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A Survey of the Use of School Libraries by Students in Government Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This paper examined the use of school libraries in government secondary schools in Delta State. Four objectives and four research questions guided the study. The design of the study is a descriptive survey which used questionnaire and personal interview as the instrument for data collection. The analyses of the result of findings showed that majority of the respondents were males and were in senior secondary school three. The result also showed that most of the government secondary schools in Delta State have no functioning libraries, though their students are cognizance of the roles of functioning libraries in promoting independent reading habit, yet they cannot see its relevance to the fulfilment of their educational objectives. Majority of the respondents did not favour school and library services taking off simultaneously. The paper went on to make recommendations on how the lots of library services in these schools can be improved upon, and emphasized that there is much more to library use and its services than just passing examinations.

Keywords: *School libraries, Government secondary schools, use, survey, Delta State.*

1.1 Introduction

Government secondary schools are schools owned and managed by the government either at the federal or state level. They are not owned by the private sector. The contribution of government secondary schools to school and economic development cannot be over emphasized. In the present information and knowledge world, Nigeria and other countries are faced with changes induced by market trends, development in information and communication technology (ICT) and the likes, that have engulfed business organizations, in institutions, society and education in general. The development in library services has affected the operations as well as the purpose of government secondary education systems with respect to curriculum content, instructional aids and methods of teaching. These new challenges and opportunities especially in ICT cannot be addressed with outdated educational tools but by developing a formidable curriculum studies and effective utilization of the school library services. The library has a revolutionary impact of educational methodology globally.

Some of the major purposes of library services is to supplement and/or complement what the teachers teach in the classroom, this goes on to say that the genuine foundation of how to make, use of library services in higher

institution, is laid at the secondary school level. The federal government decision to maintain uniformity of exposure to secondary school education for the products of Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme took off in 1976. From the above, it is clear that the Federal Government then was very concerned about the present and the future standard of education of the Nigerian youth. This is in agreement, with the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (Revised) 1981, which states:

"Government will take various measures to implement the policy lifelong education will be the basis for the nation's educational policies, educational and training facilities will be multiplied and more accessible. The educational system will be structured to develop the practice of self learning.

The broad aims of secondary school education within our over-all national objective are:

i. Preparation for useful living within the society and
ii. Preparation for higher education

The National Policy on Education (1981) states the role of libraries "as one of the most important educational services" Hence functioning libraries be established in all secondary schools in accordance with the established standard. There shall also be provision for the training of librarians and library assistants for these services (Gojeh 2004).

The school library is acknowledged in the National Policy on Education as one of the educational institutions required to achieve the national educational goals. How important and crucial are the roles of school libraries in realizing educational goals and dreams is a question every stakeholder in the educational sector must be able to proffer solution.

School libraries have important roles to play in achieving our educational goals and objectives set by the nation. IFLA and UNESCO (2000) listed the core services of school libraries as follows:

i. Supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum.
ii. Developing and sustaining children in the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning and the use of library throughout their lives.
iii. Offering opportunities for experiences in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment
iv. Supporting all student in learning and practicing skills for evaluation and using information
v. Providing access to local, state, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions.
vi. Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity
vii. Working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school.
viii. Proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information that are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation is a democracy.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objectives of the research include the following:

1. To find out whether the role of school library is fully appreciated in the schools under study.
2. To find out whether these schools have well established libraries
3. To find out whether library resources and services are fully utilized where they are available.
4. To offer useful suggestions, which can lead to improvement of school libraries.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following:

1. What is the school libraries' level of functionality?
2. To what extent are the libraries instrumental to the promotion of reading habit?
3. How necessary is it for school operations and school library services to take off simultaneously?
4. How relevant is school library to the fulfilment of academic objectives?

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Majority of the Government secondary schools in Delta State are not taking the issue of library services as a serious one. Whereas, for any student to be verse in the use of library facilities when he/she gets to higher institution, the foundation must be laid during secondary school days.

