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## Impact of Public Library Services on Educational Transformation in Nigeria; Case Study of Oyo State Library Board

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# **IMPACT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES ON EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA; CASE STUDY OF OYO STATE LIBRARY BOARD**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this paper is to report the result of a study on examining the impact of public library services on educational transformation in Oyo state. Respondents include the student users and librarians of the library. The respondents are engaged through purposive and simple random sampling techniques respectively, the instruments for data collection are self-administered questionnaire and interview. Descriptive survey research design was employed and data was analyzed using statistical package for social science, while the interview was interpreted by listening to the record properly. The result revealed that majority of the respondents patronizes the library occasionally. It was also revealed that the services mainly rendered by the library were lending, reference and user education services, the purpose of using the library were for examination preparations, research, enquiries and educational purposes. Majority of*

*the respondents were satisfied with the services rendered and has impacted their academic activities positively. The major challenges faced are poor funding, epileptic power supply and no internet facilities. The paper therefore offer useful research information that can help public libraries understand what they can do to intensify more in their goal of transforming education positively and what government can do to aid this goal.*

**Keywords:** Public Library, Library services, Educational transformation

## **Introduction**

Libraries in general and public libraries in particular, play an important role in all aspects of societal development be it educational, political or economic, especially when viewed against its users, which consist of all categories of people in the society. Public library has been defined variously. Many see it as a place built for the collection of books and other printed resources and the personnel to provide and interpret such resources as required to meet the information, research, educational, recreational, cultural and aesthetic needs of the varied users and it is usually financed with public funds.

The public library is established to provide materials, which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people. The public library is a local centre of information that makes all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It is established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organizations. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. The public library is a library in the community that serves the generality of the public without any surcharge. Akanwa (2010) citing Emenalor defined the public library as a library that provides information resources, services and recreational outlets for the generality of the citizenry, namely, the young, the old, the literate and the non-literate. Supporting this claim, IFLA (2001) defined a public library as an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization.

Aina (2004) also noted that while other types of libraries are meant for a specific group of users, the public library is not restricted to any group of users. It is expected to serve all kinds of people including young children, people with disabilities or even people who for one reason or the other are incapacitated through the services it provide. Library services are the activities that libraries and their personnel render to meet the information needs of their users. Such services are core and traditional library services (Popoola and Haliso, 2009)

The primary purposes of the public library are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. The public libraries are expected to design services that will support the educational policies of the states where they are established.

The famous UNESCO seminar of 1953, otherwise popularly known as the Ibadan Seminar 1953 set out the Objectives of public library service in Africa as follows:

- To support and reinforce programmes of adult and fundamental education;
- To provide effective services for children and young people including requisite services for schools;
- To provide needed information and reference service;
- To promote and stimulate reading for pleasure and recreation;
- To provide, whenever needed, language groups in order to ensure availability of resources on equal terms to all members of the community.

It is in lieu of this that this paper will be discussing the educational role of the public libraries as one of the roles expected of a public library in the community where it is established. Education has been defined as a complex of social processes for acquiring knowledge and experience, formally or otherwise. Ogunshye (1981) states that it involves the total apparatus used for the development of the individual. Investment in education is everywhere under scrutiny. The days are long past when a simple and direct connection was assumed between investment in education and national development (Wali, 1991). If educators are to re-affirm their commitment to education and national development, they must be able to justify their belief that education is today not only a basic human right but also an essential tool for national development. The role of public library in this regard cannot be over-emphasized.

Public libraries services should be able to provide information resources in whatever formats to support educational process in the state where they are founded. The public library acquires books and other relevant educational materials in line with the demands and the needs of different categories of

users. It makes the materials available and accessible to the users at minimal convenience. Therefore, the public library is an information agency that assists and guides its clientele in their choice of reading materials. It affords the public especially the students the opportunity to acquire learning experiences at little or no cost. Public library also links the immediate community to the outside world as regards acquisition of knowledge. It also enriches the educational development programmes of the society by supporting continuous education programme, such as adult education programme.

