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**AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLES OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN
LEARNING ACTIVITIES OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
ONDO STATE**

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted reviewing the roles of school libraries in learning activities of senior secondary school students in Ondo State. Ondo State is divided into three senatorial districts where two Local Governments were selected from each of the senatorial district and two secondary schools taken from each of the selected Local Government. Descriptive survey was adopted to carry out the research and a structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from the respondents while a high response rate of 100% was obtained. The validity of the research was determined by ensuring that the questionnaire reflects basic topics in the curriculum of the library and information studies and the reliability of the instrument was determined by subjecting it to Cronbach Alpha Reliability test with section B= 0.69; C= 0.59; D=0.64; E= 0.58 and section F=0.64. The result revealed that students use school library majorly to do their assignments, to prepare for class tests, and to prepare for examinations. All these play significant roles in learning activities of senior secondary school students. Based on the result, it was concluded that the quality and variety of the collection available in the school libraries is a significant factor in students learning activities, therefore, adequate funding needs to be available to procure current resources that are curriculum related and of general interest to students' learning activities. Also, efforts should be made by school management and government to up-grade the school library with Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Keywords: School Libraries, Students, Learning Activities, Senior Secondary School.

Introduction

The significance of a library in an academic environment is inestimable, most especially, at the fundamental stage of education. The success of any educational programme in any society can only be made possible if there is a suitable learning environment. In the light of the above, the school libraries at both primary and secondary levels have been regarded as the 'heart' of school around which all schools' programs revolve. Secondary school libraries are the libraries established in secondary school to enhance teaching and learning of both students and teachers as well as to promote the social activities of the community. Nevertheless, the school library by nature of its establishment is a key ingredient for educational pursuit and academic activities of students at secondary level.

Libraries generally serve as important instrument for the attainment of academic excellence and attainment of the broad and specific education objectives of institution. The school library has become an important organ of the educational system. According to Ogunbote and Odunewu (2008) the school libraries have an important role to play, both in the context of the educational system and in preparing future generation of library users because they provide resources and environment, within the school systems, where students can discover and develop their abilities and talents and where teachers can improve their skills and locate a wide range of learning resources. Oluwadare,(2007) stated that students will benefit more through the use of library and its resources as it will introduce them to a world of knowledge and inculcate in them the love of reading through developing a reading habit However the inadequacy of relevant books in school libraries could contribute markedly to low levels of outcomes.

Dewey wrote that a broad conception at the end of the century of the work of the schools is simply to teach the children to think accurately with strength and with speed. If it is in the school that they get their start then where do they get their education? The year 1920 marked the first effort by the library and education communities to evaluate school libraries with the publication of certain report which provided the first yardstick for evaluating school libraries. Daniel (2000) noted that 1960s marked the practical start of a shift in the function of the school library from an auxiliary service to a vital significant segment of the service to strengthen educational program. A glimpse into the historical past of school library in Nigeria shows that the history dates back to 1954 when, during the conference of West African Library Association (WALA) held in Accra, Ghana, the need to develop a school library as an integral part of the education system was discussed.

During the 1960s, the discussion of the 1954 conference was not being implemented as regional governments embarked on the provision of mobile library services to schools. Regional library boards were established in Eastern, Northern and Western Nigeria.

The first Nigeria school library conference was held in 1964 with teachers and librarians in attendance and issues affecting the school library were discussed. A major milestone was made in 1972 when the Department of Library Studies of University of Ibadan established Abadina Media Resources Centre.

This development was very significant in the growth and recognition of the school library system in Nigeria. The department of library studies put in place a collection of books and other information materials manned by professional librarians. Thus in 1974 the Abadina Resource Centre became operational. The centre assisted many schools in establishing their own libraries and it also assisted in training personnel to man the libraries.

In 1977, the Nigerian school library Association (NSLA) was launched and it became a formidable force in the development of school libraries in Nigeria. In its pursuit of being relevant to the nation's education process, the Nigeria School Library Association took the advantage of the National conference on education held in 1977 to present a position paper on the incorporation of school libraries into the National policy on Education (Daniel 2000). The school library association has continued to make remarkable achievement as it became an affiliated member of the Nigeria Library Association (NLA).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study was to determine the roles of the school libraries in the learning activities of senior secondary school students. Other specific objectives are:

- ❖ To identify the purpose of using school library by senior secondary school students .
- ❖ To find out the information materials that are available for use in the school library
- ❖ To know the services rendered by school libraries
- ❖ To know how often students use the school library
- ❖ To establish the relationship between the use of school library and student learning activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the purposes of using school library?
2. What are the information materials available in the school library?
3. What are the roles of school library in the learning activities of senior secondary students?

