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Children Librarians' Knowledge and Attitude towards Children with Neuro-Developmental Disorders: Implications for Inclusive Library Services

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ABSTRACT

Neuro-developmental disorders (NDDs) are becoming increasingly prevalent among the children population and are the underserved groups in the schools and other learning institutions like a library. The high prevalence of children living with NDDs also highlights the need for the inclusion of children victims in all learning opportunities and supporting them to attain their maximum possible potentials. As the children are increasingly being included in library services, there is a need to know how knowledgeable the children librarians are about NDDs and their attitude towards children with NDDs and their inclusion in library services. Using a qualitative approach, this study sought to investigate the knowledge and attitude of children librarians towards children with NDDs. Four children librarians working in a University children's library in a suburban area in Nigeria participated in an in-depth interview. Data collected were deductively analyzed based on the social model of disability. The result indicated that five themes explained the knowledge and attitude of children librarians towards children with NDDs, including poor knowledge, negative attitude, low expectation of the children, lack of facilities for inclusion, and lack of training on NDDs. The implication of these for inclusive library services was highlighted, including the provision of a supportive library environment and training of library personnel for inclusive library services for children with NDDs. It was concluded that children with NDDs are excluded in children's library due partly because of poor knowledge and negative attitude of children librarians about NDDs such as autism and ADHD. Low expectations for children with NDDs and lack of facilities also challenge the inclusion of children with NDDs in library services.

Keywords: Children, knowledge, library services, librarians, neuro-developmental disorders

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are the major providers of information services across the world. Libraries are referred to as learning resource centers and as the third place for children (Kaeding 2014). The work of the children's library is center on providing meaningful access information, programs, and services, they are age-appropriate and ability-oriented, in multicultural languages that speak to children, their families, and caregivers (International Federation of library association and Institutions, 2018). Children's library is meant to support literacy, learning, and reading (International Federation of library association and Institutions (2018). There is an increasing need for libraries as a third place for children to make a positive impact on children's literacy levels; social, intellectual, and emotional development (Amoo, 2014). Children's library is aimed at providing services and resources through diverse means geared towards meeting all children's educational needs irrespective of their age and abilities for their overall development.

Children's library serves a multidimensional purpose of providing recreation and leisure and also supporting children's health and wellbeing. Library services for children play an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by offering the child access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) offers support to developing library policy and practice, related to children and young people (International Federation of library association and Institutions (2018).

They express the need for libraries to use the evidence base to improve services and meet the specific needs of users. Elkin (2011) also echoes the varied future needs of children who are inescapably influenced by the media and technology around them. Rankin and Brock conclude that libraries need to provide 21st-century services if they will remain relevant in this age and this means the inclusion of social, leisure, and digital activities/services (Amoo,

2014). Library services that are offered to children in rural areas are in the form of literature (books) extension activities, audiovisual (AV) materials and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Akanwa, 2013). Libraries offer children the chance to build up their language and literacy. The children's library partners with teachers and parents to help build these skills, by easing functional access to resources and services for children and their families (International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, 2018). Specifically, children's library has some basic functions, which include facilitating the right of every child to information, literacy, cultural development, and lifelong learning (Rankin & Brock, 2012); to provide children with access to a wide range of appropriate resources and media for their development; to help children widen digital media information skills; to leverage on cultural and leisure programs to build reading and literacy skills; to provide various activities for children, parents and caregivers; to minimize barriers and promote children's freedom and safety; to facilitate community enterprise to provide services to all children and their families, including those who are most vulnerable (Anna, & Harisanty, 2019).

