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Funding as Correlates of Library Service Delivery for Students with Special Needs in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper assessed funding as correlates of library service delivery in schools which have students with special needs in North central, Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives and three corresponding research questions. Survey research design method was adopted for the study. The total population for the study was three hundred and nine (309) secondary school students in the three schools which have students with special needs. A total of two hundred and forty six (246) copies of questionnaire were filled, returned and found usable for the analysis representing 80% response rate. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Descriptive statistical such as frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The results from the findings showed that the major sources of funding for special needs schools under study are: Subvention from State Government, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and Religious Group. In addition, the major services offered by these libraries are circulation services, document delivery services and reference services. The analysis of the findings further revealed that lack of fund to procure library resources is one of the major problems affecting effective service delivery among the libraries under study. Hence, the study recommended among others that the management of special needs schools should look of alternative means of funding for the acquisition of information resources in their libraries to enable them meet the information needs of the users with special needs.
Keywords: Funding, Library, Library Service, Service Delivery, Students, Special, Needs.

Introduction

Fund is seen as the oil that keeps the wheels of every organisation running, libraries inclusive. When there is paucity of fund, it undermines the ability to acquire facilities or equipment that will lead to effective service delivery by librarians to their users including those with special needs. Such basic facilities as computers, software packages, Internet accessories, required for modern library service provision cannot be acquired when funds are not available. Funding is the act of providing financial resources, usually in the form of money or other values to finance a need, program, or project, usually by an organisation or company. The Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (2013) organised a workshop at Enugu on grant proposal writing for librarians with the aim of equipping them write beautiful proposal grants for donor agencies to provide them with fund. However, it should not only be limited to this because there is the need to also build the consciousness in librarians to always face the reality that funds are not forthcoming. A library has to be well funded before all necessary information need could be procured.

Research has shown that, the current lower levels of proficiency in reading and learning are due to under-funding of libraries and their services (Dibu, 2013). Libraries are the cornerstone of civil society and of the liberal democracy we have come to cherish. We must not allow them to crumble into disuse. The goals of education cannot be achieved without emphasis on the proper and adequate funding of the libraries and that quality education is impossible without quality library in any given educational institutions (Umar, 2013). Adequate levels of funding are crucial to the success of a library in fulfilling its roles. Without suitable level of funding over the long-term, it is impossible to develop policies for service provision and make the most effective use of available resources. This can be seen in number of examples: A new library building without adequate funds to maintain it; collections of new books with no money for their replacement; and computer systems without funds to maintain and update them. Funding is required not only when a school library is established, but should also be sustained on an assured and regular basis.

Library funding is the act of providing or making available financial resources for use in developing and equipping the library, these funds are needed to provide library services, materials and development of human resources. In fact, funding has the capacity to bring about renewal, maintenance, and sustenance, nourishment, durability of school libraries. However, the library is invariably a part of a wider school and its budget is negotiated with its parent organization. The

parent body is therefore the proprietor that takes full responsibility for its funding. Wikipedia, (2013) defined funding as a way of providing resources, usually in form of money or other value such as effort or time for a project, a person, a business, or any other private or public institutions.

Librarians have the capacity of influencing the lives of individuals and consciousness of the society through information provision. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP 2012) stated that, librarians are usually the link between information users and the information they require and therefore occupy a privileged position which carries responsibilities. In order for this privileged position not to be abused it is essential for librarians to perform their duties and responsibilities taking into cognizance that ethical standards must be maintained by effective service delivery to the users. The primary purpose of every library is 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. Libraries today, is a busy information Centre where information is packaged in various formats to the advantaged of the users, and the value of the library collection depends not only the quantity of information sources but on the effective way and means of providing and interpreting them to user. According to Akpan-Ataha (2013) for information to be at the disposal of everybody, there must be adequately equipped library and well-packaged information service delivery. This is because information has become the driving force behind the development of nations and proper service delivery has provided raw materials for socio-political and economic development.

Eskay and Chima (2013) asserted that Nigerian libraries experience limited financial resource towards funding of the information resource and services of students with special needs. Fund is needed to procure materials to all categories of people (challenged or unchallenged) and also for the maintenance of staff, facilities and services. Therefore, there is a compelling need to source for fund to meet the ever increasing demands of libraries in order to be relevant not only to their clientele but to the general public. Most libraries generate little or no fund internally. In school libraries with special needs under study, their main source of fund is from the State Government.