4. What are the services rendered in school library?
5. How often do students use the school library?
6. What are the problems encountered in the use of school library?

Statement of the Problem

The lack of libraries in most secondary schools in Nigeria has been a subject of concern to stakeholders in Nigeria educational system. Also, the inadequacy of appropriate information resources in a few libraries in Nigeria secondary schools has become worrisome for stakeholders. It is also observed that most of the available information materials in those existing libraries have become obsolete. There is, therefore, the need to establish functional school libraries in secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly, Ondo State and ensure that the libraries are stocked with adequate and up-to-date information materials to aid students learning activities. It is against this background that the study intended to carry out investigation into the roles of school library in the learning activities of secondary schools students in Ondo State.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in the sense that it will enable the students (secondary) to have knowledge of the importance of school library and its contribution to their academic excellence. It will enable the school librarians to know the need for selection of library collections and how to encourage the students to make use of the materials. This study will also go a long way in helping government and school management to pay more attention to the establishment and funding of school libraries. Also, the parents, through Parents Teacher Association (PTA), will see the need why it is expedient for them to cooperate with the school management in funding the school library. Besides, this research work will serve as a reference point to individuals or groups who want to research on related topics in the future. More importantly, the study will particularly afford respective governments the opportunity to be aware of the need to make available and accessible appropriate information resources for advancement of students' learning activities and their cognitive development

Literature Review

Library is the back bone of functional education without which academic excellence cannot be achieved, (Smith 2003). The school library, thus, stands as a symbol for the truthful expression of man's knowledge and experiences. The school on its own cannot achieve the laudable goals of Nigerian education without putting in place functional libraries.

Haycock (1995) presented a useful overview of the evidence that links school library and students achievement. The studies show that:

- In school with good library and the service of a school librarian, students perform significantly better on tests for basic research skills
- The guidance of a librarian appears to exert significant influence on student achievement in information gathering.
- Students perform significantly better in reading comprehension and in their ability to express effectively ideas in relation to their reading.
- More reading occurs when there is a school library with full of information materials in terms of printed and non-printed materials.

The roles and contributions of school libraries in the provision of education at all levels cannot be overemphasized, especially, when one considers the purposes of school library within the school system. The purposes of school library to students are as follows:

- To assist students to become skillful and develop independent reading habit.
- To help students to improve their academic standard by providing relevant books
- To develop reading ability and interest, and inculcate love, enjoyment and pleasure of reading amongst the students,
- To assist the students in the provision of reference services.
- To contribute to learning activities of the students in all areas of academic pursuit.
- To help in training students in the habit of using their leisure hours more profitably.

More recent research by Williams and Wavell (2009) highlighted the school library's role in motivating learning, teaching specific skills, fostering independent learning and encouraging collaborative learning. The school library exists to provide a range of learning opportunities for both large and small groups as well as individuals with a focus on intellectual content, information literacy and the learner. Another purpose of the school library is that, the school library serves as a place for students to do independent work, use computer equipment and research materials, host special events such as visits and book clubs, and for tutoring and testing. A school library functions as an opportunity for educators to work with librarians in support of a resource center for the students to be able to safely access the internet for both school work and interacting with each other.

Also, Alokun (2003) stated that school libraries are set up to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide opportunities for further reading and use of materials other than prescribed classroom textbooks.
- To promote the development of reading skills
- To teach library skills in preparation for future use of libraries in the community and institutions of higher learning.
- To encourage long term learning habits through reading, listening and viewing of a variety of learning materials.
- To encourage research and independent study by students and teachers.

The school library association (SLA) believes that the purpose of a school library is to provide a wide range of books and multimedia' resources to support teaching and learning throughout the key stages and foster a reading and information culture that promotes independent motivated appropriately staffed and funded and accessible to the whole school community during and outside the school day.

Information Materials in School Library

Information materials available in school library are similar to public libraries in that they contain books, films, recorded sound, periodical, realia and digital media. The quantity of services provided by the school library should be determined by the richness of its collection. Obajemu (2002), opined that a school library collection is a depository of knowledge generally with specific emphasis on the curricular. A standard school library offers a wide variety of materials that can answer the quest of developing the mind of the students. It is important that its resources should extend beyond printed materials to non-printed materials, such as graphic, pictures, films, computer and other audiovisual resources in an effort to make learning on all inclusive realistic experience for students.

