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NIGER STATE CHAPTER

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THEME:
COLLABORATIVE APPROCHES IN CURBING THE EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA ON FAKE NEWS PROPAGANDA

📅 **3RD-7TH DECEMBER, 2023**

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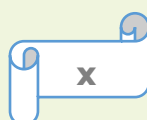
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CHALLENGES OF USING SCHOOL LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NASARAWA STATE

By

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ABSTRACT

The availability and utilisation of school library information resources have been found to play a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning among secondary school students. Studies have shown that students who have access to well-stocked and easily accessible school libraries tend to have a higher level of engagement and interest in continuing their learning outside of the classroom. These resources provide students with the necessary tools and materials to conduct research, expand their knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. Additionally the utilisation of these resources such as online databases and digital collections, allows students to access a wide range of information and perspectives, further enhancing their learning experience. Thus, it can be concluded that the availability and utilisation of school library information resources have a significant impact on promoting lifelong learning among secondary school students.

Keywords: Availability, Lifelong learning, School library information resources, Secondary school students, Utilisation

Introduction

Learning is popularly said to be beginning from cradle to the grave. The phenomenon called life is too broad to be completely learnt in a single phase. Before we were yet conscious of the world we live in, we were enrolled in crèches. From there, we built up till we reach the desired apex of educational attainment. Education definitely goes beyond the teaching and learning that takes place within the four walls of the classroom (Speranza, 2015). Learning as an exercise takes place in the presence of teachers. We learn also when we read books and when we interact with our parents, brothers, sisters, siblings, friends and colleagues. Furthermore, we learn when we listen and observe events, and from interacting with technological gadgets and innovation.

Lifelong learning is about creating and maintaining a positive attitude towards learning, for both personal and professional development. Lau (2017) defined lifelong learning as the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal life fulfillment. Lifelong learning is an essential skill to be developed in every learner and to achieve this, the learner must be committed to learn the rapidly changing information and developments over time. This not only creates an environment of learning but also brings forth the abilities to teach others and contribute for a knowledgeable society.

In education, lifelong learning has been associated with curriculum and ways of teaching and acquisition of knowledge (Jarvis, 2009). The curriculum has major impact and undergone changes from time to time to make a learner learn by correlation not by memorisation. The teacher must adopt teaching styles which promote skill of lifelong learning in students. It must be emphasised to students that learning is never completed in the classroom. Once they are in the society, they will face numerous challenges and lifelong learning is a must to solve such situations by acquiring proper knowledge. The school library can provide information resources needed for students to update their skills and knowledge to enable them become independent lifelong learners.

According to Oyedum and Babalola (2014), libraries from the modern conception of the word, are no passive repositories of artifacts and documents of the past, but are today seen as living agencies of intellectual enrichment. Consequently, a library is an organised collection of various sources of information resources made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing as well as provides physical or digital access to materials to the user community. According to Agbo (2015), school libraries are libraries attached or found in the pre-tertiary institutions such as nursery, primary and secondary schools with the mission of contributing to the intellectual development of pupils and students. The school library is the part and parcel of the school where collection of books, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, films, computers, filmstrip,

videotapes, recording of all types are kept for use by the students and teachers.

School libraries are established to provide educational information resources, which communicate experiences and ideas to students and make them easily and freely available through some service-oriented efforts to make them independent lifelong learners. School libraries deliver its services with the aid of different forms of information resources, and these resources are utilised in order to provide good learning environment for students and teachers so as to be able to achieve educational goals (Arua & Chinaka, 2015).

Library resources are library materials that preserve and disseminate information and knowledge for reading, study and reference purpose(s). According to Ntui and Udah (2015), library resources are the raw materials that provide vital services in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, Ntui and Udah (2015) asserted that library resources contain information in both print and non-print formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, newspapers and magazines, reports, Internet, video tapes, diskettes, and microforms. Library resources are the equipment, printed and non-printed materials meant to promote teaching and lifelong learning among both teachers and students.