There is no doubt that the Nigerian economy is not as developed and buoyant as those of the big industrialized countries. This underdeveloped economy, undoubtedly, affects the volume of funds available to manage libraries particularly the school libraries in the country. However, prudent management of available financial resources, efficient fund administration and fiscal discipline

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can help generate the funds required for library services in Nigerian educational institutions. Eskay (2013) mentioned some alternative sources of funds listed below which when fully considered and implemented by various libraries can hold bright prospects for the provision of the enormous financial resources required for qualitative library services in Nigerian educational institutions.

1. Heavy fines should be levied on overdue books to serve both as deterrent for other defaulters, as well as, boost the revenue base of libraries in Nigeria. Charges can also be imposed on outside borrowers and other users who are neither staff nor students of the institution to which the library belongs.
2. Consultancy services through conferences, workshops, and seminars can be organized for schools, public libraries and the community in which the library finds itself.
3. Bindery services can be done by various libraries to generate fund through binding of books, journals, projects and other works for the immediate community and outsiders.
4. Revenue can also be generated by libraries through Internet services if available.

There is a compelling need to source for funds from the aforementioned sources to meet the ever increasing demands of the library in order to be relevant not only to their clientele but to the general public especially among those with special needs. In addition to provision of funds, sharing of ideas through communication is essential towards meeting the information needs of the special needs groups. Libraries as centers of knowledge perform the basic role of educating the library users including the students with special needs in finding or locating resources that will meet their information needs. The students with special needs require special library services to limit their obvious inhibitions in the use and exploitation of the information contents of the library. This could be the reasons why library for the special needs was established, to provide information support services to the less privileged in the society. The special needs users of the libraries by all means needs to get their special information needs satisfied in their special ways through effective service delivery by the librarians.

The term 'Students with Special Needs' varies in meaning and significance not only in different countries but within individuals and also according to the purpose for which its meaning is applied or for which it is desired to classify such person. Secondly the extent to which any type of deformity will be considered as students with special needs is strictly relative to the expectations of the culture in which the person lives. The students with special needs have more than one type

of deformity or the other. The inter depending relationship between the special needs persons further get support from justice Krishna (2011) who explained special needs as individuals that lack the ability to perform any activity in the manner within the range considered normal for a normal being. It is the special needs students, more than any impairment that aggravates the problems of the disabled. This is in line with Mcleod (2014) who pointed out that, the special needs students experience personal limitation in school environments that affect their social, psychological and academic spheres that may likely affect their academic performances at school. Students with special needs have experienced narrow chances to enjoy library services or practices due to fewer priorities given by educational providers to issues that may support the students. United State (U.S) Census Bureall (2011) opined that the number of those with disability is seven million globally and are among the most marginalized groups in the world, also stated further that the people with special needs have poorer health outcomes, education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. Summarily, the special needs students are those who are unable by physical, intellectual, sensory or are persons who are in one form or the other incapacitated to make effective use of the library resources.

The need for the provision of special library service to students with special needs cannot be over emphasized. Lawal-Solarin (2012) defined library services for the special needs students as the collection of information resources and services consisting of alternative formats organized for use by the special needs. Similarly, Mehta (2010) described service delivery as a process that involve effective communication, building strong relationship, identifying problems, providing solutions, sound planning and all round the clock support with the sole aim of ensuring that the goals of the organization are met. This implies that any organization that does not take this process seriously is bound to lose patrons including the libraries as well. Therefore, Nigerian libraries in the schools of special needs, as organization, should have good service delivery as its watch word. This will in the long run assist in making information available to the disadvantage at the right time, enhance their information literacy level and make them more useful to themselves, their immediate society, the country and the world at large.

Statement of the Research Problem

The hallmark of establishing and maintaining all organisations including libraries is service provision or delivery. People with special needs are peculiar people who must be given special

attention in the library. Providing services for students with special needs is a great task which must be done with all diligence and the empathy it requires. Libraries that are facing the difficulties in providing quality services to special needs students or user in this information age that is characterised by stiff competition and survival are most likely to go into extinction. As such, in providing library service to the students with special needs, the library staff or librarian must be knowledgeable on how to communicate to them, in order know the problems they encounter, and how to solve it by providing them with the needed information.

