PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGERIA.

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Abstract
The study sought to determine the utilization of school libraries by subject teachers. 150 questionnaires were randomly administered to teachers 13 public high schools. Evaluated were the importance of school library; frequency of use; reasons for use and expectations of service from school librarians. The volunteers were 66 (44%) males and 84 (56%) females. About 75.3% had at least 5 years classroom experience and. 96% of the teachers believed that school library is important to them. Utilization of school libraries was 78% with slightly female predominance. They use the libraries mainly to read own books. Arrangement of books on the shelves was the most preferred service. The library services were important to them but they mostly go to their libraries to read own books. Stakeholders running school libraries have a lot to do in getting Nigerian libraries perform their basic functions.
Keywords: School libraries, school teacher, library service, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of library services and provision of relevant information resources. Professional librarians in all the categories of library strive to acquire and organize information resources for their potential users. The effort put in doing these is better appreciated when the users are willing and able to use the resources made available to them. Library services imply both availability and accessibility of library facilities and services to the users and the willingness and ability of readers to use the facilities and services. Information is power and access to information is indispensable to individual advancement as well as corporate educational development.

In 1978, Wali (1978) rightly pointed out that the school library serves as the "web" of the school, the axis on which the intellectual life of the school revolves.

Adefarati (2002) highlights the objectives of the school library as follows: to encourage the development of skill in reading; to prompt reading habits to some literacy appreciation; to sort for subject information center and support the school curriculum and to inculcate intellectual development.

The functions of school library from the opinion of Dike (2004) include effective participation in school program by striving to meet the needs of pupils, teachers, parents and other community members. School library is to provide the platform where the teacher-librarian works with subject teachers in the selection and use of all type of library materials which will contribute to the teaching program. Participation with teachers and administrators in program for continuing professional and cultural growth of school staff is also encouraged. It has been established that well-stocked, professionally staffed school library will assist individualized learning and improve students/pupils performance throughout the school curriculum (Shaibu, 1997).

In an attempt to show the importance of school library to quality education, Obi (1964) listed some contributions a good school library can make to quality education. These points centered on the promotion of reading skills, contribution to academic achievement increasing students' chance of success in institutions of higher education and providing students with vocational information. Others include helping them to discover and develop special gifts and talents, training students to study independently and vis-à-vis provision of up-to-date resources to meet the greatest challenge of education.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria, (Federal Ministry of Education, 1981) section 3 Nos. 5 and 10 states that libraries are one of the most important educational services. The policy

recommends that every state ministry of education should provide funds for the establishment of school libraries and for the training of librarians and library assistants. The Federal Government of Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000) on September 30, 1999 launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which is aimed at promoting literacy in Nigeria. The blueprint for UBE defines it as the foundation for sustainable lifelong learning that provides reading, writing, and numeracy skills. It makes provision for a wide variety of formal and informal activities and programmes designed to enable learners to acquire functional literacy. Moreover, it is meant to prepare the children for the future, with the ability to think rationally and to solve problems creatively, to manage and retrieve information, in addition to communicating effectively. It is also designed to instill lifelong learning as a habit, since lifelong learning is the organizing principle for education.

The mission of education for children and youth is the development of skills for self-directed enquiry rather than the mere inculcation of subject matter. This can only be achieved through a well-equipped library and users must be educated on how to retrieve and use the available library resources to meet their information needs. Elaturoti (2000) opined that this aspect of the policy has been poorly implemented, hence the persistent poor quality of school library service in Nigerian schools.

Much research has looked at teachers' perceptions of the school library in countries such as the US. In a study in the early 1960s, teachers' perceptions of the school library were identified as an important factor affecting the development of the school library (Tielke, 1968).

However, Nakamura (2000) pointed out that some teachers are still unaware of the functions of school libraries and that teacher training should place more emphasis on school libraries as an integral part of education.

Another underlining factor is that the roles of school librarians are not understood by both the teachers and the school administrators. Giorgis (1994) in her study found that teachers were unaware of the roles of school librarians. In support of this, Haycock (1991) emphasized that administrators and college teachers have little or no knowledge of, or experience with the roles of library media center and library media specialists. The same emphasis was made by Haycock (1995), Hurray (2000) and McCraken (2001). Considering the effect of lack of understanding the roles of school library, McKenzie (2010) states "When this lack of understanding combines with budgetary woes, we are seeing drastic reduction in force across the continent. This amounts to intellectual disarmament". He also stressed that given the literacy and comprehension challenges facing schools in this decade — especially those presented by the new information landscape — we need libraries and librarians now more than ever. This survey research sought to evaluate the use of school libraries by a population of class teachers and their expectation concerning the services of the librarians.

