

AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCES BY STUDENTS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OWERRI WEST LGA IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The general purpose of the study is availability and utilization of school library resources by students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West L.G.A, Imo State. The survey design research was used for the study. The researcher constructed three research questions which were analyzed based on mean value differentials. The research adopted census method which was used to investigate 364 students from the senior secondary schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State. Self constructed and validated questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. Findings showed that the format of the information resources in the school library of the secondary schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State is low and that some information resources are not relevant, even though use of the library is dependent on information relevance and information relevance satisfies use of the library. The study recommends that efforts should be made to determine if information resources contain idea that will be valuable and useful to the user before they are acquired and made available to the users.*

KEY WORDS: availability, utilization, school library, resources

INTRODUCTION

School libraries are organized collection of books placed in schools for teachers and students. It may comprise reference books and books for home reading under the care of a professional librarian. It is an indispensable unit in any school, regardless of its educational philosophy.

According to Unegbu (2012), a school library can be said to be a miniaturized intellectual power house or information centre found in primary schools, secondary schools and teachers training colleges, that is, it is a stepping stone towards a child's intellectual development. The author further stated that a school library is an organized collection of books placed in school for use by both the teachers and students. Nwaigwe (2012) states that school libraries are found in pre-primary and secondary, primary and secondary schools that have collections for young children. They contain a wide variety of teaching and learning resources for their pupils and teachers.

According to Aniebo (2007), school libraries support and enrich the academic programme of their parent body as well as serve the students and teachers. According to Ugocha (2011) school libraries are libraries established, maintained and administered at primary, secondary or other post primary schools such as teacher's training colleges whose objectives are to provide information services to support teaching and learning activities in schools. The author further states that a school library is an instructional centre supplying not only the basic necessary information materials but also that, which provides the incentives, the guidance and climate essential and conducive for learning. Anumkua, Alaehie and Igbokwe (2016) see school library as an information centre located in a school environment whose responsibilities are to identify, collect, organize, store, preserve, retrieve and disseminate information to the members of a school community namely teachers, students and non-tutorial staff with a view of satisfying their changing and varying information needs. They authors further state that a school library is a place where all Carriers of information are collected, stored and used to support and improve all educational activities.

The first concerted effort at the establishment and development of school libraries by the Nigeria government was in 1961 with the invitation of UNESCO to advice on how to develop school libraries. The result of the action led to the establishment of Federal Ministry of Education school library services in Lagos, which eventually spread to the state level (Ugocha, 2011: 67). The second positive step by the federal government was the provision of the sum of ~~N~~1.4 million for primary school library development throughout the country in the second National Development plan. Between 1970 and 1974 money budgeted for this scheme trickled down to the states through installmental distribution of this sum to states during the plan period. Such a development, according to Ifeka (2004), made it possible for many states to make positive plan for the development of school libraries in their respective areas by making some financial provision for school library development in their annual budget during the period.

Library resources are part of data and information assets of an organization, department or unit. Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) refer to library resources as the totality of information materials that form a library collection. The resources are acquired to satisfy the information needs of the library clientele and to realize the parent institutional goal. According to them, library resources are classified into two; print and non-print materials. The print materials are in form of books (monographs) and serials whereas Okoro (1999) is of the view that book library resources constitute the main source of information. Library resources are those possessions or property, which facilitate routine operations of the library. Effective library services are only possible when there is qualitative and quantitative adequacy of relevant library resources. It goes without saying therefore, that satisfactory library and information services are impossible without adequate provision of library resources.

Chernik (2002), states that the school libraries incorporate all types of media into their collections and programmes such as audio tapes, video tapes, films of all shapes and sizes programmed learning and computer-assisted instruction. The author further states that school libraries provide books, media and graph production facilities and equipment to support instruction, whether they are TV sets and cameras or overhead projectors. Attama and Ezema (2002) classify the resources of school libraries into books which consists of a set of printed sheet held together along one of the four edges and enclosed within productive cover to form a volume and other printed materials like pampwets which are library resources that appeal to our senses of hearing and sight, and they

include slides, films, audio tapes, audio-cassettes, video cassettes, computer and accessories, which are electronic media and they contain back-up facilities such as diskettes, CD –ROM, magnetic tapes and punched cards.

Availability, according to Hornby (2006), means being easily accessed, not being scarce or out of stock; things that one can get, buy or find. It is the capability of something being at one's disposal, something being free and not otherwise occupied. It is a performance criterion for repairable systems that account for both the reliability and maintainability properties of a component or system. Availability is defined as the probability that the system is operating properly when it is requested for use. In other words it is the probability that a system does not fail, or undergo a repair action when it needs to be used. Availability is the accessibility of a system in a timely manner; it means being at hand, capable of being gotten, being present and ready to use. In the words of Dipeolu (2006) availability means to achieve an end, fulfill a function; a stock supply that can be drawn upon. It is always associated with time and has to do with the accessibility of a system resource in a timely manner; e.g. is the measurement of a system's uptime. Availability is one of the six fundamental components of information security.