Though all children are should equal access to effective protection from discrimination (Chaputula and Mapulanga, 2016; Chilemba, 2013), evidence shows that children with disabilities are underserved in the library, and are referred to as disenfranchised library user group (Kaeding 2014). The World Health Organization (2012) describes disability as a 'physical or mental characteristic that constitutes a significant impairment or dysfunction' and 'some personal or social limitation associated with that impairment'. Disability represents a 'physical or mental impairment that largely confines one or more major life activities of an individual (Cassner et al. 2011). The percentage of persons with disabilities (PWDs) has increased considerably over the years (Cassner et al., 2011; Khetarpal, 2014). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2016: 15) estimates that about 600 million persons worldwide are living with disabilities, and 400 million of them

are living in low and middle-income countries, with 80 million specifically in Africa. Hence, about 1 in 10 Africans are living with disabilities, necessitating inclusion in the academic library setting. It is disheartening that the participation of children with disabilities in public and school libraries has been compromised in Nigeria and other countries (Ekwelem, 2013; Onwubiko, 2021). Children's library services in Nigeria take that path of traditional reading and lending borrowing services without building in some research-based approaches (Akanwa, 2013; Adkins, & Bushman, 2015).

Further, very few studies have focused on the underserved children with disabilities and the library services (Kaeding, 2014). Children with disabilities are children who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (UNICEF, 2013; World Health Organization, 2011). Research studies speaking to library needs and access of children with psychiatric and intellectual disorders are even scarcer (Hill 2013). Furthermore, the investigation into how librarians offer services to children with neuro-developmental disorders (NDDs), which is a relatively emerging area in public libraries is even more limited.

Neuro-developmental disorders are disorders that manifest due to impairments in functioning between the brain and behavior (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, APA, 2013). It is typified by lifelong developmental deficits (DSM-5, 2013) that manifest in the early developmental stages of children persists throughout the lifespan (Le Roux & Fourie, 2017). NDDs are categorized into six classes, which are Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Specific Learning Disorder (SLDs), Communication Disorder, Motor Disorder and Intellectual Disorder (DSM-5, 2013; Yoro, Fourie, & van der Merwe, 2020). Children with neuro-developmental disorders experience a range of personal and social barriers that limit their access to library

services (Kaeding 2014). For instance, it has been shown that libraries can be intimidating or uncomfortable places for children with disabilities, especially those with ASDs, who may be sensitive to noise, bright lights and smells and may trigger negative responses including screaming or repetitive behaviors (Kaeding, Velasquez, & Price, 2017). Kaeding and colleagues further showed that children with NDDs, like other children, benefit greatly from literacy activities.

American Library Association, (2018) states that libraries should play a transformational role by providing fully accessible resources and services for all library users. Since the libraries must provide accessible services to people with disabilities, including those with NDDs (Hill, 2013; Jaeger, Wentz, & Bertot, 2015a), specialized library services have plays an important role in providing a level of access and inclusion that would enable such children to develop their literacy skills. Irvall and Nielsen, (2005) highlighted what represents a disability-friendly library to include the provision of specialized services to PWDs. For a disability-friendly library, staff needs to be equipped with the knowledge and attitude necessary to offer reasonable access to children with disabilities in terms of physical, intellectual, sensory, emotional, and psychological accessibility (Kaeding, Velasquez, & Price, 2017). These library professionals have been described to be the most vital facilities in the library (Adkins, & Bushman, 2015), that serve as resource person and guide to library users, including those with NDDs. This cannot be achieved if the children librarians are ignorant of the features and prognoses of these disabilities (World Health Organization, 2011). Children's librarians are school librarians or learning resource center managers and library professionals working with children.

Poor knowledge and or negative attitude towards children with NDDs have been recorded among children librarians (Onwubiko, 2021; Subramaniam, Oxley, & Kodama, 2013). Attitude is the manner, disposition, feeling, and position about a person or thing,

tendency, or orientation, especially in mind (Onwubiko, 2021). Attitude is a dispositional readiness to respond to certain institutions, persons, or objects in a consistent manner which has been learned and has become one's typical mode of response. Knowledge and attitude of librarians towards children with NDDs may affect how they provide services to the group (Onwubiko, 2021; Hill, 2012).

Research outcomes from New York librarians showed poor knowledge of librarians about the general best practices for educating students with special needs or the students enrolled in special education. The study showed that 46% had moderate knowledge of special education 28% had average knowledge; 13.9% low knowledge and only 11.6% had a high level of knowledge concerning students with special education needs in their schools. There is also the to increase awareness and sensitivity of library staff to the special needs of children with NDDs (Subramaniam, Oxley, & Kodama, 2013). Awareness will increase the confidence of library officials about their skills in serving children with NDDs in the library. A study of librarians in Nigeria states that unwelcome attitudes towards library users with disabilities may stem from a lack of knowledge and skills on how to assist such users (Onwubiko, 2021; Hill, 2012).