This study is set to establish the need for library education/library services to be imparted in students right from this level of education so that such will not look strange to them at the later stage and they will just build on the foundation already laid.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The importance of the school library in fulfilling the educational programme of a school cannot be over emphasized. Amusa and Odusan (2012) submitted that education and library are two vital institutions of socialization and perpetuation of the human race. The two cannot be separated in all round development of a child.

Fegatu (2002) sees the library as an "instructional center and learning resource center, He sees the library as an important part of the school education system. There is no way a school can carry out and succeed in her educational programme without a functioning library. This submission was upheld by Nwagor (2010) when he stressed that, libraries form an effective instrument of education that our educational system has not fully recognized.

Amusa and Odusan (2012) corroborate the above in their study "a survey of secondary school students understanding and use of school libraries in Ogun State". They submitted that "libraries are established to advance the course of education. Library objectives are interwoven with that of education they both aim at producing intellectually developed and complete individuals in the society.

In the words of Adeke (2015) "the school library is a collection of books and form of recorded knowledge, housed, organized and interpreted to meet the broad needs of the students and staff for information, recreation and inspiration". Library service is a life wire of any educational institution or academic programme. The question of when a library should come up in the existence of a school does not arise since the library should normally start off with the school. This idea was supported by Odusanya (2002), when he described the role of school library as the provision of information for educational research, planning and recreational purpose. A well equipped and organized library will definitely encouraged both students and teachers in the process of self-learning and independent enquiry.

Many students in secondary schools (both public and private) don't really see the need to make use of school library. This must be due to orientation. Oke (2000) submitted that students should be encouraged to see the need to make use of library and stop the over dependence on single textbook.

Adey (2007), expressed that the educational function of library lies in its capacity to provide information for the group and individual needs of the society it serves, school libraries are assets to the instructional system, to satisfy the inquiring minds of the pupils – showing the pupils the gateway to the

world of information and knowledge.

A good school library should be centrally located with good lighting, ventilation and adequate accommodation. (Dorothy, 2007) She goes further to state the facilities needed in a good school library as: building, furniture and equipments, the library collection should include books and non-book materials with qualified staff. According to Amusa and Odusan (2012), school library is expected to bring its services within the reach of every member of the school irrespective of their social and mental status and also provide resources of all types on all subjects for students at various levels and classes.

Davies Ruth (2006) submitted that stakeholders and education planners in the country have failed to realize that standard library in a secondary school adds new breath to learning. Schools (public ones) are being established in the country today without adequate plans for functioning school libraries to serve as complement of teaching and learning. She emphasized that today's school library is a force and source for educational excellence. The direct support of the school library is fundamental to the basic design and optimum implementation of education for excellence.

Something very urgent need to be done to salvage the standard of education in Nigeria (which currently is rocking the bottom line) especially public schools. Udoh (2002), explained that although investment in education has become accepted as a real investment, but unfortunately libraries are still not recognized nor treated as an integral part of educational activities. He goes on to say that it is a very sad development because since 1969, the fourth common wealth education conference (1968) recognized the role of libraries and the use of audio-visual aids in education by including these in their agenda.

3.1 Methodology

The state (Delta State) was divided into three (3) Geo-political zone: Delta Central, Delta North and Delta South. Data for this study were collected through the instrument of a questionnaire and personal interview with school, principals, teachers and school librarians. Schools were randomly picked in each zone and 1,800 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to SSS (Senior Secondary School) students of the schools under study in such a way that every bonafide senior secondary school student of these schools had a chance of being a respondent. At the end of the exercise, 1,760 (98%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and were found useable.

4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation
Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	956	54.3
Female	84	45.7
Total	1760	100

Demographic information of the respondents revealed that 956 respondents representing 54.3 percent are male while 804 respondents or 45.7 percent are female.

