



## Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

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### Article

### A Survey of Primary School Libraries to Determine the Availability and Adequacy of Services for Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Oyo State, Nigeria

Belau Olatunde Gbadamosi  
College Librarian  
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education  
Oyo, Nigeria  
Email: [tundeseji58@yahoo.com](mailto:tundeseji58@yahoo.com)

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#### Abstract

**Objective** -- As a first step in gathering evidence, this study surveyed school libraries and examined the services those libraries provide in relation to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program at a primary level. The purpose of this paper is to explore these UBE factors in relation to school libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Methods** -- A questionnaire was sent to the 33 schools which have a library and information centre staffed by a teacher-librarian, in order to examine library services and the views of those providing them. The questionnaire covers library space, categories of library resources, student activities during library visits, mobile library services, and the teacher-librarians' perception of the adequacy of the collection and the challenges in the use of library.

**Results** -- Questionnaires were returned by 30 teacher-librarians out of 33, a response rate of 91%. Although pupils across each local government area have the chance to visit school libraries, the system of one short visit per week is inadequate for developing a universal interest in reading and in study skills. Staff responsible for the libraries consider many of the resources to be inadequate or outdated and stock is depleted as pupils borrow books, leaving fewer for those who follow.

**Conclusions** -- As a first step to implementing evidence based practice, this paper describes the primary school library system in Nigeria and provides evidence on how it operates in Oyo State. Teacher-librarians who staff the libraries confirm the

inadequacies in the system. They perceive collections to be inadequate and confirm that some pupils in the state have only limited access to library resources. Respondents also believe that they need further training, particularly in computer and information literacy.

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## **Introduction**

In Nigeria, successive governments have recognized education as a vehicle for national development and as a powerful instrument for social change. However, introducing basic education at all levels across Nigeria has been problematic. Over the years, attempts have been made to make education universally free for all children of school age. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) program was launched in September, 1976. At the state level, Bendel, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo proclaimed free Universal Education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in 1980, but the UPE program was stopped with the takeover of the government by the military in December 1983. According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (2007), there was a general decay in all aspects and levels of the educational system. Teachers were poorly trained and poorly motivated. The funding for education was low since that sector was relegated to the background. It was not until May 1999 that the Nigerian Federal Government decided to provide Universal Basic Education (UBE) to all children of school age up to junior secondary level. Almost at the same time, the governments of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states, then controlled by different parties outside the Federal Government, launched free Universal Basic Education for all children of school age up to the secondary education level.

UBE is a policy aimed at reforming basic education in Nigeria, and has been sponsored by the World Bank, the Federal Government of Nigeria, State and Local Governments, and intends to cover all neglected groups such as poor rural children, street children, nomads, migrants, native and indigenous peoples, minorities and the physically disabled. The UBE has six basic components with a formal educational system being just one of them.

Other components relate to early childhood literacy, life skills for adults, services to the nomadic population, and non-formal education or apprenticeship training for youths outside the formal education system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000).

Funding for library development is dependent on the project priorities of the individual participating States. There is not a fixed percentage of funding allocated to library development. While some States have library development in their project priority list, others may not (Unagha, 2008). Oyo State took a step to address the provision of library and information centres in primary schools in 2005.

Government efforts to promote education and literacy in Nigeria have not translated to high quality school graduates or high literacy rates amongst the population. This is due to factors which include under-funding, poor school infrastructures, poorly trained and poorly remunerated teachers and poorly equipped libraries (Unagha, 2008).

## **School Libraries and Universal Basic Education**

The most successful feature of the UPE or UBE, according to Gbadamosi (2006) is the increase in the population of children wanting to enroll in education at all levels in Nigeria. School libraries and library services are essential to the successful implementation of UBE. IFLA (2006) states that "The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens." As an educational support service, the school library adds value

to classroom instruction by providing additional resources and information that expands pupils' reading horizons, upgrades the intellectual scope and depth of teachers, and provides conducive environments for pupils that are not found elsewhere in the school. According to Unagha (2008) the school library helps children learn to enjoy reading, use library resources as a lifelong habit, and gives them a chance to evaluate and use information.