Furthermore, Small, Jaime Snyder, and Katie Parker (2009) found that only 3% of school librarians had special education training. A similar study (Demetria Ennis-Cole and Daniella Smith, 2011) reported from a nationwide study, that public school librarians lack skills for supporting students with autism. The study recommended special education training in the library and information science (LIS) curriculum. Librarians with a better understanding of developmental disabilities, who also have a positive attitude to the children are more likely to provide access and tailored library services (Subramaniam, Oxley, & Kodama, 2013).

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Further, a study conducted in Nigeria showed that the majority of librarians had a positive attitude towards library users with learning disabilities (Onwubiko, 2021). However, no work to the best of my knowledge has explored the librarian's attitude and knowledge about children with NDDs in a Nigerian population. The present study sought to fill this knowledge gap, by providing information about the level of knowledge and attitude of children library staff about children with NDDs. As the world social communities are moving towards total inclusion of children with NDDs, the results of the present study will guide policymakers in Nigeria and other LMICs in developing a framework for implementing inclusive library services for learners living with NDDs.

Theoretical Framework

The social model of disability forms the path of data analysis in this study. The model shifts the causal accountability for disability limitations from the impaired individuals to their architectural, social, and economic environment (Samaha, 2007). The social model has been powerful in explaining the limitations, discrimination, and prejudice imposed on persons with disabilities by their environment or society (Samaha, 2007). According to the social model, society disables impaired people, and not necessarily their impairments. Hence disability is imposed on top of their impairments by the way they are being isolated and excluded from full participation in society (Samaha, 2007; UPIAS Fundamental Principles of Disability 1975; Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society (Finkelstein, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006; Samaha, 2007; UPIAS Fundamental Principles of Disability 1975). Based on the paradigm of human rights these models emphasize that disability-related problems stem from an inaccessible social structure, as opposed to the disability itself. The model follows a barriers approach focusing on environmental and attitudinal barriers that limit persons with disabilities, including those with NDDs from having equal opportunities in

their societies and how such barriers can be removed or countered by supports children with NDDs (Shakespeare, 2006).
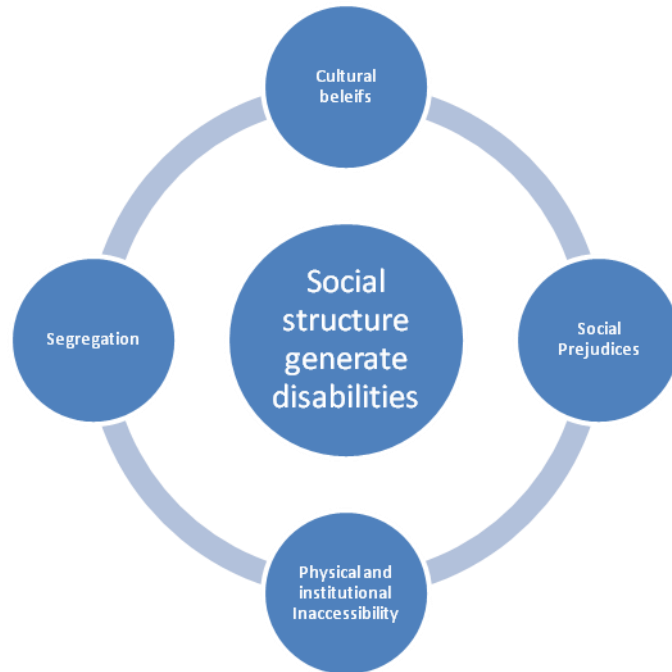

Figure 1: Social Model of Disability

Based on the social model, I propose that societal barriers (Inclusion London, 2021) account for the exclusion of children with NDDs from library services. These barriers are imposed through some social elements including cultural beliefs, social prejudices, inaccessibility, and segregation of children with NDDs. *Cultural beliefs* impose barriers in the library environment through attitudinal barriers, physical barriers, and information and communication barriers that may be emanating from library staff. Cultural beliefs may account for such assumptions and dispositions about children with NDDs that are embedded in ignorance/poor knowledge of the disorders (Korkmaz, 2011). *Social prejudices* manifest in underestimation or devaluing of the children and stigma surrounding mental disorders. *Inaccessibility* may include barriers to Library information access, barriers to library facility access, and barriers to the social network. *Segregating* may contribute to the perpetuation of

sentimental services, overprotection discrimination, and exclusion in the library (Onwubiko, 2021; Qian, Johnson, Wu, LaVelle, Thurlow, & Davenport, 2020).