Table 2: Respondents' Level of Study

Response	Frequency	Percentage
SS1	458	26
SS2	618	35.1
SS3	684	38.9
Total	1760	100

Their level of studies is at the three class level of the senior secondary school. Hence, 485 respondents or 26 percent are from SS1, 618 or 35.1 percent from SS2, and 684 or 38.9 percent from SS3. Tables I and II below give the graphic representation of this findings:

Many students from the schools covered by the study understood what a functioning library is. When interviewed, some said they have been to and used libraries in their vicinity most especially state, public and local government libraries. Most of them agreed that functioning libraries are well stocked with relevant study materials, have adequate furniture and should be adequately staffed.

Table 3: What is the school libraries level of functionality

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Above average	509	28.9
Average	589	33.5
Below average	662	37.6
Total	**1760**	**100**

Reality became reflective in their response to the instrument of this study. 509 respondents or 28.9 percent agreed that they have functioning libraries while 589 or 33.5 of the respondents agreed that their libraries are just average, while 662 or 37.6 percent of the respondents rejected their glorified "reading-room" libraries as functioning type.

Table 4: To what extent are the school libraries instrument to the promotion of Reading Habit

Response	Frequency	Percentage
High instrumental	674	38.2
Fairly instrumental	594	33.8
Not instrumental	492	28
Total	**1760**	**100**

Majority of the students are cognizance of the importance of library services as good instrument in forming study habit. During this research, 674 respondents or 38.2 percent of the respondents agreed that availability of library services is instrumental to independent study habit. 594 or 33.8 percent of the respondents agreed that this will only be fairly instrumental to reading habit, while 492 or 28 percent of the respondents cannot see the availability of the library services contributing to independent study habit.

Table 5: How necessary is it for school operations and school library services to take off simultaneously

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very necessary	703	39.9
Fairly necessary	594	33.8
Not necessary	463	26.3
Total	**1760**	**100**

Some of the respondents who recognized the invaluable services libraries can render desire that schools like theirs suppose to have taken off with a well organized library. 703 respondents representing 39.9 percent of the population agreed to the simultaneous take off of the school libraries and the school. They saw this as very essential. 594 or 33.8 percent said such is fairly necessary while 463 or 26.3 percent could not see the need for any simultaneous take off.

Table 6: How relevant is school library to the fulfilment of academic objectives

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly relevant	-	-
Relevant	722	41
Not relevant	568	32.3
Strongly irrelevant	470	26.7
Total	**1760**	**100**

None of the respondents agreed that library services are strongly relevant to the attainment of their academic objectives. 722 or 41 percent of the respondent agreed that libraries are relevant, 568 or 32.3 percent agreed that such services are irrelevant while 470 or 26.7 percent, strongly opposed the relevance of library services to the fulfilment of their academic objectives.

Table 7: Schools and Availability of library services and staffing

School and Availability of Library Services				Staffing			
Schools	Year Establishment	Functioning Library	Non Functioning Libraries	Library Attendants	Library Assistants	Library Officers	Professional Librarian
Delta Central							
1. Federal Government College, Warri	1966	x	-	-	x	-	-
2. Abraka Grammar School, Abraka	1956	x	-	-	x	-	-
3. Okpe Grammar School, Sapele	1968	-	x	-	-	-	-
4. Government Sec. School, Mosogar	1949	x	-	-	x	-	-
5. Our Lady of Nigeria Sec. School, Oghara	1953	-	x	-	-	-	-
Delta North							
1. Gov. Model Sec. School, Asaba	1967	-	x	-	-	-	-
2. Cambridge School Asaba	1957	-	x	-	-	-	-
3. Beni val Montessori School, Oshimili North	1959	-	x	-	-	-	-
	1972	-	x	-	x	-	-
4. Santa Maria College, Aniocha South	1955	x	-	-	x	-	-
5. Idumuesah Sec. School, Ika North							
Delta South							
1. Emevor	1948	.	x		-	-	-
2. Alaka Gram. Sch., Ozoro	1957	-	x	-	x	-	-
3. James Welch Grammar School., Emevor	1949	-	x	-	x	-	-
4. Golden Crest Academy, Emede	1972	-	x	-	-	-	-
5. Owhelogbo Grammar School, Owhelogbo	1959	-	x	-	-	-	

