

Staff Development Strategies for School Library and Media Centres: A Case Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal, Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Staff development is a sine-qua non to the provision of efficient library services at any level. The study sets to investigate staff development strategies in school libraries and Information centres in Owerri, Imo State Nigeria. Self-designed questionnaires were used in eliciting data for the study. Ten schools were used with 10 samples selected, the outcome of the study revealed the methods used in staff development in Nigerian school libraries and information centres, the factors limiting effective staff development were identified and recommendations were made in view of the identified problems. The study concluded that embarking on staff development among school library is also an improvement on the level of services rendered in school libraries.

Introduction

School libraries and media centres are those libraries established in secondary, primary school libraries teacher training colleges. School libraries are library system particularly to be used in primary and secondary schools respectively (Onuwuazo, 2001). School libraries support education and curriculum. They are also known as media centers and the school librarian as the media specialist enhances formal and programmed learning. They are also called media resources centre. A school library is a learning resource center located in a secondary school or primary school for the purpose of acquiring, storing and disseminating information materials for the use of teachers and students. The school library is established to cater for the teaching and learning needs of its clientele - students and teachers, Freeman (1975) summed up the goal of school library media centre as “service offering each member of the school community learning experiences that will lead him towards a fuller, more rewarding life”. As a result of development in science and technology, non book materials are now used in teaching and learning. This recent development which is based on the use of audiovisual materials in learning as in line with modern philosophy of education which stresses the “need for individualized instruction and the use of multimedia resources in teaching the curriculum . . . the modern philosophy of education recognizes an educated individual as one who learned how to learn, to think and to use methods of disciplined inquiry to examine ideas as opposed to one who has memorized facts” (Elaturoti, 1990). This implies that modern education method lays emphasis on “individual learning and independent study (Elaturoti, 1990).

Obi (1974) identified the contribution of school libraries in education to include “promote the development of reading skill and encourage long term reading interests and habits. Reading is the key to continuous success in the school and to the personal enrichment of life . . .” The minimum standard for school libraries (1992)

identified the importance or contributions of a well equipped school library as follows:

- 1) To support teaching and learning within the system
- 2) To enrich the school curriculum
- 3) Promote the development of reading skills and encourages long-term learning habit, a variety of leaning and viewing a variety of learning materials.
- 4) Stimulate research and independent learning so that it not only supplies information in printed form but also in picture, film tapes etc. this makes learning more exciting.
- 5) Providing materials for recreation and encourage students/pupils to read for pleasure----”

The teacher librarian is expected to engaged in collection development, cataloguing and classification, circulation of library material, use of the library programmes, indexing and abstracting, provision of audiovisual materials to facilitate teaching and learning (Oparaku, Anyanwu and Amadi, 2005). In order to achieve the functions of the school library there is the need for staff development in school libraries. Staff development is “the ongoing process that orients, trains, develops through a systematic approach, each member of a library organization to work together serve its customers (Trotta, 1995). Staff training is one of the mutual stages in building an efficient and stable work force for a library. It is equally concerned with informing staff members of library policies and procedures as well as training them on job skills (Onwubiko, 2004). The process of staff development in libraries is therefore one that assist employees in attaining a level of performance and a quality of personal and social behavior that meet both their needs and those of the library. This is so because training has become increasingly vital to the success of the school library. Training and development which basically mean learning, furnish, the staff with the experience required for their job in the library. These training and development activities may be related to a position in the work place, career, it may aim at improving quality of work or serve as a means of personal development aimed at improving efficiency and

productivity of library staff in order to achieve the objectives of the library (Anyanwu, 2006).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as following

- i) To find out if school libraries engaged in staff development
- ii) To identify staff development strategies for school libraries
- iii) To identify the problems of staff development in school libraries
- iv) To proffer solutions to the problems militating against staff development.

Statement of the problem

The school library is the hub on which quality education revolves. A well equipped library determines the quality of the student. A well trained teacher librarian performs a major role in achieving the objectives of the school library, it is however unfortunate to note that most schools do not have libraries. Those that have libraries do not have qualified personnel. The schools libraries that have qualified teacher librarians lack the facilities for staff training and development. The teacher librarians and school libraries are abandoned. The government, non-governmental organizations and private organization that own schools adopt lackadaisical attitude towards staff development and overall development of libraries.

