

*Full Length Research*

# **Provision of Library Services for Qualitative and Functional Education in Nigeria: A Discourse**

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Education is the result of acquired knowledge and the cumulation of observations and experiences, while a library is the fountain and source, the protector and storehouse of that knowledge and experience. Education cannot exist alone without the library, and library has no meaning if it cannot impart education. In educating the mind, there is need for information resources. The resources meant for education are the one systematically organized in the library and these resources cannot educate if the information officers or librarians has not impacted the necessary skills of information organization and dissemination on the resources. Thus, library and education are twin sisters. Library services involve the totality of assistance provided by the library for its users. These services, to a large extent determine the well-being of the library user, educationally, emotionally and otherwise. The library service could be direct or indirect as well as personal or group, consequently, based on the great importance attributed to library services.

**Keywords:** Library Services, Qualitative And Functional Education, Nigeria.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, library has been an information organisation where people of various backgrounds come to seek for information for education. It does not operate in isolation. It can be attached to institutions, organisations, towns, industries, etc. It is the information hub or the intellectual center of any educational system and the system cannot stand if the hub is removed. In other word, there is no educational institution that can exist without a library. As such, library and education work in partnership and the educational systems play a central role in research and education. They have a longstanding commitment to maintaining the scholarly record of civilization and to stimulating innovation which is made possible through the information resources made available in the library. (McRobbie, n.d).

Education is the result of acquired knowledge and the cumulation of observations and experiences, while a library is the fountain and source, the protector and storehouse of that knowledge and experience. Education cannot exist alone without the library, and library has no meaning if it cannot impart education (Ogbebor, 2004). In educating the mind, there is need for information resources. The resources meant for education are the one systematically organized in the library and these resources cannot educate if the information officers or librarians has not impacted the necessary skills of information organization and dissemination on the resources. Thus, library and education are twin sisters.

Man's quest for knowledge has led to the creation and accumulation of tremendous amount of information. This hard-earned knowledge and information is valuable for the entire mankind and therefore liable to be preserved. With the invention of paper, man has been able to convey this knowledge to others by writing books. Thousands of manuscripts have been written by the wise men of the earlier times but many of them were destroyed due to lack of proper means of preservation. Thus, the need of preservation and dissemination led to the establishment of libraries (Ogbebor, 2011). How do we then describe a library?

A library is a collection of sources of information and similar resources, selected, acquired, organized by experts and made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing, often in a quiet environment conducive to study. It provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical location or a virtual space, or both. A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Discs, e-books, audio books, databases, table games, video games and other formats (Wikipedia, 2020). In addition, Aina (2004) defined a library as an institution responsible for the collection, processing and storage of recorded knowledge for the purpose of reading, study and consultation.

According to Cengage (2020), the dramatic and accelerating development of the digital communication system and its rapid adoption by large segments of society has forced a wide-ranging revision of the notion of "library" and a reconsideration of the role of the librarian within the context of the now-dominant information economy. Initially, this development was viewed by library interests in much the same contradictory fashion as it was by society at large. The idea of using Information Technology to eliminate the print-on-paper system was a positive and exciting new development. Many librarians viewed the emergence of the information revolution as the long-sought opportunity to transcend the limitations imposed on libraries by the print-on-paper system, while to others the much celebrated "death of the book" heralded little more than cultural decline. As a result, the last decade of the twentieth century was marked by heated and highly polemical arguments about the nature and extent of the information revolution and its implications for the future of libraries. While the digital revolution has forced an intensifying debate about the future of libraries, much, nevertheless, remains the same. For example, for several centuries the principal types of libraries have remained unchanged. What differentiates these library types is the nature of their clientele; and thus we have different types of libraries-public, academic, school, national, private and special libraries, serving information-seeking patrons throughout the world.

As described, there are emergent roles for libraries in a digital context that are extrapolations of existing functions. Here, the challenge may be to ensure awareness of these new-virtual services and the library's responsibility for them. A more complex undertaking is establishing roles that do not easily build on existing library functions. While the nature of library facilities will change, the notion of library as place remains important in both physical and virtual contexts. Increasingly, this sense of place serves strategically to further the development of new roles (CLIR 2020).

