

Full Length Research

Teachers Utilization of the School Library: A Means for Developing the School Curriculum

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This work is set out to take a cursory view at teachers' utilization of school libraries as a means for developing the school curriculum. The study opens with a general introduction from which it proceed to a conceptual clarification of key concepts' employed in the paper. This is followed by a review of related literature on the topic on such sub themes as what a school library is, its objectives, roles they play in schools, the place of the school libraries in the national policy on education and then nose dive into the utilization of school libraries by teachers and how this will seemingly ensure the development of our school curriculum. The paper concludes by calling on all stake holders in the Nigerian society to lend a voice to the sorry state of our school libraries.

Key words: Teachers Utilization; School Library; School Curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

The Symbiotic relationship between books and education is so obvious that it is not debatable. This is because since the invention of books, they have been the principal vehicle for the transmission of knowledge, learning, and culture of the society. It is not surprising that Library which comes into existence as a result of the invention of books have become an invaluable tool for organizing knowledge In order to facilitate access to it. Libraries have become very important in the transmission. of knowledge to the extent that they have grown in the same proportion as the exponential Increases in the output of intellectual endeavors all over the world and the variety of formats in which they are presented (Banjo, 1993). It is. Equally not surprising that development of

Libraries all over the world have been closely linked with the establishment and proliferation of educational institutions, libraries have since therefore; become integral parts at the entire educational system. It is equally important in the realization of the educational objective of any nation. The success of any educational system depends on several factors and it is not an over statement to state that the library is the most important factor. The National Policy on Education (N.P.E, 2004 p. 47) confirms this when It states that "Libraries are one of the most important educational Services. Every state Ministry needs to provide funds for the establishment of Libraries in all our educational institutions".

Libraries in our educational institutions are very

important aspects of the institutions' educational programmes because they provide learning materials that support and promoted the educational programmes i.e. learning, teaching and recreation of the institutions. In fact, they are regarded as the beacon lights that illuminate the entire educational institutions. The Library is not only a part of the institution but it is its pulsing heart which quickens all learning activities. Therefore, the importance of Libraries in enhancing teaching and learning in schools and colleges cannot be over emphasized. In this connection, this paper attempts to highlight the importance of library services in the teaching and learning processes Vis a vis the National Policy on Education and to examine teachers utilization of the school library a means for developing the school curriculum our school system.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Concept of school libraries.

The school libraries are centres of information, a storehouse of recorded information materials for the use of students. It is an education agency meant to train the youth in a country (Federal Ministry Of Education, 1985)

The modern library is not a collection of text books. It include other sources like reference materials, books relating to school curriculum, general books not relating to a specific subject area, periodicals newspapers, audio-visual materials, government publications and electronically stored and retrievable materials. These resources enable libraries to play a crucial role in the success of life long education of students and society in general thus School libraries enrich curriculum and remain the common laboratory of a school.

Concept of a teacher

A teacher is someone who transmits knowledge. Edeka, (2010) opined that Teachers are people trained to impact education to students, who will be tomorrow's leaders,... a person who takes you out of darkness in order to see light.

Concept of utilization

Utilization connotes the extent to which a resource is put to use or not. As used in this parlance it means the extent to which teachers in our schools make use of school libraries collections in their task of transmitting knowledge. Hay, (2010) postulate that utilization is the primary method by which asset performance is measured and business successes determined.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A school library serves as a veritable mechanism for the attachment of the broad objective of education. School library provides the required study materials such as periodicals as well as audio-visuals like film strips, slide projector and other transparencies for effective teaching and learning, school library is the heart of the school around which all schools programmes revolves (Okoye 2014).

According to Owolabi (2010), the school library is a vital instrument in the education process. It is not a separate entity isolated from the total school programme, but totally integrated into the teaching and process of the school. In a similar view, Dike (2004), defined school libraries as a learning resources centres attached to individuals schools to support teaching and learning and serves as the nerves centre of curriculum.

The duo of Atagher and Adugh (2002), regards school libraries as libraries that are found at the primary and secondary school level and are established for the development of teaching and learning situation. This view is further expressed by kumar (2010), where he states that a school library as an information centre located in a school environment or school system whose responsibility and task is to identify and collect process, organize, store, preserve, retrieve and disseminate information pertinent to the need of members of the school community, namely the teachers, staff, with a view of satisfying their changing and varying information needs.

