

Availability, Accessibility and Utilization of School Library Resources and Services among the Staff and Students of Senior Secondary Schools in Gumel Metropolis, Jigawa State, Nigeria

By

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Abstract

This research was conducted in Gumel metropolis Jigawa State to investigate the availability, accessibility and utilization of school library resources in some selected Secondary Schools, (Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used to find out the availability, accessibility and utilization of library resources) Lautai Science Secondary School and College Demonstration Secondary School in Gumel Metropolis, Jigawa State as target population. A sample of six (6) classroom teachers and six (6) students from the secondary schools selected were used as a sample of the population. Four research objectives were formulated and Four research questions were asked to guide the research based on the review of the related literature. Interview guide was used as instrument for data collection. The study found that the school library resources are grossly inadequate especially electronic gadgets that can enhance effective teaching and learning. It is recommended that; the libraries need to be reinforced adequately so as to acquire information resources and train the library staff to carry out their tasks effectively for proper information dissemination.

Keywords: Availability, Accessibility, Utilization, School Library Resources

Introduction

A library is a collection of resources, and services, with the structure in which it is housed. Ogbemor (2011) defined library as an organized collection of published and unpublished books and audiovisual materials with the aid of services of staff who are able to provide and interpret such material as required, to meet the informative, educational and recreational needs of its users. In the same context Adeoye and Popoola (2011) added that library information resources can be in both printed and electronic formats including textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet, email, audio/video tapes/cassettes, diskettes, computers and microforms. Based on the above information, we can divide library resources into two categories i.e., traditional printed material or resources and non-printed or electronic resources (Lance, Rodney & Pennell, 2005). Libraries of today mostly in the pandemic and post pandemic era are in a situation where they face competition from other information providers. Libraries are therefore saddled with the responsibilities of providing the required information for its users regardless of age and race.

Library Resources is the term that applies to anything, personnel, material, functions or activities available in a library for satisfying the human need to acquire information, (Shrestha, 2012). A library will remain a mere building without relevant information materials acquired to meet the needs of users.

Library resources are essential to support and strengthen the educational quality, over the centuries. Libraries are the sources of keeping and distributing the information through books, journals, maps and other resources that are used by students in their learning processes, Simon (2019).

Statement of the problem

Libraries in some public secondary schools reading materials are inadequate causing students to experience poor reading culture and dearth knowledge to supplement classroom instructions. Additionally, when information resources are available, they are neither accessible nor utilized due to one problem or another associated with the technical processing of library resources. Moreover, if the provision of information resources is sufficient balanced and the proper organization encourages students to utilize the library materials. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the availability, accessibility and utilization of library materials by students and teachers in some selected secondary schools from Gumel Metropolis. The study would reveal what library materials are available and accessible in the library, and the extent the students utilize the library materials. Majority of the students do not seem to have come to rapport with the importance of making use of the library resources to improve their knowledge. As such, in order to help the educational process especially in senior secondary schools, there is need to investigate the extent of utilization of library resources in order to make its users more friendly with information resources.

The objectives of the study;

The primary objectives of the research are:

- i. To find out the types of library resources available in the libraries under study
- ii. To determine the accessibility of library resources among the users
- iii. To ascertain the level of utilization among both students and their teachers

- iv. What are the challenges on accessibility, availability, and utilization of library materials by students of senior secondary schools, in Jigawa State

Literature Review

The review of the related literature is under the following sub-headings:

- School library services
- Availability of library resources
- Accessibility of library resources
- Utilization of library resources

School Library Services

Aina (2004) defined school library as libraries attached to the primary and secondary school to supplement teaching and learning of school children. A school library is an organized collection of books and other learning materials placed in a school for teaching and learning among the teachers and pupils. School library caters for children who are eager to read and also for backward children who read with difficulty and who require visual aids and all kinds of incentives to study. It contains such materials as books, magazines, periodicals diagrams, newspapers, photographs etc. Today many school libraries have transformed into school library resources centers, because of a variety of its collection, a school library is sometimes called a media resource center.

Also, Aina (2004) observed that the school library as a resource center is expected to provide.

