

**ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY USE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN CALABAR
SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study examined library use and secondary school students' academic performance in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design to determine students' attitude to the use of school library. A sample of the study was made of 552 SS2 students randomly selected from seven public secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area during the 2023/2024 academic session. The instruments for data collection were two research instruments which comprised "Library Use (LUSE) and Achievement Test Question in English Language (ATQEL). The Test item were chosen using table of specification in line with the Government approved syllabus for SS2 Students. Data collection was done by the researcher who randomly administered the instruments on the students selected for the study. All the 552 copies of the instruments distributed were collected back from the subjects immediately after the exercise. The data collected from 552 subjects were analyzed using frequency count, mean value and independent t-test tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that over 60% of secondary school students in Calabar south do not make effective use of their school library, there is a positive influence of use of school library on the academic performance of the students, there is a significant influence of school library utilization on academic performance of students in Calabar south. Based on the results of the analyses of the data collected for the study, it was concluded that secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area use of school library was significantly poor.

Key words: School Library, Library Use, Academic Performance, Students

Introduction

School libraries are seen generally as vital if students are to inculcate sound reading habits and improve on their academic performance in public examinations. However, there have been reports of poor students' academic performance among secondary school students. The library has been defined as a school's entire stock of books and other material resources. According to Adeyemi (2010), the library is a collection of a wide range of learning and teaching materials that are held in one location and centrally arranged and indexed to assist readers. A school library is a physical and digital learning area where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity are fundamental to students'

information, knowledge journey, and personal, social, and cultural activities in school. It is also the focal point for individual study in schools (Adeyemi, 2010).

It goes without saying that the availability and use of contemporary, well-equipped school libraries is critical to students' academic performance in colleges. The reasons are not implausible. Regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community, a great library that is sufficiently staffed, resourced, and funded can lead to higher student performance (Ogundele & Moronfoye, 2013). In a similar vein, they also argued that school libraries can improve students' self-esteem, confidence, independence, and sense of responsibility for their own learning. The role of the school library is critical to learning because it provides the foundation for learning, provides information that can improve people's lives, encourages students to study, learn, and achieve better results, and provides confidence to look for information on their own at various levels. School libraries improve students' understanding and performance while also supporting teaching and learning throughout the school.

The Federal Ministry of Education in its Minimum Standards for School Libraries (2019) states that availability and accessibility of library resources and services increase student's library use. Suleiman, Hanafi and Tanslikhan (2018) are of the view that access and frequent use of school library resources by students influence their academic performance and achievement in schools.

In spite of this policy pronouncement, students at the secondary school level are performing poorly at external examinations conducted by WAEC and NECO, indicating a steady decline in their academic achievement. The situation got to a worrisome level in 2014 when the then Minister of Education stated that the poor performance of students in public examinations conducted by examination bodies in Nigeria was not only a cause of concern to the Federal Government but also a national embarrassment. The author went further to analyze that in recent years, less than 30% on the average of over one million students obtained credit passes in five (5) subjects that include English language and Mathematics (Ogunbadejo, 2015).

Arising from the above assertion, it was obvious that the poor performance of the Senior Secondary students nationwide was a cause for serious national concern by all stake holders including parents and the governments. In terms of funding, the Federal Government increased the allocation to education from 509.039 billion naira in 2013 to 620.50 billion naira in 2019 representing 7.03% of the National budget for that year (FME, 2019). With increase in funding, educational agencies such as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Teachers Institute (NTI) and Teachers Registration Council of Nigerian (TRCN) embarked on increased teachers training, registration and supply to the secondary education sub-sector. Olokor (2021) stated that TRCN was collaborating with UNESCO to train and retrain 28,000 teachers annually from 2017 to date for the education sector. However, despite the increase in funding, as well as the training and supply of teachers to the secondary education sector, the problem of poor performance in the external examinations by secondary school students persist. In light of the foregoing, the purpose of this study is to assess senior secondary students' use of the school library as well as their academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of library use in enhancing students' academic achievement, many secondary school students in Calabar south Local Government Area, Nigeria, appear to underutilize library facilities. Factors such as limited access, lack of awareness, inadequate resources or poor reading culture may be contributing to this issue. There is growing concern that students' academic performance may be negatively impacted by their insufficient engagement with library services. However, there is limited empirical

data assessing the extent of library use among these students and how it correlates with their academic outcomes. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining the relationship between library utilization and academic performance among secondary school students in the area.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to;

- i. Determine how frequent students use the library
- ii. Determine the reasons for the use of school library
- iii. Determine the influence of use of library on students' academic performance

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How frequent do students use the school library?
- ii. What are the students' reasons for the use of school library?
- iii. How does library use influence students' academic performance?

Research Hypothesis

- i. There is no significant influence of library use on students' academic performance.