Tefko (2003) asserts that availability is the state of being ready and accessible when required or needed; while utilization is the use of resources in order to satisfy given needs on regular basis. Utilization is to use effectively, that is the ability to effectively make practical use of something available, which reveals that utilization is governed by availability and accessibility, and cannot be effective without both at the right time. Utilization differs from person to person and from one corporate organization to another, according to their information needs and socio-economic imperatives. In other words utilization is influenced by the kind or nature of things being carried out.

Finally, availability is the state of providing and making accessible necessary facilities, equipment and resources needed to be efficient and effective in achieving a set of goals in any organization or institution. Utilization on the other hand is maximizing the use of those resources made available to satisfy given needs on regular basis. Therefore, availability and utilization of school library resources is the state of providing and making accessible the necessary resources needed for serving the information needs of the users. Therefore school library resources can be severally utilized for various reasons and could be acquired through purchase, acquisition, gifts, donations, exchange, loans and so on. According to Aniebo (2004), secondary education shall provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity of higher level of education irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background. It is also to offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles, and provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades. Also secondary education shall develop and promote Igbo language and other languages in Nigeria, arts and culture in the context of world cultural heritage, and inspire students with a desire for self - improvement and achievement of excellence.

Again secondary education is to foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity, raise a generation of people who can think for themselves respect views and feelings, of others, respect the dignity of labour, and appreciate those values specified under our national goals and lives as good citizen and finally to provide technical knowledge and vocational

skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. Libraries are repositories of knowledge organized for use. Post primary school libraries are located within secondary schools with the sole purpose of providing services to support teaching and learning. The school library is geared towards implementing the purpose of the schools' general programmes, and to meet the educational objectives of the institution (Ksaur, 1995). The task of the school librarian or teacher librarian is therefore multifarious, considering the complex nature of the users, and the variety of learning interests.

The prime users of the school library are the students who need information to supplement their lesson notes, write assignment and to provide them with materials in their subject areas. In addition, the student expect the library to provide them with materials other than in their subject areas, and to play the role of the school where they can keep themselves up to date with developments in social, political, economic and cultural situations. School libraries are expected to provide light reading materials that can help to broaden the students; mind to respect and appreciate his culture and to develop his moral and intellectual horizon. It is also a place for the training of the student to understand his surroundings and to graduate as an educated and well (Aniebo, 2004: 34). It is therefore, against this backdrop that this study intends to investigate the availability and utilization of school library resources by students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West LGA, Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study.

- i. What types of school library resources are available to students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West L.G.A, Imo State?
- ii. What is the format of school library resources use by students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West L.G.A, Imo State?
- iii. What is the relevance of school library resources use by students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West, L.G.A, Imo State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library resources variables are the characteristics of library resources, in both print and non-print that have cause and effect on the use of the library. They influence the use of the library, positively or negatively. Therefore, the use of the library and its information resources to a large extent depend on such variables as availability, format, relevance, currency, accessibility and multiple copies.

Availability or non-availability of library resources and its effect in the use of library services has received the attention of library scholars in recent times. Availability of library resources means ensuring their presence in the school libraries for use. Buckland (2001) provides a lucid analytical framework for diagnosing frustrations felt by users who fail to locate on the library shelves the information resources they want. The author outlined four basic relations between the user and library resources availability, which are:

- i. For any given period, the chances of a copy of information source being on the shelves when sought varies with the popularity. The greater the popularity, the lower the immediate availability.

- ii. For any given popularity, the length of the loan period and the immediate availability are inversely related. The longer the loan period, the lower the immediate availability; the shorter the loan period, the higher the immediate availability.
- iii. For any given level of immediate availability, the popularity and length of the loan period are necessarily also inversely related.
- iv. The greater the popularity, the shorter the loan period has to be and less the popularity, the longer the loan period can be.
- v. Increasing the number of copies availability through duplicating, shortening the length of loan periods, increasing the immediate availability.