The importance of libraries in the successful implementation of UBE was acknowledged in the National Policy on Education in which libraries are described as one of the most important educational services. The policy also suggested that training should be provided for librarians and library assistants (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Nevertheless, federal, state, and local governments as well as private owners establish schools without making provision for school library services.

It is essential to appraise and evaluate the impact that school libraries have on the academic success of students. However, because of the limited provision of libraries in primary schools in Nigeria, it was considered useful, as a first step in gathering evidence, to survey school libraries and examine the services they provide in relation to the UBE program at a primary level. The purpose of this paper is to explore these factors in relation to school libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### Literature Review

The place of school libraries in Universal Basic Education (UBE) worldwide cannot be over-emphasized. Traveline (1997) stresses that the central importance of the library and its learning resources has not diminished. These learning resources facilitate the acquisition of the physical and intellectual skills necessary to assist the individual to develop literacy for lifelong education. The Education for All (EFA) framework of action for meeting basic education needs recognize libraries as invaluable information resources which must

work in partnership with school and community workers.

Lance, Welborn, & Hamilton-Pennell (1993) report that the school library is one of the few factors whose contributions to academic achievement has been documented empirically, and is a contribution that cannot be dismissed by other powerful influences on student performance. Lonsdale (2003) agrees, claiming that existing research in Australian schools shows that school libraries can have positive impacts on student achievement whether measured in terms of reading scores, literacy or learning in general.

Similarly, the Ontario Library Association showed that there is a positive relationship between professionally-staffed school libraries and student achievement and suggests the importance of teacher-librarians in fostering engagement in reading, a factor that is instrumental in fostering literacy and lifelong learning for students ("School libraries", 2006). In a related study published by Scholastic Library Publishing, (*School Libraries Work!*, 2008) the importance of school libraries to students' education is clearly demonstrated. The study finds that whether student achievement is measured by standardized reading achievement tests or by global assessments of learning, a well-stocked library overseen by a certified librarian has a positive impact on student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or educational level of the community.

The role of librarians and teacher-librarians in dispensing library services and impacting positively on students' achievement has been researched extensively. Lance (2001) found that the level of development of the library media program was a predictor of student performance and that staffing levels correlated with test scores. He also points out that there was higher performance at all educational levels in schools with librarians than in schools without librarians.

It is important to bear in mind that the value and importance of the library and its impact

on the achievement of students as reported in developed countries may not be the same in developing countries like Nigeria. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) note that African students enter universities without ever using any library either in the primary or secondary schools. Libraries are unavailable in most schools and where they are, use is not necessarily promoted to students. The situation in Oyo State is no different which is why Adediran (2002) argues that every primary school in Oyo State should have a library.

This paper, therefore, surveys school libraries in relation to the UBE program at primary level in Oyo State Nigeria to explore the experience and perceptions of those providing the school library service.

### **Primary Schools and Provision of Library Services within Oyo State**

In Oyo State, there are 2,116 public primary schools (as of July 2010). Of these, only 33 have functional libraries. Across the state there are over one million pupils and more than 28,000 teachers. Of these teachers, 256 were selected and trained as teacher-librarians and 60 of received further training. One school in each of the 33 Local Government Areas (LGA) has a library and information centre, staffed by a teacher-librarian. The Education Trust Fund (ETF) in Nigeria has allocated ₦33 million naira (Nigeria currency) to purchase books, and each (LGA) is allotted 296 volumes of books. Public primary schools without library and information resource centres are expected to visit, on a rotational basis, the school with a library in their area. In each of the schools within an LGA, only one or two classes, particularly primary four or five stream, are enlisted to visit schools where library and information centres are located. However, the implementation of this policy is not feasible in rural areas where schools are scattered and the schools with libraries are based some distance away from the schools which they serve. Furthermore, where there is no transport, pupils must walk to the school where the library is located.

