

## Investigation into the Attitude of Public Secondary School Principals toward School Library Funding and Development in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the assessment of attitude of secondary school principals toward school library funding and development in the six geological zones of Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to investigate the factors responsible for the present state of school library funding and development in Nigeria. The research design for this study was ex-post facto research design survey. A questionnaire was raised to collect data from the respondents. To select the sample stratified random sampling technique was employed and the descriptive statistics of percentage means and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that the condition of school libraries in Nigeria is pitiable and pathetic for any school library to be developed. This is because the school libraries in the Nigeria were grossly underfunded, under staff, under stocked and unorganized. This study therefore recommends that for any school library to be developed in Nigeria, there is need for full implementation of government policies on school library by the principals so as to set up a minimum standard for funding, Staffing and proper management of school libraries.

**Keywords:** School Librarians, School Libraries, School Principals, Attitude

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of library in any organization of learning cannot be overemphasized; it remains the power house of educational institutions. Therefore education institution without it is like a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul. Both library and school are inseparable twins that one ceases to function well without the other. Erinle (1997) explained that both of them serve the same purpose to achieve a common goal, according to him, the school educates the students through the help of teachers while the library on its own serves as tutorial lecture materials to aid verbal classroom teaching which referred to as silent function of providing materials for the pleasure of students.

In Nigeria today, we are witnessing primary and secondary schools being established without libraries. No wonder while the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004)

*“State inter-alia as library is one of the most important educational services; proprietors of schools shall provide functional libraries in all*

*their education institution in according with established standards. They shall also provide for training of librarians or library assistant for their services”* (Pg 2).

However, contrary to these constitutional provisions on education and educational policy as stated above, many school principals overlook school librarians and libraries as potentially powerful instruments because they have not been educated on the value of school library (Wilson & Blake, 1993). Consequently, principals often leave library potentials untapped, despite over fifty years research evidence that effective school library or library media programme, when led by active and total involvement of school principals will lead to positive output on the part of the users (Wilson & Blake, 1993). Subsequently, the study showed that, no matter how active and committed school librarian may be in engaging his activities, he may not be able to execute his role, unless the school principals support him. Commius (2001) noted that for effective teaching and learning to take place, school library resources must not

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only be readily available but must be accessible by the teachers, students and other users. Omolayole (2001) observed that certain conditions must be met for school library to be an instrument for effective teaching and learning. He further stated that, teaching takes place only when learning has taken place and teaching cannot be regarded to have taken place if students have not learned new things and exhibit what they have been taught. This is particularly important because many school principals do not perceive librarian as a potential faculty leader (Robbins, 1991). In Nigeria for instance, the expected attitude of school principals toward school library development is worrisome.

For instance, the studies showed that the attitude of public secondary school principals toward school library funding and development in Nigeria has not been encouraging as there is a total neglect of this important component of education and the necessitous state of school library in contradictory to the provision of the National policy on education (NPE, 2004). It is a known fact, that the establishment of library services in our public secondary school has been totally neglected.

Looking at the worst performance recorded in the last three years especially the senior secondary school Examination (WASSCE, 2016/17&18) where less than forty percent (40%) out of the students that sat for the examination in the whole country had five credits passed including English and Mathematics made one to wonder at what time does these students use school library for further studies. Secondly, do these students have enough and required resources in the school libraries? Research shows that some schools have facilities designed as school libraries but most principal kept them in their offices without making provision to house them, with the excuse that the Government refused to employ the qualified personnel and making provision for the school library building. In most cases, some schools lack personnel and their school principal's care-less about the state of the facilities and what happen to the school library.

Having critically looks at the state of school library services in Nigeria by the school principal. It is therefore, pertinent that this kind of study be conducted in order to appraise the general attitude of principals toward school library funding and development so as to bring a change of orientation.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives are to:

- Investigate the factors responsible for present state of school library funding in Nigeria.
- Assess the attitude of public secondary school principals toward school library development in Nigeria.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study answered the following research questions:

- What are the factors responsible for present state of school libraries funding in Nigeria?
- What is the attitude of public secondary school principals toward school library Development in Nigeria?

### Alternative Source of Funding for School Libraries in Nigeria

The importance of school libraries at the formation age cannot be over stressed. The present sorry case of these libraries inability to perform their expected role, due to the neglect and inadequate funding is our major concern. We cannot look on helplessly while these libraries continue in their precarious situations (Omolayole. 2001). It is heartwarming that other advocates of good quality education have started calling for adequate funding of school libraries. This was what informed the cream of experts that produced the National policy on Education in NPE (1981) to recommend that "Library is one of the most important educational services and every state Ministry of education needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all its educational institution and then train librarians as library assistant for the services".