A study by Marama and Ogujumbi (2003) on availability of library and information Science (LIS) collections in Nigerian University libraries confirmed high unavailability rate of LIS collections in most libraries. This has affected the use of information resources in the libraries studied. The effect is that faculty members cannot conduct quality research and get published while library students cannot even use the library. The authors recommended that at least 5% of the book budget for the library should be set aside for the purchase of information resources on library and information science. Okiy (2000) conducted a study on assessing students' and faculty use of academic library of Delta State University, Abraka and found out that unavailability rate of Library resources in the library was a serious factor in the non-use of the library by most patrons. Iyoro (2004) in a similar study found out that availability of serials at the University of Ibadan was 94%. 242 of 256 respondents agreed that serials publications were available and this has increased their use of the library in that area. Oyediran-Tidings (2004) in her study, on the information needs and seeking behaviour of library users at the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos identified low patronage of the library by the students, which was attributed to the expressed unavailability of desired information resources. From the foregoing review, it can be said that availability or unavailability of information resources can make or mar the use of the library.

For most information professionals and library users, the format of informational content is the most important evaluation criteria for any information source. According to Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), the word, format, can be understood in two ways;

- i. as the peculiar or essential character of anything; and
- ii. as a degree of excellence.

It has both intrinsic and extrinsic connotation. From the intrinsic viewpoints, the quality of library resources pertains to their Pedagogic research value, and from extrinsic standpoint, it refers to their physical reliability and durability. The format of academic libraries is connected with library resources and services. Because libraries are service organizations, the format in the content of library resources is often treated as the quality of service (Pindlowa, 2002).

Brown (1994) maintains that information resources format of a library system expresses no more than its capacity to produce satisfactory results. The format of an information source, argued Cossette (2005), is not determined by the impressions of the persons in-charge (the librarians) as to the results achieved or by the subjective opinion of the users, but by the indicators of format, which is a quantifiable datum obtained by observation and systematic analysis. This quantifiable

datum indicates how far the results achieved match up to the objectives (expected results) from the information source. Simonds (2000) notes that the failure of a library to provide users' needs could lead to dissatisfaction.

This implies that a collection that does not have high format could lead to users' dissatisfaction but high quality collection could lead to user satisfaction. Clamson University Library (2001) investigates the performance of its main and branch libraries as regards to provision of resources to users. The survey revealed that the teaching staff and students were worried because the collections of their libraries were not high in format to meet their information needs for teaching, learning and research. Oshinaike and Abba (2001) noted in their studies the low or poor quality of information resources in Nigerian libraries. Agosto (1999) evaluates information resources format in terms of accuracy of the information provided, the source information (For primary source information, are the research methods adequately described and explained. For secondary source information, are the resources of information given), the source being relatively free from typographical and grammatical errors, the information being thorough, but not too thorough, and the information being presented in an interesting manner, but not so creatively as to obscure its meaning. The author concludes that if information is of low or dubious format, the source itself is of low or dubious format, regardless of its strength in other areas. In a nutshell, high format library resources signifies high user satisfaction and vice versa.

The concept of relevance is of concern to libraries because it underlines the effectiveness of any communication process. Tefko (2003) studied this concept and found out that there is a formal relationship between the quality of retrieved materials and their relevance. In the context of collection, library resources serve as the medium of communication between information and the patron (user). The effectiveness of this communication depends on the relevance of the information. In other words, patrons are not likely to consult a source which cannot supply them, with relevance information. Jam (1992) identifies lack of relevant library resources to be one of the problems facing library users. Osinulu and Balogun (2003) in a study reports that 18(10.71%) of the respondents indicated irrelevant library resources as a major drawback in their use of the library. Akande (2003) yet in a similar study of University of Ibadan Library reports that majority of the respondents indicated lack of textbooks of relevance to their studies as the students' major inhibition to their use of the library and its services.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study using questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was titled "Availability and Utilization of School Library Resources Questionnaire"(AUSLRQ). The population of the study is 364 students (Three Hundred and Sixty Four). This comprised all the students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West L.G.A, Imo State. No sample size was drawn from the population. This is because the population of the study is small and accessible. The census method was used to ensure that opinions of all the students were captured for the study.

Analysis

A total of the three hundred and sixty four (364) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State. Out of

these two hundred and ninety eight (298) were duly completed and return for analysis giving a response rate of (81.7%).

Research Question 1: What type of School Library Resources are Available to Students in Senior Secondary School in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Types of School Resources Available to Students

	Types of Library Resources	Available	Not Available
a.	Reference books	30	
b.	Texts books	207	
c.	Periodicals	23	
d.	E- resources	-	Not available
e.	Audio-visual materials	7	
	Total	270	
	Mean score	54%	

This research question was gathered using observational check list. A grand mean (x) score of 54% were available. This include reference books such as dictionaries, maps, Atlas, manuals, directories, and government publications; texts books such as fictions and non-fiction books; periodicals such as newspapers and magazines and audio visual materials such as maps, motion pictures, charts, posters and photographs while e-resources are not available in secondary school in Owerri West Local Government Area.

