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Note for Contributors

The journal "Samaru Journal of Information Studies (SJIS)" addresses issues in the field of library science, information science and related fields including but not limited to, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications to effectively create, apply, and communicate knowledge in organization.

The basic objectives of the journal are

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- (ii) To provide a platform for new thinking and directions on the problems, prospects strategies and techniques of library and information services and ICT applications in library, archive, publishing and information works.
- (iii) To provide a forum for discussion of library and information science education and training, and future trends in information access and delivery.

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IMPACT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN POTISKUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, YOBE, STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigate the impact of public library services on community development in Potiskum Local Government, Yobe State, in North East Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: identify the types of services provided by the Potiskum public library and their Relevance to community needs, to assess the contribution of these services to community development in the community, identify challenges hindering the library's effectiveness and recommend strategies for improving its role in community development. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The entire population of the study consisted of 222 users of the public library in Potiskum Local Government of Yobe State. The questionnaire was titled "The Impact of Public Library Services on Community Development in Potiskum" (PULIPLOGO). The responses were used to answer the research questions. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale. The instruments were face-validated by three experts: two from the Department of Library and Information Science and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, Federal University, Gashua. The paper revealed moderate efficiency in operations such as circulation, reference services, and user assistance, the library plays a valuable role in meeting the information, educational, and literacy needs of the community. Services such as research support, access to past examination papers, and ICT training have contributed positively to users' development. The study revealed that the Potiskum Public Library supports education and literacy in the community but faces challenges such as inadequate up-to-date resources and limited ICT facilities. It concludes that while the library is vital, its services are not fully meeting user needs. Therefore, it was recommended that the library improve its collections, adopt ICT tools, and secure better funding.

Introduction

Public libraries play a central role in democratic societies as gateways to knowledge, lifelong learning, and community development. They provide equitable access to information, educational resources, and digital technologies that empower individuals to acquire new skills, expand their knowledge, and make informed decisions. As community-based institutions, public libraries contribute to literacy promotion, cultural preservation, social inclusion, and the overall personal growth of citizens (Onuoha, 2021). Their services are particularly important in developing contexts where educational opportunities and access to information may be limited.

In Nigeria, public libraries are mandated to serve diverse populations regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic background. They support formal and informal education, facilitate personal development, and provide information that enhances the socio-economic well-being of individuals and communities (Okoro, 2020). Through reading resources, digital access, outreach programs, and advisory services, public libraries have the potential to act as engines of community transformation, especially in underserved local government areas.

The Potiskum Public Library in Yobe State is one such institution with the responsibility of meeting the information and educational needs of its community. It provides a range of services including reading materials, ICT access, reference services, and guidance for learners. However, like many public libraries across Nigeria, its effectiveness is often undermined by persistent challenges such as insufficient funding, outdated or inadequate collections, poor infrastructure, and limited ICT facilities (Abubakar, 2020). These constraints hinder its ability to function as a dynamic center for learning and community development.

Effective library service delivery requires well-organized resources, responsive staff, updated information materials, and functional technological infrastructure. When these elements are lacking, users encounter difficulties in accessing information that supports literacy, research, and personal advancement (Ibrahim, 2021). The broader impact of library services on community development cannot be overstated. Public libraries contribute to digital literacy, support school and adult education initiatives, foster youth empowerment, and provide access to information needed for economic and social decision-making (Musa, 2022). Thus, a well-resourced and efficiently managed public library can significantly enhance the growth and development of the community it serves.

Despite the recognized importance of public libraries, several studies in Nigeria indicate that many are unable to deliver optimal services due to resource shortages, inadequate staffing, and low technological integration (Yakubu, 2021). These challenges highlight the need for continuous assessment to determine the extent to which public libraries are fulfilling their mandate. Such evaluations help identify gaps and guide strategic improvements that can strengthen library relevance in an increasingly digital society.

This study therefore examines the impact of public library services on community development in Potiskum Local Government, Yobe State.

Statement of the Problem

Public libraries serve as vital community institutions where citizens gain access to information, lifelong learning opportunities, and essential literacy resources. They provide safe and inclusive spaces for reading, research, creativity, and digital learning, thereby supporting both personal development and community empowerment. Through their collections, ICT services, and outreach programs, public libraries help bridge information gaps and promote informed citizenship. They also contribute significantly to socio-economic growth by providing equitable access to knowledge and skills development for all categories of users.