In Oyo State, mobile libraries are intended to benefit those schools that are unable to visit the library in their area. Under this arrangement, the books are boxed and boxes are taken to the rural schools and then moved to other schools at three weeks intervals (Adediran, 2002)

### **Objectives**

This study seeks to establish:

1. Which library resources and services are available at the primary schools under the Universal Basic Education program in Oyo State.
2. The views of personnel in primary school libraries in Oyo State regarding the adequacy of the resources and the obstacles impeding effective use of library resources.

### **Methods**

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was sent to the 33 schools that have a library and information centre staffed by a teacher-librarian. Before the questionnaire was distributed it was checked by a senior colleague for content validity. The questionnaire covers library space, categories of library resources, student activities during library visits, mobile library services, and the teacher-librarians perceptions of the adequacy of the collection and the challenges in the use of library.

### **Results**

Questionnaires were returned by 30 teacher-librarians out of 33, a response rate of 91%.

The adequacy of instructional and book resources was studied by assessing the availability and currency of 13 types of resources. Each of the instructional materials was assessed using the 4-Likert scale rating as shown in table 1 below. HA = Highly adequate; A = Adequate; FA = Fairly Adequate; NA = Not Adequate.

Table 1

Assessing the Adequacy of Available Instructional/Book Resources (n=30)

	<b>Instructional Resource Available</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Frequency %</b>
1	Children's Encyclopedia	HA A FA NA	22 08 - -	73.33 26.6 - -
2	Dictionaries	HA A FA NA	06 24 - -	20 80 - -
3	Historical/Cultural/Geographical Charts	HA A FA NA	- - - 30	- - - 100
4	Science Charts	HA A FA NA	07 23 - -	23.33 76.66 - -
5	Computer Sets	HA A FA NA	- - 04 26	- - 13.33 86.66
	<b>Book Resources Available</b>			
6	Mathematics	HA A FA NA	10 20 - -	33.33 66.66 - -
7	English Language	HA A FA NA	15 15 - -	50 50 - -
8	Elementary Science	HA A FA NA	16 10 04 -	53.33 33.33 13.33 -
9	Verbal & Qualitative Reasoning	HA A FA NA	18 10 02 -	60 33.33 06.66 -
10	Physical & Health Education	HA A FA NA	- - 30 -	- - 100 -
11	Yoruba Language	HA A FA NA	25 04 01 -	83.33 13.34 03.33 -
12	Literature/story books	HA A FA NA	28 02 - -	93.33 06.66 - -
13	Newspapers/Magazines	HA A FA NA	15 15 - -	50 50 - -

Table 1 shows the perceptions of the adequacy of the resources in relation to the number of students using them during their visits.

Table 1 shows that instructional and book resources that are rated highly adequate include children’s encyclopedias, verbal and qualitative reasoning, Yoruba language and story books. These are rated foremost and considered highly adequate in terms of the total collection in relation to the number of pupils using them at a time.

Table 2 provides information on the operation of the library services including library mobile services.

the library. Since library and information centres service many schools, pupils and teachers use of the borrowing facility will render the book collections inadequate. Mobile library services are not well established, occurring in only 3 (10%) of the total number of library and information centres in the state. Teacher-librarians who have transport such as motor-bikes are assigned to act as supervisors for schools in rural areas which have no access to library services.