Owolabi,(2010) cited above submitted further that the school library is a catalyst for literacy and reading and teaching and scaffolding inquiring learning. She says that, school libraries make a difference to students understanding and achievement and provides support for teaching throughout the school. She also view school library as important as part of the school community and reflects and welcome into community.

OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL LIBRARY

A school library does not exist for itself. It exists to serve the objectives of the parent organization. The objectives of a good educational system are to equip individuals to be able to play their role in the society effectively. The library attempts to advance the objectives of the school. The aim of a good school library is to become a force for educational excellence.

The objectives of school library according to Kurmar (2010), are as follows:

To acquire, process and make available documents with emphasis on non-book materials (such as films,

filmstrips, video tapes, video cassettes, overhead projection, transparencies, audio cassettes slide, and gramophone records e.tc. Photographs, maps, charts, globes, newspaper clipping; models, handout (duplicated summary of class lectures). To server the needs of the students and teachers adequately.

To provide user education to enable students to become skillful and discrimination users.

To create among students lifelong reading habits and To play an effective role in school programme.

In order to achieve these objectives, a modern school library should also be considered a resource centre, providing open access to its users. It should be made a centre of informed education. Above all it should be a hub of the activities in a school.

Roles of Libraries in Schools

Libraries in schools are very important in the realization of the School's educational objectives. They are also essential tools in the intellectual, social and cultural development of the child. Adeniji (2006 pp 32-41) observed that "Both the school and the library are inseparable", and that "none of the two will function well without the other". In the same light, Odunsanya (2006) cited in Adeniji is of the view that a well structured educational system and a reasonably articulate library system is required to nurture the implementation of the National Policy on Education to success.

The distinctive role of libraries in schools is that of assisting students to develop the abilities and habits of using books and libraries. However, the specific roles of libraries in schools have been enumerated by Stam, in Salifu (1989, pp. 49 – 50) as follows.

- 1.To awaken and develop the interest of the child in reading so that he could become similar with books and other sources of information.
- 2.To help the students to develop the habits of studying independently as well as develop the ability of finding out information for themselves from a variety of sources.
- 3.To participate effectively in the school programmes as it strives to meet the needs of students, teachers, parents and other community members.
- 4.To provide students with the library materials and services most appropriate and most meaningful in their growth and development as individuals.
- 5.To stimulate and guide students in-all phases of their learning so that they may find increasing enjoyment and satisfaction and grow in critical judgment appreciation.
- 6.To provide an opportunity through library experiences for the pupils to develop helpful interests to make satisfactory personal adjustments, and to acquire

desirable social attitudes.

- 7.To help children to become skillful and discriminating users of libraries and of printed and audio visual materials.
- 8.To introduce pupils to libraries as early as possible and co-operate with other libraries in the community in order to encourage continuing education and cultural growth. If the roles of libraries in the schools, as enumerated above, are viewed critically, it could be seen that they derived from the objectives of the schools and therefore are connected to the advancement of the educational programmes of the schools as well as the realization of the nation's educational objectives as entrenched in the National Policy on Education. In addition, a good school library should also provide materials that will provide the students with vocational guidance leading to the choice of a suitable career.

It is in view of this that Atkinson in Agishi, Demekaa and Gbakighir (2001: p 19) provided ways that the school library .support teaching and learning through the following provision:

- a space in order that the library may be used for reading and browsing and centre for instruction .location and the use of resource materials.
- Providing a place for all instructional materials whether print or non-print.
- The school library compliment and supplements teachers' efforts and help students to follow up what they have learnt in the classroom situation.

The librarian and the teacher works together to develop and manage library collection. Full use will be made of the library only when the library collection has relationship to the curriculum. Government is aware that before any meaningful development can take place in Nigeria, illiteracy must be wiped out. For this reason, formal schools are established to train the people to be productive in the society. Since libraries constitute one of the most important educational services, the National Policy on Education (2004:47) section F indicated that: proprietors of schools shall also provide functional libraries in all their educational institutions in accordance with the established standards. They shall also provide for the training of librarians and library assistants for these services.

