Winter 9-17-2021

The Role of School Libraries in Promoting Reading Culture among Secondary School Students in Benue State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of school libraries in promoting reading culture among Secondary School Students in Benue State. Four objectives were achieved. The study population was 136 subjects comprising of Senior Secondary School 1 and 2 students and same was used as sample size. The instrument for the study is a structured questionnaire titled 'Role of School Libraries in Promoting Reading Culture among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (RSLORCSSSQ)'. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, precisely mean. Research question 1 was on the purpose of library use by students. Findings revealed that the students read in the library to "catch funs", for personal intellectual development, to while-away time, for personal intellectual development and to hide from school works. Findings revealed that students read once a week in the library. Findings also revealed that students spend less than an hour reading in the library. It was found that students prefer poetry, newspapers and magazines, novels and story books and comics. The study also found that the hours for opening the libraries is not convenient for students, most of the school library materials are outdated and are not relevant for students, the school always closes libraries and the school lacks library periods. The study concluded that non-integration of the library in the school curriculum, and "catch funs" were the major causes of poor reading culture. It was recommended that school administrators should

encourage students to read to pass examinations, have vast knowledge about the world and development of their personal intellectual capacity, students should learn how to spend enough time of at least 2-3 hours reading in the library as it will enable them cover wide in their books and integration of school library activities into the school curricula should be suitable for students to enable them make good use of school library.

INTRODUCTION

School library facilities and information resources refer to the equipment and other instructional and study materials in the school library meant for teaching and learning. Arua and Chidaka (2011) stated that school library facilities are seen as all inputs which are utilized in the library in order to provide good learning environment for students and teachers so as to be able to achieve educational goals. The school library in addition to doing its vital work of individual reading, guidance and development of school curriculum, it serves the school as a centre for instructional materials. Instructional materials include books - the literature for children, young people and adults-other printed materials, films, recordings and other latest media developed to aid learning. The function of an instructional materials centre is to locate, gather, provide and coordinate school's materials for learning and the equipment required for use of these materials.

Secondary school is the stage of education following primary school. It is generally the final stage of compulsory education (Odeh, 2013). The author sees secondary school as intermediate between elementary school and college usually offering general, technical, and vocational or college- preparatory courses. As a result of deregulation in Nigerian education, the system of secondary education has two main interest groups – public secondary school education and private secondary school education. Public schools are those schools controlled neither by individuals nor by private interest or agencies but by those who represent the society as a whole. In other words, public schools are those schools which are supported and controlled by the

government of the state or nation. Private schools on the other hand are those schools that are not administered by local, state or national government, which retain the right to select their student body and are funded in whole or part by charging their students tuition rather than with public funds (Wanjikwu 2013). This means that the schools established by the missionaries, individuals and voluntary organizations belong to this group.

There are certain stipulated goals for secondary education be it public or private schools. Some of those goals are; (1) to provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background. (2) To offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles. In Nigeria for example, some of the students in secondary schools perform poorly in West African School Certificate Examinations. This situation makes it impossible for the attainment of the above goals. For instance, there are many secondary school dropouts today who are unable to enter into any tertiary institution or fit anywhere in the society. In view of this, tertiary institutions set up preliminary programmes like remedial and IJMB to enable the poorly performed students gain admission. All these problems are as a result of poor achievement of students, which appearto be deep-rooted in inadequacy and or non-availability of facilities and information resources in secondary schools.

School libraries and school library services need to be whole hearted in their role in supporting and influencing teaching and learning. They need to understand their own pedagogy and the pedagogy of the classroom and how the two interact. Operating as they are in an educational context, they need to be clear about their support for the vision the school's leadership has for the school and demonstrate the contribution they can make to deliver that vision. Stronger alignment

of school libraries with their educational purpose needs to be the fundamental theme underpinning school library improvement activity.

The goal of school library is to develop information literate students who areresponsible, andethical participants in the society. Information literate students are self-directed learners who are aware of their information needs and actively engage in theworld of ideas, (IFLA guidelines for school libraries, 2015). School libraries facilitate teaching and learning; therefore, its collection must be based upon the curriculum andparticular needs and interest of the school community and reflect the diversity of societyoutside the school. Professional librarians, known as teacher librarians are saddled withthe responsibility of maintaining school libraries, (Uzuegbu, &Ibiyemi, 2013).

Reading not only has the awesome power when it comes to stimulating thedevelopment of an individual, its importance to the entirety of human life in this era ofinformation explosion cannot be underestimated. Reading, according Tella & Akande (2007), is an art capable of transforming man's life and his entire society. Reading is aworldwide phenomenon that has the capacity to promote development as well as instilldiscipline on the individual. The survival of any society therefore is a function and extentto which that society is involved in reading, (Owate and Iroha, 2013). It is essential therefore, for every individual to develop a culture for reading. Everyindividual should and aim at developing good habit of reading since its benefits aretremendous to human existence and a necessity for one to pull through in life.

