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THE USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR SUPPORTING EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

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Abstract

This paper is a research paper trying to find out the level of provision of school libraries and information services in primary schools in four Local Government Areas of Kaduna State. One hundred and sixteen (116) schools were randomly selected out of 577 public schools in the four Local Government Areas. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was administered to all the head teachers of the sampled schools. The study found that only 22 schools (18.96%) have libraries. Examining the types of materials in the libraries, textbooks ranked highest with 16 (13. 79%) libraries while no library had films strips and slides. As for the highest qualification of the librarians, most libraries were managed by primary school leavers (cleaners) while some libraries had nobody directly managing them. However, two schools had Diploma in Library Science holder and one school had a degree holder managing the library. The schools had very poor ways of funding their libraries. 'The writer recommends that primary schools need to have libraries because that is where the foundation for the use of library later in life is laid. The writer further recommends that Local Government Education Authorities as well as the schools and the old pupils associations of schools team up to provide libraries in primary schools. In the interim, teachers who must have taken the use of libraries course at N.C.E level should attempt introducing children to the use of library using the class library. "

Introduction

What does support refer to? In a lay main's language, we can refer to support as something that one can do to prevent a structure or someone from falling. In this paper we shall see the library as an institution or facility capable of lifting the standard or level of education. School libraries by implication are libraries that are situated in Nursery, Primary or Secondary schools. They are there to play the role of teaching aids for the teacher and learning aids for the learner, hence in most literature the school library is often referred to as a resource centre. For example, Elaturoti (1998), referred to the school library as a media resource centre. The value of a library in the school is not only measured by the size, quantity and variety of resources but also by the services it renders. Services such as book talk, display of attractive materials on display shelf or new arrival shelf of the library are very valuable services in school libraries. Useful and interesting displays are those that are not left for too long on the shelf. This will attract the children to visit the library very often since whenever they visit, they will find new attractive features. The school library personnel should be active in the area of service provision which include provision of variety of resources both print and non-print. Nickel (1975) sees this as a step towards providing a satisfactory service to school children.

In most cases, especially in Nigeria nursery and primary schools do not have libraries despite the fact that this is the level of educational institution that can be referred to as the foundation laying level. If the foundation is faulty, the building cannot stand properly and firmly. The architects of foundation building are teachers and they need to know the role they could play in introducing children to making use of the library provided they believe in what that can do to the education of the children. In America Library Association (ALA) World Encyclopedia of

Library and Information Services (1980), it was stated that school library does not become effective without the class room teacher. This is because the teacher who has control over every activity in the class can influence the use of library resources of his pupils.

The Role of School Libraries in Education

The school library provides educational activities for the teacher and the learner. They enrich the curriculum, stimulate initiative on the part of the pupils and develop healthy minds, socialize and democratize values and they have an important part in character development. In order to facilitate the realization of these values, the developed world can go to as far as sending the best teacher in a school to train as a librarian so as to enable him/her perform the dual role of a teacher and a librarian. It is the teacher who should influence the establishment of libraries in the school because he stands to gain much from such a facility being available and functional in the school. The teacher uses the library to assist children acquire the skills of self directed learning because the library is concerned with creating a community of lifelong learners with skills to locate, use and evaluate information using variety of resources that an individual cannot afford to have, personally.

The development of school libraries cannot be isolated from developments in education because modern school libraries are a part of education. The demand for the modern, well-equipped, well-staffed school library has emerged from changes in education which have led to greater demand for resources in schools. Libraries are meant to provide facilities for pupils to learn effectively from. The phrase 'learning to learn' is increasingly seen in statements in education. Changes in teaching methods have led to greater freedom for pupils to develop learning and information acquisition skills while using a wide variety of resources for classroom

based work or for project work in class and in the library. It was in the light of this that Lonsdale (2003) reported an outcome of a research stating that in schools with good libraries, funded and the services of a good librarian, students performed significantly better on tests for basic research skills; and they performed significantly better in reading comprehension and in their ability to express effectively ideas in relation to their reading. With this realization, the school library should be a must in all primary schools.

School Libraries in the fact of Global Economic Challenge

The school library can provide learning resources for a school in the face of economic depression. Since no meaningful learning can take place without the backing of information resources, all hands must be on deck to provide materials for the school library. The cost of print and non-print materials is a barrier to teachers and pupils acquiring up to date materials for their personal use. The library provides a variety of resources including reference and rare materials which enable pupils obtain information with the assistance of the librarian.

Many international studies, one of which was conducted by Ontario Library Association (2006) have demonstrated a link between students' achievement and the presence of professionally staffed and accessible school libraries. A competent, effective librarian is the key to good library services. Because by his training he understands children and has the ability to manage and direct them, he can identify their needs and meet them adequately.

The presence of school library will provide a solid foundation for using information as children grow and mature. Libraries should hold resources that can provoke children to possess the ability to recall, summarize, paraphrase and to extend resulting to producing children that

exhibit the ability of critical thinking. Any child growing along these lines will be a sound student in the future.

What can the Teacher do?