It should be noted that information materials in the school library are not only for education, enjoyment, and entertainment of members of the school community, but also to enhance and expand the school's curriculum. Oguntuase (2004) opined that information materials in the library should reflect the diverse needs, experience and exposure that we want the students to have. Oluwadare (2002) opined that adequate library resources play an effective role in secondary education in Nigeria. It is a tool of man's knowledge and experiences store in useful format to aid leaning of the academic community.

The Services Rendered in School Library

A good library is indispensable if academic excellence is to be achieved in any academic setting, Obajemu (2002). The truth of this statement depends on the types of services that are available in such school library. Clark (1999) stated that school library serve students by providing materials to meet their various needs and encouraging reading and the use of library. The quality of school library services will be largely influenced by the availability of human, material and financial resources. Every school library should be able to provide the following levels of services: selection and acquisition of library materials, organization of stock, circulation or loan services, current awareness, reference services, production of instructional materials and other promotional activities.

UNESCO (2000) identified the core services of school libraries vital to the development of literacy. These include: information literacy, teaching, learning and culture. The goal of school libraries in Nigerian school should be the adequate provision of all the core services mention below to support the total education programme for each school. The core services are:

- Supporting and enhancing goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum
- Offering opportunities for experience in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment.
- Providing access to local, state, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences an opinion
- Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity for teachers and students.
- Working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school
- Promoting reading and the resources and services of the library to the whole community and beyond.
- Serving as the center and coordinating agency for all materials used in the school.

Problems Encountered by Students in the Course of Using School Library

In Nigeria, it is observed that school libraries exhibit inadequacies in personnel (staffing) and the few they have are unqualified library personnel. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) observed that, a school library, for example cannot be expected to fulfill its role and carry out its responsibilities effectively if its instructional authorities failed to provide it with adequate funds, personnel and physical facilities, and if the libraries cannot collaborate with the

teaching staff in building up library collection, it has problems discharging its responsibility properly. As such, learning tends to be at the memory level of intelligence.

In terms of space, Ayorinde (2005) argued that space matters a lot in school libraries. He referred to UNESCO prescription of 10,000 books and journals annually in a standard school library while a typical library must provide sitting facilities for at least a quarter of the population of the community in which the library is located. This standard has, perhaps, not been met in school libraries. As such, libraries in Nigeria have relied heavily on foreign book donations which, in many cases, are irrelevant to the needs of students.

Obada (2004) opined that the school library resource center, in most cases, has some challenges. Teachers' attitude, librarians' attitude, irregular opening hours and inadequate and irrelevant materials for the library. For instance, the opening hours may not be suitable for the students to come into the library, the school librarian may be unfriendly to the students and even to the teachers as well. The materials housed in the library may not be relevant to the school syllabus. All these will go a long way in discouraging the use of the library by students which may otherwise reflect in their learning activities.

Location of school library is another problem encountered by students in the course of using school library. Some of the school libraries are located in-between the principal's office and staff room. This, of course, discourages students because of the treatment they usually get from teachers on their way to the library. Yusuf (2008) observed that the major constraints the school libraries have in Nigeria are: inadequate funding, paying lip services on implementation of school library development policy as well as environmental inhibition, such as parental illiteracy, poverty and treatment received from wicked teachers.

METHOD

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study.

Population: The population for this study comprises all the Senior Secondary School students in Ondo State of Nigeria.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

A multi stage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for the study. At the first stage, a random sampling technique was employed to select two Local Governments from each of the three senatorial districts (Ondo North, Central and South). At the second stage, a random sampling technique was employed to select two schools from each of selected local government totaling twelve. The third stage was concerned with randomly selecting twenty

(20) senior secondary II (SS2) students from each of the schools totalling two hundred and forty (240) students.