Sambo (1966) as the commission executive secretary federal ministry of Education while delivering his key note address re-affirmed the need to increase budgetary allocation to library and education as a whole. Therefore, the major breakthrough in solving this problem will come if we do not wait for the almighty federal government to pump money into the running of school libraries. If or our only hope is the federal or state or local government, we might wait for too long because, what was not done during the oil boom might not be easily feasible now when government itself is thinking of alternative sources of funding for all level of education most especially at the midst of this present economy recess (Erinle, 2001).

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To this extent, for the school libraries to perform their expected role in schools, their libraries, must be market orientated and enterprising. A good school-librarian and principal must be able to source for funds, grants or sponsorships from the private sectors, government agencies and other value added services which may operate out of the library without destroying the fundamental purpose.

Omolayole (2001) in his study affirmed that every public secondary school needs a school library. Therefore school librarian is expected to encourage community participation in funding school libraries. He believed it cannot be difficult for them to fund the other aspects of the school. The librarians could get to the community through their opinion leaders, religious leaders and their traditional leaders. He further affirmed that revenue generating drives of the school librarians will not exclude market men and women within the society. Philanthropies, organization Parent Teacher Association and other N.G.O is other important avenue where school librarian could raise money for school libraries either through launching or donations. School libraries also generate funds internally, through charging registration fees and running of other services. Apart from P.T.A, the Alumni Association is also encouraged to come to the aid of their school libraries.

In all, school librarians need to love the environment where they work and make themselves relevant in the activities of such society by so doing, the society will be able to come to their aid in time of need. Finally, the school librarians cannot individually carryout these tasks without the help of an enterprising school library Association in generating ideas to a logical conclusion. The school library Association needs to rise up to its responsibilities by acting as a monitoring body on issue that affects its sectional unit.

### Factors Militating against School Library Development in Nigeria

There is no doubt that principal support is vital to the establishment and maintenance of a quality school library or library media programme. Although we all value trust, but support flow through trust and trust flow through understanding (Gary, 2002).

Many principals do not understand what teacher librarians really do nor do they appreciate the potential the school library has for contributing to student and faculty achievement.

From the librarian's perspective, school library and school library specialists are in arguably valuable to students, teachers and principals, clearly essential to student's achievement and central to the school's mission. To many principals, the value of school libraries and school librarians is however less obvious and less certain. Gary (2002) in his contribution emphasized that, school librarian deliver services that empower other to be successful in their jobs and their contribution get swallowed up in the activities of these people. Teachers and students take what school librarian gives them and fold it into their own thinking patterns, work products and performance. The integration is so complete that it is difficult to distinguish the extent of the school librarian's contribution in the finished work (Plister, 1986). Ultimately, the students see the research project, examination success or performance quality as something he or she put together as an individual forgotten that Teachers are empowered by school library resources and school librarians (Buchanan, 1982).

Haycock (1995) claimed that absorbability of school library work is one of the most powerful forces clouding principal's vision against school library services. A principal can recognize a successful teacher, but it is difficult to assess how much of that success might be as a result of the school libraries specialists' idea, resources, services and support. No matter how significant those contributions might be to the instructional programme, they most probably overshadowed by the public success of teachers and principals who are perceived as responsible for individual and collective students accomplishments are for the programmes of the school as a whole. Principal's in ability to see these contributions sometimes causes them to withhold recognition and makes them more ready to interfere with library operations when pursuing other goals. Fisher (1986) affirmed that school library and its staff are often early casualties in budget cuts, in scheduling change and in the assignment of extra duties. There is irony in this, and sometimes tragedy. In rightly doing everything possible to protect the classroom in light financial times, principals may support cut in library services, and in doing so unwittingly cut away one of the essentials of classroom quality and above all hindered school library development.

Haycock (1995) conceptualized school by putting teachers and principals at the core. The

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perception often makes it difficult for other both inside and outside education to be seen the depth, breadth and importance of what school library librarian's contribute or school be contributing to school and schooling. Gatz (1992) in his contribution emphasized that invisibility of school librarian is compounded with isolation and scheduling. Most times there usually only on school librarian in a school and he or she is left without the strength found in numbers. Teachers and students most often have lunch and other breaks in their days at the same times. Because students and employees frequently use these times to go to the school library for what they need many school library librarians are required to be at their duty stations to serve them. This keeps them from the opportunity to build relationship systematically with the teachers and principals as a result of isolation, most of them felt their roles are not all that important (Getz, 1992).

### METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is the survey *ex-post facto* type of research design. A total of eighteen (18) public secondary school principals from six geopolitical zones of Nigeria were used. To select the sample, stratified random sampling technique was adopted. In order to ensure equal representation of the sample of all the geopolitical zones, a random selection of sample was drawn from each stratum. The name of all the states in each zone were put in a box, and the first one picked was selected. This was

repeated for the rest five remaining zones. At the end of the exercise a total of (6) states were picked and three secondary schools were selected in each district making a total of eighteen (18) secondary schools in all for the study.

### Instrumentation

The researcher made use of set of questionnaire and was validated by groups of experts. The copies of the draft of the questionnaire were given to two lecturers who are specialists in the school library development at the Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan and the Head of Department, Library and Information science Delta State University, Abraka. The pre-test was carried out and provided empirical basis for ensuring that the questionnaire was valid and reliable.

### Data Collection Procedure

The copies of the questionnaire were forwarded to all the selected public secondary school principals. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the school principals and monitored the completion of the questionnaire

### Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics such as Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data as well as to answer the research questions.

**Table1.** Perception of respondents on school library funding in Nigeria.

Research Question1: What is the present state of school library funding in Nigeria?

S/N	Statements	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	Std/Dev
1	There is need to solicit for book donations from publishers and other relevant agencies	11 (6.1%)	5 (2.8%)	11 (6.1%)	61 (33.7%)	93 (51.4%)	4.22	1.09
2	School principals, PTA, community have been involved in fund raising for school library.	112 (61.9%)	45 (24.9%)	4 (2.2%)	7 (2.9%)	13 (7.2%)	1.70	1.16
3	The government releases special funds for collection, building and services annually	12 (6.6%)	10 (5.5%)	3 (1.7%)	68 (37.6%)	88 (48.6%)	4.16	1.14
4	We have adequate funds budgeted to support school library services	79 (43.6%)	82 (45.3%)	-	14 (7.7%)	6 (3.3%)	1.82	1.01
5	OurSchool library takes the lion share of the school budget from annual grants	131 (72.4%)	44 (24.3%)	-	3 (1.7%)	7 (1.7%)	1.36	0.73
6	School librarian is allowed to submit its financial proposal during school budgeting	109 (60.2%)	65 (35.9%)	-	6 (3.3%)	1 (0.6%)	1.48	0.72

The perception of the present state of school library funding and budgeting and its rating. There is need to solicit for publishers and other relevant agencies to donate books, ( $x=4.22$ , S.D. = 1.09), The Government should release

special fund for library stocking and services annually, ( $x=4.16$ , S.D.=1.14), School Principals, PTA, Community have been involving in fund raising for school library, ( $x=1.70$ , S.D.=1.16), We have adequate fund



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budgeted to support school library services, ( $x=1.82$ ,  $S.D.=1.01$ ), School librarian is allowed to submit its financial proposal during school

budgeting, ( $x=1.48$ ,  $S.D.=0.72$ ), Our school library take lion share of the school budget from annual grants, ( $x=1.36$ ,  $S.D.=0.73$ ).

**Table2.** Perception of Attitude of school Principals toward School library Development in Nigeria.

### Research Question2

What is the attitude of secondary school principals toward school library development in Nigeria?

S/N	Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	Std/v
1	School Principal overlook school libraries and librarians as potentially powerful instrument for library services	39 (21.5%)	51 (28.2%)	18 (9.9%)	24 (13.3%)	49 (27.1%)	2.96	1.54
2	Principal organizes orientation programme to students and teachers especially new ones informing them the resources available	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.7%)	47 (26.0%)	129 (71.3)	4.67	0.60
3	Library hours are integrated into the school time table to allow every child to have access to library skills	70 (38.7%)	30 (16.6%)	38 (21.0%)	18 (9.9%)	25 (13.8%)	2.44	1.43
4	Improving student's achievement through school library is a vital principal interest.	6 (3.3%)	23 (12.7%)	51 (28.2%)	35 (19.3%)	66 (36.5%)	3.73	1.18
5	Principal sees school librarian as a dynamic member of school system	4 (2.2%)	19 (10.5%)	24 (13.3%)	51 (28.2%)	83 (45.9%)	4.05	1.10
6	There exists tight cohesive bonds between the teachers, school librarian and the principal	14 (7.7%)	27 (14.9%)	16 (8.8%)	77 (42.5%)	47 (26.0%)	3.64	1.23
7	A functional school library will be a sheer in futility if recognition is not given to its existence and usage in school	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	10 (5.5%)	39 (21.5%)	130 (71.8%)	4.64	0.67
8	Library studies need to be integrated into the secondary school curriculum	2 (1.1%)	2 (1.1%)	14 (7.7%)	64 (35.4%)	99 (54.7%)	4.41	0.77
9	School libraries are opened on weekend for the students.	95 (52.5%)	27 (14.9%)	4 (2.2%)	33 (18.2%)	22 (12.2%)	2.23	1.53
10	We have library period on our school time table	101 (55.8%)	56 (30.9%)	3 (1.7%)	20 (11.0%)	1 (0.6%)	1,70	0.99