Libraries and the National Policy on Education

The central role of libraries in education could be seen from the perspective of the universally acclaimed modern philosophy of education which forms the basis of the current national policy on Education. This policy places

emphasis on the individual learner's ability to progress according to his own pace for 'Maximum self development'. Specifically, the policy states among others that, educational activities will be centered on the learner for maximum self development the education system will be structured to develop the practice of self learning. Lifelong education will be the basis for the nation's educational policy. Educational and training facilities will be multiplied and made more accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice (NPE, 2004)

It goes without saying that the adoption of this policy means that libraries will be at the centre of the educational system. Equally, the realization of the policy's objectives will to large extent depends on the availability of effective library services in our schools and colleges because any educational programme which places more emphasis on the students for his own education necessarily involves greater use of books and libraries (Banjo, 1993).

The National Policy on Education recognizes this fact when it emphatically states that:

“Government will ensure that all schools are properly equipped to promote sound and effective teaching, and in particular, that suitable textbooks and libraries are provided for schools. To this end, funds are being provided for school libraries (N.P.E. 2004p. 8).

Elsewhere, it again emphasizes that:

In pursuance of its objectives, government will make provision for adequate educational services. It will establish a school library service and ensure that teachers are given in-service training in the management and organization of school libraries (N.P.E. 2004, p.8)

This is further supported by the statement that:

Libraries are the most important educational services. Every State Ministry needs to provide funds for the establishment of Libraries in all our educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for this service (N.P.E., .2004, p. 39).

These policy statements suggest that the government recognizes the usefulness of libraries in our schools and colleges and realizes the central place of libraries in the new educational system. However, these are by all means well meaning and glorified statements that meant well for our educational system, but what is the real or practical situation today?

SCHOOL LIBRARIES UTILIZATION BY TEACHERS AS A MEANS OF ENRICHING CURRICULUM

Teacher librarian can work with classroom staff to support all areas of the curriculum, and will often know exactly the right resources that are available, both in print and digital, to support units of work and to compliment any theme you are working on with your students.

Working with your library colleagues during the planning phase of curriculum development is a great way to ensure that you cover content with efficiency, with depth and with interesting and stimulating material. With advance notice they can acquire resources for you that will make all the difference to successful learning outcomes with your students.

Teacher librarians with their dual qualifications and in-depth knowledge of curriculum, teaching method, and information management skills, have a role educating students directly but also as a professional collaborator with classroom teachers.

Within the broad fields of education and librarianship, teacher librarians are uniquely qualified. This is valuable because curriculum knowledge and pedagogy and combine with library and information management knowledge and skills.

Dike, (2009), listed the following point as ways by which teacher utilization of school libraries can equip teachers and thus develop the curriculum:

Adhere to standards in cataloging metadata application and data base retrieval system;

The school library helps to provide audio and visual materials personal use and for students illustration;
The school library can equip the teachers by providing excellent teaching practice and guiding teachers with curriculum implementation;

It help teachers to evaluate students learning in relation to improve students' learning outcomes; and
It help the teachers to use the best practice in the library and database management, the diverse range of information resources including the online environment to maximize accessibility and relevance.
Put in other words Frantis, H. et al (2002), stated the following as benefits of teachers utilization of school libraries:

Possibilities for new working methods become available to the teacher;

The teacher can find new information and also update previous knowledge;

The teachers' professionalism as a uses of

information services increases;

The teacher can relax, refresh and recharge in a good school too;

The teacher's information management skills are developed;

The teacher learn to give pupils information retrievals task that are more meaningful for the pupils and A natural forum for cooperation opens up to the teacher.

CONCLUSION

From the expositions above one cannot help but agree that utilization of school libraries by teaching and indeed non teaching members of staff in our schools can enhance in no small ways the development of our educational curriculum. The obvious however is the fact that the school libraries in our Nigerian schools are in a sorry and pitiable state. This paper thus conclude by calling on all stake holders in the educational sector and other segments of the Nigerian society to wake up to the many challenges facing our school libraries rather than the lofty statements in the educational policy that are without any operational backing in budgetary and legislative provisions,

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