For instance, the assumption that children with NDDs cannot use the library, cannot learn or are not expected to work independently. Another attitudinal barrier may include believing that children with NDDs are upsetting, are slackers, are dangerous, or should be protected. Physical barriers include those barriers that are connected to the physical environments, ranging from barriers to equal access (Inclusion London, 2021) to library services, such as poor lighting, poor seating, narrow corridors and doorways, poorly managed libraries of other public spaces, and so on. Poor knowledge of NDDs increases the plight of children with NDDs.

On the other hand, information and communication barriers include the availability of sign language interpreters for children with nonverbal conditions such as high support needs autism conditions; lack of assistive technologies, lack of social networks, lack of information in different assessable formats, including easy-to-read, plain English, large font, charts, and symbols. Summarily, barriers to the impaired children may include exclusion, discrimination, and disadvantage for people with NDDs (Inclusion London, 2021).

METHOD

Ethical Considerations

The researchers received ethical approval from the faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria to conduct this study. All participants signed an informed consent agreement before participating in the study. Participation in the study complied with the ethical rules of using human subjects in research. The research had no negative impact on the participants or the researchers. Data collected in the study were handled without the participants' details

Design

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, that emanate majorly from the participants' standpoint (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2016). Qualitative studies entail systematic collection, organization, description, and interpretation of textual, verbal, or visual data. Qualitative research techniques used in this study include semi-structured interviews. Hammarberg, et al showed that this technique is appropriate when a study is exploring views on a focused topic, with key informants who are expected to give background information or an institutional perspective concerning the research topic (Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019).

Participants and Sampling

Non-probability sampling was used for the study, with both purposive and convenience sampling techniques (Byrne, 2001). Using purposive sampling I drew 4 children library staff in the University of Nigeria Children's Library. Convenience technique was considered as there was not many children's library in the sub-urban area of Nsukka, Enugu state, where the researcher resides. I, therefore, leveraged the library staff from the only children's library within the Nsukka sub-urban area, where I reside. These were the children's library attendants that the researcher could access. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects participants who cover a full range of perspectives about the specific perspectives being examined (Byrne, 2001). Convenience sampling is another non-probability sampling strategy that is employed by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. To draw a convenience sample, a researcher simply collects data from those people or other relevant elements to which he or she has most convenient access. This method, also sometimes referred to as haphazard sampling, is most useful in exploratory research Gentles, Charles, & McKibbon, 2015).

Data Generation

An in-depth interview was conducted face-to-face and individually on 4 library attendants in the children's library. To develop a question for the study, a question matrix can be developed to ensure that the questions that are asked in the interview will solicit responses relevant to testing the propositions of the research. The interview sessions were guided by a total of six (6) open-ended questions, meant to elicit information about the participants' perspectives on the inclusion of children with neuro-developmental disorders in children's libraries. Specifically, three open-ended questions guide the interview about the participants' knowledge of neuro-developmental disorders/learning needs, while three also sought information about the participants' attitudes towards the children who are living with NDDs. These foundational questions built on the participants' perspectives and awareness about NDDs and library services. Questions include: (i) describe your experience/knowledge about neuro-developmental disorders. ii) What do you think are the most important features of NDDs that could challenge their use of the Library? iii) Give some examples NDDs, and their typical manifestations iv) Do you think that children with NDDs can/should be supported to use the library, and how? v) What are the biggest challenges you face serving children with NDDs? vi) What is your view about accommodating children with NDDs into library services and programs? In addition to these questions, the interviewer was also able to probe into details of the participants' perceptions through in-depth discussion to discover the perceptions of participants more. The interview questions were formulated following Pearse, (2019).