Source: *Delta State Ministry of Education/Education Board*
Date of Information: *November, 2020*

Table 7 shows government secondary schools randomly selected from each of the three Geo-political zones in Delta State. The table shows whether the schools have functioning library or not, the date of establishment and the staffing situation of the school libraries under study. Five schools were randomly picked from each zone for this purpose, otherwise the space to be occupied by all the school will be too enormous.

3.1 Methodology

The state (Delta State) was divided into three (3) Geo-political zone: Delta Central, Delta North and Delta South. Data for this study were collected through the instrument of a questionnaire and personal interview with school, principals, teachers and school librarians. Schools were randomly picked in each zone and 1,800 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to SSS (Senior Secondary School) students of the schools under study in such a way that every bonafide senior secondary school student of these schools had a chance of being a respondent. At the end of the exercise, 1,760 (98%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and were found useable.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Most of the government secondary schools investigated in this study has peculiar problem, which is lack of functioning libraries. Most of the students appreciated the fact that functioning libraries should be well stocked, staffed and should promote independent study habit. They also agreed that secondary school establishment and library development should be simultaneous, but they still failed to see the relevance of library services to the fulfilment of their academic objectives. This may be connected to the fact that most of the students perform very well in their external examinations like WASCE (West African School Certificate Examination) and NECO (National Examination Council). They

believed that, that was all they would have needed the library for. Thus, there is need to educate the students that there is much more to library use/services than just passing examinations.

In this study, the researcher tried to find out what factors are responsible for the student good performance in their examinations, despite the absence of good and functioning libraries in their schools. In the interview held with both school principals and teachers, the following was discovered:

a. Teachers in these schools take time to teach the students effectively even though most of them are not professionals.

b. The school managements encouraged students to buy textbooks on all subjects he/she might be offering.

c. Teachers supervise the students during prep, which is daily affair except Fridays.

However, as good as these practices are, they cannot be substitute for good and functioning library services. There will be no prep or reading supervision in tertiary institutions. Students will always be at liberty to make good use of their time and the library services available.

In most of the schools visited, there is lack of suitable structure for library services. The shelves are not enough and where they were available, they were substandard. Many pieces of furniture found in those libraries were inappropriate for library purposes. Majority of the libraries visited lack professionally qualified staff and many don't have functioning libraries, where there is one, the highest they could go in terms of staffing is the appointment of library assistant. Most staff found on duty in these libraries have never attended any library course.

Inadequate stocking is another major problem these school libraries are facing. The volume of holdings in each of the library is grossly inadequate. Book per student is not even up to one. The findings revealed that there is lack of fund for articulate library

development in the Government Secondary Schools under study, which is rather unfortunate, whether a school library's objectives are adequately met or not depends largely on the financial, human and material resources available to it.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher will like to make the following recommendations: School heads (principals) should as a matter of urgency make library development part of the capital projects of the schools. It is suggested that they can set aside 20% of their annual budget to put in place necessary library facilities like books and non-book materials, book shelves, reading chairs and table etc until they are able to meet the required library, standard. A school library committee should be set up whose major pre-occupation would be the development of library services in the school.

Trained library staff should be employed to maintain the school library services, the trained staff should be able to give the school library a professional touch in the area of acquisition, processing, organizing and making learning materials accessible.
Students of Government Secondary Schools, should be well oriented and sensitized on the roles and relevance of library services to their overall educational development and attainment. The State Ministry of Education should be more articulate in carrying out their supervisory roles on all Government Secondary Schools to ensure that the schools do not compromise standard in respect of library services.

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