

Correlates of School Library Development in Calabar, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

The study investigated the correlates of school library development in Calabar, Nigeria. Two hypotheses guided the study. A thirty item structured questionnaire was developed and validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. This was administered to a total of four hundred and fifty respondents comprising of principals, vice-principals and library staff of the secondary schools in the study area. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between the negative attitude of principals of secondary schools and the school library development. A significant relationship also existed between funding and school library development in Calabar. Based on this it was recommended that government should set a compulsory benchmark for every secondary school in the state as a condition towards having a functional, current, well stocked library. Philanthropic organizations and private investors in the state should be made to promote the development of school library service by presenting books as donations to schools.

Keywords: Library Development, Counselling, Principal attitude.

1. Introduction

School libraries are indispensable resource centres for the improvement and success of any educational system. They assist the processes of teaching and learning by storing and providing instructional materials for the students as well as the teachers. The importance of the school library cannot be overemphasized. They serve as a repository of knowledge and a catalyst towards qualitative education. In an ideal situation, a school library is an indispensable learning resource for every primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. In any educational set up, apart from human resources, textbooks, journals and other reading materials are considered as major material resources that are required and utilized in the process of attaining educational goals.

It was based on the importance of the library that the National Policy on Education in Nigeria (2004) stated that libraries are one of the most important educational services and recommended that every state ministry of education should provide funds for the establishment of school libraries and library assistants. Unfortunately the Nigerian government has not provided serious financial backing to support the policy and due to this, school libraries where they exist, have very few library materials and are faced with decreased patronage. There is also difficulty in extending library services outside the urban schools.

A school library is an information centre located within the school environment whose task is to identify and collect, process, organize, store, preserve, retrieve and disseminate information pertinent to the needs of members of the school community with the view of satisfying their changing information need. Obaitan (2004) described the library as a collection of books and other forms of records, housed, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of people for information, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. School libraries found at the primary and secondary school levels are established for the development of teaching and learning. They are expected to offer supplementary reading materials in the educational pursuits of the child but contrary to this, most of the present school libraries lack current reading materials.

Library contributes to education in a number of ways. Some of these contributions include encouraging reading, expanding learning process, developing learning and critical thinking skills. Libraries also help in developing appreciation, values and also assist in developing mental task. They are essential resources in schools. Nyan and Guraji (1999) noted that the establishment of school libraries is as essential as the establishment of schools themselves. Reading habit no doubt broaden one's horizon of knowledge.

Ideally, every primary and secondary school should have a library with spelt out goals of operation through which the teachers and the students may be helped in their educational process, such library services provide

students with stimulating and rewarding experiences in modes of learning and make them better library users in later life. Unfortunately most school principals exhibit negative attitude towards school library development and in some cases may divert library funds into other school projects.

Adeferati (2002) identifies the objectives of the school library as follows to

- (i) encourage the development of skill in reading.
- (ii) prompt reading habits to some literacy appreciation
- (iii) sort for subject information centre and support the school curriculum
- (iv) inculcate intellectual development

Despite these objectives, it is amazing to however observe that the development of school libraries in Calabar is receiving the least attention from school principals and government. Some school libraries are not well established, some are found in dilapidated buildings and some where found are not well funded. School library services may be seen as the most neglected of all services in the school system by the principal and the government. Since the introduction of school library into Nigeria in 1946, the process of school library development recently seems to be slow and many schools are yet to have good libraries or have adequately equipped ones.

Adetoro (2004) pointed out that oil boom of 70's in Nigeria brought relative growth and prosperity in acquisition of materials for libraries. However the 80's heralded hard times and brought about reduction in staff and funding which slowed down library development nationwide. One of the most fundamental areas responsible for the dwindling educational standards today especially at the secondary school level may be traced to the area of library education and library service utilization among the students. Atagher and Adung (2002) lamented the state of the school libraries in Nigeria as a whole. They described it as pathetic. The school libraries where they exist, the facilities are inadequate and the books are haphazardly organized and arranged. The most widely experienced disappointment in public schools today is the dilapidated structure called library which cannot be compared with what are obtained in the private schools in Nigeria.

