

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIBRARY USERS IN PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By

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Abstract

Primary and post primary schools the world over can be comfortably tagged 'incomplete' without school librarians that will effectively man their media and audio-visual centres (libraries). The reason is because anomalies that may not be easily seen in a child by his or her teacher can be spotted out by the school librarian. This paper is a discourse that highlights the strengths that can be tapped from school librarians. These strengths include: self-control, transparency, ability to adapt to any condition in the library and also the ability to take initiatives. Can school librarians empathize, manage conflicts, build bonds and work as a team? Libraries are great tools on changing trajectory of how information is created, stored and accessed. This is not limited to pupils without challenges. As a matter of fact, librarians who cater adequately for children or users with special needs will be at the forefront of their career as they will be highly sought for. The role of a school librarian is so awesome that having paramedical skills in psychotherapy and psychology will enhance the quality of the job carried out also comes by school librarians. This is where collective responsibility

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Introduction

The establishment of libraries in every primary and secondary school is very essential. This is reason why the Federal Government does not mince words when it comes to the National Policy on Education (1989) stating categorically the need for the provision of libraries in schools. Daudu (2002) emphasizes that libraries are needed in schools just as laboratories are needed. Libraries are to be run in such a way that children can develop their skills and also be able to use them independently. This is because educational and overall national development starts from the grass root.

School libraries are attached to primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges in order to acquire, organize, store and disseminate materials for the use of teachers and pupils. Resources found in school libraries are meant to meet the teaching needs of the teacher and the learning needs of the students. Books and electronic resources are found in this type of library and manned by school librarians.

Anyawu (2016) states that school libraries are also called instructional materials centres, learning resources centre, media centre, multimedia centre, and audio-visual centre. Any of the names with which the school library is known may not matter as far as it serves the right purpose for which it is established. Obi (2013) opines that some people may want to call school libraries academic libraries but that it should not be because the school libraries are not into research. Obi (2013) also elucidates that school libraries function as:

- Information centres required for school education for which its resources come in different formats.
- Means to improve reading skills and learning habits of pupils.
- Provide skills required to transform information to knowledge.
- Assist to broaden knowledge by reading fiction which forms about 75% of the library's collection.
- Develop habit of reading for pleasure.
- Reading to have cultural awareness.

Ogbonna (2009) clarifies that in school libraries, learning resources such as books and audio-visual materials are systematically collected and organized for the use of students and teachers. He further strengthens that the new educational trends require utilization of non- book resources such as flash cards, slides, filmstrips, films, records and computers in teaching and learning processes.

Anyawu (2016) insists that school media centre is not like the traditional library that acquires materials without emphasis on its use. In this centre, concepts in the curriculum are illustrated through film strips, microform materials, cassettes, CD-ROM and flash drives which facilitate pupils' understanding and learning. The media or audio-visual centres in schools are meant to be an integral part of teaching and learning process of the school.

The 21st century era needs all it can to establish standard and even non-conventional libraries in schools to capture emphasis on the learner today. There is no particular order in which a standard school library can be established, this means that making a higher quality of it in the nearest future is possible as soon as the opportunity comes. It is time every school looked out for what works for its pupils and also go beyond this. Thus, Daudu (2002) emphasizes that the idea of a non-conventional library in every class room will obviously produce better book lovers, better book users and even children that will have better reading skills. School libraries are managed by school librarians and emotional intelligence is needed as a skill for them to be able to manage these libraries effectively.

Emotional Intelligence (Conceptual Clarification) Goleman (2006) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulse and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping, the ability to think, empathize and hope. Okocha (2015) posits that emotional intelligence is the core of personal relationships, to understand the emotions of others and intensions which include: appraisal, expression, regulation of emotion and utilization of emotion in solving problems. Okocha (2015) further postulates that emotional intelligence teaches how to understand and appreciate the feelings and thoughts of others and react to them approximately.

Tom-George (2016) states that Emotional Intelligence serves as a tool provided to interact with and in the society in a positive and emotionally healthy manner. If this is so, primary and secondary school users with disorders must be given their pride of place in the library and it is a core

responsibility of Librarians to ensure that users with disorders are granted their rights to use the library like any other user admitted in the library. Delayed gratification is the key because one who is interested in affecting and changing lives positively will see past an exchange for money and other favours.