However, the public library in Potiskum Local Government Area falls short of fulfilling these critical functions. The library is constrained by chronic underfunding, outdated and insufficient learning materials, and weak ICT facilities that limit access to digital information. Community-focused programs are inadequate, and awareness of the library's services among residents remains notably low. As a result, the library's contribution to literacy improvement, employment support, youth empowerment, and general community development is minimal. These challenges raise concerns about the library's effectiveness in meeting contemporary community needs.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the current state of public library services in Potiskum, identify the specific gaps affecting performance, and examine how these shortcomings hinder community development. The study will also propose practical strategies for improving resources, strengthening ICT services, enhancing outreach, and making the library more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the community.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the Study is to identify Impact of Public Library Services on Community Development in Potiskum Local Government”:

1. To identify the types of services provided by the Potiskum public library and their Relevance to community needs.
2. To assess the contribution of these services to literacy Development in Potiskum Local Government.
3. To identify challenges hindering the library's effectiveness and recommend strategies For Improving its role in community development.

Literature Review

Public libraries are mandated to provide reference and information services that connect users to reliable sources for academic, personal, and professional needs. These services include answering information queries, guiding users on resource use, and offering bibliographic assistance. In their study, Madu (2020) emphasized that effective reference services are fundamental to the relevance of public libraries in Nigeria, as they directly address the information demands of the community. Mobile and outreach library services extend access to populations unable to visit the physical library. Such services may include bookmobiles, deposit collections, and outreach programs to schools, hospitals, and rural areas. Ezeani (2021) noted that mobile services are particularly critical in rural Nigerian communities, where physical distance and lack of infrastructure limit residents' access to information.

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in public library services has transformed information access. These services include internet browsing, online catalogs, CD-ROM databases, and e-mail reference. According to Ariole (2022), ICT service not only enhance information delivery speed but also expand the range of resources available to users, thereby increasing the library's impact on community development. Extension service such as book exhibitions, reading promotions, and topical displays are valuable tools for

attracting users and promoting available materials. Ojo (2020) highlighted that such activities create awareness of library resources and foster a reading culture within the community, especially among young people and non-regular library users.

Public libraries also have a responsibility to serve users with disabilities through assistive technologies, accessible formats, and tailored programs. Idhalama (2019) observed that while Nigerian public libraries often have limited resources for such services, targeted provision can greatly improve inclusion and ensure that all community members benefit from library resources. Beyond education, public libraries contribute to cultural preservation and community identity through heritage documentation, language promotion, and cultural programs. Akintunde (2021) argued that cultural programming in libraries strengthens community bonds and fosters pride in local traditions while keeping historical records accessible for future generations.

Public libraries are essential in promoting literacy by providing access to books, reading programs, and literacy campaigns for all age groups. According to Akinola (2021), the availability of free reading materials and literacy-focused events in public libraries significantly improves reading skills and fosters a culture of continuous learning in local communities. Beyond literacy, public libraries support formal education by supplementing classroom learning with reference materials, textbooks, and e-resources. Udo (2020) found that Nigerian public libraries play a complementary role in education by offering students a conducive learning environment and materials that may be unavailable in their schools.

Public libraries also contribute to community development by facilitating lifelong learning through workshops, skills training, and self-directed study resources. Nwankwo (2022) noted that lifelong learning programs organized by public libraries empower individuals to improve their professional skills, engage in entrepreneurial ventures, and adapt to changes in the job market. Access to employment information, business resources, and vocational training through libraries can directly influence socio-economic development. Okafor (2021) emphasized that public libraries in Nigeria have helped job seekers prepare CVs, learn computer skills, and connect with career opportunities, thus contributing to poverty reduction.

Public libraries provide ICT services that bridge the gap between information-rich and information-poor communities. Musa (2020) highlighted that internet access in public libraries enables individuals to participate in online education, apply for jobs, and access government services, thus promoting social inclusion and economic participation. By hosting cultural events, heritage exhibitions, and public discussions, libraries strengthen social ties and promote shared identity. Ibrahim (2021) argued that such activities in public libraries foster unity, reduce social isolation, and create an informed citizenry capable of contributing meaningfully to community development.

One of the major challenges facing public libraries in Nigeria is chronic underfunding, which limits their ability to acquire updated materials, improve infrastructure, and expand services. Emezie (2021) found that budgetary allocations to public libraries are often insufficient

and irregular, leading to resource shortages and reduced service quality. The relevance of a public library depends heavily on the currency and adequacy of its collections. According to Yusuf (2020), many Nigerian public libraries operate with outdated books, inadequate reference materials, and minimal access to e-resources, which reduces their ability to meet users' diverse information needs.