The implementation and recommendation of library services towards the provision of effective and efficient information to the students with special needs differs from one institution to another and from one country to another. UNESCO (2010) opined that, in countries within Africa, the students with special needs have at least double chance of never attending school and those that are fortunate to start schooling are at the risk of dropping out with the problem worse in higher level of education. Corroborating this submission, the researchers conducted a preliminary investigation which revealed that poor service to students with special needs is a common problem in Nigeria. In addition, poor funding of library for acquisition of needed resources and service have also been observed in schools with special needs. It is against this backdrop that the researchers deem it fit to carry out this study. The study investigates the funding of library resources as correlates of library services delivery in schools that have students with special needs in north central Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this study is to investigate the funding of library resources as correlates of library services delivery in schools with special needs students in north central Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine sources of funding of libraries in schools that have students with special needs in north central Nigeria;
2. ascertain the level of library services delivered to students with special needs in north central Nigeria;
3. find out the barriers for library service delivery to students with special needs in north central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the source of funding libraries in schools with students who have special needs in north central Nigeria?
2. What are the level of library services delivered to students with special need in north central Nigeria?
3. What are the barriers for library service delivery to students with special needs in north central Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is a research method that describe the characteristics of specimen or sample in a given population. The advantage of descriptive survey is that it provides wider coverage and allows data to be collected on a large population. Descriptive survey is considered most suitable for this study because since the study hopes to describe funding as a correlate of library service delivery to the students with special needs over a large population. Structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The population of the study consisted of three hundred and nine (309) students in schools with special needs. Census study (total enumeration) was used in the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation.

Results, Data Analysis and Discussion

Research Question One: What are the source of funding libraries in schools with students who have special needs in north central Nigeria?

Table 1. Sources of Funding Libraries in Schools that have Students with Special Needs in North Central Nigeria

S/N	Sources of Funds	Abuja School for the Deaf Kuje, Abuja	FCT School for the Blind Children, Jabi, Abuja	Kwara State School for Special Needs	Niger State School of Special Education, Minna	The School for the Handicapped Bukuru, Jos	Jevaron School for the Handicapped Keffi, Nasarawa State	RCM Special Section for the Hearing, Handicapped Benue State	Kogi State School for the Handicapped	Total
1.	Subvention from State Government	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**8**
2.	Subvention from Local Government	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
3.	Individuals	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	**2**
4.	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**8**
5.	Private Sectors	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
6.	Religious Groups	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	**5**
7.	Industries	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Total	**6**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**27**

Key: Yes =1, No = 0

Table 1 revealed that Abuja School for the Deaf Kuje the sources of funds are: subvention from State Government, Local Government, Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) private sectors, religious groups an industries. The sources of funds in FCT School for the Blind Children Jabi, Abuja are: subvention from state government, local government, non-governmental organization (NGOs), individuals and religious groups. In Kwara State School for Special Needs the sources of funds are subvention from State Government and Non-governmental Organisations. Also in Niger State School of Special Education, Minna subvention from State Government, Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) and religious groups are the only sources of funds. Subvention from State

Government, Non-governmental Organisations and religious group are the sources of funds for School for the Handicapped Bukuri, Jos, and while in Jevaron School for the Handicapped Keffi, Nasarawa State, Subvention from State Government, Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) and religious groups are the only sources of funds available to school. In RCM Special Section for the Hearing, Handicapped Benue State, Subvention from State Government, Individuals and Non-governmental Organization are the sources of funds. While in Kogi State School for the Handicapped, Subvention are mainly from state government and non-governmental organization (NGOs).

Research Question Two: What is the Level of Library Services Delivered to Students with Special Needs in North Central, Nigeria**?**

Table 2: Level of library Services Delivered to Students with Special Need

S/N	Library Services	VH 4	H 3	L 2	VL 1	n	FX	$\overline{X}$	St.D	Decision
1.	Circulation Services	211	202	93	72	578	1708	2.96	0.46	**High**
2	Document Delivery Services	145	263	88	82	578	1627	2.82	0.32	**High**
3.	Reference Services	172	159	181	66	578	1593	2.76	0.26	**High**
4.	Inter-Library Loan Services	34	38	317	189	578	1073	1.86	0.64	**Low**
5.	Referral Services	62	88	233	195	578	1173	2.03	0.47	**Low**
6.	Children Section Services	43	82	216	237	578	1087	1.88	0.62	**Low**
7.	Internet Services	28	70	225	255	578	1027	1.78	0.72	**Low**
8.	Mobile Library Services	64	51	287	176	578	1159	2.00	0.50	**Low**
	TATOL	**759**	**953**	**1640**	**1272**	**4624**	**10447**	**2.26**	**0.24**	

Decision rule (benchmark): If mean >=2.5 High. If mean < 2.5 Low.