IFLA (2001) was of the view that public libraries are expected to provide access to knowledge in printed and other formats to support formal and informal education. Throughout their lives people require education either at formal institutions, for example, schools, colleges and universities, or in a less formal context related to their employment and daily life. Learning does not end with the completion of formal education but is, for most people, a lifelong activity. In an increasingly complex society people will need to acquire new skills at various stages of their life, the public library has an important role in assisting this process. The public library should provide material in the appropriate media to support formal and informal learning processes. It should also help the user to make use of these learning resources effectively as well as providing facilities that enable people to study. The ability to access information and make effective use of it is vital to successful education and, where possible, public libraries should co-operate with other educational organizations in teaching the use of information resources. The public library should also actively support literacy campaigns, as literacy is the key to education and knowledge and to the use of libraries and information services. Newly literate people need easy access to appropriate reading materials to maintain and develop their skills.

### **Background information on Oyo State Public Library, Nigeria**

The Oyo State Public Library was established in 1955 under the Government of the Western Region of Nigeria and then known as the Western Region Library. In 1979, Oyo State was created and Western Region Library was restructured and renamed the Oyo State Library. In 1988, it was further renamed the Oyo State Library Board under edict 18 of that year. It presently has its headquarters at Dugbe, Ibadan and branches at Elekuro, Bodija, Oyo and Ogbomosho. The Library and its branches serve

all the 33 Local Governments in Oyo State, providing a range of resources and services to cater for the information needs of all strata of the society, including young adults, [Olarongbe, 2013].

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It has been noted that public libraries are expected to provide access to knowledge in printed and other formats to support formal and informal education in any state they are established. The public library plays an important role in the attainment of viable transformation in education in any community. However, it is believed that public libraries in Nigeria have neglected this role and have not paid attention to the provision of relevant information in different formats to students that will support their learning process. This study thus examines the influence of public library services on educational transformation in Oyo States, Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To find out the impact of public library services on educational transformation;
- To assess how often users patronize the studied public libraries, services available to the users, the main purpose for patronizing, the level of satisfaction of users, the impact on academic performance and the challenges faced in using the public library services.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The public library is an institution of inestimable value supported by public fund for the benefit of the society. The use of public libraries is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but it is freely available to all (Anie, 2007). Anyalebechi and Udo-Anyanwu, (2016) posited a similar definition in stating that public libraries are libraries that provide unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all residents of a given community district or geographical region. According to Anie (2007), public libraries are public institutions owned and funded by the public of which the services are free irrespective of age, race, sex, profession, status etc. the public library provides for the reading interest of wide range of users in the community where the library is situated.

Ifidon (2006) opines that services in a library could be said to be excellent and appreciative if only there are books and other library resources available in that library. Public libraries are making frantic efforts to provide services to its clientele. In other words, services expected to be provided by the public libraries have become a major concern of library and information science practitioners. The services provided by the public library include community information services, recreational activities, reference services, loan services, storytelling, reading, career information, customer care, adult literacy education etc.

According to history, the inseparable relationship between the libraries and education started way back in the Byzantium or Constantinople (the ancient city of Thrace in modern Turkey's Istanbul that, the Greeks founded in the seventh century). Monks wrote incessantly in Scriptoriums (Rooms in monasteries earmarked for manuscript writing), to preserve and accumulate the results of their Hellenistic thoughts on what became large libraries that were solely devoted to the monks' education in spiritual advancement. Eighteenth century history, educational materials and Buddhist scriptures, stored in "Pitakataik" a library that founded by King Mindon Min during the pre-colonial era as one of the eight structures that were established in honor of naming Mandalay as his capital), further reinforced the destinies of libraries with education. Library and education thus became symbiotically and inexorably dependent on one another. Over the years, it is obvious that the library, education, literacy and national development always went hand in hand and have influenced everyone from the primary school students to the highest levels of education.

The importance of the library in the service on education cannot be overestimated as Onohwakpor (2005) posited that libraries are regarded as one of the institutions that have a role in advancing literacy and education in the society. Library services are needed to keep the skills that have been required through literacy classes alive by the provision of good literature. If adult education is to have a greater share in the molding and building of a happier individual and a better society, the providers of adult education must go beyond their roles as literacy facilitators to a more practical role of providing libraries for sustaining the newly acquired skills of adult learners.



## **METHODOLOGY**

For this study, the descriptive survey research design was employed. This method is primarily chosen because it is considered appropriate for this kind of study. It allows the researcher to analyze, interpret and state categorically relationships that exist among variables. The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire for the users and a face to face interview with the staff.

