

ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

School libraries play major roles in the academic performance of students in and secondary schools. This paper gives a clear picture of what school library is all about. Its purposes and objectives are as follows, to support teaching and learning within the school system, to encourage the reading habits of the learner etc. The study also enumerated the elements of the library which contribute to the impacts of learning thus, a qualified full-time librarian who is proactive and has managerial status, a library that supports physical and visual access to resources in the library, classrooms, at home, during school hours and beyond etc. The paper also discovered the reasons why most do not have libraries. Some of these reasons are lack of space for building school library, selling of textbooks in primary secondary schools etc. The paper finally recommended the following, space for library buildings provision of audio-visual materials, qualified staff, funding, interest of the management and teachers for school libraries etc, without which there will be no in the academic performance of students

Keywords: School libraries, academic performance, Secondary school students

Introduction

School libraries those libraries established in pre-primary, primary, post-primary, teacher training colleges and schools of nursing, midwifery and health technology. These libraries are established for the use of the pupils/students and teachers or instructors to help them achieve the educational goals Agbo (2015) defined the school as that library attached or found in pre-tertiary institutions such as nursery, primary and secondary schools with the mission of contributing to the intellectual development of pupils and students. These libraries are learning laboratories whose equipment includes books, magazines, newspapers, filmstrips, tapes slides, recordings, transparencies, art painting and other types of teaching and learning materials The

school like all other libraries in educational institutions was established to support the teaching functions in the school. Like any other supportive unit in an organization, its component elements are the human and material resources, and the users Alolabi 2005)

School library promotes the development of reading skills and encourages long term learning habits through reading, listening to and viewing of variety of learning (Mhagwu and Okoroafor, 2013)

The role of school libraries is essential in academic performance as they provide information and ideas that are fundamental to the educational needs of the students. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) School Library Manifesto, the school library offers information and ideas that are important to enable students to function fully in today's knowledge society by providing essential information materials. In this process they will become life-long learners and become responsible citizens (IFLA/UNESCO School library Manifesto, 1999). The American of School Librarians (AASI.) notes that school libraries are crucial to the development of educational skills with their provision of physical and intellectual access to the information resources and vital for learning. School libraries provide students with the opportunity to require life- long learning skills so they may develop their imagination as well as critical thinking skills. School libraries play a significant role on learning. Many international have recognized effective school library as having direct link to the improvement of students' academic performance. With regards to the purposes of school libraries, Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals, (2003) identified seven roles they perform to include:

- Leading the teaching and learning of information literacy across the curriculum;
- Collaborating with teachers to embed information literacy across the curriculum;
- Providing training for teachers and students:
- Offering a suitable environment for research;
- Affording access to a wide range of resources;
- Facilitating opportunities to browse and discover, and
- Stimulating independent learning.

In Nigeria and other countries Education authorities have failed to include school libraries in planning and establishment of secondary schools. According to Shenton (2014), "In Britain, we live in an era library are being downgraded or even discarded completely, and instances in which new schools are opening without any physical library are all too frequent" Barrett and Douglas (2004) recognized that people develop as a result of the school library services and the work of the school. William (2013) clearly identifies the elements of the library which contribute to the impact on learning as:

- A qualified, full-time librarian, who is proactive and has managerial
- The availability of support staff to undertake routine tasks enabling the librarian initiate instructional, collaborative and promotional activities as well as professional duties to support collection development;
- A library that supports physical and virtual access to resources in the library, classrooms and at home, during school hours and beyond;
- An adequate physical and virtual collection that is current, diverse and supports the curriculum as well as appealing to students' leisure needs.
- Networked technology to sue and outside agencies, including central schools library services, to ensure the most appropriate services are delivered support of learning.