Data Analysis

Content analysis was conducted data for this study. Data were coded deductively to find recurring categories based on the social model of NDDs. We identified patterns across the codes and reflected on the underlying meaning to cluster codes and form themes that were

consistent across the personal interview. This was meant to bring out the key issues, as well as similarities and differences both within and between participants.

All data were analyzed following Yukhymenko et al. (2014) by matching data with the codebook prepared from the social model framework of disability. Themes were identified by confirming data codes with a codebook (Pearse, 2019). Pattern matching was applied, to compare the dataset with the social model framework. Observing these phases in the cause of this research enabled the researchers to ensure trustworthiness concerning credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the study outcome (Nowell, et al., 2017). We familiarized ourselves with the data set line-by-line reviewing the data from each group, and used theory to inform the data analysis.

RESULTS

Themes arising from the data include poor knowledge, negative attitude, low expectations, poor access, lack of training; poor facilities, and Stigma. Figure 2 shows the themes that emerged through the deductive coding procedure. Data were coded based on the social model of disability.
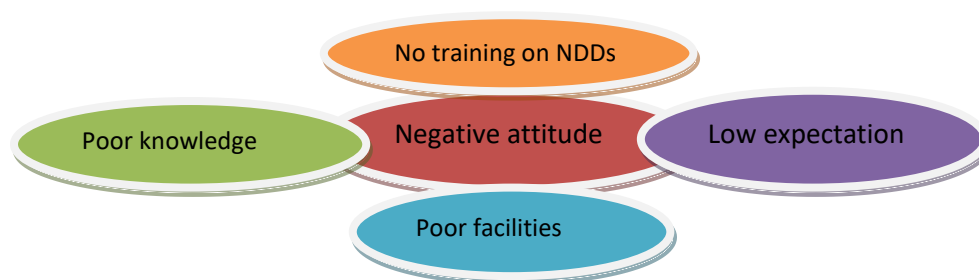

Figure 2: Outcomes of the study

Theme 1: Poor knowledge of NDDs

It was found that all the participants declared that they have no good knowledge of NDDs as to the different ways they manifest and how they impair children are learning. Though all the participants expressed that they are aware of how learning disabilities manifest and

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intellectual disabilities, but not autism and ADHD, for instance, one of the participants stated: *I know some of the learning challenges in some children, but as you are grouping it as neuro-developmental disorders, I get confused…..are they the same as mental retardation? ……..Yes some children are just bizarre; I rarely understand how I can assist such children….. …I have no idea, how much children could be made to use a library or participate in library programs. Something they come for holiday programs with their parents, but it is quite confusing what service they can benefit from…..*These statements attest to the poor knowledge about how to assist children with NDDs in the library.

Theme 2: Negative attitude

The result showed a negative attitude towards children with NDDs. In their answers to questions like- do you think that children with NDDs can/should be supported to use the library, and how? v) What are the biggest challenges you face serving children with NDDs. The participant displayed a negative attitude in their responses. For instance, participant 1 stated *"I think these may be difficult to manage in the library. They are not expected to do everything since they are not normal like others.* Participant 2: *"A child with mental illness should be kept at home or kept in a special school….. There are no way library facilities can attend to all they need…. After providing facilities for them, shall we also be expected to manage their behaviors?"* Another participant submitted *"I don't think children with such mental disorder will be able to use library services without disrupting the whole system. If it is an ordinary learning disability, they can be supported, but if it is also behavioral…. hmm. …. Children in those categories are not meant to use the library without the trained person of family carer.*

These specific submissions make it glaring, that a negative attitude is held about children with NDDs by the children library staff who were interviewed.

Theme 3: Low expectation

Another emerging theme was low expectations placed on the children with NDDs by the children's library. The low expectation is attitudinal and was found in all the four participants interviewed. Some exemplary statements showing low expectation include [Participant 1] *" The children having such problem are not to do much academically, so using or not using the library does not make sense"* [Participant 2] *" I have not seen a person with intellectual disabilities who is a graduate. Since they are not expected to do much, I think the family should be able to teach them basic things without the library".* [Participant 3] *"What they need is basic life skills…..* [Participant 4] *I know children who are mentally disabled cannot learn much, so spending all the time for them alone could be daunting.* These show that all the participants believe that children cannot learn in the library suggesting low expectations.