Table 3 illustrates the student-activities that take place during library visits. All respondents agree that schools visit library

Table 2  
Types of Library Services and Mobile Library Services (n =30)

	Services	Yes	%	No	%
1	Pupils are registered and issued with registration cards	-	-	30	100
2	Pupils have free access to books in the library	30	100	-	-
3	Pupils can borrow books	30	100	-	-
4	Loan policy: One book for one week Two books for two weeks Four books for two weeks	28 - -	93.33 - -	02 - -	06.66 - -
5	Teacher can borrow on behalf of their school	28	93.33	02	6.66
6	Mobile library service is available for schools in rural areas	03	10	27	90
7	Teacher-librarians that has mean of transportation is appointed as Mobile Library Teacher Supervisors	29	96.66	01	33.33

From Table 2 above, it can be seen that although pupils have free access to library resources when they visit the library, they are not formally registered or given registration cards. The majority were able to borrow books for one week. School teachers can borrow on behalf of the schools. This implies that the borrowing facility by either the pupils or teachers will deplete the books further as each school visits the centre. In consequence, there are fewer books available when students visit

and information centres on an average of once per week, however those running the library believe this is inadequate. This is because each school selects one or two streams of primary four or five or both as designated classes to visit the library and information centres. It is only this stream that visits the centre; other classes do not access the library at all. All libraries provide reading and comprehension in local Yoruba and English language but are

Table 3  
Student Activities During Library Visits (n = 30)

	Activity	Yes	%	No	%
1	School visits library for one period of 45 minutes per week	30	100	-	-
2	Do you consider one period of 45 minutes per week adequate	-	-	30	100
3	Reading of personal notes, and carrying out home assignments	-	-	30	100
4	Reading and comprehension exercises in local Yoruba and English language texts under the guidance of a teacher-librarian	30	100	-	-

not used for reading personal notes or carrying out homework.

Table 4 provides more detail regarding teacher-librarian perceptions of the adequacy of the library services. These findings suggest that respondents are happy with the amount of space in the library but not the furniture within it. In addition the majority suggest that book resources are in short supply and obsolete. Furthermore, respondents believe that reference books are insufficient. Twenty-eight (93.32%) of the respondents agree that a change needs to be made to the ledger system of loaning books to users, where the controlling records of the borrowed books are kept in a book (or ledger) form. The books are not catalogued or organized according to any of the known classification schemes and only an accession number is used to identify each library book, making it difficult to track the books which are loaned.

Table 4 shows that 28 (93.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that library personnel, particularly teacher-librarians and library assistants, need training and retraining while two respondents (6.6%) disagree. The actual use of the library resources is very low and all respondents agreed that is because a library is not located within each of the schools. Instead, some classes visit a local library on a weekly basis.

The table also shows that the majority of respondents (83.33%) strongly agree that there is the need to introduce information and communication technology (internet services) to complement the conventional library services in school libraries.

Table 5 shows respondents' perceptions of the challenges relating to effective use of the library. All respondents agree that one library resource centre is inadequate to effectively serve all the schools in a LGA. The table shows that 26 respondents (86.6%) strongly agree that the movement of the pupils and by extension, the security of the pupils is hindered because the library resource centre is located far away. The security of the pupils and teacher-librarians alike is endangered because in some cases pupils and staff have to cross busy roads. Of the total number of respondents, 20 (66.6%) strongly agree and 8 (26.6%) agree that books and other current sources should be procured to strengthen the library collections (suggesting that the respondents perceive book collections as inadequate). Table 5 also shows that respondents agree that there is need for the appointment of qualified librarians and library officers who are computer and information literate.

Table 4  
Assessing the Adequacy of Library Services and Mobile Library Services (n = 30)