Literature Review

In the 21st century, libraries are performing pivotal roles in disseminating and sharing the culture of knowledge. Today's advanced information technology is enabling libraries to accomplish diverse task in the library on a large scale. The modern library is not only a collection of textbooks or information books. It includes other types of media like reference materials, books relating to school curriculum, general books not relating to a specific subject area, periodicals, newspapers, audiovisual materials, government publications and electronically stored and retrievable materials. Libraries now offer physical and digital materials due to the digital revolution (Brown and Clark, 2022). This attracts students who preferred varied learning styles and may definitely increase Library visits (Hernandez, 2023). These resources enable libraries to play a crucial role in the success of lifelong education of communities and society in general. The library is the powerhouse of the school and it is an integral part of the school system. In spite of the value of libraries in schools, it is an acceptable fact that there are very few schools with libraries. Students are less aware of the roles and benefits of a school library or services offered by the library as a result of the absence of school libraries in the schools. The importance of Libraries as educational environment that facilitate students' academic endeavours has been widely established (Smith2020).

Fagyan, Macalingay, Abellada, Munar, Depnag and Kitani(2023) researched on the impact of Library Use Frequency on Students Satisfaction: An Evaluation of Resources, Services, and facilities. The results indicated that a sizeable percentage of students (42.66%) frequently visited the Library and that students were extremely pleased with the Library's resources, services and facilities. Also, Jones et al (2023) revealed same frequency of 42.66% of utilization of Libraries by students for their academic needs. In another study by Sahu and Dash(2021), students were unhappy with Library staff, resources availability and convenience. This will definitely lead to low frequency of use of Library by students. In addition to Libraries serving as a repository of books and resources, they offer tranquil and favorable setting for students to concentrate on their academic pursuit, thereby fostering a culture of frequent utilization(Williams, 2021). Libraries provide information and knowledge as curriculum emphasizes self-directed learning and research (Taylor,2021). Thus many

students use Library for academic purposes. Library use appears to improve academic performance as posited by Johnson and Patel(2023)

Singh, and Mahajan, (2015) expressed users' assessment as one of the important activities of an academic library. The assessment process provides necessary information to develop the library in a right direction. Assessment of users' needs is an important aspect for collection development and starting new services as well as the improvement in the existing services. The students who regularly visit the library know the library resources are comprehensive, reliable and scholarly than most of the web sites. Librarians and library staff do help students to access and use quality information and resources which help them to enhance their study and explain to them how to browse the latest technologies which will help them to improve and strengthen their learning. The purpose of student's visiting the library was established to find out whether they are there to satisfy their information needs or for general reading or for research requirements. In this way the library use increases and students' performance will eventually increase.

The school library has become vital and indispensable in providing information. The rapid growth and fast changing environment in the field of technology has left behind many information providers and the users struggling to get the current information from the library. Since the Library is a powerhouse where information is stored, generated and retrieved and disseminated to fulfill the students' need. Adeniran (2011) has examined the user satisfaction with academic library services: Academic staff and students' perspectives. The findings of this study revealed that users' satisfaction is a function of the quality of staff and services of a library. The study also revealed that provision of relevant information materials, access point and conducive environment for learning, teaching and research lead to an increase in the use of library.

Afebende and Ebaye (2008) revealed that the success of the library depends on the effective exploitation and use of resources by the users and not only on collection and facilities provided by library. However, most faculties claimed they are not aware of all available library resources/services. They also indicated inability to access electronic databases and materials from the shelves as problems inhibiting library use. The adequate use of libraries yielded high academic success among students. Veena and Kotari (2016) in their findings showed that 59% of respondents had the habit to visit the library daily, majority 86.7% of respondents were highly satisfied with the collection of general books, and 70.0% were highly satisfied with collection of text books and 53.3% respondents considered circulation services as being excellent. The study suggested that college library should carry out users' studies at regular intervals, in order to identify user's information needs.

The library provides ideal environment and vital information resources for students to develop and sustain good study habits necessary for excellent performance in their academic works. Thus, it is imperative for the students to cultivate good study habits that will equip them for excellent performance in their academic work through the use of a school library. Being successful in school requires one to have a high level of study skills. Students should be able to first learn the skills, keep practicing them and then develop effective study habits in order for them to be successful in their academic work. Secondary school education is supposed to be the bedrock and foundation towards higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. Students' failure to use the school library and its resources to expand their study habits negatively affects their academic performance. Several studies have shown that there is strong connection between the students' use of school library and their academic performance. Students that use the school library often perform better in test and examination than students who fail to use the school library.