The users of school libraries include the pupils, the students, the teachers and non-teaching of the parent institution. Given the variety and the backgrounds of the school library users and the need to perform the duties of a gatekeeper, the teacher librarian must know the information needs of library users and their information seeking behaviors. This will enable the library provide satisfactory services to its users. According to Subair (2015). Students with poor study habits should be into library use from a young age in order for them to develop appropriate and effective study habits that will go a long way with them to university level". The study habits developed by some student may also affect their use of the university library. In situations where students do not have effective study habits or fail to make adequate use or non-use of the school library in the secondary school they may find it difficult to use the University library. This may affect students negatively in their academic performance. It is in the light of the foregoing that study seeks to investigate the role of school libraries in the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Objectives of School Libraries

School library remains the power house of educational institution, any educational institution without a library is as lifeless as a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul. It is a place where students get access to all kinds of reading materials thereby given the opportunity for critical thinking Alokun (2003) stated that school libraries are set up to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide opportunities for further reading and use of materials other- than prescribed classroom textbooks.
2. To promote the development of reading skills
3. To teach library skills in preparation for future use of libraries in the community and institutions of higher learning.
4. To encourage long term learning habits through reading, listening and Viewing of a variety of learning materials.

5. To encourage research and independent study by students and teachers.

UNESCO (2000) identified the core services of school libraries vital to the development of literacy. These core services include, information literacy teaching, learning and culture. The goal of school libraries in Nigerian in supporting the total education programme for each school according to Afolabi (2017) includes:

- Supporting and enhancing goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum
- Offering opportunities for experience in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment.
- Providing access to local, state, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences an opinion
- Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity for teachers and students.
- Working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school
- Promoting reading and the resources and services of the library to the whole community and beyond.
- Serving as the center and coordinating agency for all materials used in school.

Role of Library in School System

It is incontrovertible that libraries form a vital part of the world's system of education. Libraries provide through books, films, computers or internet recording microforms, CD-ROMs and other media, knowledge that have been accumulated through the ages. Every school therefore needs a library, even if a good public library is nearby. Throughout the day, teachers and students need to use the library materials in the teaching and learning process. Akande and Bamise (2017) wrote that "the school library remains the proper house of educational institution: any educational institution without a library is as lifeless as a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul. It is a place where students get access to all kinds of reading materials, thereby giving them the opportunity for critical thinking. It is really essential and necessary for primary schools, since it constitutes a big and rare treasure". The Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledges the importance of school libraries when it states in its National Policy on Education (2014) that "libraries are one of the most important education services. Every State Ministry of Education needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for this service". As enunciated by Adelerati (2002), the main purposes of a school library are to;

1. Encourage the development of skills.
2. To prompt reading habit to some literacy appreciation.

3. To sort for subject information and support the school curriculum.
4. To inculcate intellectual development.

The school library has a teaching role in the education programme of the school. The teaching roles include imparting the library skills and study skills which includes planning with the subject teachers, class projects and the Involvement in curriculum or lesson planning. Apotiade (2002) identified the educational role of school library as encouragement reading habit, development of student's ability to learn from books. He further elucidated that school libraries are; "to provide books and other information materials that will assist in their study, instruct students the use of library resources and encourage recreational reading by providing newspapers, magazines, books on sports, adventure, hobbies, folklores and fiction". Nyam and Guraj (1999) described the role of school library as the provision of information for educational research, planning and recreational purposes. He also viewed school library as essential to the establishment of school itself which should be seen as an integral part of the educational process and not just as an outside agency. Furthermore, he described the means through which school library contributes to spread education, complement teacher's work, and provide education to those without teachers. These are through;

- i. Provision of primary school children with learning resources such as educational facilities, both in print and non-print, which they can use at the end of the school day and during vacations
- ii. Provision of secondary school children with information assistance in homework and this may include children's encyclopedia, journals, magazines, tapes, records and cassettes.
- iii. Provision of specialized resources for governmental activities through creation of a "special document" section in the library and;
- iv. Provision of recreational and continuing educational facilities such as games, films and filmstrips, slides, tapes records, and cassettes, fiction and non-fiction books. Wherever it is, the school library is established to educational objectives of the primary and secondary education as in the National Policy on Education (1981).