The art of reading could be a very interesting experience for children andadolescents if they are properly guided. A reading habit cultivated early in life helps the child togrow into an independent adult, (Oji, &Habibu, 2011). Though the benefits of reading areimmeasurable, the reading culture of Nigerian society is poor. Study has shown that the averageNigerian reads less

than one book per year, in fact only one percent (1%) of successful men andwomen in Nigeria read one non-fiction per month; also, 30 million Nigerians have graduatedfrom high school with poor reading culture, (Henry, 2004).

Reading culture is on a daily decline especially with the influx of smart phones into thecountry. With these phones, individuals, especially young adults have access to a variety ofsocial networking sites on the internet. Such social networking sites include Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and a host of others. On these platforms, they spend hours sending instant messaging, *pinging,* and making video calls as well as sharing videos online, and much more.

According to Aina, Okusaga, Taiwo & Ogundipe, (2011), there is also an overriding desireamongst young people to spend more time with their friends than remain at home reading. Adultsand children alike glue more to televisions, watching drama or home videos as a way of enjoyingtheir leisure instead of reading. These individuals therefore end up with bad reading habits. Dorothy (2002) posits that there are chances of kids with poor reading habits involving in anti-social behaviours. Aina, Okusaga, Taiwo & Ogundipe, (2011) also observed that delinquency, school violence, bullying, incidence of hacking computers, and even incidence of examination malpractices has a higher correlation with poor reading habits.

With poor reading culture eating deep into the fabric of the country, it has becomenecessary for school libraries to promote and instill a culture of reading among Nigerianchildren. According to Owate and Iroha (2013), reading requires books, and that good reading habit promotes effective use of library bookresources; and effective use of library book resources has the inherent/advantage of promotinggood reading habit. Libraries are the custodians of knowledge and information, and hence theneed to develop effective means of promoting reading culture. Librarians must make efforts totake back the book to the people.

Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the purpose of library use by students

2. To determine the level of library use by students

3. To examine the amount of time students spend in reading and purpose for reading.

4. To examine the preference of library collection by students.

5. To assess how well integrated school library activities are into the school curricula.

Research Questions

1. What is the purpose of library use by students?

2. What is the level of library use by students?

3. What is the amount of time students spend in reading and purpose for reading?

4. What library collection do the students prefer?

5. How well are school library activities integrated into the school curriculum?

METHODOLOGY

Area of Study

The area of the study is Benue State. Benue state is in the mid-belt region of Nigeria with a population of about 4, 253, 641 (2006 Census). Tiv and Idoma are spoken predominantly. There are other ethnic groups, such as Igede, Etulo and Abakwa, Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon among others. With its capital at Makurdi, Benue State is a rich agricultural region; some of the crops grown in the state include potatoes, cassava, soya bean, guinea corn, flax, yams, sesame,

rice, and groundnuts. The state has 23 Local Government Areas. The study was conducted in Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi Demonstration Secondary School.

Design of the Study

This study employed a survey research design. This design is suitable because the researcher collected and described the characteristics or facts about the population under study.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for this study is 136 subjects comprising of Senior Secondary School 1 and 2 students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

There was no sampling for the study. The entire population of 136 comprising of Senior Secondary School 1 and 2 students was used in the study as sample because the population size could be handled effectively by the researcher.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for the study is a structured questionnaire titled 'Role of School Libraries in Promoting Reading Culture among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (RSLORCSSSQ)'. The instrument was developed by the researcher using the literatures reviewed and information from extension agents.

Validation of Instrument

The items of the questionnaire were validated by 2 experts; two from the Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies, University of Agriculture Makurdi. Both content and face validation of the instrument was done.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was trial-tested among 10 students from Special Science Secondary School who were not part of the main study. Cronbach Alpha (α) coefficient formula was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and a coefficient of 0.90 was obtained.

Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study was collected by the researcher. The researcher also administered the copies of the questionnaire to students and collected the completed copies at the spot.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, precisely mean. The bench mark for this item will be 2.50 (4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50). Any item with a mean value of 2.50 or above was regarded as agree while any item with a mean value of less than 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Results and Interpretation

Research Question 1

What is the nature and status of the library collection of Secondary schools in Benue State library?