Availability is concerned with resources physically located in the library. Ogugua et al. (2019) defined library availability as the state of providing and making accessible necessary facilities and equipment needed to promote learning for effective achievement of a set of goals in educational institutions. Availability of library resources creates an enabling environment that stimulates students and pupils to gain deeper knowledge via access to information. Ternenge and Agipu (2019) asserted that the availability of library resources means the presence of information or reading materials that can be easily obtained or used by the readers. The availability of library information resources will strengthen students' confidence in carrying out their assignments and studying for their tests and examinations. This means that its adequacy in quantity and quality will promote effective learning activities.

It is important to note that the value of any library lies on the stock of necessary information in the effectiveness of utilisation of its information resources available to the community of users it serves. The term 'use' in this study involves getting information from the library mostly with the help or aid of a librarian which satisfies the information need of the user. Anyaoku (2015) stated that library use involves the consulting, reading and borrowing of library resources. The use of school library by students involves reading and borrowing of library information resources for their assignments, tests and examinations. The school libraries and its information resources are used by students to prepare for their next class period,

examination, general education, information, competitions, recreation and inspiration (Chukwueke et al., 2019). These reasons, therefore, make it a thing of uttermost importance for the school libraries to judiciously select and procure the prescribed or recommended textbooks worth studying and other reading materials from different sources, technically process them by making use of a standard scheme of classification and cataloguing them to provide various access point bearing in mind the manner most convenient for the student and teacher users.

The variety of library information resources are essential to help the school library fulfil its functions of providing information resources necessary for the school's educational programmes as well as help in improving and raising the reading skills and gainful learning habits of students to become independent lifelong learners. Onye (2016) posited that failure to have access to information resources (knowledge acquisition in all fields of study) in the library has numerous consequences, which include: poor reading habit, poor student's achievement, frustration, low morale and low productivity in teaching and learning. This implies that if the school libraries fail to provide information resources required by students of the library or is unable to make them available to students in an easy way, then the libraries run the risk of not making them independent lifelong learners.

In order for school libraries to fulfill their objectives, there is need to improve on information resources provided to their users. The school libraries have great roles to play in the provision of information necessary for the day-to-day educational business and purpose of the teachers, students and pupils (Agbo, 2015). The dwindling economy due to a result of shortage of fund needed to acquire necessary library information resources to enhance effective use among students for their academic activities is invariably being affected thereby altering the importance attached to school librarianship. It is against this backdrop that this study explored the challenges of school library and information resources on lifelong learning among secondary school students.

Concept of School Libraries

The library is one of the indispensable educational services that must be established, stock with relevant educational books that supports the school curriculum and maintained in schools with high quality of human and material resources, in order to achieve the effective goals of education (Ode, 2014). Educational advancement and meaningful growth cannot do without libraries, it is strongly believed that educational services are to facilitate the implementation of educational planning, objectives and promote the efficiency of education in a country (Lawal-Solarin, 2016). The services also help to develop access and improve educational programmes. Lawal-Solarin, (2016) averred that for education to be meaningful and

achievable there must be educational resources of various types; and libraries provide educational resources for all categories of users; for examples teachers, students, businessmen, civil servants. The teachers are the pioneers of the society because in the classroom, among other functions, they transmit skills and knowledge to the students. There are different types of libraries, such as; School library, Academic Library, Public Library and Special Library.

School libraries are libraries that are established in pre-tertiary institutions such as primary, secondary and nursery schools, with the mission of contributing to the intellectual development of pupils and students. It involves collections of books and other learning materials organised by trained professionals and placed in one or two big rooms in the school for the use by students and teachers (Yusuf, 2013). In other words, it is the central laboratory of the whole school, where all books in all subject areas, taught in the school and non-book materials are stocked.

School library as a learning laboratory par excellence where learners find the world of knowledge, interact directly with resources, acquire information and develop research skill for lifelong learning. School libraries are designed to serve the needs of secondary and elementary school students and, to a large extent, their teachers and the school curriculum generally. The school library is an integral part of the school system with the ultimate function of providing a variety of learning resources and facilities to support effectively the education programmes of the school (Chimah and Nwokwocha, 2013). The objectives or roles of school libraries all over the world are to encourage the development of skill in reading; to prompt reading habits; to sort for subject information centre; inculcate intellectual development; support curriculum; support the teaching and learning system of the school with various resources.