The Effective School Library

An effective school library is one that is adequately resourced and to provide educational materials appropriate for teachers, students and the entire school population. In addition, it should be manned by a professional librarian. The effective school library should be able to provide the following levels of services: selection and acquisition of library materials, organization of stock, circulation or loan services, current awareness, reference services, production of instructional materials and other promotional activities (Mokhtar & Majid, 2005). The school library is effective when the school management acknowledges the role it plays in the school. A report by the Office for Standards in Education United Kingdom (OFSTED, 2006) confirms that head teachers' commitment to improve libraries and their vision for the library as having a key role in raising standards of literacy is significant to creating effective school libraries. This suggests that when leadership acknowledges the contributions

of libraries in teaching and learning process they are able to improve and provide for the library whenever possible. Other attributes that help to make the school library effective and efficient is where teamwork exist between teachers and the librarian. The teachers and the librarian share the achievements of students together, by openly showing students' works in public; regular current awareness bulletins for teaching staff; and educating students on media and information literacy skills (International Association of School Librarianship, 2012).

Many students don't use school libraries frequently in Nigeria because they are stocked with irrelevant and out-dated books. For students to be attracted to the library, the school librarian, in collaboration with the teaching staff, needs to select the best current resources to support the school curriculum. Countless studies indicate that well-resourced libraries contribute to excellent academic performance of schools. The New York Comprehensive Center for Education indicates that schools that relied on their libraries to support student academic growth in relation to learning have seen vast improvement in their assessment scores (New York Comprehensive Center. 2011). Howard (2010) also points out that most of the research conducted about the usefulness of a school library and student achievement established positive correlation between teaching and learning with the support of the school media specialist. Apart from the involvement of the school management, an effective library should also have a well-qualified librarian to man it.

Student' Library Use and Academic Performance

Students' failure to use the school library and its resources to expand their study habits negatively affect their academic performance. Several have shown that there is strong connection between the students' use school library and their academic performance. Students that use the school library often perform better in test and examination than students who fail to use the school library. For instance, Wikipedia (2010) reported that researchers have demonstrated that school libraries have positive impact on student's achievement. It reported that more than 60 studies have been conducted in 19 U.S. states and one Canadian province. The major findings of these studies as reported in the Wikipedia the free encyclopedia (2010) are that students with access to well-supported school library media programmer with a qualified school library media specialist scored higher on reading assessments regardless of their socio-economic status. Also, it observed that a study conducted in School library is very important in shaping students habit regard reading for leisure, to pass examinations and to obtain information on different aspects of life (George, 2011). Library users make use of library for different purposes. While some users visit the library to read their notes and personal books, others use library to do assignments. Yet, others visit library to prepare for examination, recreation and relaxation. Students should therefore maximize the use of school libraries to their advantage since school libraries provide favorable environment where the students can discover and develop their abilities and talents as well as improve their reading and study skills.

Ogunbote and Odunewu (2008) stated that the performance of students could be improved considerably, if they use the library regularly, without jeopardizing the quality of education in schools. A learning environment which is conducive is associated with the use of library as a study space. A library containing quality, relevant, current materials and information resources

as well as a professional librarian has been seen to have a positive effect on students. Lance (2000) reviewed literature and discovered that students who used a library with up-to-date resources performed at a high level than students in school with minimal or no library resources.

Besides reading class notes and looking for materials to complete assignments, students should be given orientation on how the library can be of help to them in ways. For example, through the use of the school library by having access to different books, students can make their career choice, they can also read different philosophical books and literature books that can build their critical thinking ability. A good school library and its staff will develop in students good reading skills and encourage long-term learning habits through listening, reading and viewing a wide variety of learning resources. These learning habits form the key to continuous success in school and to personal enrichment of leisure time through life.

If students at secondary school level are properly guided on how to use a library, they will be equipped to later use the university library. The school library is an important part of elementary middle and high school programs without which students would not thrive academically and find it most difficult to conduct research when they reach university level.

Students use and process information better with the help of a school librarian. School librarians guide students through their reading and research process as well as helping them to choose books that fit their interests. As Lance (2000) and others have reported, a school librarian should be someone who is trained to work with students and to understand their learning needs. Busayo (2011) stated that a school library is an integral part of educational system that cannot be ignored without jeopardizing the quality of education in schools. The school librarian should be fully aware of the community and home reading cultures of students in their school.

