

Constraints to Effective Management of Secondary School Libraries: A Case Study of 2 Private and 2 Public Schools in Owerri Municipal LGA, Imo State Nigeria

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Abstract: This study on the constraints to effective management of secondary school libraries was carried out using the survey method. Questionnaire was used to collect required data and simple tables and percentages were used to analyze the data collected. During the course of the study, it was identified that inadequate funding by the government is the major constraints to effective management of school libraries. Data gathered also showed that the area mostly affected by this constraint is in provision of library/information resources. The libraries under study have been coping with these constraints through alternative funding. However, the researcher made some recommendations which include among which are adequate funding by government.

Key words: Management, resources, libraries, course, government, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

School libraries are indispensable in the realization of the aims and objectives of education. The school library is one of the most important organs in the school system and therefore needs adequate attention from both government and authorities of the school system (Edom, 2006). The library is integral components of education which exist in other to provide varied information materials. The school library has a great role to play in improving the reading habits of students which will enable them to be grounded on a solid educational base.

Contemporary school libraries are now centers for the acquisition, processing and utilization of a extensive variety of educational media teaching aids and learning resources. The expansion in the composition of information materials in the school library has brought about a change and hence there is need for its effective management. It is the intellectual, cultural and social product of any educational system. Akanwa (2007) posits that the school library is an integral part of the school, a laboratory where many activities and experiments are carried out and all these activities and experiments are geared towards the development of the child and nation. She went further to say that without it, no profitable or rewarding educational activity can go on in the school environment.

However, there is apparent lack of interest in school libraries by the government. Agwaranze is of the view that

government has not been able to make finance available for the upkeep of secondary school libraries, the problems inherited in the inadequacy of financial provision to run the educational system.

On the major factors that constitute constraints to the effective management of school libraries, Fayose (1991) identified government, students and teachers. The government and education commissioners have not adequately addressed the importance of school libraries: leading to makeshift services, lack of training for library staff, irregular payment of salaries and poor conditions of services. On the part of students, they steal books, damage library materials and disobey the school librarians. Teachers cannot be exonerated since some of them do not make adequate use of the library. Ahanene (1990) stated that many teachers still see their notes of lessons as the be all and end all in teaching and instruction. Fayose (1995) in his own view indicated that if children see their teachers going into the library frequently, they themselves will always go there frequently too.

Another indicator of poor management of school library is the manning of the school library individual who do not have any training in librarianship. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) is of the view that the teacher-librarian should be duly qualified as a teacher and as a librarian to be effective in the management of the library. Other non-professional staff such as library officer, library assistants and library attendants is also required for effective management of the school library.

However, most of the secondary school libraries in Owerri Municipal in Imo State Nigeria can hardly boast of these learning resources to guide teachers and students in their studies. The state government does not budget enough money for libraries and there is lack of funds, materials, infrastructures and maintenance. It is also of note that some of the schools lack accommodations for their libraries and bookshelves are not organized. Thus, one cannot lay hands on any books in some of these schools continue to decrease. Principals of these schools lack adequate management skills to instill discipline in their staff and students.

It is based on this that this research work seeks to identify the constraints to effective school library management in some secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. The study is aimed at identifying the factors that constitute constraint to the effective management of secondary school libraries under study, determining the areas of school library management that are mostly affected by these constraints, examine how the selected secondary school libraries cope with the constraints on the effective management of these libraries understudy, assess the effects of these constraints on the effective management of these libraries and recommend solutions to these constraints.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: A survey research instrument was administered on 4 senior principals, 4 junior principals and 4 teacher librarians in the 4 secondary schools under study in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria. The secondary schools are: Government Secondary School, Owerri, Girls Secondary School, Owerri, Federal Government Girls Secondary School, Owerri and Government Technical College, Owerri.

Instruments: The instruments used in this research was questionnaires which was administered on the participants. Frequency and percentages were used to analyze data collected.

Procedure: On reaching the schools, the researcher administered the questionnaires on the respondents and the respondents were given 2 days to enable them complete the questionnaires. At the end of the 2 days, the researcher went back to retrieve them. All the 12 questionnaires administered were returned representing 100%. Frequency and percentages were used to analyze data collected as shown in Table 1-5 in the results.