Mayer and Salovey as cited by Lindebaum and Cartwright (2010) define emotional intelligence as the 'ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote intellectual growth'.

The 21st century librarian meets various categories of users be it special, academic, public or school library. These library users have peculiar needs. Their challenges may range from slow comprehension precipitated by stunted medical growth to diverse health challenges. Emotional Intelligence skills on the part of a school librarian cannot be overemphasized. Emotional Intelligence is also applicable to;

- Children and young adults with autism.
- Schizophrenic children.
- Traumatic children and young adults (resulting from violence or accidents)
- Assaulted/molested children and young adults.
- Kleptomaniacs.

Autism: In working with some children with autistic challenges, Spoladore (2013) records that some efforts to comprehend autism from a psychoanalytic perspective were looked into and received as attempts to blame the parents for child's condition. Bettelheim (1967) as cited and elucidated by Spoladore (2013) states that the lack of connection between mothers and their children was central to their disturbance. Parents felt criticized and blamed for the cause of their children's autism. There is no doubt also that parents felt scandalized at this.

Rhode (2004b) as cited by Spoladore (2013) disagrees with the above finding. It may not also be out of place as parents who share in the latter view would resist receiving a diagnosis of attachment disorders and find it quite hard to accept that some autistic symptoms can be psychogenic, (from the mind, having psychological rather than physiological causes).

A child's abnormal behavior was recorded by Spoladore (2013) as licking the sole of his shoes, picking and putting stones in his bag and avoiding other children. This ugly behavior was identified by a teacher and the child presented himself as unhappy and withdrawn which became a source of worry for the school staff and was eventually referred to a doctor for assessment. It took emotional intelligence skills to discover and handle the child appropriately.

In the above regard, librarians are meant to work hand in hand with psychotherapists in order to help an autistic patient in school who moves from one environment to the other. Significant improvement on the performance of the child cannot be complete without the immense contribution of the librarian through effective monitoring, follow-up, encouragement and simple counseling.

Waggett and Musskett (2010) as recorded by Spoladore (2013) reports that under the age of five, a child's emotional development is under ongoing construction, where if effective treatment is given early enough, psychological problems can be addressed and the child's development can be quickly returned to its normal path.

“Psychoanalytic psychotherapy provides patients with a secure and reliable space, where they are repeatedly exposed to the experience of being understood by another person. Such experience leads to a better understanding of oneself and to a fuller use of one's potential (Rhode, 2004b) and in some cases leads to growth away from autism” (Rhode, 2004b as cited by Spoladore, 2013). So then what should be the role of the school librarian here should we find these children in schools? Necessity and demand are placed on the librarian to navigate the child into a world of exploration that can lead to a better self-discovery through core books that soothes this disorder and the ability of these children to be able to get the best out of such books.

Schizophrenia: It is a psychiatric diagnosis denoting a persistent often chronic mental illness affecting normal behaviour, thinking and emotions. It is also a mental disorder characterized by withdrawal from reality and deterioration of the personality. It is the duty of the school librarian to select core books that will soothe the reading and learning improvement on these disadvantaged

children. It is not enough that these soothing materials are provided but that these materials are used by them through effective monitoring.