Methods

The research design adopted for this study was the survey. The study was carried out in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 1,839 Senior Secondary School two (SS2) students in seven public secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area. The population was made up of 791 males and 1048 females. The researcher selected 30% of the students from all the seven government secondary schools in the area using simple random sampling technique which included 552 students for the study. The reason for the selection of 30% of the student population was because they will constitute a proper representation of the population. This was done through the use of table of randomization using the students register.

The sample for the study was made up of 552 (227 males and 325 females) SS2 students randomly selected from 7 government schools in Calabar South Local Government area of Cross River State during the 2023/2024 session. The instruments for data collection were two research instruments which comprised "Library Use (LUSE) and Achievement Test Question in English Language (ATQEL). The Test items were chosen using table of specification in line with the Government approved syllabus for SS2 Students. The LUSE instrument comprised two sections; Sections A and B. Section A seeks information about the demographic data of the respondents while Section B measures purpose of library, use of library and relationship between use of library on a modified four-point Likert type scale. The ATQEL comprised 30-item multiple choice achievement test questions in English Language.

Data collection for the study was done personally by the researcher in the sampled schools. The researcher randomly selected the required number of subjects needed from each school for the study. The subjects were properly informed on the need to give objective responses to the items and that the data will be used for research purposes only. The researcher administered the instruments to the SS2 students and all the copies of the instrument distributed were collected from the respondents immediately after the exercise. Data were analyzed using simple percentages and independent t-test.

Results

Research questions one

How frequent do secondary students use the library?

The variable involved in this question is 'frequent use of secondary school library'. This was analyzed using frequency count and a pie chart presentation and is presented in Table 1 and in Figure 1. The result on Table 1 shows that over 60% of senior secondary school students in Calabar south do not make effective use of their school library. This is presented in the responses; 32 respondents said they use the library very often, 147 respondents said they use the library often, 287 reported that they sometimes use the library while 86 reported that they never use the library.

Table 1: Summary of frequency on use of school library

Options	No of responses
Very Often	32
Often	147
Sometimes	287
Never	86
Total	552

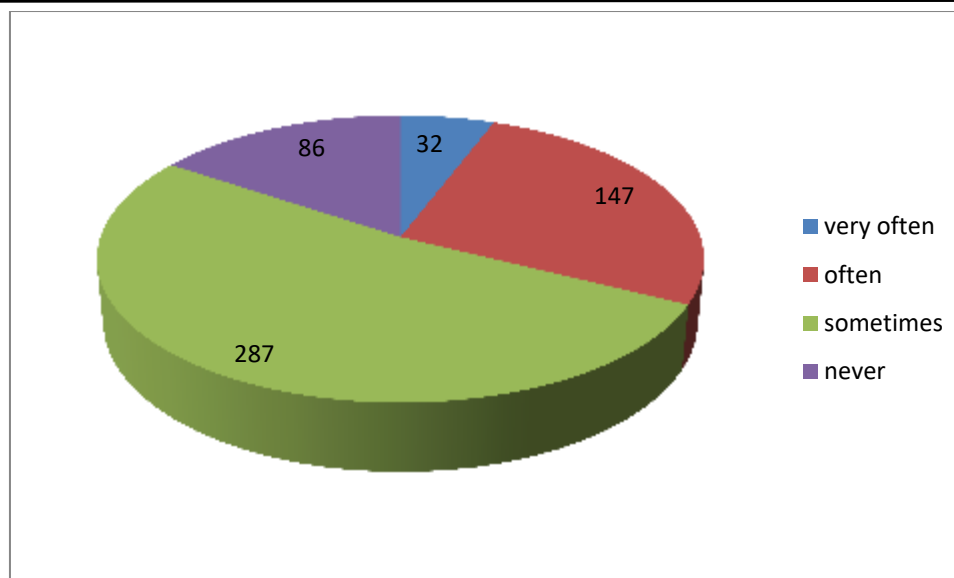


Figure 1: Pie Chart on frequency use of library

Research Questions two

What are students' reasons for the use of school library?

Table 2: Summary of analysis on students' reasons for the use of school library

S/N	Students' reason for use of school library	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1	Review of past examination questions	262	213	26	51	552	2.66	Significant
2	Do research for examination	302	214	32	4	552	2.81	Significant
3	Prepare for examination	423	82	31	16	552	2.79	Significant
4	do class assignment	458	50	43	1	552	2.77	Significant
6	Personal reading on my subject area	368	104	32	48	552	2.85	Significant
7	Read newspapers and magazines	89	289	138	36	552	2.59	Significant
8	Use the library for relaxation	14	28	276	234	552	1.64	Not significant
9	Watch audio books/ lessons	34	65	68	385	552	2.11	Not significant
10	To Avoid noise	12	37	302	201	552	2.24	Not significant

Significant mean = 2.5

Table 2 indicates that there was a positive influence of use of school library on the academic performance of the students. This is because at a significant mean value of 2.5, students' use the school library to carry out a variety of academic enhancing activities such as using the library as a platform to review past examination question papers ($x=2.66$), carried out research for examination purposes ($x=2.81$), prepared for their examinations ($x=2.79$), used the library to do their classroom assignments given by their teachers ($x=2.77$), carried out personal reading on their chosen subject areas ($x=2.85$) and regularly went through newspapers and magazines for current affairs relating to their education ($x=2.59$). However, students utilized the library to rest ($x=1.64$), watch audio books/lessons ($x=2.11$), and avoid noise ($x=2.24$).