### **Population and Sampling**

The study focuses on the users who are students and Librarians of Oyo State Library Board. The total population of the users who were students couldn't be determined as the library is open to every student in the state. A total of eight librarians were available in the library. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the users who are students. This was used because the populations of the library users who are students were indeterminate. Users present in the library on the day of going to the field were all sampled which formed the sample size. The simple random sampling technique was used to select librarians. The sample size of 3 librarians was also studied.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data gathered with the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Demography of respondents and research questions were equally analyzed with descriptive statistics, using the simple frequency percentage count. Data gathered from the face to face interview were interpreted by listening to the record properly and drawing out the main points.

## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The total of thirty questionnaires were distributed to users of the library who are students, sixteen copies were retrieved and found useful for the analysis giving us 53.3% questionnaires retrieved.

*Demographic Information of the respondents*

**Table 1: Demographic Information of respondents (Students)**

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	5	38.5
	Female`	8	61.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age Bracket</b>	10 – 15	1	6.7
	16 – 20	4	26.7
	21 – 25	5	33.3
	26 – 30	2	12.5
	Above 30	3	20.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Class Bracket</b>	Senior Secondary School	3	20.0
	Tertiary Institution	12	80.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 presents the frequency of the demographic information of respondents. Majority of the respondents to this study were female with a frequency of 8 (61.5%), while the male respondents to this study were 5 (38.5%). Majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21 - 25 years with a frequency of 5 (33.3%), while the least respondents were within the age bracket of 10 - 15 years with a frequency of 1 (6.7%). Higher number of the respondents were from the tertiary institution with a frequency of 12 (80.0%), while the least respondents were from the senior secondary school with a frequency of 3 (20%) respondents.

*Question 1: How often do you patronize the library?*

**Table 2: Distribution of frequency of patronage of the library**

Frequency of Patronage	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	5	31.3
Once in a week	2	12.5
Once in a Month	1	6.3
Occasionally	8	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 presents the distribution of the frequency of patronage of the library. Majority of the respondents indicated that they patronized the library occasionally. This was the opinion of 8 (50.0%) of the respondents. Just 1 (6.3%) respondent which is the least indicated that he patronizes the library once

in a Month. This result indicated that most students rarely patronize the public library except on special occasions when they have no choice.

**Question 2: What are the library services available to you?**

**Table 3: Distributions of the library services available to students**

Services Available	Agreed		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Lending of materials	12	85.7	2	14.3	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Reference Service	12	85.7	2	14.3	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Photocopying Service	1	7.1	13	92.9	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Internet Service	3	21.4	11	78.6	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Referral Service	7	50.0	7	50.0	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Translation Service	8	57.1	6	42.9	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
User Education Service	9	69.2	4	30.8	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Adult Literacy Program	8	61.6	5	38.5	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Outreach and extension	8	57.1	6	42.9	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the distribution of the library services available to students. The services majorly available to students as indicated by respondents include lending services, reference services and user education services. These were the opinion of 12 (85.7%), 12 (85.7%) and 9 (69.2%) respondents respectively. Photocopying and internet services were seen not to be available to the respondents with 1 (7.1%) and 3 (21.4%) respondents only agreeing to its availability. This result is an indication that the public library hasn't really done so much in making all important services available to students which could be a likely cause for the rare patronage of students in the library.

**Question 3: What are the main purposes of using the public library?**

**Table 4: Distribution of the purposes of use of the public library**

Purpose for Patronage	Agreed		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Obtain general information	12	85.7	2	14.2	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Borrowing of information materials	10	66.7	5	33.3	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Reading newspapers	7	46.6	8	53.4	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Leisure	9	60.0	6	40.0	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Entertainment	4	26.7	11	73.3	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Prepare for examinations	15	100	0	0	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Research purposes	15	93.8	1	6.3	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>
Enquiries	14	93.4	1	6.6	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational purpose	13	92.8	1	7.1	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows the distribution of the purpose of use of the public library. The major purposes why students use the public library as indicated by the respondents include preparing for examination, Research purposes, enquiries and educational purpose. These were the opinion of 15 (100%), 15 (93.8%), 14 (93.4%) and 13 (92.8%) of the respondents respectively. This result is an indication that the public library even though it lacks some important library services, the little services it render (lending services, reference services and user education services) is able to cater for the students' academic needs. That is why main reasons the students visit the public library are all related to their academics as indicated by the respondents.