Research Question 2: What is the Format of School Library Resources Use by Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Format of School Library Resources Use by the Students

S/N	Format of the Library Resources	SA	A	D	SD	X
a.	The format of information resources in the library is low	109	51	48	60	2.80
b.	My use of the library depends on the format of information resources	113	84	49	52	2.87
c.	The format of information resources satisfied my use of the library.	98	89	61	50	2.79
d.	The format of the information resources don't satisfied my use of the library.	117	79	57	46	2.90
Significant mean value		2.84				

Based on the significant mean value of 2.84 as shown on table 2, the format of information resources in the library is low (x =2.80); my use of the library depends on the format of information resources (x = 2.87); the format of information resources satisfactory my use of the library (x= 2.79) and the format of information resources do not satisfies my use of the library (x =2.90). Generally, with the significant mean value of 2.84, evidence from the analysis shows that the use of the library resources has strong correlation with the format of the information resources.

Research Question 3: What is the Relevance of School Library Resources Use by Students in

Senior Secondary Schools in Owerri West Local Government Area Imo State?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Relevance of School Library Resources Use by Students

S/N	Relevance of School Library Resources	SA	A	D	SD	X
a.	My use of the library resources are not relevance.	101	91	52	54	2.8
b.	My use of the library depends on the relevance information resources.	110	93	57	38	3.1
c.	The relevance of the information resources do not satisfy my use of the library.	109	56	61	42	2.9
d.	The relevance of the information resources satisfies my use of the library.	120	83	67	28	3.0
	Significant Mean Value			3.0		

Table 3 reveals that the relevance of school library resources use by students in senior secondary schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State had significant mean value of 3.0. The information resources in the library are not relevant ($x=2.8$); my use of the library depends on the relevance of information resources ($x=3.1$); the information resources satisfy my use of the library ($x=2.9$) and the relevance of the information resources satisfy my use the library ($x=3.0$). Hence, it could be seen from the analysis that the relevance of school library resources use by students in senior secondary school in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State made them use the library.

FINDINGS

Evidence from Table 1 showed that there are different types of school library resources available in the library in the secondary schools in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State. These includes reference materials such as dictionaries, maps atlas, manuals, directories, government publications; text books such as fictions and non-fiction books, periodical such as newspapers and magazines and audio visual materials such as motion pictures, charts, posters and photographs. The finding are not in line with Marama and Ogijumbi (2003) who stated that there was high unavailability rate of school library collections in most school libraries. Okiy (2002) and Oyediran-Tidings (2004) in their respective studies also find out that there was unavailability of school library resources which leads to non- use of the school library where as Iyoro (2004) found that availability of school library resources increases the rate of use of the library.

As shown on table 2, the research found that most of the school library resources in the school libraries studies were of low format. This finding is corroborated with Oshindeke and Abda (2001) in their studies found that there is a relationship between format of school library resources and use of the library as indicated by the respondents in their resources on whether the format of the school library resources satisfied their use of the library. Majority of the respondents ($x=2.87$) indicated that their use of library is depended on the format of the school library resources in the library. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) revealed in their studies that there was low or poor format of information resources in Nigerian school libraries as Pindlowa (2002) in his study found that satisfactory library usage or service is a function of the format of information resources in the school library in terms of accuracy, sources, presentation of information and typographical and grammatical errors.

Data on Table 3 revealed that there is a positive dependence of library on the relevance of information resources. The respondents ($x = 3.1$) indicated that their use of the information resources in the school library is dependent on the relevance of information resources and ($x = 2.9$) also affirmed that the relevance of information resources satisfies use of the library. These findings agree with the studies of Tefk (2005) who found that there is a formal relationship between relevance of school library resources and use of the library likely to consult and information resources which could not supply them with relevant information. Balogun (2003) in his study reported that an irrelevant information resource is a major drawback in the use of the library.

Recommendations

1. The use of the library starts with the availability of information resources. One does not use what is not available. Therefore, school libraries studied should make efforts to be in co-operation with other libraries so as to be able to provide its users with what is not available through inter-library loan.
2. School library administrators should as a matter of fact, ensure that the intellectual and physical contents of the information resources made available to the users of the library must be of high standard in terms of accuracy and sources, authority, paper handling, type face, presentation of information and typographical and grammatical errors. Acquisition staff could be used to ascertain these.
3. The concept of relevance underlines the effectiveness of any communication process. Just like in format, effort should be made to determine if an information resource contains ideas that will be valuable and useful to the users, before they are acquired and made available to the users. Outdated information resources contain outdated information. Users need to be abreast of recent happenings in their field of study especially in science and technology. Recent books should be acquired. However, books of historical value, no matter how old, could be acquired to fill that knowledge

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