		Response	Frequency	Relative frequency %
1	Library space is adequate	SA A D SD	22 08 - -	73.33 26.66 - -
2	Library seating furniture is adequate	SA A D SD	10 10 10 -	33.33 33.33 33.33 -
3	Many of the books are obsolete	SA A D SD	- 30 - -	- 100 - -
4	Books are in short supply	SA A D SD	21 09 - -	70 30 - -
5	Numbers of school visits are very low	SA A D SD	30 - - -	100 - - -
6	Reference books are sufficient	SA A D SD	- 10 - 20	- 33.33 - 66.66
7	Organization of books follow specific scheme	SA A D SD	- - 12 18	- - 40 60
8	Accession number is used to arrange the library books	SA A D SD	29 - - 01	96.66 - - 3.33
9	Personnel need training and retraining	SA A D SD	28 - 02 -	93.33 - 06.66 -
10	Ledger system of loan needs to be changed	SA A D SD	08 20 - 02	26.66 66.66 - 06.66
11	Fact that library is not located within each of the schools hinders the effective use of the resources	SA A D SD	30 - - -	100 - - -
12	Effective mobile library service is predicated upon the availability of mobile vans and personnel	SA A D SD	29 - - 01	96.66 - - 03.33
13	Need to introduce internet service to complement conventional library services in schools	SA A D SD	25 05 - -	83.33 16.66 - -

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree



Table 5  
Perceptions on the Challenges Relating to Effective Use of the Library (n = 30)

		Response	Frequency	Frequency %
1	One library resource centre cannot effectively service all the schools in a Local Government Area	SA A D SD	30 - - -	100 - - -
2	Because the library resource centre is located far away, movement of pupils to the centre hinders the use	SA A D SD	26 04 - -	86.66 13.33 - -
3	In some Local Government areas where pupils have to cross major roads, road crossing poses serious danger to the pupils	SA A D SD	28 02 - -	93.33 6.66 - -
4	There is the need to introduce ICT in primary school library resource centre	SA A D SD	30 - - -	100 - - -
5	There is the need to strengthen collection of books and current sources in the library	SA A D SD	20 08 02 -	66.66 26.66 06.6 -
6	Need for the appointment of qualified librarians and library officers	SA A D SD	28 02 - -	93.33 06.66 - -
7	Need for training and retraining of teacher-librarians to be computer and information literate	SA A D SD	28 02 - -	93.33 06.06 - -

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

## Discussion

The questionnaire identifies perceptions of a range of inadequacies in relation to school libraries in Oyo State. The data shows that although pupils across each local government area have the chance to visit school libraries, the system of one short visit per week is inadequate for developing a universal interest

in reading and in study skills. Further, those who are able to visit the library are discouraged by long walks or busy traffic. This means that libraries and librarians are not well integrated into the teaching and learning process. Mobile libraries are in their infancy and this means that schools in rural areas do not have access to library services.

Staff members responsible for the libraries consider many of the resources to be inadequate or outdated and stock is depleted as pupils borrow books, leaving fewer for those who follow. Traditional classification schemes are not used to organize books and inadequate ledger systems are used as a means of tracking the movement of books in the library.

Effective delivery of library services for UBE is contingent on resources such as books, personnel, space and new information and communication technologies (ICT). For school libraries to provide environments that enable teaching and learning, they must have qualified staff. This survey shows that qualified librarians and library officers would be welcomed for staffing the school library and there is a need for training and retraining of teacher-librarians to be computer and information literate. Introducing ICT in the libraries is also desired by those providing library services.

Usoro and Usanga (2007) argue that children must be encouraged to use resources effectively for lifelong education. Primary school children must develop a reading habit that will encourage literacy. One way to overcome the neglect of school libraries in Nigeria and Oyo State may be to include them in the basic education program. Obanya (2002) maintains this has the effect of encouraging extensive reading development in the middle years, through systematic exposure to a variety of carefully graded reading materials.

### Conclusion

As a first step to implementing evidence-based practice, this paper describes the primary school library system in Nigeria and provides evidence on how it operates in Oyo State. Teacher-librarians who staff the libraries confirm the inadequacies in the system. They perceive the collections to be inadequate and confirm that some pupils in the state have only limited access to library resources. Respondents (teacher-librarians) also believe

that they need further training, particularly in computer and information literacy.

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**Appendix A**

Questionnaire Survey Of School Libraries In Primary Schools In Oyo State Universal Basic Education (UBE)

**Introduction**

Please complete this questionnaire as truthfully as to assist in bringing about improvements to library services in primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. Your response is essentially for research purpose and shall be made as confidential as possible.