Table for answering question 1 is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Purpose of library use by students

S/N	Purpose	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	I read to catch funs	3.20	0.69	Agree
2	I read to pass examinations	2.09	1.07	Agree
3	I read for personal intellectual development	3.00	0.86	Agree
4	I read to while away time	2.95	1.05	Agree
5	I read to be well have vast knowledge about happenings in the world	2.25	1.19	Disagree
6	I read for personal intellectual development	2.15	1.23	Disagree
7	I read in the library to hide from school works	2.70	1.26	Disagree

Source: Field study, 2019

Result in Table 1 show that out of 7 items, 4 had their mean values ranged from 2.70 to 3.20 while 3 had their mean values ranges from 2.09 to 2.25 and were less than the bench mark of 2.50. This showed that the respondents agreed that the 4 items are purpose of library use by students.

Research Question 2

What is the level and purpose of library use by students?

Table for answering question 2 is presented in table 2 below:

Table 2: The level of library uses by students

S/N	Level of visit	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Daily	1.98	0.44	Disagree
2	Once a week	2.65	1.14	Agree
3	Twice a Week	1.78	0.33	Disagree
4	Occasionally	2.37	0.12	Disagree
5	Never	2.44	0.08	Disagree

Source: Field study, 2019

Result in Table 2 show that out of 5 items, 1 had mean value of 2.65 while 4 had their mean values ranges from 1.98 to 2.44 and were less than the bench mark of 2.50. This showed that the level of library use by students is low.

Research Question 3

What is the amount of time students spend in reading and purpose for reading?

Table for answering question 3 is presented in table 3 below:

Table 3: Amount of time students spend in reading and purpose for reading

S/N	Time spent	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	I spend less than an hour	2.93	1.35	Agree
2	I spend 1-2 hours	2.44	0.77	Disagree
3	I spend 2-3 hours	2.16	0.45	Disagree
4	I spend 3-4 hours	1.87	0.33	Disagree
5	I spend 4-5 hours	1.42	0.02	Disagree
6	I spend 5 hours and above	1.98	0.09	Disagree

Source: Field study, 2019

Result in Table 3 show that out of 6 items, 1 had mean value ranged of 2.70 while 5 had their mean values ranges from 1.42 to 2.44 and were less than the bench mark of 2.50. This showed that the respondents disagreed that the amount of time they spend for reading in the libraries is very short.

Research Question 4

What library collection do the students prefer?

Table for answering question 4 is presented in table 4 below:

Table 4: Preference of library collection by students

S/N	Preference	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Poetry	2.88	1.22	Agree
2	Newspapers and magazines	2.97	1.33	Agree
3	Novels and story books	2.76	1.13	Agree
4	Textbooks	2.11	0.39	Disagree
5	Lecture notes	2.21	0.88	Disagree
6	Comics	2.88	1.20	Agree

Source: Field study, 2019

Research Question 5

How well are school library activities integrated into the school curriculum?

Table for answering question 5 is presented in table 5 below:

Table 5: Integration of school library activities are into the school curricula

S/N	Integration	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	The hours for opening the libraries is not convenient for you	3.17	0.97	Agree
2	Most of the school library materials are outdated and are not relevant to you	3.20	1.19	Agree
3	The school always closes libraries	3.00	1.09	Agree
4	The school lacks library periods	3.10	1.15	Agree

Source: Field study, 2019

Result in Table 5 show that 4 items had their mean values ranged from 3.00 to 3.20 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This showed that the respondents agreed that the 4 items are integration of school library activities are into the school curricula.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 was on the purpose of library use by students. Findings revealed that the students read in the library to catch funs, for personal intellectual development, to while away time, for personal intellectual development and to hide from school works.

Research question 2 was on the level of library use by students. Findings revealed that students read once a week in the library.

Research question was on the amount of time students spend in reading and purpose for reading. Findings revealed that students spend less than an hour reading in the library.

Research question 4 was on the library collection the students prefer. Findings revealed that students prefer poetry, newspapers and magazines, novels and story books and comics.

Research question 5 was on how school library activities are integrated into the school curriculum. Findings revealed that the hours for opening the libraries is not convenient for students, most of the school library materials are outdated and are not relevant for students, the school always closes libraries and the school lacks library periods.

Conclusion

The success of children in schools depends on a large extent on their ability to read and comprehend, which in turn is dependent on the support we give in promoting reading habit. Consequent to this, this study focused on the roles school libraries can play in inculcating reading habits among students. This study has supported the notion that school libraries form parts of the most effective ways of renewing education because of their roles in transforming changes in children's reading abilities. The study concludes that non-integration of the library in the school curriculum, and catch funs were the major causes of poor reading culture.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators should encourage students to read to pass examinations, have vast knowledge about the world and development their personal intellectual.

2. Students should also be encouraged to visit library to read on daily basis, this would help them to keep memory of what they read in the classroom

3. Students should learn how to spend enough time of at least 2-3 hours reading in the library as it will enable them cover wide in their books

4. School administration should procure more of relevant textbooks in the library than newspapers, magazines and comics

5. Integration of school library activities into the school curricula should be suitable for students to enable them make good use of school library

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