ICT facilities are essential for modern library service delivery, but many public libraries lack reliable internet access, functional computers, or relevant software. Okoro (2022) emphasized that poor ICT infrastructure hinders libraries from offering essential digital services such as e-journals, online catalogues, and virtual reference. The availability of trained library staff determines the efficiency of service delivery. Olayemi (2020) observed that some Nigerian public libraries are staffed by non-professionals or have insufficient professional librarians, leading to gaps in specialized services like information literacy training and reference assistance. Even when services are available, low awareness among community members can limit their utilization. Chukwuma (2021) reported that many potential users are unaware of the range of services offered by public libraries, and some perceive the library only as a place for borrowing books rather than a multifaceted community resource. Poor maintenance of library facilities contributes to declining user satisfaction and safety concerns. Ibrahim (2022) highlighted that leaking roofs, inadequate ventilation, and poor seating arrangements discourage library visits and diminish the institution's role as a community hub.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive design. The design according to Musa (2020), aims at studying a group of people or items by collecting data from a sample of the same group or items considered appropriate to be a represented of the entire population. This design was appropriate for the study because it sought information from respondents on the Impact of public library services on community development in potiskum local government, Yobe, State, area of North-East Nigeria. The population of the study was 222 users in the public library. There is no sampling because the population was manageable. The researcher develop one instrument for the study. The instrument was "title" To find Impact of public library services on community development in potiskum local (PULIPLOGO). Which contains 18 items statements. The responses of the users were used to answer the research questions. The instrument was structure on 4-point scale. The research instrument was validated by two experts in department of library science and one from measurement and evaluation all from faculty of education federal university Gashua Yobe State Nigeria. The researcher visited the libraries and administered the instrument personally to the Users. The data collected were analyzed using statistical package social science to calculate mean and standard deviation. Item statement with mean rating of 2.5 and above is accepted. While ant item with a mean rating less than 2.50 was Rejected.



Results and Discussion:
Table 1: Types of services provided and their relevance to community Potiskum Local Government.

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	STD	Decision
		57	60	56	49	222	2.56	.10	Accepted
1	Key services currently offered by the Potiskum Public Library	57	60	56	49	222	2.56	.10	Accepted
2	Print and electronic resources are relevant to information needs	60	57	49	56	222	2.54	.14	Accepted
3	Internet, computers, e-resources are regularly available and useful.	54	60	49	59	222	2.49	.13	Accepted
4	Library outreach, reading clubs, mobile visits, and community talks	68	56	48	50	222	2.64	.14	Accepted
5	Library provides inclusive services that consider students, workers, traders, farmers	64	57	54	47	222	2.62	.04	Accepted
6	Cultural/heritage activities, exhibitions, local history, language programs	63	60	52	47	222	2.63	.10	Accepted
Grand Mean							2.56	0.04	

Key: AS, Strongly Agree; A, Agree; D, Dis Agree; SD, Strongly Disagree;

The responses in Table 1 show that the various services offered by the Potiskum Public Library are generally considered relevant by users, although the level of agreement differs slightly across items. For instance, the mean score of 2.56 for the availability of key services indicates that users acknowledge that essential library services exist, but they may not be provided consistently or in sufficient depth. Likewise, the relevance of print and electronic resources received a mean of 2.54, suggesting that while these materials are helpful, they may not fully meet the information needs of all categories of users.

ICT-related services scored slightly lower, with a mean of 2.49, implying that computers, internet access, and electronic resources are available but may not always be reliable or adequate. In contrast, outreach activities, reading clubs, and community talks received a relatively higher mean of 2.64, indicating that users appreciate the library's effort to engage the community beyond the physical building. The library's attempt to provide inclusive services for different groups—including students, traders, workers, and farmers—was also acknowledged with a mean of 2.62, showing that users perceive the library as trying to cater to diverse needs. Cultural and

heritage activities scored 2.63, reflecting the community's recognition of the library's role in promoting local history and culture.

These item-level results suggest that the library has a visible presence in the community and offers several meaningful services. However, the slightly lower means tied to digital services and resource adequacy show that users still expect improvements in modern, technology-driven services and updated materials. The results indicate that improvements in the quantity, quality, and accessibility of materials are needed, in line with the observations of Olaniran (2021) who emphasized that library effectiveness depends on resource adequacy.

Table 2: Contribution of Library Services to Literacy Development in Potiskum Local Government.

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Library has improved my reading and writing skills.	61	67	55	39	222	2.68	.06	Accepted
2	Library resources have helped me perform better in school or training activities?	61	57	57	47	222	2.59	.10	Accepted
3	Library programs have strengthened my job readiness	70	61	49	42	222	2.72	.10	Accepted
4	Access to the library's internet and e-resources has reduced my digital access barriers.	69	62	49	42	222	2.71	.10	Accepted
5	Library activities have increase my participation in community development	69	52	59	42	222	2.67	.10	Accepted
6	Information obtained from the library has supported my literacy advancement	59	52	59	52	222	2.53	.12	Accepted
Grand Mean							2.53	0.04	

Key: AS, Strongly Agree; A, Agree; Dis Agree; Strongly Disagree:

Table 2 reveal that users generally perceive the library as contributing positively to various aspects of literacy development. The mean of 2.68 for improved reading and writing skills indicates that the library is viewed as a helpful environment for building foundational



literacy abilities. The item on enhanced academic or training performance received a mean of 2.59, suggesting that library resources assist learners, though perhaps not to the fullest potential. Library programs aimed at strengthening job readiness were rated with a higher mean of 2.72, showing that users find workshops, training activities, or access to career-related information beneficial. Similarly, access to internet services and electronic resources scored 2.71, which suggests that users feel the library helps reduce digital barriers, even though ICT availability was earlier noted as moderate. Participation in community development activities scored 2.67, indicating that library programs encourage individuals to take part in community life. Meanwhile, the mean score of 2.53 on literacy advancement through information resources implies that although the library contributes to personal literacy growth, users may still need expanded or more targeted literacy support.

