
- Lack of professionals in that area
- New models of delivery
- Changed political landscape Management decisions

Solutions

- From some of these challenges mentioned above, it's obvious that the establishment of the children's library will face some setbacks if not followed strategically. The children library is advocated to be in the academic library, which is a library in tertiary

Institutions therefore, there is a need for the management of the institutions to support in its establishment financially.

- There should be training of staff those willing to specialize in being a children librarian to discharge his/her duties properly

Recommendations

1. Academic libraries should incorporate children's libraries to educate train promote reading among children in tertiary institution communities and outsiders who may want to benefit from the library.
2. The management of the various tertiary institutions should be made to understand and support the establishment of children's libraries.
3. Detailed letters should be written to the alumni, friends of the library, NGA about the importance of the children's library seeking financial support

Conclusion

This paper has dissected the salient reasons for the establishment of children's libraries in academic libraries in Nigeria. The work shared that children's libraries will encourage visitations from schools book talks' storytelling, and enlightening programmes that will provide children with self-education will be drawn. And so constant advocacy about children's libraries through various media can be of huge success in driving this important aspect of learning the quest for children libraries in our academic libraries, need to make the professionals, parents, and guidance proactive so that we are not forced to be reactive on the vital drive like this. Finally, the constant advocacy about children's libraries and the various ways recommended putting this library in place should be enforced to get and catch our children young for a better tomorrow.

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