METHODOLOGY

There are about 13 public secondary schools in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria of which 8 were randomly selected. A set of questionnaire adapted from the one used by Nakamura[10] was designed with the aim of examining teachers' perceptions of school library. The questionnaire was randomly administered to twenty teachers from each of the selected

schools retrieved immediately after completion from the volunteers.

The questionnaire has six sections:
Section A- Demographic variables

The items in this section were to elicit information on the following variables: sex, age, duration of work as a teacher, and the grade of classes being taught.

Section B- Importance of school library to subject teachers

In this section, the importance of school library was assessed by asking "How have you regarded the importance of the school library in your teaching?" Responses ranged from "very important to not important".

Section C – Frequency of use of the school library by subject teachers

The frequency of use of the school library by teachers was assessed by asking "How often do you use the school library in your teaching work?" Responses ranged from Likert scale of "Very frequently (>once/week) to (Very rarely" (almost never).

Section D- Reasons for using the school library

Reasons for using the school library were assessed in this section. " Responses to seven tabulated variables ranged from "Very frequent to "Very rare"

Section E - Reasons why you do not want to use the school library as expected

Five statements about common school library challenges were employed, for example; "No adequate books" The volunteers were to rate each statement from "Strongly agreed" to "Strongly disagreed

Section F- Teachers rating of expectation of services from their School librarians

This section assessed subject teachers' expectations of school library services. Responses to six tabulated variables ranged from 'Excellent' to "Very poor"

The questionnaire forms were completed anonymously and retrieved immediately. The data was analyzed based on the information provided by the respondents. SPSS Software Version 16.0 was used to run some of the statistics; frequencies and means.

For secondary analysis of the data, the ratings for variables in all the sections were according to the Likert's[17] scale of measurement and were assigned weight values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

The total weight value (TWV) for each variable was obtained through the summation of the product of the frequency of responses for each Likert scale scale rating and the respective weight value. This is also expressed mathematically below:-

$$TWV = \sum_{i=1}^{5} Fi.Wi$$ (where TWV is the total

weight value, Fi is the frequency of respondents that rated the variable i; and Wi the weight assigned to the rating of the variable i.

The score for each variable was arrived at by dividing the TWV for each item by the total number of respondents (150). The values obtained ranged from 1 to 5. The closer the value to 5, the higher the level of variable being measured.

Variable score (VS) = $\dfrac{TWV}{N}$ where N=number of study population (150).

The mean value for all the variables in each section $\overline{MVS}$ was calculated by the summation of the values generated for each variable divided by the number of variables assessed in the section.

RESULTS

160 questionnaires were administered and retrieved immediately, 150 of them were adequate for analysis and interpretation. The volunteers were 66 (44%) males and 84 (56%) females. Majority (47) of the teachers were between 40 to 49 years of age. About 75.3% of them had at least 5 years classroom experience and 44.7% of the volunteers teach in the junior high school while the rest (55.3%) were in the senior high school. 96% of the teachers believed that school library is important to them.

A score of 3.9 (78%) was obtained (Table I) for the utilization of school library by the population of teachers evaluated with about half of them visiting the library more than once per week. There is a slight higher frequency among female teachers with a score of 3.8 (80%) and 4.0 (76%) for males.

Table II shows that teachers in the age bracket of 40 to 49 years and those that have more than thirty years experience used the school library more frequently. According to the class grade level being taught, the table shows slim differences in the frequency of use of the school library but the teachers of the uppermost class (senior class 3) used the school library more frequently.

Tables III shows that reading own books, to develop lesson note and research assignments, to develop curriculum units, reading newspapers and using the library computers were the major reasons for using the library; they have values above 2.5 while using the library resources and materials like dictionaries and photocopier were not major among the reasons for using the library; they have values below 2.5.

No adequate books in the library; do not have enough time to use the library and the librarians are not professionals were some of the reasons why the teachers do not use the library as expected; they have values above 2.5. I'm not interested in the school

library and I do not know how to use the library for my teaching were the less important reasons for not using the library. (Table IV). About 70.7% indicated they usually ask the school teacher-librarian for assistance while 29.3% says no.

Table V shows that the participants have high expectations of service for all the measured library activities performed by their school librarians. All the variable scores were more than 2.5. Arrangement of the books on the shelves was observed as a most preferred service by the participants, it has the highest variable score of 3.8.

DISCUSSION

In the last two decades, school library programs have become more important than ever because of technology development and because of the information explosion. Some countries, such as United States, Canada, and Australia, have developed especially good school library programs based on the understanding that information literacy is an essential survival skill for children in this information age and that resource-based learning must be integrated into instructional system. A key factor in developing school libraries seems to be the use of these libraries by classroom teachers. About 96% of the teachers believed that school library is important to them. This is quiet significant. It implies that the teachers have a clear perception of school libraries.