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of use of library on students' academic performance in Calabar south. The independent variable which was use of school library was grouped into two categorical group these were (very often and often) were grouped as **often used** while (sometimes and never) were grouped as **not often** while the dependent variable is students' academic performance. The statistical tool used for analysis is the independent t-test. The result is presented in Table 3

Table 3: t-test analysis of the influence of library use on students' academic performance in Calabar south.

Usability of school library	No	X	SD	t-test	Df	p-value
Often used	179	52.46	5.84	9.24	550	0.04
Not often used	373	68.25	5.36			

* Significant $p < 0.05$, df 550

When t-test analysis was applied as shown on Table 3, the result shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 550 degrees of freedom, the p-value .004 was found to be lesser than 0.05, which is an indication that utilization of school library has significant influence on academic performance of the students in Calabar south.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings of this study is presented under the following sub headings:

Frequency of students and use of school library

The result of the first research question showed that over 60% of secondary school students in Calabar south do not make effective use of their school library. The finding of this research question is in conformity with the view of Adeniran (2011) who examined the user satisfaction with academic libraries services: Academic staff and students perspectives. The finding of this study revealed that users satisfaction was a function of the quality of staff and services of a library. The study also revealed that provision of relevant information materials, access point and conducive environment for learning, teaching and research led to an increase in the use of library. These, most secondary schools in Calabar south lack. The result of this study also agrees with Sahu and Dash(2021), who stated that students were unhappy with Library staff, resources availability and convenience and will definitely lead to low frequency of use of Library by students.

The study also disagrees with Veena and Kotari (2016) who in their findings revealed that students have access to borrowing of books in public secondary school. In their findings, 59% of respondents have the habit to visit to the library daily, majority 86.7% of respondents are highly satisfied with the collection of general books, and 70.0% are highly satisfied with collection of text books and 53.3% respondents considered circulation services as excellent. This is a reverse in the case of public secondary schools in Calabar south local government area as most schools did not have enough library materials let alone the ones to borrow to students.

Students reason for use of school library

The result of the second research question revealed that students have a positive reason for the use of school library. The findings of this research question is in agreement with Afebende and Ebaye (2008) who revealed that the success of the library depends on the effective exploitation and use of resources by the users and not only depend on collection and facilities provided by library. The study also agrees with Smith (2020) who carried out a study on academic performance of students who frequently use the Library with those who do

not use the Library. He found that the students who frequently read in the Library and carry out researches had many challenges with ever-decreasing resources which eroded public confidence and greater number of students from diverse backgrounds going to college than ever before. Jones et al (2023) revealed that 42.66% of utilization of Libraries by students were for their academic needs.

Influence of use of school library and students' academic performance

The result of the one and only research hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of school library utilization on academic performance of students in Calabar south local government area. The findings of this study agreed with that of Veena and Kotari (2016) in their findings showed that 59% of respondents had the habit to visit to the library daily, majority 86.7% of respondents were highly satisfied with the collection of general books, and 70.0% were highly satisfied with collection of text books and 53.3% respondents considered circulation services as excellent. The study suggested that college library should carry out user studies at regular intervals, in order to identify user's information needs

The findings of the study is also in agreement with Pandey and Singh (2014) who observed that a large number of respondents were satisfied with library resources and services and books were most widely used resources and most preferred services used by the users was circulation service. Respondents have given suggestions to make library resources and services effective and can be used in a efficient manner. Also, the result of this study is in agreement with the statement that Library use appears to improve academic performance as posited by Johnson and Patel(2023)

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analyses of the data collected for the study, it was concluded that secondary school students use of school library in Calabar South Local Government Area was significantly poor. It was also concluded that, where effective use of the school library is practiced by secondary school students, their academic performance will be positive. It was finally concluded that there is a significant influence of school library utilization on academic performance of students in Calabar south.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations could be useful for the purpose of improving the state of insecurity in our public secondary schools

1. Every school should be mandated to have a standard school library as this is the first possible contact of students with a library, its resources, processes and services.
2. Library professionals should be hired to man the libraries as they play a key role in positively imbibing the desire to continuously make use of the library in the students.
3. Parents should encourage their wards to practice healthy reading habit at home and in school.

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