Libraries are faced with an increasingly unmanageable quantity of information. Fortunately, the availability of sophisticated computer technology and the willingness of librarians to adopt it have helped libraries to meet the needs of users. Libraries now have information databases and computerized indexes and catalogs. Computers, especially personal computers (PCs), are now used in nearly all library functions, from ordering and cataloging library materials to providing on-line information. Although manual catalogs still exist in many libraries, an increasing number of libraries are converting to computer-based catalogs called on-line public access catalogs (OPACs). Libraries want to make their collections available not only to those who come into the library but also to remote users who need to have access to library resources from their homes or offices. Such remote access is offered around the clock, including weekends. For example, some public libraries' on-line catalogues, especially in the advanced countries, offer access not only to their catalogues but also to various periodical indexes, catalogues of other cooperating libraries, bulletin boards, and other information databases (Issa, 2009).

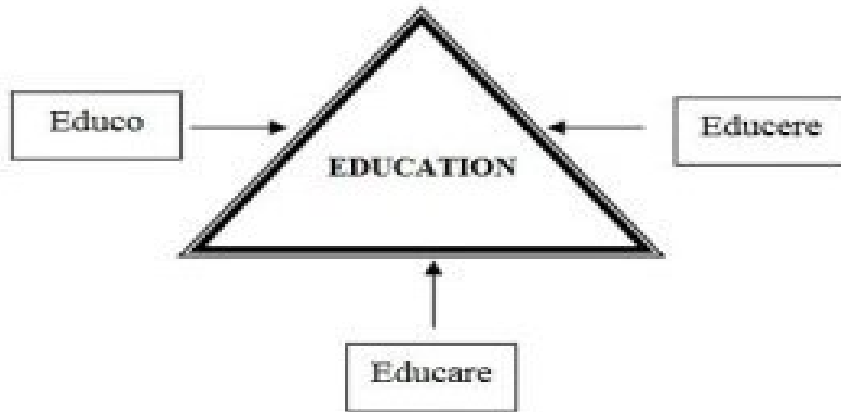
Infoscience Today, (2017) in Jamogha (2018) explained that the satisfaction of librarians goes far beyond their basic function as custodian of information. They have a major role to play in educating the citizens of the world, not only from the advanced nations, but also those poor aspirants from developing countries that are aspiring for a more promising tomorrow, through the various resources available in the library, as there cannot be a library without the librarians who are the intellectual power behind the availability and accessibility of the materials. Hence, Islam (2004) as stated in Ogbebor (2011) viewed library as a learned institution equipped with treasures of knowledge maintained, organized and managed by trained personnel to educate the children, men and women continuously and assist in their self-improvement through an effective and prompt dissemination of information embodied in the resources.

## **Concept of Education**

When talking about education people often confuse it with schooling. Many think of places like schools or colleges when

seeing or hearing the word. They might also look to particular jobs like teacher or tutor but it is wider than that in concept (Ifed, 2020). Etymologically, the word “education” is said to be derived from the following Latin words:

- (i) `Educare' means 'to bring up', 'to nourish' and to 'raise'.
- (ii) `Educere' implies 'to draw out', 'to lead out'.
- (iii) `Educatum' denotes 'to train', `Educo', it consists of two words 'e' meaning 'out of' and `duco' meaning 'to lead', 'to lead out' (Kolangi, 2014).



**Figure 1.** Etymological meaning of Education (Kolangi, 2014).

All these meanings indicate that education seeks to nourish the good qualities in man and draw out the best in every individual. Education seeks to develop the innate inner capacities of man (Jamogha, 2018). Thus, education is the manifestation of divine perfection which already exists in man, Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902) in Kolangi (2014). Such manifestation is the outcome of the development of the individual in all aspects, namely, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. The education, one receives, is the greatest input for advancing towards this objective since education helps the total development of human personality. Education holds the key to human progress. Education plays an important role in bringing change.

Fafunwa (1974), therefore, defined education as what each generation gives to its younger ones, which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which are of positive value to the society in which they live. On a general note, Amaele (2003) considered education to mean the total development of the individual child, through acceptable methods and techniques, according to his abilities and interests, as well as the needs of the society, to take his rightful place and contribute adequately to the advancement of his society. Thus, education can be defined as the process of acquiring knowledge or habit through instruction or study. It is the process of bringing desirable change in the behaviour of human beings. The behavioural changes must be directed towards a desirable end. There should also be change in knowledge, attitude, skills and understanding (Hussain, n.d).