About half of the teachers visited the library more than once/week. This is almost similar to the study of Nakamura (2000) and Suresh and Suresh (2008) where the largest number of teachers indicated they use school library once a week. Our findings show that teachers that most frequently used the libraries were the fairly older, more experienced and were also the uppermost (graduating) class teachers. It's our opinion that this category of teachers was for most

part of their time in the library for meetings concerning final grade exams planning and results consideration.

Reading own books was the most predominant reason for using the library, followed by the category that used the library for their project and research assignments. The teachers may not have learned how to use school libraries for their teaching activities hence they were in the library to read own books and write their lesson notes. Lack of access to a range of desired books; quality of book stocked for reading and borrowing; online resources and information that meet local needs are prevailing situations in Nigerian libraries and are key factors capable of hindering their utilization. Particularly, most of the libraries do not have ICT which is a major source of attraction to libraries in most developed countries. This finding is similar to that of Mansor and Nor (2011) where many of those who visited the library did so for leisure reading such as reading newspapers and magazines. Only a small number of teachers actually used the library resources for their teaching-learning purposes.

No adequate book in the library was the predominant reason for not using the library as expected. This high level of dissatisfaction with the library stock among the teachers is not unconnected to the fact that supply of books to school libraries either by the government or non-governmental organizations is not popular in Nigeria as identified by Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2010). Current books, periodicals, magazines, fictions and non-fictions that can support teaching and attract users to the school libraries were not available or inadequate. The state of most of the books in some school libraries in Nigeria reported by Jelena et al. (1995) was described as

particularly pathetic. According to them about 90% of the books were old enough to be weeded. It was also stated in their study that 60 % of the schools had not received new collections in the last ten years. All these were attributable to inadequate funding, which has also affected the serial holdings which are mainly gifts and do not come as frequently published.

Collection development also has become more difficult in recent times with escalating books and publishing cost. Furthermore, it was opined that government policy is also negatively affecting the publishing industry in Nigeria as a result of traffic barriers and high taxes, coupled with high cost and inadequacy of indigenous books (Jelena et al. 1995). Irrelevant materials littering most libraries were also a source of concern. Kantumoya (1992) observed that African libraries are stocked with foreign literatures that are not only out of date but also irrelevant to the information needs and interests of the people.

These identified challenges invariably point to the need for more interlibrary co-operation, libraries forming consortia that will enable them share resources. Public and research libraries in this environment should come on board and contribute to the provision of books and serials for these school libraries through a well planned gift network.

Most of the teachers asked their librarians for assistance. This is not surprising because their opinion and leadings as trained personnel are highly valued but it may also reflect a library environment that is not particularly user-friendly as regards the arrangement of materials in the library. The latter scenario may probably explain the finding in our study considering the expectation of the teachers on the services of the librarians.

Arrangement of the books on the shelves was observed as a clearly preferred service by the participants. Very many of the school libraries in Nigerian lacked professional teacher librarians, It is a common practice to have one of the teachers in the school who will have his office at a corner within the library doing the job of a school librarian or at most the school management may employ a secondary school certificate holder to do the work of a librarian. Staffing is part of the problems hindering effective use of library and information centre in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. The idea of using unqualified personnel as school/teachers/librarian has not helped matters as most of them will not be able to assist in the full exploitation of library resources as they were not educationally equipped to do so.

Librarianship is a skilled profession which requires a high standard of educational and professional training. This group constitutes the highest qualified staff in any school library. In most cases they have a first degree, master degree, or PhD certificates and with a good subject background. Professional librarians are saddled with the responsibilities involving book selection, reference services, readers' advisory work, current awareness service, cataloguing and classification of library materials. It is plausible that a well-equipped school library with trained and adequate staff will tremendously serve the knowledge and information need of both staff and students. It could also make up for inadequate teaching staff and poverty of students who are unable to purchase required text.

In the absence of trained personnel working in the school libraries, professional librarians in public and tertiary institutions could organize workshops and seminars for those serving in the position of school librarians at least for them to have the basic knowledge of what is required of them in order to management of school libraries. Although this may not the best option but what can be done when getting professional in the school libraries is not feasible with current situation of school library management in the country.

Conclusions

Findings suggest that the teachers visit their school libraries frequently but only to read their own books and develop their lesson notes. They observed inadequate library books as major hindrance to the use of the libraries as expected. Arrangement of the books on the shelves was observed as a clearly preferred service. It's obvious that libraries in most schools are serving no other functions than reading rooms. There problems can somewhat be traced to the level of available fund as most of the schools are substantially government funded. In recent times, government has not faithfully released due grants to the schools. The ripple effect of this is that school library developments will be virtually eliminated from the plan of the head teachers. There is an urgent need for government to release fund for the acquisition of library resources and materials. This is also the time when a measure of cost sharing between schools and parents be implemented for the sake of survival of school libraries. One other way of cost sharing is for alumnus of schools to see the development of school libraries as priority project for their respective bodies.