The school library has a teaching role in the education programme of the school. The teaching role comes up in the areas of imparting the library skills to students, study skills including planning with the subject teachers, class projects and its involvement in curriculum or lesson planning. Moruf (2015) further elucidated that school libraries provide books and other information resources that will assist student in their study, instruct students in the use of library resources and encourage recreational reading by providing newspapers, magazines, books on sports, adventure, hobbies, folklores and fiction.

School Library Resources

The main aim of establishing school library is to provide free access to educational information to support learning and school programme. In other to achieve this purpose, the school library should provide access to varieties of information resources in different physical format. Salisu (2016) opined that the extent at which children and young people of today will be creative, informed and knowledgeable will be shape of the boundaries of the content of the library resources available within the schools. However, resources in school libraries are made up of print and non-printed media and they are the information carrier.

Egesimba *et al.* (2015) highlighted that the resources in school library usually come in varied forms; book, picture book with word picture book without words, non-book material which includes charts, slides, types, transparencies, models, magazines and newspapers. The variety of library resources that can be acquired and stocked in school library to enhance continuous education and lifelong learning. These include: fiction materials, reference materials, graphics, microfilm, vertical file material, audio-visual materials, serial publication and textbooks.

Use of School Library Resources Enhance Lifelong Learning

The extent to which the students use school library resources matters a lot in their academic learning and good pursuing. It is a matter of necessity for adequate use of the school library resources for improved academic performance. According to Herring (2014), the main purpose of modern school library is to support the educational aim of the school, the school library and its resources exist to support and further the purpose which are formulated by the school. Herring (2014) argued further that proper use of the school library resources will train pupils to read fast without losing comprehension, this could be achieved if the subject teacher uses the school library effectively by taking the students to the library often and guiding them on how to read on their own. This will inculcate in the students the habit of going to the library and making adequate use of these library resources. However, the effective use of the library resources widens the students' knowledge in different subject areas thereby making them well informed and well-adjusted to learning generally.

Challenges confronting the use of School Library Information Resources

The establishment and effective operation of a school library is a complex task that involves various stakeholders, including the government, school administration, librarians, teachers, students, and parents. However, numerous challenges often hinder the availability and utilisation of library information resources by secondary school students for their continued education and lifelong learning. These challenges range from policy issues to staffing, funding, infrastructure, facilities, and awareness (Azuoma, 2018).

Lack of school library policy

A library policy serves as a roadmap for the management and operation of a school library. It defines the visions, role, aims, and objectives for the whole school community and is underpinned by good practice. The policy should make reference to the library's status as a learning environment in the school and its role in raising achievement (Mojapelo, 2014). However, the absence of a well-defined library policy can lead to inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the management of

the library. Without written guidelines, it becomes difficult to have effective school library programs, which can negatively impact the learning outcomes of students. Furthermore, a lack of library policy can lead to financial implications for schools as there may be no dedicated funding to create or maintain libraries (Shonhe, 2019).

In the context of school libraries, the policy should also address issues such as collection development, reconsideration procedures, and the role of the review committee (American Library Association, 2014). A robust library policy can help in facing challenges related to materials and resources, and provide a legal framework for the operations of the library (Streatfield & Markless, 2012). Therefore, the lack of a library policy is a significant challenge that needs to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of school libraries.

Poor staffing practices

Staffing is a critical component of any library's operations, and this is particularly true for school libraries. The presence of qualified and dedicated staff is essential for the effective functioning of a library. However, many school libraries face the challenge of poor staffing practices (Shonhe, 2019). In many cases, school libraries are run by staff who lack professional librarianship qualifications (Shonhe, 2019). This can lead to a number of issues, including irrelevant library collections, uncatalogued and poorly organized books, and a lack of information literacy among students. Furthermore, unprofessional staff may not be able to adequately market library services or raise awareness about the library's role in the school community.