Education can be generally be classified into three forms, namely: formal, informal and non-formal.

- (i) **Formal Education:** This is the type of education which is received in the regular formal school setting, for instance, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Formal education has well determined setting where well trained and equipped personnel e.g. teachers, instructors, lecturers etc interact with the learners on planned educative process. The curriculum, the learning environment, instructional materials, testing and evaluation, human resources and others are planned ahead of time to achieve specific objectives within the time frame.
- (ii) **Informal Education:** This process of education includes all other agencies of learning outside the formal learning system. These agencies include the home (family), church or mosque, peer-group, mass media. Informal education can also be received in the market, farm, along the road, etc. This type of education provides learning opportunities for the child to develop his natural potentialities within a given limit. What the child learn from his/her mother, father, elderly ones, peer groups, association etc fall under the informal education.
- (iii) **Non-Formal Education:** It is a form of education that is received not within the regular school system. Non-formal education is mainly received through workshop, seminar, conferences, correspondences, and television and radio media. It is used to equip the individual with some basic skills, attitudes and intelligence required for human and societal growth.

The past 62 years have seen a dramatic change in the status of the library both at the tertiary and secondary school levels. Since the early 1950s, almost 30,000 new secondary school libraries have been established in Africa, and thousands of federally funded development programmes and collection expansion projects have enhanced existing libraries in public elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria. At the same time, school libraries have evolved from having a primary focus on books, housed in a store-like environment or room to providing the rich array of resources and services with computers as may be found in most academic libraries and information centers of today. These school libraries through the provision of information-rich resources and services have been considered paramount in the development of education and academic performance of its pupils and students who on a daily basis, patronize the services of the library.

Additionally, Ginika (2017) and Chukwueke (2018) asserts that the facilities, materials, equipments and staff of the library are organized in such a way that they support learning within the educational goals of the academic institution. Furthermore, these educational goals are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives. Thus, the achievement and mastery of the educational objectives is what leads to educational development and academic enhancement. Nonetheless, 'educational development', for the purpose of this paper can be considered as any innovative action taken with the intention of either enhancing the teaching of a particular subject or enhancing the students' learning of the subject. This is to say that educational development acts on both the teaching and learning processes.

Consequently, preliminary observations and literature have shown that most Nigerian secondary school students cannot secure admission into institutions of higher learning of their choice due to poor academic performance in the placement examination. This poor performance which negatively affects the educational development of the students may be attributed to poor learning environment especially absence or inadequate library services in these secondary schools. Here, academic performance is seen as one of the determinants of educational development. Academic performance translates into the ability of the student to accomplish his or her tasks and studies. However, this accomplishment is measured with grades and is certainly the most well-known indicator of academic performance. Consequently, academic performance is the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate one's knowledge verbally or written on paper.

Library services in the words of Nnadozie (2007); Igwe and Onah (2013) in Chukwueke (2018) may be classified into technical and readers' services. Library services involve the totality of assistance provided by the library for its users. These services, to a large extent determine the well-being of the library user, educationally, emotionally and otherwise. The library service could be direct or indirect as well as personal or group, consequently, based on the great importance attributed to library services.

The roles library play in functional education shall be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- a. Encouraging reading
- b. Expanding learning resources
- c. Developing learning skills
- d. Developing critical thinking
- e. Developing values, attitudes and appreciations
- f. Assisting with developmental tasks (Dike, n.d)
- g. Promotion of Research

#### **a. Encouraging Reading**

The library can play a crucial role in encouraging reading and the development of reading habits and skills. It has been noted that libraries have been associated with information resources and literacy. The resources offered by the library can take potential users beyond technical literacy to a reading culture. The abundance of reading materials in the library not only inclines users to reading, but gives them opportunities to practice. The practice will make reading easier, thereby encouraging them to read further, and so the cycle continues (Dike, nd). According to Oji and Haibibu as cited by Jamogha (2018), schools and public libraries can promote good reading habit through book exhibition and book talk, story-talk hour, creative activities or creative writing, clubs and drama.

