

**AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE
READING CULTURE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN ILORIN EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the availability of library services and its effect on the reading culture of secondary school students in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara state. Descriptive statistics was used to analyses data using frequency tables and simple percentage. The instruments used in collecting data were a combination of interview and observation. Findings show that majority of the secondary school students indicated that there are library services in their school but most of the students did not use the library regularly. The study also reveals the purpose for which students used library. It was evident that students visited the library to study class work, read library books and for relaxation, but the greater percentage of students visited the library to read library books. It was also revealed that unorganized inadequate and mostly irrelevant library materials couple with lack of relevant librarians, among others constitute the reasons for poor patronage among secondary school studies students. Based on the findings, the study concludes that library services are not available in all secondary schools and those that have use small class room and lack professional librarians. As a result of these, more libraries should be provided in secondary schools and professional librarians should employed in orders to improve library patronage, hence reading culture. The study recommends that government should build more libraries in secondary schools and stock them with relevant books in order to promote reading culture amongst secondary school students. It was also recommended that State

*Government, through the Ministry of Education and Association of Professional Librarians should **provide relevant and current books for secondary schools libraries to enhance patoranage by the students to read.***

Keywords: Library Services, Reading Culture, Secondary School Students, Ilorin East Local Government Area.

Introduction

Collins and Cheek (1999) describes reading as a process that requires the use of complex thought process to interpret printed symbols as meaningful units and comprehend them as a thought unit in order to understand a printed message. Also, according to Rubin (2002), reading is a total integrative process that suits the reader and includes the effective, perceptual and cognitive domains. Reading adds quality to life, provides access to culture and cultural heritage, empowers and emancipates citizens, as well as brings people together. Reading according to Fatimayin and Lawal (2010), is the ability to read well not only English language and literature texts, but also newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, and engaging in both recreational and academic reading.

In the words of Sisulu (2004), reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Reading in all its variety is vital to being better informed, have a better understanding of us as well as others. Adigun and Oyelude (2003) posit that skill in reading will not only assist students in organizing their thought and jotting down important facts, but also equip them to comprehend entire texts. Magara (2005) describes a reading culture as one where reading is highly valued and appreciated in the society and where reading is regarded not simply as something developed for school purposes but something practical in all aspects of our lives. According to Tracy (2008), reading is the only form of entertainment that is also an essential life skill.

The school library is committed to the development of the basic education sector, which is the foundation of any educational set-up. School Libraries are established to support the educational curriculum of schools, which could only be achieved through various means such as the provision of library resources that are relevant to the school curricular and provision of various information services ranging from technical to readers services (Markless and Streetified, 2004) Libraries have a historic mission of fast tracking literacy and learning.

It was discovered that secondary schools students hardly go to library to read, borrow books as the room were very dusty, unattended to and infected by termites. Studies, however, reveals that there may be a decline in reading culture of secondary schools students thereby contributing to low use of libraries. It is in the light of this that the present study examines the availability of library services and its effects on the reading culture of secondary school students in Ilorin East Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Therefore the objectives of the study were:

- i. To find out the availability of library services in secondary schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area
- ii. To identify the effect of available library services on the students reading culture.
- iii. To identify the **causes of poor reading culture in secondary schools**

The findings of this paper will assist authorities concerned to plan and cater for the plight of the students in the local government in providing a tangible library services in the schools for the use of the students. The findings of this study will also help the students to be aware of the provision of library services that are available to them so as to make better use of them.

Okebukola (2004) affirms that through reading, humans have the tools to transmit knowledge to each succeeding generation; it allows one to listen to the wisdom and people of the ages. In his own submission, Douglas (2000) asserts that every child must become fully competent in reading to succeed in school and discharge responsibility as a citizen of a democratic society. Reading is also the foundation of much enjoyment in life and it is closely related to vocational efficiency. The ability to read well is absolutely critical to success in life. According to Tracy (2008), reading is the only form of entertainment that is also an essential life skill. Reading is a skill that must be nurtured from a child's earliest years. Poor reading habits occur in children and young people because reading is not considered a relevant leisure activity as it does not form part of children's social interaction.

Students with poor reading skills receive poor grades at school, get easily distracted and frustrated, have behavioral problems, seem to dislike school, and often fail to develop to their full potential. Iheanacho (2007) opined that a healthy reading culture has a pivotal role to play in the social, economic and technological development of any country. Reading is a very essential commodity in the task of nation building. It is a main political weapon in the development of any nation.

In his own words, Fosudo, (2010), the acquisition of reading skills has a beneficial effect on all school subjects, including social studies, science, mathematics, and so on. Poor reading skill can make a child develop a poor attitude towards school and can create self-esteem problems later in life. Ifedili (2009), argue that there is a high decline rate in the reading culture in Nigeria. Escobar (2011) asserts that students need to be familiar with the relation of good study habits and academic achievement to accomplish great success in any level of education. She also pointed out that by learning good study habits, students tend to perform better than struggling students.