Theme 4: Poor facilities

It was noted apart from the knowledge and attitude of the library staff, that the library lack facilities that accommodate the children with NDDs. The interviewees noted that their library does not have facilities that will accommodate the children with NDDs, such as assistive technology. Though the participants did not share any experience with children with NDDs, they reported that they offer to learn support to children with poor performances whom their parents register in their library. Also, they identified barriers as poor lighting, poor physical space to accommodate children with NDDs. They also said that there is not technological assistance and diverse materials that will attend to the learning need of children with NDDs. Quoting the participants [Participant 2] *" …Yes, we do not have any arrangement for children like that, but we normally give learning support to children during holidays.* [Participant 4] *" We have toys and graphics, which children use for their play, but I do not know how much it can cater for children with NDDs. Our main challenge here is that most of the facilities we need for*

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literacy and numeracy are not available for normally growing children". .... ^{Participant 1}*I think we would need a special section in this library that we could assist such children....*

Theme 5: No training on NDDs

When asked of their major challenges in accommodating children with NDDs in their library services, their responses were anchored on having received no training for catering for children with NDDs in a library setting. ^{Participant 3}*" I have not had any training on how to assist children with mental illnesses in the library. I am not trained for them and I think professionals in special education can help out. ....*^{Participant 4}*to can assist effectively, one needs training and facilities. I am not against accommodating or including them in our services, but training is needed to build our skills in offering such services.*

DISCUSSION

There is an increasing need for the inclusion of children with neuro-developmental disorders in all learning-based institutions, including the library. Given that such children have a special need for environmental social and academic adaptations for full participation in library services, there is a need for librarians who work with children to be informed about their special need for service consumption in a library environment. The current study sought to explore the knowledge and attitude of children's librarians towards children with NDDs. The result of the study supported the theory of social exclusion as enshrouded librarian knowledge and attitude towards children with NDDs and their inclusion in Library services. Themes arising from the data show that the children's library staff members have poor knowledge about NDDs, and negative attitudes towards the children, thereby constituting a social barrier to the children. Low expectations, poor facilities, and lack of training on the part of the librarian are also part of the barriers to library services for the children and are all due to social issues.

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The outcome of poor knowledge about NDDs is consistent with prior research in this area. For instance, in research on School Librarians as Ambassadors of Inclusive Information, Access for Students with Disabilities, Subramaniam, Oxley, and Kodama, (2013) found a low level of knowledge about NDDs among children librarian. Onwubiko (2021) further found poor knowledge of NDDs among library staff in a Nigerian population. This poor knowledge suggests that such library staff may not be able to provide library services that could attend to the needs of children with NDDs. this is because, evidence-based research has shown that library staff knowledge affects the quality of services they offer to children with special learning needs (Hill, 2012). Sometimes, when there is poor knowledge about the learning needs of a group of children, it is difficult to select materials and facilities they need for effective learning, thereby limiting the inclusiveness of the library.

Apart from poor knowledge negative attitude towards children with NDDs was found in this study among the children librarians. This result concurs with the results of a related study by Shari, and Vranda, (2016), which found that teachers in Bangalore South had a less favorable attitude towards the inclusion of children with learning disabilities in regular schools. In another study that explored middle school students' attitudes toward a peer with autism spectrum disorder, it was found that ASD status was associated with more negative anticipated peer attitudes (Tonnsen, & Hahn, 2016). In a study that explored the attitude of mothers of children with developmental disabilities, it was found that mothers of children with intellectual disability were found to have the most negative attitude towards their child compared to children with other disabilities (Shobana, & Saravanan, 2014). These threaten the full inclusion of children with NDDs in learning activities such as using library services. Makoelle (2016) argues that inclusive education is still a mystery to educators because they struggle to understand what constitutes an inclusive education. The major reason behind the inability of educators to accommodate and support learners with NDDs is a lack of adequate

knowledge and skills, as well as a negative attitude towards learners with barriers to learning (Mahlo 2017). These attest to the fact that different populations, including teachers, parents, and peers tend to show a negative attitude towards children with NDDs. This study strengthens the existing literature by adding that library professionals also possess a negative attitude towards children with NDDs.