School libraries in Nigeria do exist in some secondary schools but many almost in name because all the elements required for them to operate effectively are not put in proper place. Some head teachers convert parts of the libraries into classrooms, staffroom or where staff meetings are held without considering whether such will be conducive for learning (Ofoade, 1993). School libraries in some schools are run by non-academic staff or full time teachers who lack library training skills and this do not augur well for school library development. In the 70's, library service existed in virtually every secondary school and even in primary school in Nigeria. They were managed by not too qualified staff yet they rendered some library services to the school community.

Libraries then were well stocked with current books and journals and students patronized them effectively. In most secondary schools, library period appeared on their school time table on weekly basis. It was compulsory to sign and borrow at least one book weekly. Today's school system is quite different. Reading culture has been lost. Many librarians have decried the dwindling fortunes of library services in our school system. The lukewarm attitude which may be exhibited by some school principals towards improving the conditions of their school libraries and the absence of well equipped libraries may cause many schools not to participate in academic competitions and where they do, they hardly ever create a meaningful impact.

Many factors may be responsible for the negative attitude exhibited towards school library development. This problem may arise as a result of non-availability of trained personnel in library science, lack of enough library facilities, inadequate accommodation, lack of adequate and sustained funding and lack of current informational materials. This study is therefore designated to answer the major question of finding out the correlates of school library development in Calabar, Nigeria.

2.Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to:

- (i) determine if any relationship exist between the negative attitude of principals and school library development in Calabar.
- (ii) determine the relationship between funding and school library development in Calabar Nigeria.

Hypotheses

- (i) There is no significant relationship between the negative attitude exhibited by principals of secondary schools and the development of school library in Calabar Nigeria.
- (ii) There is no significant relationship between funding and the development of school library in Calabar Nigeria.

3.Scope of the Study

This study was specifically focused on investigating the correlates of school library development in Calabar, Nigeria. The independent variables for the study were principal's negative attitude and funding while the

dependent variable was school library development.

4. Methodology

The research design was survey. The independent variables were principal's negative attitude and funding. These were correlated with the dependent variable, school library development. A total of four hundred and fifty males and females (principal, vice-principal and library staff) of the secondary and technical secondary schools in the study area was used. This was simple randomly drawn from the population of principals, vice – principals and library staff in Calabar.

The instrument used for data collection was a validated 30 item questionnaire titled “Correlates of School Library Development” (CSLD). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by the use of Cronbach Alpha. Data generated from the instrument were used to test the two stated hypotheses. The administration of the instrument was done directly by the researcher. The data generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

5. Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the negative attitude exhibited by principals of secondary schools and the development of school library.

The independent variable (X) in this hypothesis was the negative attitude of the principals while the dependent variable (Y) was school library development. In testing the hypothesis, the data for the two variables were again calculated from the data and then categorized into X and Y respectively. The values were then subjected to analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical technique as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) of the attitude of the principals and the development of the school library

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum X$	df	r-cal	t-val
Attitude of principals	4092	87069			7454	448	0.229	4.98*
Library Development	3794	70373						

Significant at $p < 0.5$, df - 448, critical t = 1.960 n = 450

From table 1, the calculated t-value of 4.98 is found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance with 448 degrees of freedom. This means that the respondents generally do perceive a relationship between the negative attitude of principals' towards library services and the development of school libraries. Instead of paying attention to library development first, most principals exhibit a negative attitude towards school libraries. The null hypothesis is thereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This indicates that the principal's negative attitude towards school library development significantly relates to the poor development of school libraries. This implies that school library development is dependent on the principal's negative attitude towards it.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between funding of the secondary school and the development of school library.

The independent variable (X) in this hypothesis was funding of school while the dependent variable (Y) was the development of school library. In testing the hypothesis, the data for the two variables were again calculated from the data and then categorized into X and Y respectively. The values were then subjected to analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical technique as shown in table 2.

TABLE 2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis of funding and the development of school libraries

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum X$	df	r-cal	t-val
Funding (X)	4651	104213			8449	448	0.796	27.92*
Library Development	3794	70373						

*Significant at $p > 0.5$, df - 448, critical t = 1.960 n = 450

From table 2, the calculated t value of 29.92 is far higher than the calculated t-value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the respondents perceived that school libraries are poorly funded and this has significantly influenced school library development negatively. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is upheld. This shows that there is a significant relationship between funding and school library development. This implies that school library development was dependent on funding of the school.