Contributions of international organizations in growth of school libraries in Nigeria are imperative. This could be in the form of sending library materials to the schools. Audio-visual materials would be most helpful as well as personal computers. The encouragement of local writers and local publication of secondary school texts through grants will be most welcomed.

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TABLES

Table I: Frequency of visit to the school library

Frequency	More than once /week	Once/ week	Once or twice/month	Once or twice/term	Once or twice/session	Total weight value (TWV)	Variable score (TWV/n)	%
Weights	5	4	3	2	1			
Total number of teachers (n=150)	350	116	84	32	7	589	3.9	78
Male teachers (n=66)	135	48	51	14	3	251	3.8	76
Female teachers (n=84)	215	68	33	18	4	338	4.0	80

Table II: Utilization of the School Library according to age, experience and class grades being taught

	More than once /week	Once/week	Once or twice/month	Once or twice/term	Once or twice/session	Total weight value (TWV)	Variable score (TWV/n)
Weights	5	4	3	2	1		
Teachers age							
Under 25 yrs (n=15)	30	4	15	0	3	52	3.5
25 to 29 yrs (n=21)	40	28	15	0	1	84	4
30 to 39 (n=45)	110	36	21	12	1	180	4
40 to 49 (n=47)	125	36	21	8	2	192	4.1
50 yrs above (n=22)	45	12	9	12	1	79	3.6
Teachers experience							
Under 4 yrs (n=37)	100	16	27	2	3	148	4
4 to 9 yrs (n=33)	60	44	21	4	1	130	3.9
10 to 14 yrs (n=34)	85	28	15	10	0	138	4.1
15 to 19 yrs (n=15)	25	14	9	2	2	52	3.5
20 to 29 yrs (n=20)	45	4	12	10	1	72	3.6
30 yrs above (n=11)	35	8	0	4	0	47	4.3
Class grades being taught by the teachers							
Jss 1 (n=21)	50	28	6	2	1	87	4.1
JSS 2 (n=15)	35	20	3	2	1	61	4.1
JSS 3 (n=31)	55	28	24	4	3	114	3.7
SSS 1 (n=26)	55	0	21	14	1	91	3.5
SSS 2 (n=25)	60	24	12	4	1	101	4.0
SSS 3 (n=32)	95	16	18	6	0	135	4.2

Table III: Reasons for using the School library

S/N	Reasons	Very frequent	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Very rare	Total Weight Value (TWV)	Variable score (TWV/n)
	Weights	5	4	3	2	1		
1	To read own books	215	212	96	28	8	559	3.7
2	To read newspaper	65	160	117	40	38	420	2.8
3	To use library resources e.g dictionary	60	76	87	62	59	343	2.3
4	To develop curriculum units	110	200	117	50	14	491	3.3
5	For develop lesson note and research assignment	135	216	123	52	12	538	3.6
6	To use the library computer	55	156	90	64	37	402	2.7
7	To use the library photocopier etc	45	92	66	84	54	341	2.3

Table IV: Reasons why you do not want to use the school library as expected

S/N	Reasons	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Not sure	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	Total weight value (TWV)	Variable score (TWV/n)
	Weights	5	4	3	2	1		
1	No adequate books	290	240	36	20	10	596	4.0
2	I do not have enough time to use the library	85	184	51	54	43	417	2.8
3	I do not know how to use the library for my teaching	40	72	45	114	52	322	2.1
4	I'm not interested in the school library	40	64	64	104	58	330	2.2
5	The school librarian is not a professional	80	100	72	82	44	378	2.5

Table V: Teachers rating of expectation of services from their School librarians

S/N	Services	Excellent (Rank=5)	Above average (Rank=4)	Average (Rank=3)	Below average (Rank=2)	Very poor (Rank=1)	Total Weight Value (TWS)	Variable Score (VS)
1	Arrangement of books on the shelves	215	208	120	24	3	570	3.8
2	Making books accessible for reading and borrowing	160	236	120	26	6	548	3.7
3	Assisting students and teachers in locating information	180	208	129	26	6	549	3.7
4	Planning and implementing events	105	140	117	70	20	452	3.0
5	Instructing students on how to use the library resources	195	172	111	50	6	532	3.5
6	Working with teachers in developing curriculum units and providing teaching aids	115	168	147	40	16	486	3.2