Table 1: Study Sample

| District | Local Governments | Name of the selected secondary schools | Sample number (SSII) |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Ondo North | 1. Owo LG | i. Imade College, Owo | 20 |
| | | ii. Uso High School Uso | 20 |
| | 2. Akoko North/West LG | i. Ahmadiya Grammar School, Ogbagi Akoko | 20 |
| | | ii Ado-Ugbo Grammar School, Afin Akoko | 20 |
| Ondo Central | 1. Akure South LG | i Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure | 20 |
| | | ii Fiwasaye Girls Grammar School, Akure | 20 |
| | 2. Ifedore LG | i. Anglican Grammar School, Ijare | 20 |
| | | ii. Ero High School, Ero | 20 |
| Ondo South | 1. Irele LG | i. United Grammar School, Ode-Irele | 20 |
| | | ii. Jowori Grammar School, Ajagba | 20 |
| | 2. Okitipupa LG | i. Methodist High School, Okitipupa | 20 |
| | | ii. Layelu Grammar School, Ode-aye. | 20 |
| Total | 6 | 12 | 240 |

Research Instrument

The research instrument for this research work was questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A was on respondents Bio-data, while sections B,C,D,E and F were prepared to obtain data on the research questions for the study. This was earlier discussed in the abstract.

Reliability and Validity

The questionnaire was given to specialists and professionals in measurement and evaluation and library and information studies to ascertain the face validity while the content validity was determined for ensuring that the questionnaire reflects basic topics in the

curriculum of the library and information studies with special focus on the aspect of the school library. The reliability of the instrument was determined by subjecting it to Cronbach Alpha Reliability test. (Section B= 0.69, Section C= 0.59, Section D= 0.64, Section E= 0.58, Section F= 0.64)

Data Collection Procedure

The permission of the school management of the selected schools was sought, and the instruments were given to research assistants who helped to distribute the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected back after four weeks by the researcher to ensure that none was missing.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using frequencies (numbers), percentages and tables.

RESULTS

Table 2: Age of the respondents (students)

| S/N | AGE RANGE | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE % |
|-----|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | 12-13 | 38 | 16 |
| 2 | 14-16 | 127 | 53 |
| 3 | 17-above | 75 | 31 |
| | Total | 240 | 100 |

The table above showed that 53% (127) of the senior secondary school students falls between the age range of 14-16years old, 38 (16%) fall between ages 12 - 13 years while 75 (31%) are of the age of 17 years and above.

Table 3: Gender of the Respondents

| S/N | GENDER | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE % |
|-----|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Female | 133 | 55 |
| 2 | Male | 107 | 45 |
| | Total | 240 | 100 |

As shown in the table above, responses were fairly evenly divided by gender with males 133 (55%) and females 107 (45%).

Table 4: Services enjoyed in the school library

| S/N | ITEM | AGREED | % | DISAGREED | % |
|------|--------------------------------|--------|----|-----------|----|
| i | Reference Services | 155 | 65 | 85 | 35 |
| ii. | Organization of reading Group | 148 | 62 | 92 | 38 |
| iii. | Loan Services | 86 | 36 | 154 | 84 |
| iv. | Library orientation services | 77 | 32 | 163 | 68 |
| v. | Computer and internet services | 45 | 19 | 195 | 81 |
| vi. | Story telling hour | 125 | 52 | 115 | 48 |

Table shows that the library stocked the reference materials that meet the needs of the students with 155 (65%), organized reading group 148 (62%), offered loan services to students 86(36%), organized library orientation services 77(32%) while computer and internet services ranked lowest 45(19%)

Table 5: The roles of school library in the learning activities of senior secondary school students

| S/N | ITEM | AGREED | % | DISAGREED | % |
|------|--|--------|----|-----------|----|
| i | It helps to understand teaching better and support the class work. | 181 | 75 | 59 | 25 |
| ii. | It assists me with my assignments and spellings. | 191 | 80 | 49 | 20 |
| iii. | It enhances independent learning and this improves my performance. | 203 | 85 | 37 | 15 |
| iv. | It helps to develop my reading skill | 197 | 82 | 43 | 18 |
| v. | It increases my cognition | 175 | 73 | 65 | 27 |

However, this table 5 shows that school library enhances independent learning which improves students' performances 203(85%), It helps to understand teaching and class work 181(75%).It helps to develop reading skill 197(82%) and it increases students' cognition 175(73%).

Table 6: Regularity of use of school library by students

| RESPONDENTS | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE% |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Frequently | 115 | 48 |
| Occasional | 55 | 23 |
| Not at all | 70 | 29 |
| Total | 240 | 100 |

From the table above, it shows that students, who use library frequently, are: 115(48%), occasionally 55(23%) and there are some students who do not use library at all 70(29%).

