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The Significance of School Libraries in the Educational Development of Students: the Case of Novena University Staff School, Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria

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Introduction

Children and their teachers need library resources and the expertise of a librarian to succeed. School libraries help teachers teach children (Keith 2004). A school library is an academic library that supports school programs as well as the teaching and learning process. School libraries serve students by providing materials to meet their various needs and encouraging reading and the use of libraries (Clark 1999). Martin (2000) notes that “research shows that the reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are, on average of eight to twenty one percent, higher than similar schools with no such development.” Adomi (2006) stresses the importance of adequate collections.

School libraries help children to discover for themselves by independent study and learning how to ask questions. This study assesses the educational development of students and library use by students and the problems encountered. The population for the study is students from the Novena University staff school. Novena University is a private university in Novena University Ogume, Delta State, Nigeria, which was opened in 2005. Secondary students in the university's staff school were surveyed to find their experience with and views on library service.

Methodology

A questionnaire was used to gather data for this study. Questionnaires were administered to 200 students of Novena University staff school, with 198 returned.

Findings and Discussion

Table I: Gender of respondents

Sex	No. of respondent	% of respondents
Male	108	55%
Female	90	45%
Total	198	100%

Responses were fairly evenly divided by gender, with males having a slight majority.

Table II: Age of respondents

Age	No. of respondents	% of respondents
10 – 12	-	0%
12 – 14	44	22%
15 – 16	124	63%
17 – 18	30	15%
Total	198	100%

The largest number of respondents were aged between 15 and 16.

Table III: Class

Class	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Senior Secondary 3	46	23%
Senior Secondary 2	126	63%
Senior Secondary 1	26	14%
Total	198	100%

A majority of respondents were from Senior Secondary 2 at 126 (63%). This could be the result of availability of students at the time of the study.

Table IV: Do you use the library?

User	No. of respondent	% of respondents
Yes	160	81%
No	36	18%
Undecided	2	1%
Total	196	100%

The vast majority of students (81%) say that they use the library.

Table V: How often do you use the library?

frequency	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Frequently	46	23%
Occasionally	146	73%
Not at all	6	4%
Total	198	100%

Less than one quarter of respondents use the library frequently, with nearly three quarters using it occasionally.

Table VI: Do you think that those who use the library are academically better or worst than those who do not?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Better	134	67%
Worst	52	26%
Undecided	12	7%
Total	198	100%

A clear majority feel that using the school library helps students be academically better.

Table VII: Does the school library provide adequate recreational and information materials for students?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	28	14%
No	162	81%
Undecided	8	5%
Total	198	100%

More than 80 percent of respondents find the library's resources inadequate.

Table VIII: True or False: The school library plays a very important role in the development of students' reading habits.

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
True	84	42%
False	50	25%
Undecided	64	33%
Total	198	100%

Response to this question is mixed, with nearly one-third undecided, and a quarter thinking it "false."

Table IX: Does the school library provide materials to augment classroom teaching?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	24	12%
No	128	64%
Undecided	46	24%
Total	198	100%

Most respondents feel that the library does not provide materials that augment teaching.

Table X: Is the school library able to satisfy your educational needs?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	38	19%
No	158	80%
Undecided	2	1%
Total	198	100%

Nearly 80 percent of respondents find that the library does not satisfy their educational needs.

Table XI: Does your school library provide audiovisual materials?

Response	No of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	8	5%
No	188	94%
Undecided	2	1%
Total	198	100%

Nearly all respondents are not provided audiovisual materials by the library.

Table XII: Do you have enough reading room?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	8	5%
No	190	95%
Undecided	0	0%
Total	190	100%

A similar large majority find that there is not enough reading room in the library.

Table XIII: Does your library have a professional as a librarian?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	44	23%
No	152	76%
Undecided	2	1%
Total	198	100%

More than three quarters of respondents say that there is not professional librarian.

Table XIV: Does the distance affect your visit to the library?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	20	11%
No	178	89%
Undecided	0	0%
Total	198	100%

Distance to the library is not a problem for almost 90 percent of respondents.

Table XV: Do you always get the information you need in the library?

Response	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	26	14%
No	172	86%
Undecided	0	0%
Total	198	100%

Only 14 percent of respondents always get the information they need at the library.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The survey shows that most students who responded are not satisfied with the services and collections of their school library. The literature demonstrates the importance of a good school library in students' academic achievement. Based on the importance and the benefits of the school library to both staff and the students, the author has the following recommendations:

- The school library should have a professional librarian to render effective services to staff and students
- The teacher/librarian should organize orientation, films, exhibitions, and displays to create awareness of the library service to users.
- The library should take steps to enhance its collections and resources with material for both staff and students that meets their educational needs and developments and augments classroom teachings.
- Students need audiovisual materials as well as print and other formats.
- The library should provide adequate recreational and information materials to arouse student interest
- The library should provide adequate reading and study space.

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