*Question 4: What is the level of satisfaction with the public library services?*

**Table 5: Distribution of the level of satisfaction of the public library services**

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very poor	3	18.8
Not Satisfactory	1	6.3
Satisfactory	5	31.3
Very Satisfactory	7	43.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 show the distribution of the level of satisfaction of the public library services to the respondents. It was revealed that majority of the respondents were very satisfied and satisfied with the services rendered to them by the public library. These were the opinion of 7 (43.8%) and 5 (31.3%) of the respondents. The finding is an indication that the public library even though all importance services are not available to students, the little which are available has been able to satisfy students' academic needs. Which means the public library is having massive effect on the positive academic transformation in its little way.

*Question 5: Does the public library have any positive impact on your academic performance?*

**Table 6: Distribution of the impact of the public library on academic performance.**

Impacted positively on academic performance	Frequency	Percentage
No	3	18.8
Yes	13	81.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 presents the distribution of the impact of the public library on academic performance. From the findings, majority of the respondents 13 (81.3%) indicated that the public library has positive impact on their academic performance. This result is an indication that public libraries are concerned with that educational transformation of the state by impacting positively in various ways to their academic performance.

**Question 6: What are the challenges faced in using the public library services?**

**Table 7: Distribution of challenges faced in using the public library services**

Challenges	Agreed		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor attitude of library staff	4	26.7	11	73.3	15	100
Inadequate collections	6	40.0	9	60.0	15	100
Inadequate facilities	10	66.7	5	33.3	15	100
Epileptic power supply	15	93.8	1	6.3	16	100
No internet facilities	13	86.6	2	13.4	15	100
Location of the Library	5	33.4	10	63.6	15	100
Poor ventilation	6	40.0	9	60.0	15	100

Table 7 shows the challenges faced in using the public library services. The major challenges faced by students in using the public library services as indicated are Epileptic power supply, No internet facilities and inadequate facilities. These were the opinion indicated by 15 (93.8%), 13 (86.6%) and 10 (66.7%) of the respondents. It can be seen by the findings that most public libraries lacks basic facilities that can aid other important services which isn't supposed to be. Power supply and internet facilities are really need for the smooth running of any modern libraries in this 21st century.

**Question 7: What are the possible suggestions to tackle the identified challenges?**

**Table 8 Distribution for possible suggestions to tackle the identified challenges**

Solutions	Agreed		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Staff should be trained on proper user staff relation	14	93.3	1	6.7	15	100
Library should be stocked with enough and relevant information materials	15	100	0	0	15	100
Internet facilities should be made available for use	15	100	0	0	15	100
The library should create/establish branches in each of the local government in the state	14	93.3	1	6.7	15	100
Provision of alternative means of power supply	15	93.7	1	6.3	16	100

Table 8 presents the distribution for possible suggestions to tackle the identified challenges. The challenges can be tackled by stocking the libraries with enough and relevant information materials, Internet facilities should be made available for use and Provision of alternative means of power supply among others as indicated by the respondents. These were the opinion of 15 (100%), 15 (100%) and 15 (93.7%) of the respondents respectively. It is advised that public libraries shouldn't fully depend on just a source of power supply, other sources should be made available so power challenges can be addressed. Also the public libraries should subscribe to credible internet service providers for efficient internet services.

### **Summary of the Interview held with Librarians in Oyo State Library Board**

#### ***Library services rendered by the library***

**Respondent 1:** It was stated that since it is a public library, hence their services cover all categories of users ranging from adults to children, students and the likes. The services therefore includes; Lending services, Referral services, ICT for Internet services for users to browse, Consultancy services to some private Librarians, Organise public lectures to discuss current issues.

**Respondent 2:**It was stated that the library acquire different range library materials for users to read (i.e acquisition services). The users therefore range from children, students, researchers, adults, retirees and so on.

**Respondent 3:** This was the technical Librarian, it was stated that, they render technical services like processing the library materials for it to be accessible in the shelves.

#### ***How library services support academic performance***

**Respondent 1:** It was stated that, Libraries are engine rooms of any academic environment. Some who have one professional examination or another always come to the library for materials and so far the library has been doing well in that regard (i.e providing with the needed materials). Our peak times have been during exams like GCE, WAEC, NECO, JAMB and the rest because the library does have more students than even the library can contain who comes around to read and use the materials to prepare for

the exams. After exams, we hardly see people to that come around to read because of the poor reading culture of Nigerians.

**Respondent 2:**It was stated that, through the reading materials we provide for them, they use it to prepare for their exams and a conducive environment for them to read too. We have textbooks, journals and the likes.

**Respondent 3:** It was stated that the library has supported academic performance, through the library books that is made available to them for their exams, project and others.