- a. Information and faster their professional development.
- b. Learning laboratory that provides opportunities for pupils to develop information skills and commitment to informal decision making.
- c. Learning laboratory that links learning and resources for learners.
- d. Opportunities for pupils to become self-directed learners and develop a commitment to lifelong learning.

The objectives of school library according to Aina (2004) include the following:

1. To help children and the young people to develop abilities and habits of purposefully using books and libraries in attaining the goals of living.
2. To carry out the purpose of sharing in the whole school program and of encouraging the effective use of books and libraries by providing audio visual services to individuals and library experience.
3. To serve as a symbol for truthful expression of man's knowledge and experience. That is, it should help the children and young people to be creative, informed and knowledgeable.
4. To introduce children and young people to the wonderful world of imaginative literature, through storytelling, books, talks and reader's guidance.
5. To serve as instructional laboratories for learning and to provide books and other materials of pressure and information.

Library Information Resources

The information resources in libraries serve different purposes that are in line with the objectives of establishing its organization. Therefore, the school library helps students to achieve their goals and objectives in making an information literate society. Because charity begins at home, the information literate society espoused here can be narrowed down to the

student and school's environment. Literarily, library resources include print and non-print materials. The print resources include journal publications, monographs, textbooks, articles, dissertations, and documents. While audio-visual tapes, projectors, CD's, and cassettes belongs to non-print information resources of the library (Nnadozie & Nnadozie 2008; Hobohm, 1999; Olanlokun, 1995; Meho and Huas, 2001; Adekunle, 2004; Folster, 1989; Meho and Tibbo, 2003; Haart, 1997). Nazan and Kurbanoglu (1998) added encyclopedias, dictionaries, and periodicals to the list of library's print material resources. Also, it is the duty of the university library to support students, and other user's innovative services by providing support for digital scholarship (Vinapoly and McCormick, 2013). Presently, the wave of innovations ushered in by the emergence of information communication technology (ICT) in the scene of library services has added a new dimension to library information resources. The technology has added a digital touch to library services such as reference services of the library can be executed digitally using electronic means (Watson, 2004; Agbata, et al., 2004). The establishment of the digital library oversees that digital resources and ensure information resources are available online to meet user aspiration for digital information (Wu, Thompson, Vacek, Watkins and Weidner, 2016). The result of such initiative has increased digital content adding thousands of information resources online contributing to the widening information resources at the disposal of the library. Libraries now provide statistical tools for data analysis along with training, and various online support systems for students to enjoy complete access to innovation that supports teaching-learning. Information resources in the libraries are witnessing exponential growth and diversity, best described by Smith (2016) as retooling library information resources to support the innovation of reshaping library practices.

Availability of Library Resources:

The library invests in making information resources available and accessible to users which include students, and other researchers. Availability of information resources includes all print and non-print material resources in the library. Nwosu (2000) mentioned textbooks, reference books, and serial publications as vital print information carrying resources for effective teaching-learning and research necessary to supplement classroom instructions. The addition of information technology (IT) that supports communication via the internet to what constitutes traditional resources of the library makes the information much more readily available. However, libraries must have in place the requisite capacity for the availability of digital and online information resources, in such a way that, libraries must be able to demonstrate the presence of functional ICT as sources of information and different types of publications as information resources.

Accessibility to Library Resources

In separate studies, availability of information resources does not automatically translate to resource accessibility and utilization (Lawal-Solarin, 2012; Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2008). While availability is concerned with resources physically located in the library, accessibility deals with problems of storage, display, and transmission of information resources to users promptly.

Similarly, accessibility to information resources is of paramount concern and relevant to library users (Ugah, 2008). Without access to resources, utilization is unrealizable, and the value of the resources meaningless to users. According to Ajayi (2013) any student without access to supplementary reading materials as provided for in a library will be seriously handicapped: his academic success will be based largely on his ability to memorize his lecture notes.