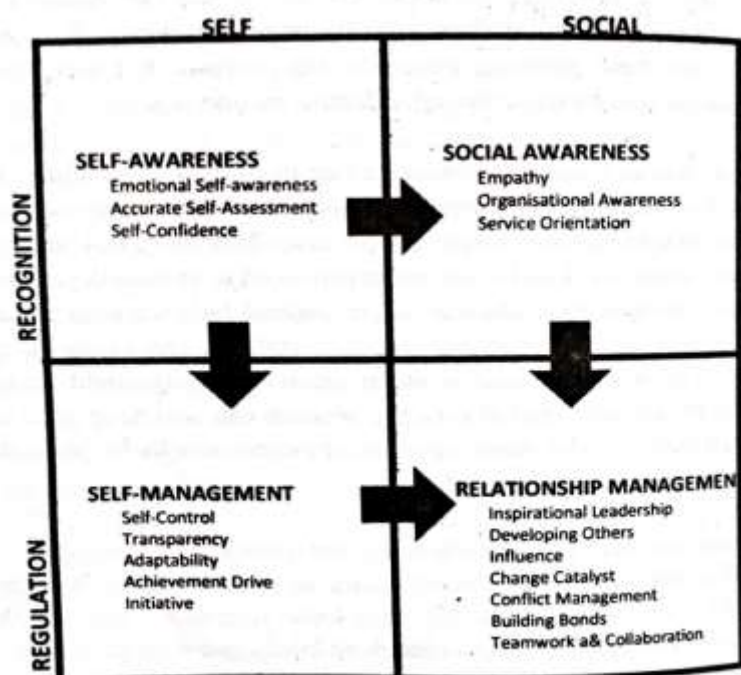
Trauma: it is an emotional wound leading to psychological injury; an event which causes great distress. Trauma can occur as a result of grief and mourning, when loved ones are lost. This emotional hurt can occur in various ways and emotions experienced in various degrees of intensity. There is no doubt that that if a school librarian works hand in hand with a psychotherapist, affected children can easily come around. This is can be done in group sections using the right books and also presenting right talks. Group sections can also be applied to assaulted children who have experienced violent attacks by physical means, force, blows, weapons etc.

Kleptomania: is a physical disorder that causes an uncontrollable obsession with stealing without economic or material need. It is the duty of the school librarian to be in the know if there are pupils with this kind of disorder in order to treat them kindly and even show more love and care to them.

Emotional Intelligence and the Role of the School Librarian

The school librarian in his or her daily routine job comes in contact with various tasks to contend with. Salovey and Mayer (1990) carved out five components of Emotional Intelligence that the school librarian can apply to his or her routine/professional duties to ensure effective service delivery namely:

1. Self-Awareness knowing your emotions to have an understanding of oneself.
2. Self-regulation-managing your own emotion.
3. Internal motivation-Motivating yourself, self-motivation, mastery for creativity.
4. Empathy-Understanding other people's emotions and seeing from their own perspectives.
5. Managing skills-Managing relationships and coming up with interpersonal effectiveness.



A simplified diagram of Emotional Intelligence by EI experts

<http://www.danielgoleman.infor/topic/emotional-intelligence>

(1) SELF

(2) SOCIAL

The Librarian Self-awareness Accurate self-assessment Self-confidence	Library Users Awareness Library Awareness Empathy Service Orientation
THE LIBRARIAN	
Self-Management Self-control Transparency Adaptability Initiative	Relationship Management Developing Library Users The Librarian as Change Catalyst Conflict Management Building Bonds (among librarians) Team Work and Collaboration

Emotional Intelligence Diagram as modified by Nnenda Tom- George (2016)

Self: The first (1) diagram as modified illustrates self-awareness meaning that the school librarian should be able to understand his/her own feelings, emotions, moods, thoughts etc. It highlights self-awareness of the school librarian as being consciously aware of his or her emotions, a quality required as the ability to recognize oneself as an individual separate from the environment and other individuals. 'Emotion' is an umbrella word that houses feelings, thoughts, moods etc. The school librarian's emotion at the point of duty can determine the tempo and pace of activity that will run in the library to affect the school as a whole whether positively or negatively. When the librarian is aware, it becomes very easy for him/her to understand and better engage his/her user and this in turn affects the way the library user perceives him and opens up to services rendered.

In self-assessment, the more accurate a librarian is in his/her self-assessment, the better he/she is in improving his services as he is able to detect lapses in the service that he provides and thus there is direction for self-improvement. It is the school librarian that is in the best position to give judgment about his or her feelings.

Self-confidence on the other hand, is the art of trusting in one's own abilities, personal judgment, opinion and capabilities. Studies show that self-confidence is contagious. It is commonly said that "nemodati quod non habet" meaning that you cannot give what you don't have. A librarian who has no self-confidence in him/herself or the unique skill he/she possesses will not be able to transmit same to the library user. Furthermore, the quality of self-confidence a librarian has will determine to a large extent, the communication strength as well as level of assertiveness that he/she will have and use on the library user.