- **Book exhibition and Book talk:** Children could be asked to pick book of interest which they would have to read. The librarian could read to them or each child in turn. A librarian could pick a book and talk on it; stimulate interest in the book and ask children to read book and could come back for further literacy analysis of the book (Jamogha, 2018).

- **Story-talk Hour:** Libraries can organize story-talk hour for evening of week days and Saturdays. The language must flow well when presented verbally. With illustrations, the language and presentation take on extra importance in conveying the story. Folk tales are usually excellent choices, not only for all the usual reasons that they appeal to children, but also because they are rich in narrative language. Because tales have been passed down verbally, most adaptations are not dependent on the illustrations. Story-talk helps children get to know sounds, words and language, and develop early literacy and reading skills; learn to value books and stories; spark child's imagination and stimulate curiosity. And it helps child's brain, social skills and communication skills develop (Raisingchildren 2020).
- **Creative Activities or Creative Writing:** Good writing comes after good reading, it is therefore logical that a good reading habit be developed as a precursor to good writing. After a read aloud session, students could be asked to write a short story or a different ending to the story they were told to read. This will provide wonderful stimulus for youth to read.
- **Clubs:** School librarian can introduce the formation of reading clubs within the library on the basis as children hobbies. The role of the library would be to provide reference and information materials for the chosen hobby. The club members would then build on the information with the assistance of the librarian.
- **Drama:** Drama sharpens the hidden talent of children. Drama could be organized during story-telling hour; children can take home and learn their parts properly. The drama could be presented during special occasions in the school (Jamogha, 2018).

#### b. Expanding Learning Resources

Libraries have supported education efforts by providing teaching resources, information and referral services. Many libraries have outreach programs designed to meet the needs of specific group of people with limited educational skills. Library resource materials are distributed to the institutionalized, including those in prisons, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and group homes for the elderly and disabled. In addition, some libraries offer programs for groups at risk for education-related problems. The development of Science and Technology (S&T) in the last two centuries has led to an information explosion. Rapid changes have taken place at a great pace. In order to meet the growing needs of users the library system has been greatly improved and upgraded to meet the new challenges. The services offered by libraries have also undergone a great change as such different learning resources are housed in the library for users' consumption. (Shukla, Singh and Mishra, 2013).

#### c. Developing Learning Skills

The library supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any educational provider (Boucher and Lance, 1992). Library is an institution where anyone can come to learn at his/her own pace. In this process, a user can start to develop interest in learning when guided by his own mind without being forced by any instructor.

#### d. Developing Critical Thinking

The free inquiry method of learning, inspire learners to be able to accommodate information in terms of what they already know and apply it in real situations. For example, in junior high school they should, with lots of guidance, be gaining practice in evaluating and synthesizing sources and information, while senior students should be given the opportunity to carry out these activities independently. In lower grades students need practice brainstorming in groups and attacking assignments thereby locating the sources of information they need. As they grow older they begin to analyze sources for qualities such as currency and they begin to think in terms of key words and descriptors. Finally, in senior high they are ready to design search strategies. When the theory of levels of cognitive development is applied to senior high school libraries, the implication should be that students are ready for fairly sophisticated thinking and evaluation of sources.

The process approach focuses on the evaluation of sources and their information and promotes more flexible problem solving skills. Therefore, students are able to proceed to a higher level of cognitive development than approaches that emphasize locating sources only. One type of process approach is the free inquiry method. In this approach, students are encouraged to form questions and use the library as a laboratory to find answers and raise still more questions. The library is more suited to accommodating this more flexible type of learning than the classroom. Librarians need to encourage teachers to include assignments which develop critical thinking skills in their courses. Librarians can play a

more active role in the development, teaching and evaluating lessons that develop critical skills. The library is the logical laboratory for learning information comprehension and evaluation skills, and the librarian is the logical coordinator, instructor, and advocate of these skills (Zuelke 1988).