In addition to the different types of barriers to accessibility of available information resources identified by (Ugah, 2008), Olowu (2004) categorized the obstacles as either natural or artificial. Libraries must process information resources before users can make sense of the available resources. Because information resources available in most libraries are mostly print materials, problems of accessibility manifests from indexing, abstracting, cataloging, and bibliography. As a library standard procedure, information resources not processed cannot be utilized by users. Neelameghan (1981) confirms this by the assertion that accessibility is a prerequisite to information utilization.

Utilization of Library Resources

When it comes to the use of library resources among the users, availability and accessibility must be guaranteed before considering other variables. This is based on the premise that since library occupies space, its resources must exist within the said space it occupies. According to Ross and Sennyey (2008), an important attribute of the library as a place is self-evident.

Moreover, the possibilities of users locating a physical place called the library that provides information resources justify the library as a place. A library is a place where users visit with the primary intent to acquire information. For students, the library is pivotal to academic performance and success through utilization of information resources relevant to teaching-learning, (Faith, 2021).

Therefore, every student is to utilize information resources available and accessible to develop analytically in conjunction with classroom instructions in a self-passed capacity, the library should be treated as a laboratory of information necessary and capable of taking classroom instruction to higher levels if adequately utilized by students and teachers, (Shrestha, 2012).

In view of this, Kyoshaba, (2016) was of the opinion that, it's impossible for scientists to function without a laboratory, so that library is indispensable to teaching-learning process and students, researchers, teachers, and the entire community. Students need information resources in the library that can be applied practically to their needs and enrich their knowledge.

Methodology

The researchers chose the qualitative approach as best and suitable for the study based on the notion that it allows for a systematic, factual, and accurate description of a situation or area of interest investigated. A survey method enables the researchers to collect comprehensive and accurate data on the environment studied using an interview guide designed for the teacher librarians and the students as the instrument for data collection.

The population of this research consisted of six (6) classroom teachers and six (6) students from the selected schools in Gumel Metropolis as the number is manageable. Therefore, adopting a survey method enables the researchers to collect comprehensive and accurate data using unstructured interview guide for the teacher librarians and the students from the schools selected. Two (2) experienced research assistants helped with administering and retrieving responses, and the exercise lasted for a period of six weeks.

Preliminary Study and its Result:

A preliminary study is a small-scale study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events and effect (statistical variability) in an attempt to predict appropriate elements for the main study and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a

full-scale research. In order to investigate the availability, accessibility and utilization of school library and information services in some selected secondary schools in Gumel Local Government Metropolis. A preliminary survey was carried out by the researchers on the 15th December, 2024.

The aim was to find out the following expected results:

1. There is need for consideration on print materials, namely textbooks and serials, to be the main information resources in addition to other resources \ available in the library considered, computers and films are rarely available respectively.
2. The study reveals that textbooks in the libraries contained 70% of the available resources in the libraries under study as the primary sources of information resources utilized. While computer, internet and other audio video facilities usage recorded 30%.
3. While accessing the frequency on use of library resources found that 64% respondents indicate that library resources are not often utilize due to disorderly classification and cataloguing of the resources for easy retrieval.
4. The study reveals that poor reading culture among the students and lack of users guide on how to use the library facilities is another major challenge on the use of library resources by students and limited time or no library period in their time-table.

Conclusion

The findings of this research concluded that library resources are in short supply in the selected secondary schools in Gumel Metropolis. Also, modern library resources like audio, visual, audio-visual materials are not complete which makes it impossible for internet resources to be used properly. Thus, the purpose of establishing libraries in secondary schools has not been achieved as the necessary resources to actualize the objectives are inadequate.

The recommendations are made based on the findings:

- i. The library should improve its overall stock (information resources) to include multiple formats and up-to-date reading materials.
- ii. Provision of school library facilities as mentioned in section (2) Basic Education (29 and 33) page 10 of National Policy on Education in Nigeria 2014.
- iii. The library should adopt technology as a major information resource, which will enable the library enjoy online information such as Open Access (OPAC) and online databases.
- iv. Digital communication is paramount to successful hosting of information in multiple channels; therefore, the library should adopt strategic planning in its acquisition policy to cover the information needs of all its users.
- v. The Government should consider an adequately supply the school libraries with current and modern facilities of which digital technologies are paramount.

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