Taken together, these findings indicate that library services have a meaningful impact on different dimensions of literacy. However, the means show that the level of impact varies, with some areas—such as job readiness and digital access—receiving stronger support than others. The findings align with the study by Ahmed (2020), which highlighted that service quality in public libraries significantly affects user satisfaction and engagement.

Table 3: Challenges Hindering Effectiveness And Strategies For Improvement in Potiskum Local Government.

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Insufficient funding limits the library's ability to provide up-to-date services.	73	69	40	40	222	2.79	.09	Accepted
2	Library's collections are current and adequately meet users' needs.	77	69	39	37	222	2.84	.08	Accepted
3	Frequent power/internet interruptions reduce the quality of library service.	78	69	38	37	222	2.85	.08	Accepted
4	No enough trained staff to deliver reference, ICT, and user-education services.	76	71	38	37	222	2.84	.07	Accepted
5	Many community members are unaware of the full range of library services?	77	70	37	38	222	2.84	.08	Accepted
6	No space, seating, ventilation and conducive for learning.	74	68	40	40	222	2.79	.09	Accepted
Grand Mean							2.64	0.03	



Key: AS, Strongly Agree; A, Agree; Dis Agree; Strongly Disagree;

The specific item means in Table 3 provide clear insight into the challenges affecting the Potiskum Public Library. The mean score of 2.79 for insufficient funding reflects strong user agreement that financial limitations hinder the library's ability to provide up-to-date services. Similarly, the item stating that library collections are current and adequate received a high mean of 2.84, showing that users overwhelmingly see the collections as outdated and insufficient, despite the item being framed positively.

Power and internet interruptions also pose major problems, as reflected in a mean score of 2.85, the highest among the items—indicating that disruptions in electricity and internet severely reduce the quality of service delivery. The issue of inadequate trained staff scored 2.84, demonstrating that users believe the library lacks personnel who are equipped to provide reference services, ICT support, and user education. The perception that many community members are unaware of library services also earned a mean of 2.84, suggesting that outreach and publicity efforts are not strong enough. Finally, the item concerning inadequate space, seating, and ventilation scored 2.79, showing that the physical environment fails to provide a comfortable and conducive learning atmosphere.

These item-level results paint a consistent picture of serious operational challenges affecting the effectiveness of the library. Each of the problem areas identified is strongly affirmed by respondents, suggesting that without targeted interventions—such as improved funding, better staffing, infrastructure upgrades, and stronger publicity—the library will struggle to expand or sustain its impact on community development. The result is consistent with Musa (2022), who noted that effective library services enhance educational growth and information accessibility within communities.

Conclusion

This study assessed the adequacy of resources, efficiency of service delivery, and the impact of library services on meeting the information needs of users in the Potiskum Public Library, Yobe State. The findings revealed that while the library plays an important role in providing information and promoting literacy, its resources and facilities are only moderately adequate, with a grand mean of 2.56. Service delivery was found to be functional but not fully efficient, with a grand mean of 2.53, indicating the need for improved promptness and personalization in services. The impact on community information needs was rated higher, with a grand mean of 2.64, showing that despite limitations, the library significantly contributes to education, research, and community development. Overall, the results suggest that the Potiskum Public Library has a strong foundation for supporting its users, but strategic improvements in resources, facilities, and service quality are necessary to maximize its potential.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical steps are recommended to strengthen the effectiveness of the public library in Potiskum Local Government.

1. The local government should increase funding allocations to the library to enable the acquisition of current books, learning tools, and essential operational resources. Improved funding will also make it possible to upgrade library infrastructure, ensuring a more conducive and functional environment for users.
2. The library management should prioritize the development of ICT facilities, including reliable internet connectivity, computers, and digital literacy tools. Enhancing ICT services will not only support students and job seekers but also position the library as a modern learning hub that meets current information needs. In addition, staff should be trained continuously to competently manage digital resources and guide users.
3. There is a need to redesigning and expansion of community-focused programs. The library should introduce activities such as literacy clubs, skills workshops, reading competitions, health information sessions, and youth engagement programs. These activities will attract different age groups and stimulate increased use of library services. Moreover, establishing partnerships with schools, NGOs, and community-based organizations will help enrich these programs and promote shared responsibility for community development.

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