### *Challenges faced in rendering library services*

**Responses:**It was stated by the respondents that the challenges include; Lack of Funding, Staffing (which also rely on funding), Electricity, lack of reading materials.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Majority of the respondents indicated that they occasionally patronized the library for whatever purpose they patronize it for. This is an indication that most Nigeria students don't see reasons why they should use the public library except on special occasions when it is really important and they kind of have no choice at all, they rush to the library. This finding is in line with Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2014), in their study which revealed that most of the public library users in the study visit the library at least once a week. This can be attributed to the poor reading culture of the young ones in this country. This is why Goulding (2006) asserted that, there is a widespread recognition that public library needs to tackle the issue of non-use of public library services. In tackling this, the library need to ensure the services they offer meets the 21st century library standard.

The findings also revealed that not all important services is been rendered by the library, but a few were rendered which includes lending services, reference services and user education services. This services are in line with the services identified by Ifidon (2006) who stated that the services provided by public libraries includes community information services, recreational activities, reference services, loan services, storytelling, reading, career information, customer care, adult literacy education etc. Even with

this few services rendered by the library, it should be able to settle large number of the users' information needs. It can be noted that a good library should be able to allow users lend materials and organize different kind of user education programs like seminars, public lectures that can impact its users positively.

The findings also showed that the major purposes why students visit the public library were for preparing for examination, Research purposes, enquiries and educational purpose. This is an indication that the public library has stand as a tool for students' educational transformation as it is able to meet their various individual academic needs based on the services it rendered, that is why Onohwakpor (2005) posited that libraries are regarded as one of the institutions that have a role in advancing literacy and education in the society. Students from whatever society can work up to the library when they have academic challenge and by the time they are leaving the library, whatever challenge they were faced with is addressed due to the services rendered. The findings also revealed that majority were at least satisfied with the services rendered. It is fact that they were satisfied because the library through its services was able to cater for their different purpose of use of the library which is all majorly related to the academic purposes of use. This is what is expected of the public library today, it should be a place students can get transformed educationally and able to satisfy whatever need they are faced with related to their academics.

The findings also revealed that the library has impacted positively on students' academic performance as majority of the respondents indicated that. This is seen to be one of the major goals of any public library as stated by UNESCO in a seminar held in the year 1953. This libraries even as they have done quite a lot in educational transformation, they are still faced with a number of challenges which was indicated by the respondents. They challenges face includes poor funding, epileptic power supply, no internet facilities and inadequate facilities. Some of this challenges identified are in line with Ebiwolate (2010) suggests that public library services are facing a number of problems which could be highlighted as bad roads, lack of funds, insufficient library materials, irrelevant or outdated materials. In the same manner, Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2014) stated that the facilities (internet/ICT among others) and



services that are meant to make these libraries a functional and strategic part of the public library system is actively lacking. It can be seen that the government haven't done a lot in encouraging the libraries as it is the responsibility of the government to fund the public libraries so they can get alternate sources of power supply, access good internet service providers and also ensure the provision of adequate facilities.

Some solutions were indicated by the respondents as a suggestion based on the challenges. These solutions include stocking the libraries with enough and relevant information materials, Internet facilities should be made available for use and Provision of alternative means of power supply. All this can be made available ones the budgetary allocation for the public libraries is worked upon and increased adequately.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The public library is very important to the educational transformation of the country, therefore the need for the library to get involved in creating adequate awareness about the importance for students starting from those in primary school up till those in the tertiary institutions, on the need cultivate the reading culture and ensure they use the library at least ones a week so they wouldn't just go to the library only whenever it is urgent on occasional bases. Although the public library has made some important services like the lending service, reference services and education service available, but there are some other services that are still lacking in the library, which the public library can work in providing so as to meet the major purposes of students use of the library which is for academic purposes.

Based on the services that has been made available to students, majority of them were at least satisfied with the services rendered and have stated that it has affected their academics positively which is one of the goal of the public library. But the library can still do more so that the unsatisfied users can have the reasons to get satisfied with the library services. For this to be actualized, other services like the ICT services should be addressed.

The major challenges faced by the public library were associated to funding, and other challenges includes; electricity, no internet facilities, inadequate facilities and the likes of other. In other to address

these challenges, the government should see to increasing the budgetary allocation for public libraries, stocking the libraries with enough and relevant information materials, Internet facilities should be made available for use and Provision of alternative means of power supply. So the library can stand with be among one of the 21st century library and would be a great force to reckon with by students from various educational institution and background

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