Evidences from the studies of Oluwadare (2006) and Tella, Owolabi, and Attama (2009), was that the most common use of the library by students is for reading and this was, however, in contrast with the finding of Ifedili (2009) were almost half of those surveyed claim that the library was substandard and so was not always used.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The instrument used for the collection of data was both combination of interview and observation. **In selecting the students for interview, the local government was first demarcated into two districts (Iporin and Gambari district). Six secondary schools were randomly sampled from each district. 30 students in each of the selected 12 secondary schools were randomly selected for the interview giving us a sample size of 360 students, who were interviewed using a structured interview questions and their responses were recorded by the interviewers.**

Background Information of the Ilorin East Local Government

Ilorin East is a Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in Ilorin town and Oke-Oyi. It was created in 1991 from Ilorin local government with other local government area. Ilorin east local government area shares boundaries with Ilorin south, West, Moro and Ifelodun Local Government Areas. It has (2) two districts namely; Iporin and Gambari. It equally has (12) twelve political wards. The major economic activities of the people are farming, fishing, weaving, hunting, and garri processing.

Results

Table 1 show the availability of library services in secondary schools in Ilorin east local government area. The table revealed that 208 (58%) of the respondents said that they have library services in their schools.

One hundred and twenty (33%) respondents indicated that there is no library service in their school. However, about 9% of respondents were not sure of library service in their schools. This implies that majority of the respondents indicated that there are library service in their school.

Table 1: Availability of library services in secondary schools in Ilorin east local government area

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	208	57.8%
No	120	33.3%
Not sure	32	8.9%
Total	360	100%

Table 2 reveals respondents frequency of library usage. Forty five (12.5%) of the respondents used library daily; 132(36.7%) used the library once in a week; 31(8.6%) of the respondents used library twice in a week; 22(6%) used library three times a week; 36(10%) used library occasionally while 94(26%) of the students never used it at all.

Table 2: Frequency of library patronization

No. of library use	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	45	12.5%
Once in a week	132	36.7%
Twice in a week	31	8.6%
Three times a week	22	6.1%
Occasionally	36	10%
Never used it at all	94	26.1%
Total	360	100%

Table 3 reveals that 94(26.1%) respondents visited library to study class work; 48(13.3%) visited library to do assignments; 127(35.3%) visited library to read library books and 53(14.7%) visited library to write personal note. Only 38(10.6%) visited the library to relaxation. Majority of the respondents visited the library to study class work and read library books.

Table 3: Purpose for using library

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
To study class work	94	26.1%
To do assignments	48	13.3%
To read library books	127	35.3%
To write personal note	53	14.7%
For relaxation	38	10.6%
Total	360	100%

Table 4 shows the respondent's reasons for not visiting the library to read. About 51(14.2%) of the respondents were of opinion that inadequate professional librarians/staffs were while majority (18%-53%) of the respondents revealed that irrelevant and inadequate materials were their reasons for not patronizing the library 39(10.8%), 24(6.7%) and 57(15.8%) respondents revealed that lack of availability, limited tables and chairs and materials out-of-date, respectively were their reasons for not patronizing the library.

Table 4: Reasons for not Patronizing Library

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate Professional librarians/Staffs	51	14.2%
Irrelevant and Inadequate Materials	189	52.5%
No internet connection	39	10.8%
Limited tables and chairs	24	6.7%
Materials are out of date	57	15.8%
Total	360	100%

From Table 5, 28(7.8%) of the respondents indicates that poor educational system **is the cause of poor reading culture of students in secondary schools. About 41(11.4%)** of the respondents said it was caused by poor awareness of the need to read. 33(9.2%) attributed poor attitude of parents, while 74(20.5%) indicated that availability of phones and computers affected their reading culture. 69(19%), 26(7.2%) and 52(14.4%) of the respondents said the **cause of poor reading culture of students in secondary schools are** inadequate materials in libraries, harsh economic reality and laziness on part of students respectively. Only 37(10.3%) of the respondents were of opinion that poor method of teaching in secondary schools contributed to the poor reading culture.

Table 5: Causes of Poor Reading Culture of Students in Secondary Schools

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Poor educational system	28	7.8%
Poor awareness of the need to read	41	11.4%
Poor attitude of parents	33	9.2%
Phones and computers have affected reading culture	74	20.5%
Materials in libraries are Inadequate	69	19.2%
Harsh economic reality	26	7.2%
Laziness on part of students	52	14.4%
Poor method of teaching in secondary schools	37	10.3%
Total	360	100%

Table 6 shows the challenges facing secondary schools in the provision of library services. 48(13.3%) of the respondents indicated that inadequate funds for building libraries as a challenge, 93(25.9%) inadequate teachers / professional librarians, 167 (46.4%) agreed that small and inappropriate buildings for library are major challenges facing secondary schools in the provision of library services while 52(14.4%) attributed problems on awareness of the importance of library.