Table 7: The purpose of using library

| S/N | ITEM | AGREED | % | DISAGREED | % |
|------------|--|---------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| i | To read my note books and text books | 179 | 75 | 61 | 25 |
| ii. | To prepare for class texts and examination | 197 | 82 | 43 | 18 |
| iii. | To borrow books and return them | 70 | 29 | 170 | 71 |
| iv. | To read Novels, Magazines and Newspapers | 148 | 62 | 92 | 38 |
| v. | To do my assignments and for further studies | 183 | 76 | 57 | 24 |

The table 7 above shows the purpose of using library by senior secondary school students. The respondents revealed that largest number of the students use library to prepare for class test and examination 197(82%), follow by those that use library to read their note book and other text books 179(75%), to do assignment 183(76%), to read novels, magazine and newspaper 148(62%) while those who visit library to borrow books are 70(~9%) and this is because they have bought almost all the text books.

Personally, they usually bring it from home and take it to the library. The students agreed that the school library serves its purpose. However, this result shows that school library improves learning activities of students in all areas.

Table 8: Problems encountered in the course of using library

| S/N | ITEM | AGREED | % | DISAGREED | % |
|-----|---|--------|----|-----------|----|
| 1 | Lack of library period in the school time table | 221 | 92 | 19 | 8 |
| 2 | Lack of current and relevant text books | 195 | 81 | 45 | 19 |
| 3 | The location of the library is discouraging | 165 | 69 | 75 | 31 |
| 4 | Lack of enough sitting space | 105 | 44 | 135 | 56 |
| 5 | Lack of computer internet facilities | 211 | 88 | 29 | 12 |
| 6 | The school Librarian is unfriendly to students | 85 | 35 | 155 | 65 |

Table 8 revealed that lack of library period in the school time-table and lack of computer and internet facilities are highly rated i.e. 221 (92%) and 211 (88%) respectively. Location of library is another issue that is discouraging most of the students from using the library 195(81 %), finally, there is no enough seating space for students 1 05(44%).

Discussion of findings

It was discovered from the study that students enjoy services in school library such as reference services, loan services and organization of reading group which help their leaning activities. This is in line with the submission of Tiwari (2013) that library should provide the students with appropriate library materials and services for the overall growth and development of the personality of the students as an individual. The study also revealed that school libraries play significant roles in learning activities of senior secondary school students because it enhances their independent learning which improves their performances. This is supported by Busayo (2011) which emphasized the function of school library and information resources availability like development of reading skill, encouraging long-time reading habit through reading and listening to and viewing a variety of learning materials.

It was also discovered that majority of senior secondary students use library frequently and occasionally which has been the source that improves their performances while only few don't use library at all. Ogunbote and Odunemu (2008) confirmed that the performance of students could be improved considerably if they use the school library regularly. The result also indicated that students make use of school library for different

reasons ranging from doing assignment to carrying out learning activities for further studies. This is in accordance with Odusanya (2004) that school library can be used to promote learning by encouraging students to use library for further studies, to carry out assignments; for leisure reading, examination purposes and recreation. The study however, further revealed that lack of library in school time-table and computer and internet facilities are some of the major challenges. This was corroborated by Oketunji (2004) who posited that the Internet and other ICTs provide a golden opportunity for the provision of value-added services by libraries.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that senior secondary school students use school library purposely for examination and class test, to do their assignment and to read their note books. The core service the students enjoy is reference service designed to meet students' various needs. The students also admitted that school library enhances their independent learning. This improves their performances and it also helps to develop their reading skills. However, the major problem is lack of library period in the school time table and lack of computer internet facilities. It can be concluded, therefore, that school library plays a very fundamental and considerably positive roles in senior secondary school students' leaning activities.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are hereby made.

1. Government, in her education policy, should make the establishment of a modern and functional school library a compulsory requirement for all secondary schools be it public or private.
2. The quality and variety of the collection is a significant factor in students learning, therefore, adequate funding needs to be available to maintain current resources that are, curriculum related and of general interest to student's learning activity.
3. School authority should provide adequate reading and study space.
4. Library hour should be included in school time-table and there must be a personnel appointed to monitor the students to ensure that they use library hour effectively.
5. Effort must be made to up-grade the library with Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

6. School authority should encourage students to borrow books and other relevant materials in order to broaden their knowledge in their chosen subjects. This will also go a long way to enhance their research ability in their higher academic pursuits.
7. School librarian, with the help of school authority, should organize library orientation regularly to encourage use of library. This will create awareness on the importance or significance of the school library to the students.
8. School library should be situated in a quiet area free from excessive noise, disturbance and pollution. e. g common rooms, canteens and playground.

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