Table 2 revealed that out of the eight (8) items listed to determine the level of library services delivered to students with special needs, three (3) items have a mean score greater than the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a four-point scale. These are: Item 1: Circulation Services ($\overline{X}$ = 2.96, SD = 0.46), item 2: Document Delivery Services ($\overline{X}$ = 2.82, SD = 0.32) and item 3: Reference

Services ($\bar{X}$ = 2.76, SD = 0.64). The remaining four items have a mean score lesser than the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a four-point Likert scale. While the remaining five (5) items have a mean score lesser than the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a four-point scale which also depicts low level of service delivery. These are: item 4: Inter-Library work Services ($\bar{X}$ = 1.86, SD = 0.64), item 5: Referral Services ($\bar{X}$ = 2.03, SD =0.47), item 6: Children Section Services ($\bar{X}$=1.88, SD=0.62) item 7: Internet Services ($\bar{X}$ = 1.78, SD =0.72) and item 8: Mobile Library Services ($\bar{X}$ = 2.00, SD = 0.50).

Research Question Three: What are the barriers to library service delivery to students with special needs in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 3: Barriers to library service delivery to students with needs in North Central Nigeria

S/No	Barriers to Library Services	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	n	FX	$\bar{X}$	St.D	Decision
1.	Lack of librarians who have the ability to communicate using sign language	275	187	65	51	578	1842	3.19	0.69	**Agreed**
2	Lack of funds to acquire resources that will cater for students with special needs	217	251	64	46	578	1795	3.12	0.61	**Agreed**
3.	Lack of commitment from the top management	185	203	160	30	578	1699	2.94	0.44	**Agreed**
4.	Lack of skills by librarians	238	219	43	78	578	1773	3.07	0.57	**Agreed**
5.	The architecture of the school library building lack signs to take care of the need of students with special needs.	28	42	243	265	578	989	1.71	0.79	**Disagreed**
6	Lack of Internet facilities in the library	213	124	158	83	578	1623	2.81	0.31	**Agreed**
	TOTAL	**1156**	**1026**	**733**	**553**	**3468**	**2.81**	**0.31**	**3.41**	

Decision rule (benchmark): If mean >=2.5 High. If mean < 2.5 Low.

Table 3 revealed that five (5) out of the six (6) items listed have a mean score greater than the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a four point scale. These items includes item 1: lack of librarians who

have the ability to communicate using sign language ($\bar{X}$ = 3.19, SD = 0.69), item 2: lack of funds to acquire resources that will cater for students with special needs ($\bar{X}$ = 3.12, SD = 0.61), item 3: lack of commitment from the top management ($\bar{X}$ = 2.94, SD = 0.44), item 4: lack of skills by librarians ($\bar{X}$ = 3.07, SD = 0.57) and item 6: lack of Internet facilities in the library ($\bar{X}$ = 2.81, SD = 0.31), while items 5: the architecture of the school library building lack signs to take care of the need of students with special needs ($\bar{X}$ = 1.71, SD=0.79) have a mean score below the benchmark mean of 2.5 on a four likert point scale

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that library service delivery to students with special needs was not well funded as indicated by school librarians. This was attested to by evidences such as insufficient fund from the State and Local Government subventions and even from NGOs to procure library materials for students with special needs to meet their information needs. These findings are in tandem with the findings of Eskay and Chima (2013) that Nigerian libraries experience limited financial resource towards funding the information resources/services of students with special needs. It was also found that there was a positive significant correlation between funding and library service delivery to schools that have students with special needs in Nigerian libraries. Eskay and Chima (2013) corroborated this by stating that service delivery effectiveness in a library depends on funding.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study it could be concluded that there is no library particularly those meant for users with special needs users can achieve its goal and objectives without provision of funds to acquire the necessary information resources to take care of their information needs. Barriers such as lack of funds to procure current library resources and the lack of professional librarians affected the effective delivery of library service to students with special needs.

Based on these findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

1. The management of schools that have students with special needs should look of alternative means of funding for the acquisition of information resources in their libraries to enable them meet the information needs of the users with special needs.
2. The librarians should be trained and retrained by their management to keep them abreast on better ways of library service delivery to the students with special needs.
3. The schools management should install Internet facilities to enable online service delivery by the library to students with special need.

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