Furthermore, the result of the current study showed that the children librarians in the study have low expectations for children with NDDs. This result also agrees with other studies that found the low expectation of children with disabilities among educators (Orsati, 2014; Peterson, 2010; Sperotto, 2014; Thurlow, & Quenemoen, 2019), parents (Qian, Johnson, Wu, LaVelle, Thurlow, & Davenport, 2020; Yoro, Fourie, & van der Merwe, 2020). Exclusionary dispositions in policies and practices related to standards-based services to children with disabilities are associated with low expectations of the stakeholders (Quenemoen, & Thurlow, 2019; Thurlow, & Quenemoen, 2019). Low expectations are the belief that children who need special education services are not able to achieve age-appropriate goals to the same level as their typically developing peers. These are erroneous beliefs as Thurlow, and Quenemoen, (2019) contended that disability is not inability.

Lack of training among the children librarian was another interesting and important result of the present study. Lack of training on NDDs among educators has been identified in the literature (Al Hazmi, & Ahmad, 2018; Bradley, & Domingo, 2020). Studies on librarians have consistently shown that they lack proper training for inclusive library practices that attend to children with NDDs (Shea, & Derry, 2019; Subramaniam, et al., 2013). In addition to training, this study found those children's libraries lack facilities for meeting the learning needs of children with NDDs. Significant research outcomes have indicated a lack of library facilities to meet the learning needs of learners with disabilities (Ekwelem, 2013; Shimmon, & General, 2010). Based on the findings of this study, it can allude that assistive device,

alternate formats, personal support, transportation services, low-tech devices, environmental adaptations are not available in the children's library.

CONCLUSION

From the outcomes of the study, it is concluded that children with NDDs are excluded in children's library due partly because of poor knowledge and negative attitude of children librarians about NDDs such as autism and ADHD. They are only aware of learning disabilities which are common in school settings. Children's librarians have a negative attitude towards children with NDDs, feeling they cannot learn or use the library. Low expectations for children with NDDs account for the librarians' negative attitude towards children with NDDs. Poor facilities for the inclusive library are also identified, and it is also concluded that children librarians need training on NDDs for effective inclusive library services.

Implication for inclusive Library services

The finding of this study has far-reaching implications for inclusive library services in Nigeria and other low and middle-income counties. Firstly, before inclusive library services can be achieved, the librarians need to be knowledgeable on the diverse manifestation of disabilities, including neuro-developmental disorders. A full understanding of NDDs will equip the library personal in selecting programs to be offered to such children and providing appropriate materials needed to meet the learning needs of such children. There is also a need for attitudinal change among children librarians in Nigeria for inclusive library services. If librarians believe that children with NDDs cannot learn or use the library, it is difficult for such librarians to provide and inclusive library services. As noted by pieces of evidence, the knowledge and attitude of librarians affect the library services offered to children with NDDs (Onwubiko, 2021; Hill, 2012).

The results of the study also imply that for inclusive library services, library staff should raise their expectation for children with NDDs. As pointed out, disability is not inability, and children who are having NDDs can be supported to achieve maximally in education settings like the library. All library activities should be organized in an inclusive perspective so that all children will benefit to the best of their capabilities. Additionally, the physical and social environment of the library must be supportive of children with NDDs. This could mean that library staff should give learning support and employ different resources and materials in the library to meet all children's needs. For functional inclusive library services that cater to the needs of children with NDDs, staff training is required. Children librarians need to be trained on NDDs and how to meet their learning needs in the library. Finally, inclusive facilities must be available in the children's library to allow all children to benefit maximally.

Limitations of the Study

Being a qualitative study, the major limitation arose from the study sample. The sample of the study was too small to be generalized across contexts. The result of the study is based on data collected from four librarians in one sub-urban children's library. Further study may investigate the same topic in a bigger sample that would be generalizable, using a quantitative approach.

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