6. Discussion

6.1 Principals attitude and school library development.

The finding of this hypothesis exposed us to the fact that school library development was highly influenced by the principal's negative attitude. The administration of secondary school libraries is a combined effort of the teacher, principal, libraries and other supporting staff. When once there is an effective administration in support of library services, the library will be given due attention and made to function for the benefit of staff and students of schools in Calabar.

This finding is in support of Dike (1986) who asserts that administrators of schools do not yet understand the usefulness of the library and this is one of the reasons why little or in some cases no attention is paid at all to library services. Instead of using library fund for the school in developing the school library, most school heads prefer to use such vote for projects that will attract some interest to themselves like building of school blocks, roads, plastering of classroom blocks, purchase of school buses and other projects of less academic interest.

6.2 Funding and school library development

This study shows that school library development is dependent on funding. Mfon (1986) in her studies also agrees that both government as well as its agencies (school principals) do not fund libraries instead funds are usually diverted to execute other projects. She thus noted that school libraries in Nigerian are not yet the type that can usher in positive changes in the Nigerian educational system. This study is also in agreement with the work of Duru (1998) who asserted that most budgetary allocation to education does not take library development into consideration and as such school libraries continue to function haphazardly and below expectation. He therefore advised that both government, school principals and education policy makers should encourage library development as this will enhance the much needed advancement in education of the child. Well organized school libraries with adequate book collections and other media resources are still hard to come by in Nigerian secondary school system and unless government takes a positive change of attitude towards this, it will be difficult for Nigeria to make any meaningful breakthrough in its school library development process.

7. Counselling Implications

There are various problems associated with school library development in Calabar and Nigeria as a whole. One of the most fundamental area responsible for the dwindling educational standard today especially at the secondary school level is in the area of library services and awareness. Some years ago, library utilization was an indispensable arm which then contributed greatly to the foundation level in the whole educational cadre. Library services in most schools are now in deplorable state. The standard of secondary school leavers and even graduates from tertiary institutions, continues to depreciate to the extent that most graduates can hardly make simple correct sentences. Reading culture is gradually disappearing and most youths nowadays prefer to spend long hours watching African movies rather than reading good novels. There is need for counsellors to create awareness on the importance of library utilization among students.

The cost of investing in education is daily soaring, the need to establish good library in all primary and secondary schools should not be ignored. Therefore the counsellor can assist the students, teachers, principals, government in the following ways: A good library service is desirable in our schools. Library science should be one of the courses for counsellors under training and with the full knowledge of this, they can adequately impart this to the students and also assist in library services in their various schools. Students need orientation and counselling in the area of searching for knowledge through library utilization. Counsellors can help to expose the dangers and consequences brought about by poor reading culture such as academic failure. This may go a long way to impair one's future which may subsequently.

There is need for counsellors to understand their students as individuals who possess varying capacities and study habits and who also experience different academic problems, counsellors should therefore encourage the students to carry out library service consultation in various academic subjects for deeper understanding and better academic performance. Students should be made to realize that making use of the library improves their reading and writing skills and also exposes them to materials which would supplement class teaching. Library gets the students acquainted with books which will broaden their ideas and stimulate their appetite for more

knowledge.

Counsellors can organise seminars for both the teachers and students to give information relating to utilization of library. Teachers should be encouraged to give students assignment that will involve library search for information. Students should not only depend on the lecture notes during lessons. There is need for extra reading to be carried out by them for good academic success.

The principals in each school should be enlightened by the school counsellor to develop a favourable and positive attitude towards establishment and maintenance of school library. Priority should be given to library services and the counsellor should solicit for slots on time table for library consultation for each class especially at the junior secondary school level. Proper funding of the school library in various schools is imperative for proper and qualitative education to be achieved. Counselling services on library utilization should be established in every school to help prevent students from academic misadventure.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This work examined the correlates of school library development in Calabar, Nigeria. Findings suggested that principal's negative attitude relate to the poor level of school library development. It also revealed that funding had significant relationship with the development of school library. Given the above findings, it became imperative to recommend that government should make it compulsory for every secondary school in the state to have a functional library according to the standards laid down in section 10(9) of the National policy on education. Workshops, seminars, conferences should be organized by the school counsellor to create awareness to both the students and the staff on the importance of utilization of school library. Philanthropic organizations and private investors in the state should be made through awareness campaign to help promote the development of school library service by presenting books as donations to schools instead of physical cash.

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