Developing effective study habits is vital to student's future, not just academically but in everyday life. Shenton (2014) reported that using school library would help learners obtain "new or different vocabulary. Studying has become a very fundamental aspect of progress and development of students of all ages, especially those aspiring to higher education. This may be because it shapes and develops human intellectual capabilities. When students reach university level, they are expected to use the library more. Being fresh from secondary schools, it is expected that they have little knowledge about using the library. In order for library skills to be effectively taught, scheduled library periods should be provided on the school's timetable throughout the six years secondary school period.

Benefits of School Library to the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students.

School libraries play a major role on learning and academic performance of students in secondary education. Students with good learning that allows habits tend to have learning habits tend to have learning tendencies that allows them to work privately when school libraries are available. Several studies have shown that there is a connection between the students' use of school library and their academic performance. The study by Gettinger and Sebert (2012) shows that effective study skills are necessary a college student to excel academically.

School libraries serve as a medium of education as well as plays the same role in curriculum enhancement. Baro and Eze (2016) revealed that student's failure to use the school library and its resources to expand their study habits negatively affect their academic performance, Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRI.) (2017) holds that library services play the following roles in the development of the academic performance of secondary students:

1. Through the library instructions provided to the students, they tend to acquire information literacy instruction during their initial coursework which help them acquire a common set of competencies for their studies. However, the believes that students receiving this instruction perform better in their courses than students who do not. Furthermore, the project findings demonstrate different ways information literacy contributes to inquiry-based and problem-solving learning, including effective identification and use of information, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement which leads to educational development.
2. The use of the library resources and services increases students' success. The report holds that the analysis of multiple data points (eg.. circulation, library instruction session online database access, study room use, interlibrary loan) shows that students who used the library in some way achieved higher levels of academic success (eg, GPA, course grades, retention) than students who did not use the library.
3. Collaborative academic programs and services involving the library enhance student learning. Analysis shows that library partnerships with other units, such as the writing center, academic enrichment, and speech lab, yield positive benefits for students in the areas of higher grades academic confidence and retention.
4. One-on-one or small-group reference and research assistance with a librarian enhances academic success, as documented by such factors as student confidence, GPAs, and improved achievement on course assignments Furthermore, Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRI) (2017) holds that library services play the following roles in the development of the secondary students:
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Secondary Schools and Availability of School Libraries

School library development in Nigeria is still in its infancy especially considering the rampant establishment of public and private secondary schools in nearly all villages and towns without Libraries. "Despite their inestimable importance, school Libraries in Nigeria are still clearly in their embryonic stage of development, displaying inadequacies in funding, staffing, collection furniture equipment and services provided" (Fafanwa, 2003)

Almost half of the secondary schools in Nigeria had not included despite the large of published research that suggests that School libraries can make a difference to students understanding and achievement and provides support for teaching and learning as an important part of the school community. Emphasizing the importance of school libraries, the National Policy on Education (2004) in Nigeria stated that Libraries are one of the most important educational services. As laudable as that directive may be, not many state ministries make sure that there are school libraries attached to every secondary school in Nigeria Library period will make students use the school library frequently, Jato, Ogumyi, and Olubiyo (2014) recommended that there should be library study hour in the school timetable to enable the students to have a specific time to use the school library regularly. They further stated that the inclusion of library study hour on the school timetable would afford the student the opportunity to study more than 30 minutes in the library on regular basis. If students in secondary schools are to effectively utilize the school library, then school leaders must address the barrier of teachers' negative attitudes toward the Librarian and library resources. Many teachers in the school system today still see their lesson and note as the all-and-end in the teaching-learning situation. If teachers believe in resource-based learning, then they must begin to see library staff and library resources as partners in the teaching learning process. If students see their teachers go into the school library frequently, then they themselves will take it seriously and use the library frequently. Students should know what a library is and how it can help them. If students form the habit of using the school library during secondary school, then confidently later use the university library.