In spite of the negligence in the provision of library service in primary schools, there is still need for efforts to be made. While efforts are being made, teachers should do their best to introduce the concept of library service to pupils, which this paper refers to as "thinking outside the box." The teacher can provide a functional library corner with books made available for children to borrow. Any book donation that is kept in the headmaster's office as a result of the absence of a library in the school should be distributed to classes so that teachers could have them as their class library collection.

The teacher should dedicate the class reading period to practice the use of library. There would be experimental lending and borrowing, there would be reading competition using the class library resources and token gifts given to the most dedicated pupils. Arrangement could be made with the public library so that mobile library services would be provided. As books are brought to the school, the class teacher receives them on behalf of the class and does the charging and discharging. The idea is to emphasize to the children the importance of library service to their learning process.

Statement of the problem

Despite government pronouncements on the provision of school libraries and library services to support education in Nigeria, school libraries are still a mirage. Again despite the fact that primary school is the basic level of education that libraries should be made available to

because of the role it plays in the foundation of education of the pupils, it is the most neglected area. Where libraries are established, they are scarcely available in public primary schools and where they are available, they are not functional since the managers of such libraries are not professionals. Teachers seem not to realize the role they can play in establishing libraries in primary schools and in encouraging children to utilize libraries.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised and answered

1. Are there libraries in public primary schools in Sabon Gari, Zaria, Giwa and Soba Local Government Areas of Kaduna State?
2. What are the types of resources /materials available in the school libraries
3. What roles do teachers play in encouraging pupils to use the libraries
4. Who are the managers of the school libraries ?
5. What are the qualifications of the school librarians?
6. How do schools get funds for acquiring materials for their libraries?

Methodology

A survey method was used to study all the public primary schools in Sabon Gari, Zaria, Giwa and Soba Local Government Areas of Kaduna State. These LGAs have 54, 117, 198, 208 primary schools respectively which form the population of the study. Random sampling technique was used to select 20% of the population as the sample hence 11 schools from Sabon Gari, 23 from Zaria, 40 from Giwa and 42 from Soba LGAs were selected bringing the total sample size to 116 schools. Questionnaire was used to gather the data from head teachers of every school or their representatives hence 116 questionnaires were administered, one questionnaire per school and simple percentages were used for analysis. The population and sample of the study are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Population and Sample of the Study

S/No.	Location	Number of Schools	Sample
1	Sabon Gari	54	11
2	Zaria	117	23
3	Giwa	198	40
4	Soba	208	42
	Total	577	116

***Source*: SUPEB Kaduna, 2011**

Results of the Research

The first research question of this study was aimed at finding out the availability of school libraries in the schools. Table 2 reveals that 22 schools (18.96%) have libraries while 94 (81.04%) do not have libraries.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Availability of Libraries in the schools of study

S/No	**Location (LGEA)**	**No of schools**	**AV**	**%**
1	Sabon Gari	11	4	36.36%
2	Zaria	23	7	30.43%
3	Giwa	40	5	12.50%
4	Soba	42	6	14.28%
Total	4	116	22	18.96%

Types of materials available in the school libraries

In seeking to find out the types of resources available in the 16 table 3 reveals that the highest types of resources available are text books libraries (13.79%) followed by fiction /story books 12 (10.34%). Only 3 schools (2.59%) in Zaria Local Government Area have computers and the computers were not found in the library.

Table 3: Distribution of types of materials in the school libraries

S/No	Items	ZLG	S/GLG	GLG	SLG	Total	%
1	Text book	5	4	3	4	16	13.79
2	Reference Materials	3	-	-	-	3	2.59
3	Faction books/story books	5	2	3	2	12	10.34
4	Magazines	2	-	-	-	2	1.72
5	Newspapers	2	1	1	-	4	3.45
6	Plash cards	2	-	-	-	2	1.72
7	Film strips	-	-	-	-	-	0.00
8	Slides	-	-	-	-	-	0.00
9	Audio tape	2	-	1	-	3	2.59
10	Redio Tapes and player	3	-	1	-	4	3.45
11	Computers	2	-	-	-	2	1.7

Key

ZLG = Zaria Local Government

S/GLG= Sabon Gari Local Government

GLG = Giwa Local Government

SLG = Soba Local Government

COMP= Computers

Teachers' Roles in Encouraging Library use

To find out this, the researcher interacted with the teachers and found out that many of them did not use the library themselves so they did not encourage the children to use the library either. When they were asked whether they gave children assignments to make use of the library they said they only gave the children home work and not assignments that could be done using the library.

Qualification of the school librarian

It was revealed that most school libraries did not have qualified librarians. The highest qualification recorded was Diploma in Library Science except in Zaria Local Government that there was one (1) degree holder in Library Science. Most school libraries were being taken care of by Primary and Secondary School leavers who were messengers or cleaners as shown on table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of School Librarians by Qualification

S/NO	Items	ZLG	S/GLG	GLG	SLG
1	Primary School Certificate	1	1	1	1
2	Secondary School Leaver	1	1	1	1
3	Grade II Teacher Certificate	1			1
4	Senior Library Assistant (SLA)				
5	Assistant Library Officer (ALO)				
6	Diploma in Library Science (DLS)	1		1	
7	Bachelor in Library Science (BLS)	1			

Sources of funds for the Acquisition of Library Materials

Responses to this question show that it was mostly the management of the schools that provided funds for the acquisition of library materials, other sources were not very prominent. Table 5 shows the distribution pattern of the sources of funds for the acquisition of library materials.