#### **e. Developing Values, Attitude and Appreciation**

Donna Norton (2010) as cited in Crippen (2012) identifies literature as important because it gives students appreciation about their own cultural heritage as well as those of others; it helps students develop emotional intelligence and creativity; it nurtures growth and development of the student's personality and social skills; and it transmits important literature and themes from one generation to the next. Literature provides an avenue for students to learn about their own cultural heritage and the cultures of other people. It is crucial for children to learn these values because, "developing positive attitudes toward our own culture and the cultures of others is necessary for both social and personal development. In saying this, however, when teaching students about the cultural heritage of others, one should be very careful in selecting which books to recommend to young readers. There are many stories, some folktales, which contain blatant stereotypes and inaccuracies about certain cultural groups. Many books are available that depict culture as an important piece of society that is to be treasured and valued, and those books can have great value for students.

The role that literature plays in nurturing and expanding the imagination fosters on personality and social development. Children are very impressionable during the formative years, and children's literature can help them develop into caring, intelligent, and friendly people. Developmental psychologist says that when students move from the pre-operational to the operational stage of cognitive development, they become less egocentric. Whereas students in preschool and kindergarten may be entirely focused on themselves, as students grow older they begin to take into account the feelings and viewpoints of others. Being able to understand other people's viewpoints and to not be selfish are important skills that adults must nurture in children. Finally, children's literature is of value because it is a timeless tradition, one in which "books are the major means of transmitting our literary heritage from one generation to the next.

#### **f. Assisting with Developmental Tasks**

The broad "jobs" of childhood that need to be accomplished in each stage in order for children to learn life skills at the appropriate times are referred to as developmental task. The tasks of one stage do not need to be completely mastered before a child begins the tasks of the next stage. However, the sooner a child masters a task, the easier it will be to tackle the tasks of the next stage. Children continue to work on most tasks throughout childhood, even though there is usually one stage at which any one task is most prominent (The Center for Parenting Education, 2020).

Developmental tasks are fundamental achievements that must be accomplished at each stage of life, arising at or near critical stages in the maturation of an individual; successful attainment leads to a healthy self-image and success with later tasks. Failure to achieve developmental tasks at one stage leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval of society, and difficulty in accomplishing later developmental tasks. (The Free Dictionary, 2020). The library can play a similar role with regard to other type of identity and relationships. For instance, many adolescents experience conflicts with parents or other adults; they are also torn over their desire for acceptance by peers and the pressures for conformity exerted by the group. They can be given added resources for confronting and understanding these problems on psychology, sociology, culture or ethics and through novels portraying relationships and providing insight to them. The same types of resources can be invaluable in helping children and youth establish a sense of identity and sort through their values. Through library resources, important aspects of education can be provided for outside the school's regular academic programme and overall development of children and youth enhanced (Dike, nd).

#### **g. Promotion of Research**

The library assists scholars and researchers to conduct in-depth studies, investigate specific areas of knowledge, and create new knowledge (Boucher and Lance, 1992). Access to high-quality content remains crucial to research, and its value is recognized by researchers, students and lecturers alike. Libraries spend huge amounts to sustain and develop their collections, and researchers across the sector now have access to more content than ever before. But they always want more.

Libraries are critically important in helping researchers to exploit the full benefits and opportunities of the networked world, including such developments as open access and social media. But libraries that are not well-equipped to promote change make researchers sometimes resist efforts to modify their behaviours and practices. Nevertheless, many libraries have succeeded in addressing such problems, by establishing stronger links with researchers and re focusing their services to promote and exploit new technologies and new models of scholarly communication. The digital revolution has changed the relationship between libraries and researchers, many of whom do not use the physical

library. As one librarian said, “the more we do to make access quick, seamless and easy, the more invisible we make ourselves”. Libraries are becoming alert to their separation from researchers, and are trying to find ways to reconnect with them, and to fill the gaps in their knowledge and understanding of researchers’ needs. Such an approach can lead to a strong service culture permeating the library, increasing researcher satisfaction, as well as winning recognition and respect for the library across the institution (Research Libraries, UK and Research Information Network, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

Library and education as collaborative and partnering agencies have been discussed extensively in various arms of the concept of library, education, library user education and the role of library in education. Library User Education can be provided through introductory briefing in the orientation programme (Library Orientation), library brochure, library tours, library guides and so on. The roles library plays in education have also been discussed under the following sub-headings as encouraging reading, expanding learning resources, developing learning skills, developing critical thinking, developing values, attitudes and appreciations, assisting with developmental tasks and promotion of research. As such, library and education cannot be separated as they are interwoven for strength.

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