Table 6: Challenges facing secondary schools in the provision of library services

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate funds for building libraries	48	13.3%
Inadequate teachers/ professional librarians	93	25.9%
Small and inappropriate buildings for library	167	46.4%
Problem of awareness of the importance of library	52	14.4%
Total	360	100%

Table 7 result shows that about 13.6% of the respondents were of the views that recruitment of qualified teacher librarians will reduce the challenges of using library and improved reading culture of students in secondary schools. Majority of the respondents 142(39.4%) suggested that provision of relevant and current text books will reduce the challenges of using library and improved reading culture of students in secondary schools. About 16% of the respondents suggested that provision of adequate chairs and tables in secondary school libraries will solve the problem of poor library usage and poor reading culture in secondary schools. 21% suggested creation of library periods in school timetable while 11% suggested construction of separate buildings for library to improve challenges of using library and poor reading culture in secondary schools.

Table 7: Suggested solutions to the challenges of using library

Suggested solutions	Frequency	Percentage
Recruitment of qualified librarians	49	13.6%
Provision of relevant and current text books	142	39.4%
Provision of adequate chairs and tables in secondary school libraries	57	15.8%
Creation of library periods in School Timetable	74	20.6%
Construction of separate buildings for library	38	10.6%
Total	360	100%

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that majority of the secondary school students indicated that there are library services in their school. This study also finds out that most of the students did not use the library regularly. This may be as a result of poor awareness of the importance of library services in the secondary schools. The irregular use of the school libraries by the students of secondary schools could lead to poor reading culture. This is in line with the study of Jato, Ogunniyi and Olubiyo (2014), Onuoha, Unegbu and Umahi (2013) and Ifedili (2009), whose studies revealed that the library was not always used.

The study also reveals the purpose for which students used library. It was evident that students visited the library to study class work, read library books and for relaxation, but the greater percentage of students visited the library to read library books. The **result shows that** most of the studied libraries in secondary school are not well stocked with relevant materials and this has been affecting the reading culture of secondary school students over the years.

In an interview with secondary schools students on the cause of poor reading culture, most of them said phones and computers affect the reading culture of majority of them. The result supports the findings of Emmanuel, Charlie and Oyemike (2012) that showed that the major challenges of promoting reading culture include phone addition and the internet syndrome. Therefore, excessive use of phones and computers by the secondary schools students should be minimized.

On the issues of challenges facing secondary schools in the provision of library services, the major challenges include inadequate teachers / professional librarians, and small and inappropriate buildings for library. The above observations give credence to the fact that most of the libraries we have in secondary schools have a very small space, inappropriate buildings and lack professional librarians.

As have been shown in this paper, it is sad to note that most secondary school libraries do not have relevant and current text books for students to read, has most of the students suggests the provision of relevant and current text books as a major solution to challenges of using library and poor reading culture in secondary schools.

Conclusion

This study concludes that libraries are not in all secondary schools in Ilorin east local government area of Kwara state and those with libraries use small class room for it and they lack professional librarians couple with irrelevant and inadequate text books leading to poor reading culture among secondary school students. As a result of these, more libraries should be provided for in the secondary schools and professional librarians are also needed in this libraries to improve the reading culture of secondary school students in Ilorin east local government area of Kwara state.

Recommendations

This study recommends that state government, ministry of education and association of professional librarians should **provide relevant and current**

books for secondary schools libraries so that students can go to libraries regularly to read. This paper finds out that our school libraries are stocked with outdated and irrelevant materials. This apparently stressed the need for provision of relevant materials in school libraries, more especially **current text books in order** to attract students to the library.

It is also recommended that secondary school should have library periods on their time table. It should be in such a way that at least a class will have an hour in a week for library use. During the period, the library staff should properly supervise students. This is an instrument to improve reading culture in secondary schools.

Government should join hands with parents, schools, associations such as the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN) to establish Reading Rooms, Reading Clubs, and Reading Centres. They should build more libraries for secondary schools and stock with books in order to promote reading culture of secondary school students. Also libraries must be supported and adequately financed by federal, state and local governments, and Parents should themselves cultivate the habit of reading so as to be models for children to emulate.

State government should ensure that they recruit qualified teacher librarians in all secondary schools. They should also ensure that each of the secondary school libraries would have a professional librarian or at least an education graduate with certificate or diploma on librarianship. If these are done libraries will be effectively strengthened.

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