Table 5: Sources of funds for acquisition of library materials.

S/NO	Items	ZLG	S/GLG	GLG	SLG
1	School Management	2	2	2	2
2	Parents Teachers Association	1	1	-	-
3	Library Funds	1	-	-	1
4	Alumni	1	-	-	-
5	Philanthropists	2	-	2	-
6	Local Government	1	-	1	-
7	Private Individuals	3	1	1	-
8	Gift/Donations	4		3	1
9	State Library Board	1	1	1	1
10	Local Community	-	-	-	-

Discussion

Reference to table 2 in this study, the number of schools that have libraries is extremely low. The absence of libraries does not provide support for the teacher nor does it agree with what the National Policy on Education (2004) says. For the library to render effective service, there

should be useful resources. Textbooks in school libraries are useful resources as they assist children to have access to textbooks that they are not able to secure due to financial constraints.

It is equally useful that libraries stock other resources as their presence in the school libraries complement and supplement prescribed textbooks. It is in this light that experts such as Dike (2001), Lonsdale (2003) and Jaja (2008) talked about having print and non-print resources in school libraries. Also the National policy on Education specifically states that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities should be provided in all levels of education. It is not proper that children will pass through primary school without knowing what a computer is as seem in this study.

The teacher has a role to play in assisting children to make use of the library. First and foremost, the teacher should insist that there be a library period on the school time table. This can be discussed during staff meeting. When he/she takes children to the library, he should be able to introduce them to different types of books through the help of the librarian. Also he/she should give children assignments and direct them to make use of the library. This will address the problem reported by Jaja (2008) of not allowing children from public school in the Federal Capital Territory to have access to books.

According to Herring (1986), most standards for school libraries in the U.K, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand recommend that the school librarian should be a qualified personnel. He/she should be a chartered librarian though this qualification is more suitable for a secondary school librarian. At the primary school level, the school librarian should possess at least a diploma and a teaching qualification. In Nigeria, a National Certificate in Education (NCE) holder who took library science as an elective course at his NCE level would be a good

substitute for a teacher librarian. The implication of this is that schools should find out the qualification of their teachers and assign the responsibility of establishing and running the school library to those who offered library science as elective at their NCE levels.

Most schools were not aware that P.T.A. could be used to develop libraries in their schools. As shown on the table none of the schools ever thought of using alumni of the schools to fund the library since most of the schools in the study do not have that association. There is no school that does not have influential people that graduated from that school. Such people could be approached and encouraged to invest in the school by providing funds to acquire books and other library resources for the school library. In the same vein, philanthropists can also be approached. The school with its meager resources may not have to use it after all if these are explored.

Conclusion

As a foundation level of education, primary schools need libraries that will assist children achieve effective learning. This paper reported a study carried out on the library as a support for education. It was discovered that most schools didn't have libraries. Any school that had a library did not have a qualified staff running it. The study also found out that most schools did not have steady means of funds for acquiring library materials. Teachers are very instrumental in inculcating ideas into the minds of children, hence they should be involved in ensuring that library service is utilized by primary school pupils. They need to create a library environment in their classes as well as encourage their pupils by directing them to use the library to carry out assignments.

Recommendations

1. All schools whether private or public should make it a point of duty to establish libraries. In the absence of libraries in the schools, teachers should adopt the "thinking outside the box" strategy mentioned in this paper. That is, they should establish functional class libraries by providing book boxes whereby they could make arrangement with mobile libraries to supply them books for the boxes once a week. They will make the class library functional by organizing loan service for the children and also encouraging children to share what they have read from the library with the class members. This is in agreement with what (Daudu 2002) suggested.

2. Improve on the types of materials in the school library by adding stories written by children to the library collection; procure reference materials for the library too.

3. Teachers should ensure that a library hour is included on the school time table. They should refer children to the library regularly to encourage them to make use of the library. Reading competition and spelling contests could be organized by teachers. This will enable children to use reading as well as reference materials such as dictionaries to prepare for this exercise.

4. At the primary school level, the school librarian should possess at least a diploma and a teaching qualification. In Nigeria, National Certification in Education (NCE) holder who took library science as an elective course at NCE level could be used as a teacher librarian. The implication of this is that schools should find out the qualification of their teachers and assign the responsibility of establishing and running the school library to

those who offered library science as elective at their NCE levels. In addition, the school could sponsor such teachers to attend workshops and seminars on school librarianship.

5. Schools should explore the possibilities of using old pupils of the school to develop the school library. Where PTA is not functional, the school should ensure that a strong PTA is established and encouraged to introduce development projects such as establishing school libraries.

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