Lack of adequate funding

Adequate funding is another critical factor for the successful operation of school libraries. However, many school libraries face the challenge of insufficient funding. In a study conducted by the National Literacy Trust and Penguin Random House UK, it was revealed that four out of ten primary schools in the UK have no dedicated library budget (Robertson & McMenemy, 2020). In some cases, teachers are forced to buy reading materials for children with their own money due to the lack of funding. The lack of funding can lead to inadequate resources and poor staffing, hindering the development and maintenance of functional school libraries (Mojapelo, 2018). The issue of school library budget and funding needs to be addressed within the school library policy and the National school library policy within the Ministry of Education. In the context of developing countries, the inability of governments to invest in the development and management of effective school libraries has been identified as one of the problems leading to the challenge of achieving quality education (Shonhe, 2019). Therefore, securing adequate funding is essential for improving the availability and utilisation of school library resources.

Infrastructure in School Libraries

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in academic libraries, providing numerous benefits and transforming the way libraries operate, support teaching and learning, and serve their communities (Danladi & Yohanna, 2018). ICT enables academic libraries to provide access to a vast array of digital resources such as e-books, e-journals, online databases, and multimedia materials. These resources offer a wealth of information that can be easily accessed by students, faculty, and researchers (Danladi & Yohanna, 2018). ICT expands the breadth and depth of available resources, enriching the learning and research experience. ICT allows users to access library resources and services remotely, regardless of their physical location and time zone (Adeyemi, 2013).

Library Facilities in Secondary Schools

Research shows that school libraries have a positive impact on student literacy and learning outcomes (Adeyemi, 2013). Libraries must be considered an integral part of schooling as they provide a space for students to explore and gain information literacy, essential for rounded education and growth. They have the potential to address shortcomings in public schools as they create spaces for children to nurture the habit of reading (Adeyemi, 2013).

Lack of awareness

Libraries are not marketed and therefore users are not aware of their significance in education. Due to lack of marketing, school principals and headmasters do not appreciate the essential role of school libraries in the teaching/learning process. It is very clear in literature that school libraries are facing various challenges which can impact on students' academic achievement. The quality of school libraries in many developing countries is disreputably poor. Azuoma (2018) identified poor attitude of teachers to the school library as a problem where many classroom teachers in primary school system today still sees their notes of lessons as best in their teaching and learning. On the use of school libraries and their resources by teachers, Majid and Mokhtar (2015), remarked that teachers generally do not use their school libraries and various information resources effectively, mainly due to the inadequacy of their school libraries in term of educational materials. Adeyemi (2013) carried separate research which all arrived at the same position on the barriers that hinders the pupil's utilisation of school library resources as seen below; lack of current reading materials, lack of professional librarians, restricted library hour, inadequate space, low level of information technology development and lack of adequate funding.

Conclusion

The paper explored the importance and challenges of school library information resources on lifelong learning among secondary school students. Secondary school students derive lots of benefits from information resources gaining access to a wider range of information readily available in order to improve on their lifelong learning as a result of utilisation of quality information. Information resources predominantly magazines and journals, the Internet resources, encyclopaedias and databases were important resources that should be

deployed in secondary schools. Thus, there is need for a proactive step toward enhancing the effective use of modern technologies as tools for effective teaching and learning in today's information society. This has become necessary as a result of the importance of school library especially development of e-library in the life of the modern child and its immense role towards realising the educational and millennium goals. Therefore, for an the effective use of information resources in school libraries by the secondary school students, there is need for current and adequate school library information resources, provision of accommodation facilities, provision of professional school librarians to manage libraries and conducive reading environment.

Recommendations

- Local government, school owners and management should ensure that school libraries are well equipped with various information resources that will help stimulate students' interest in reading. They should also ensure that current library resources are made available to secondary school students through regular acquisition.

- Local government, school owners and management should ensure that school libraries go beyond textbooks to include resources such as 3D objects, non-fiction science books, robotics and ICT software to mention but a few.

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