Challenges of School Libraries in Nigeria:

Some of the challenges of secondary school library services in Nigeria according to Baro and Eze (2016) include:

1. **Lack of space for building school library:** In Nigeria, school business has become so lucrative that private investors now use every available apace to build classrooms for primary and secondary schools without considering providing space for school library Due to wide spread corruption, schools (especially private schools) are often built without proper approval from education authorities; school proprietors often bribe the education authorities and get their schools approved without inspection to ensure that the building meets National Policy on Education guidelines. The ideal school library building should be located in quarters specifically designed for it. It should be a separate building of its own located centrally within the school compound but removed from noisy areas such as the principal's office or staff room.

2. **Lack of funds:** The reason for not having school library is financial constraint. Most primary and secondary schools in villages are established and funded by the community but later taken over by the government. This tension between a lack of local funds and widespread corruption may be why school administrators cannot provide facilities such as school libraries and laboratories until the government takes over such schools.
3. **Selling of books in primary and secondary schools:** Schools have books they sell. This makes them not to bother of establishing a library. They feel if they establish libraries students will not buy the books sold in their schools. This is happening especially in private schools. Some principals in public schools also do that by selling books that are provided by the government to the students. The worst of all is by making them compulsory for students to buy.
4. **Lack of interest on the part of school management/teachers:** There is lack of interest on the part of school management and teachers concerning libraries. Principals and teachers have not really taken libraries seriously. Many have mentioned that the library is not necessary to their teaching, because they themselves have not had the opportunity of using good libraries. "Most administrators of schools do not value the role of school libraries in the educational process because they are not interested on library. Thus, they pay less attention to establishing school libraries or maintaining existing ones."
5. **Government nonchalant attitude:** Government's nonchalant attitude towards providing fund for the establishment of school libraries. Consequently, students from the secondary schools without idea of using libraries, not knowing what a catalogue is, how to locate books in the library, the type of books in the library.
6. **Schools in villages:** Many secondary schools located in remote villages lack the necessary facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and sporting fields. Despite the laudable directives in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria on necessary guidelines for establishing schools, the government could not establish school libraries in all secondary schools, perhaps due to corruption and lack of interest. Private school owners, who also know the benefits of including school libraries in their schools, have avoided providing space or build libraries in the school.

Conclusion

In order for the school library to function as an integral part of the total educational programme of the school, there is, therefore, the urgent need to improve the quality of school libraries in secondary schools and take the advantage of modern instructional technique in education for better quality education for our youths.

Way Forward:

1. **Accommodation:** School libraries should occupy as possible a central position in the school. It should not be near areas such as, playing field, dining hall, assembly hall, staff and principal's office. It should be a separate building and spacious enough. However, encouragement should be given to secondary schools to establish classroom libraries to

supplement the central school library. The classroom library will reduce to a great extent the pressure on the central school library.

2. **Provision of Audio-Visual Materials:** Nowadays, school libraries are often referred to as school "media center" or "educational resources center". In this way, the school library has in its stock both the books and non-book materials. In view of the above, it is hereby recommended that school libraries should acquire audio-visual materials which should be used along with books in view of the tremendous assistance which they render in instructional methods. Adequate supply of these materials makes classroom work more stimulating and efficient. *Journal of Research in Education and Society* Vol.2 No. 1, April 2011 120.
3. **Personnel:** There is need to recruit qualified staff into school libraries. A situation where English teachers are drafted to man school libraries would not augur well for their development. The English teachers so drafted, should be encouraged to undergo training to acquire the necessary professional qualifications in librarianship. Also, clerks cleaners, messengers that work in school libraries should also undergo refresher training courses in librarianship.
4. **Library Periods:** Library period should be incorporated in the school timetable. This period should not be used for leisure or relaxation in the library, rather during this period, library instructions should be vigorously taught by a teacher librarian from the state or public libraries under the arrangement of the teacher-librarian.
5. **Funding:** The greatest problem facing all libraries in general is how to generate money to run efficient and effective library services In order for school libraries to get out of this problem, it is recommended that government should put school libraries on its priority list. Furthermore library levy should be strictly used by the various principals in our secondary schools to develop the library and should not be diverted for other uses or projects. Old students, individuals, organization especially charitable and corporate organizations should be encouraged to donate books and non-book materials or sometimes money for the running of the school libraries.

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