Table 1: Simple percentage table showing the factors that constitute constraints in library management

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate funding by the govt.	8	67
Lack of teacher interest	-	-
Nature of the library building	1	8
Inadequate library/information resources	2	17
Unqualified library staff	1	8
Total	12	100

Table 2: Percentage table showing areas affected by the constraints in library management

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Library/Information resources	7	59
Staffing	2	17
Library building	1	8
Library services	1	8
Library infrastructure	1	8
Total	12	100

Table 3: Percentage survey table showing ways of coping with library management constraints

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Seeking advice from other schools	1	8
Borrowing from other sources	3	25
Putting in extra hours at work	-	-
Involving students in the management of school libraries	-	-
Alternative funding	7	59
Total	12	100

Table 4: Percentage table showing effects of the constraints in library management

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate library materials	3	25
Ineffective library services	1	8
Inadequate use of library by teachers and students	7	59
Dissatisfaction to staff and students	1	8
Total	12	100

Table 5: Possible solutions to these constraints

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Funding of school library by government	6	50
Employment of qualified staff	3	25
Provision of relevant information resources	1	8
Provision of conducive environment	2	17
Total	12	100

Design/statistics: The research method used for this work was the survey method as outlined by Nwankwo (2001) where the researcher identified the variables, subjects, elements and incidents considered relevant to the inquiry for making a broad and provisional decision. At the end of the research, frequency and percentages were used to analyze data collected as shown in Table 1-5 in the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that inadequate funding by the government is the major factor that constitutes

constraints. This is shown by 8 (67%) response rate. The second is inadequate library/information resources with 2 (17%). Nature of the library building and unqualified library staff got 1 (8%) each with non of the respondents ticking lack of teacher interest as a factor that constitute constraints. This is in agreement with Agwaranze who stated that government does not provide adequate fund for the management of school libraries. Again, this is in line with Nwafor (2001) that lack of government interest in secondary school libraries, especially in funding constitute major constraints in management of school libraries.

On the areas affected by the constraints, majority of the respondents 7 (59%) indicated library/information resources. Others pointed out staffing 2 (17%), library building 1 (8%) and library infrastructures 1 (8%). This implies that either the library/information resources are inadequate, outdated and/or foreign based. Oduagwu (2002) stated that one of the problems associated with school libraries is appalling shortage of reaching materials (Table 2) especially in library and information resources. This is in agreement with Fayose (1991) that information resources in the secondary school libraries are not rich and varied hence it does not cover all the subject areas of the school curriculum.

Out of the 12 respondents that answered this question, 1 (8%) responded seeking advice from other schools as a way of coping with management constraints, 3 (25%) indicated borrowing, 1 (8%) affirmed involving students in management of school library while alternative funding ranked highest with 7 (59%) response rate. The result is in agreement with Mbagwu (2009) who opined that one of the best ways of coping strategies of these constraints is by seeking for alternative funding, especially through philanthropists (Table 3).

Table 4 shows that 7 (59%) indicated that inadequate use of the library by teachers and students happen to be the most serious effect on the effective management of school library. About 3 (25%) pointed out inadequate library materials whereas 1 (8%) each affirmed ineffective library service and dissatisfaction to staff and students. From the analysis, it can be deduced that ineffective management has consequences on the school library and its users. This is justified by the fact that teachers and students inability to use the library gave the highest percentage as in Table 4 shows that these group of people though interested to use the library but are constrained due to poor library infrastructures.

On how to solve the constraints, half of the respondents 6 (50%) said funding of school library by government, 3 (25%) employment of qualified staff, 2 (17%) provision of conducive library environment while

1 (8%) said provision of relevant information resources. This implies that proper and adequate funding of school library by government will offer the best solution to constraints to effective management of school libraries in secondary schools in Owerri Municipal LGA. This view supports Bonny (1981) that government has not been able to provide secondary school libraries with funds hence, libraries are not being incorporated into the plans for the Universal Basic Education.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it was observed that inadequate funding as a result of lack of government interest in the secondary school library constitutes the major constraint. More so lack of information resources, furniture and equipment and also, unconducive library environment constitute constraints to effective management of secondary school libraries in Owerri Municipal LGA. If government and other philanthropists should look into these factors that constitute constraints to effective management of secondary school libraries and learn a helping hand, there will be a better management of secondary school libraries in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the results of the research carried out, the researcher recommends the following: there is need for government to intervene in the management of school libraries through adequate funding and their interest should always be there since it is their responsibility to oversee the management of school libraries. There is also need for recruitment of professional librarians in the school libraries studied. The management of school libraries should always create alternative source of funding instead of relying solely on the government. More of the relevant information resources that will assist the teachers and students in their educational pursuit should be procured. Finally, there is also need for separate library building instead of makeshift arrangement as observed in some secondary school libraries.

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