Self-Management: Self-management is the ability to take responsibility for one's actions. Self-management for the purpose of this work will be looked at under the subjects of Self-Control, Transparency, Adaptability and Initiative.

The school librarian must be able to control oneself. Self-control is a form of self-regulation. It can be described as the ability to restrain one's emotion, actions and inaction. It is a form of inhibitory control. It is the ability to say and do the right thing at the right time. The school librarian can be likened to a medical doctor that out rightly kills his/her patients if wrong injections and drugs are administered, must be very mindful of what is said and done to the pupils, especially if the pupil is found with one challenge or the other. In Transparency, school librarians must be easily understood and must ensure that they adapt easily by changing situations positively.

Transparency implies openness, communication and accountability. Transparency by the Cambridge dictionary online (2018) is defined as the characteristics of been able to see through. According to Forbes (2015), one characteristic of an emotionally intelligent person is the ability to see opportunities where others see failure. An emotionally intelligent librarian has the characteristic of being transparent. He is open as to his goals and the progress that makes with the library user to meet his/her own goals.

Adaptability is the ability to adjust oneself readily to different conditions. Adaptability connotes resilience, remaining calm under pressure, not brooding, pointing fingers or holding grudges because you have been put in a different environment.

Boychev et al (2010), opine that adaptability is the ability to be aware of user's behaviour so that it can take accounts the level of knowledge and provides the user with the right kind of documents. An emotionally intelligent librarian who displays the quality of adaptability will identify the resources that best suits her users. Users are spared the trouble of expressing these needs before they are satisfied.

The field of how knowledge is imparted is constantly changing and the traditional meaning of imparting knowledge has been substituted by technological preferences. A librarian with the skill of adaptability is able to move with this flow which in turn translates to a better approach to users with special needs. The need to constantly review approaches is a much needed character which will help the librarian to manage different circumstances differently. Libraries are great tools on changing trajectory of how information is created, stored and accessed. This is not limited to pupils without challenges. As a matter of fact, any librarian that caters adequately for children or users with special needs will be at the forefront of his career as he/she will be well sought after.

Adaptability is the key to professional life. A school librarian must be flexible, able and willing to quickly adapt to changes that may come with the job. Taking initiative is the ability to take new approaches, to start, to introduce something new which is popularly referred to as dynamism.

Library Users Awareness: The second diagram is on the awareness of library users. It befits the librarian to attend to the needs of the library users according to the various levels of understanding. Children with special needs may not easily be detected. School librarians can however, through emotional intelligence spot this category of library users. Empathy is a must have in a school

librarian's dictionary. Empathy in a lay man's term is 'putting your feet in another man's shoes'. It is a form of identifying with the thoughts, feelings or state of another person. Service orientation is to desire to meet the needs (satisfaction) of librarians' clients.

Relationship Management: A school librarian must be able to manage conflicts, minor misunderstanding and mishaps amongst pupils. A conflict can arise either to champion a negative or a positive course. School librarians are to build bonds, work together with a team spirit and bring out the best in every child that comes across their way.

Collective Responsibility: The term 'collective responsibility' as expressed by Martins, Orlunwene and Atteng (2016) suggests co- operation. It suggests separate individuals acting in cooperation to realize a common goal. They also opine that 'collectiveness' denotes coming together of different individuals as one and 'responsibility' denotes a state of being responsible. This is why the issue that bothers with pupils with disorders cannot be handled by one individual with mastery in one profession alone.

Conclusion

The importance of emotional intelligence in this era to primary and post primary school library users is too expedient and cannot be overlooked. If the school library is seen as a healing ground for the emotionally imbalanced children that come to patronize it, the school library and indeed the school management will give all it takes to make the school librarian heavily equipped with various trainings to match the huge work carried out. Training includes not just skills but all efforts that will be given to librarians for efficient execution of the roles that come with the demand of catering for the needs of the children that have special needs.

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