The perception of the respondents on the principal's attitude and its rating is shown below.

School Principal overlook school libraries and librarians as potentially powerful instrument for library services, ( $x=2.96$ ,  $S.D.=1.54$ ), Principal organizing orientation programme to students and teachers especially, new ones informing them the resources available, ( $x=4.67$ ,  $S.D.=60$ ), Library hours are integrated into the school time table to allow every child to have access to library skills, ( $x=2.44$ ,  $S.D.=1.43$ ), Improving students achievement through school library is a vital administration interest, ( $x=3.73$ ,  $S.D.=1.18$ ), principal sees school librarians as a dynamic member of the school system, ( $x=4.05$ ,  $S.D.=1.10$ ).

There exists tight cohesive bonds between the teacher, school librarian and principals, ( $x=3.64$ ,  $S.D.=1.23$ ). A functional school library will be a sheer in futility if recognition is not given to its existence and usage in school, ( $x=4.64$ ,  $S.D.=0.67$ ).

Library studies need to be integrated in the secondary school curriculum, ( $x=4.41$ ,  $S.D.=0.77$ ), School library should be opened for students on weekend, ( $x=2.23$ ,  $S.D.=1.53$ ). We have library period in the school time table, ( $x=1.70$ ,  $S.D.=0.99$ ).

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study corroborated the objectives of National policy on Education (NPE, 2004) which recognizes library as one of the most important educational services that state government should provide adequate funds for. However, the unrepentant neglect of school services in school have caused the present fall in the standard of education in Nigeria and the seemingly low level of development being witnessed in Nigeria educational sector. The poor performance recorded in some couple of years back in West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) where only less than 40% out of the students that sat for the examination in the whole country had five credit passed including English language and

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Mathematics made one to wonder at what time do these students make use of school library to further their studies? The above finding showed that the absence of school libraries in our school had a conspicuous adverse effect on our educational system. The findings of the study corroborated Gabarro (1990) and Buchanan (1992) views where both stressed that many school principals do not really appreciate the potential and contribution of the school library to the school setting.

Though it is inarguable that school librarians are valuable to the schools, students, teachers and principals themselves, but in line with this finding many schools principals believe that the contributions of school library and school librarians are less important.

The finding of the study equally affirmed the Sambo (1996) commission reports which affirmed the poor funding of public school libraries and stressed the need to increase the budgetary allocation to school library and education as a whole. However, contrary to this commission report, it is further observed in this study that school libraries across Nigeria were grossly underfunded, under stocked, understaffed and unorganized.

This also confirmed the observation of National School Library Association (NSLA) at its annual conference held in Nsukka and Ibadan in 2002 and 2008 respectively. The conference observed and confirmed that the poor implementation of government policy on school library and budgeting allocation has been stalling the growth and development of school library in Nigeria.

The availability and prompt implementation of this policy would have set the minimum standard for funding, staffing, stocking and holistic management of school libraries in Nigeria. The results would have caused considerable growth and high level of development of school library in Nigeria.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study revealed and affirmed that the condition of school library in Nigeria deserves prompt and adequate attention and for any school library to be developed in Nigeria, School principals must be ready to embark on positive attitude towards school library development in all ramifications by been alive to their responsibilities. Government on their own should be ready to support and implement

every policy that encourage proper funding and better management of school libraries in Nigeria.

### RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- The school principals should be strict in the enforcement of law on the establishment of school library in all secondary schools in Nigeria and the employment of qualified school librarians to run the school library.
- The school principals need to take cognizance of the value of school library and submit themselves to work for the progress of the school library by ensuring the inclusion of library period on the school time table, where student could be taught library skills and other vital information during this period.

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