**Dr. B. O. Gbadamosi**  
**Emmanuel Alayande College of Education,**  
**Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.**

**1. Personal/Institutional Data**

- i. Name of the School
- ii. Name of the Teacher-Librarian
- iii. Local Government Area
- iv. Your Present Status – Classroom Teacher, Teacher-Librarian, Assistant Teacher-Librarian, Teacher-Librarian Supervisor

**2. Provision of Library Space**

Each school visits the designated Library (Mark as appropriate)

	YES	NO
Once in a week		
Twice in a week		
Every day of the week		

Assessing the adequacy and recency of available Instructional/book resources

**3. Library Resources Available**

	Highly Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Adequate	Not Adequate
1. Children Encyclopedia and their volumes				
2. Dictionaries (please give numbers)				
3. Historical/Cultural/Geographical charts (give the numbers)				
4. Science chart (Give the numbers)				
5. Available Computers (Give the numbers)				
6. Mathematics (please give the numbers)				
7. English Language				
8. Elementary Science				
9. Verbal & Qualitative reasoning (Give the numbers)				
10. Physical & Health Education (Please				

- give the numbers)
11. Yoruba Language
  12. Literature/Story book (Give the numbers)
  13. Newspaper/Magazine


**4. Student Activities During Library Visit**

1. School Visits library for one period of 45 minutes per week
2. Do you consider one period of 45 minutes per week adequate.
3. Identify student activities when they visit the library (Mark as many as relevant)
  - a. Private reading of textbooks
  - b. Private reading of English/Yoruba Literatures
  - c. Reading of English/Yoruba Literatures under the guidance of a Teacher Librarian
  - d. Reading of personal lesson notes
4. Student doing their home assignments

YES	NO


**5. Library Services Available**

Mark the various services provided for the students otherwise leave blank

1. Pupils are registered and issue registration cards
2. Pupils have free access to books in the Library
3. Pupils can borrow books
4. Identify number of books a student can borrow and loan period
  - a. one book for one week
  - b. two books for two weeks
  - c. four books for two weeks
5. Loan Service to Teachers
  - a. One Service to Teachers
  - b. two books for one week
  - c. two books for two weeks
  - d. Four books for one week
  - e. Teacher can borrow on behalf of the school.

YES	NO



**6. Mobile Library Services**

Mark up as many relevant options as possible

- a. Mobile library is available for schools in rural areas
- b. Mobile librarian are appointed among Mobile Teacher supervisor

YES	NO

7. **Assessing the Effectiveness of Library services and Mobile Library Services**

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i.	Library space is adequate				
ii.	Library sitting furnitures are adequate				
iii.	Many of the textbooks are obsolete				
iv.	Books are in short supply				
v.	School visits are very low				
vi.	Reference books are sufficient				
vii.	Organization of books follow specific scheme				
viii.	Accession number is used to arrange books				
ix.	Personnel need training and retraining				
x.	Leger system of borrow need to be changed				
xi.	Because the library is not located within each of the schools affect the effective use of the resources				

8. **Access the Problem Confronting and Solutions Being Profer to the Effective Use of the Library**

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i.	One library resource centre cannot effectively service all schools in a local government				
ii.	Because Library Resource Centre is located far away, movement of pupils to the centre hinders the use				
iii.	Because Library Resource Centre is located far away, movement of pupils have to cross major road, crossing the road poses serious danger to the pupils				
iv.	There is the need to introduce ICE in primary Library resource centre				
v.	There is need to strengthen the books and current sources collections in the Library				
vi.	Effective Mobile Library is predicated upon the availability of mobile vans				
vii.	Need to introduce mobile internet service even to the rural area				

viii.	Need for the appointment of trained Librarians and Library Officers				
ix.	Need for training and retraining of Teacher-Librarians to be computer and internet compliance				