Review of related literature

The school library acts as a force in galvanizing educational excellence leading to the provision of quality education. It is also a place where teachers can get information since they cannot afford to buy all the books they need. According to George (2011), the library is an inexhaustible house of organize of knowledge where teachers and pupils can go unrestricted to help themselves to as much information and knowledge they need. She further emphasized the need for employing professional and paraprofessionals to ensure adequate record keeping and achieving the objective of the school system. She emphasized that one of the roles of the government should be training of teachers of which teacher librarians are included; Adefarati (2004) in his contribution emphasized the need for the training and retraining of librarians in school libraries. He emphasized that Nigerian School Library Association and Nigerian Library Association should sensitize the government on the need for training and retraining of teacher librarians. Attama (2004) emphasized the need to employ qualified school librarians and training through seminars, workshops, and short term courses to expose them to the latest techniques in service delivery. Ezeofor, Okeke and Orakpor, (2007) also advocated the training and retraining of school librarians through workshops, seminars and conferences on a regular basis. Adebowale

(2010) highlighted the need for effective ICT training of the school librarian to enable him reposition himself for the digital age. Ifidon (2008) harped on the crisis in education and training of librarians at all levels, she emphasize need to set minimum standards, generally accepted curriculum. and she also emphasized the need for effective staff development of librarians. Mbachu (2007) also harped on the need for training of staff. Onwubiko (2004) and Trotta (1995) identified training as the major types of staff development programme.

Research Methodology

A survey design was chosen in the conduct of the study. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting ten (10) secondary schools in Owerri municipal comprising of government owned schools, missionary schools and private owned schools. A questionnaire titled "staff development strategies in school libraries / media centers" was designed administered to the participant personally and nine (9) was retrieved and used for data analysis. The simple frequency counts and percentages were used for the analysis of data. The schools used for the study includes Federal Government Colleges, Owerri, Madonna Secondary Schools, Holy Ghost College, Alvana Model Secondary Schools, Owerri. Rochas Foundation Secondary School, Emmanuel College, Bethel Seminary Secondary and Eternal Word Secondary School.

Result and Findings

Table 1: Attendance of staff training and development programmes

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	66.7
No	3	33.3
Total	9	100

Table 1 above reveals that 6(66.7%) of the participant do attend staff training, while 4(33.3%) do not attend staff training. The findings therefore reveals that staff working in school libraries in Owerri municipal do attend staff training and development programmes.

Table 2 above reveals the frequency at which they attend staff training and development programmes, 1(11.1%) attend often, 3(33.3%) attends very often, 5(55.6%) attends not often.

Table 3 above reveals the type of on-the-job staff training and development attended. 1(11.1%) indicates job rotating while 8(88.9%) indicate staff meeting. Therefore, finding shows that staff meeting is the major type of staff training that the staff in school libraries in Imo State are exposed to.

Table 4 shows the type of the off-the-job training programme that the staff are exposed to, 6(66.7%) confirm that they have attended conferences, seminars and workshops as part of the off-the-job training while

5(55.6%) have attended lecture as part of the off-job-training.

Finding therefore shows that the off-job-training programme mostly applicable to staff working in school libraries in Imo state includes seminars, conferences/workshops and lectures.

Table 2: Frequency at which they attend the training and programme

	Frequency	Percentage
Often	1	11.1
Very often	3	33.3
Not often	5	55.6
Not very often	-	-
Undecided	-	-
Total	9	100

Table 3: Type of on-the-job staff training

	Frequency	Percentage
Rotating	1	11.1
Job Institution	-	-
Staff meeting	8	88.9
Mentor	-	-
Coaching	-	-
Apprenticeship	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	9	100

Table 4: Type of the off-job-training programs

	Frequency	Percentage
Seminars, conference/workshops	6	66.7
Lectures	6	55.6
Role play	-	-
Case study	-	-
Behaviour modelling	-	-
Other	-	-

Table 5 reveals the importance of staff development programmes in school libraries. 7(77.8%) of the participant indicates that it improves productivity, 2(22.2%) opined that it helps trainees to improve productivity, 2(22.2%) opined that it helps trainees to improve on services to customers, 1(11.1%) says it reduces supervision in work place, 1(11.1%) states that it reduces industrial accidents.

Therefore, finding reveals that staff development programmes is important because it improves productivity.

Table 6 reveals the areas where staff has undergone training in librarianship. 2(22.2%) have undergone training in the area of classification, 1(11.1%) have been trained in the area of reference and readers services. None indicated trainings in the area of ICT in school libraries, 5(55.6%) have not undergone any training in any of the identified areas of librarianship.

Finding reveals that the staff working in the school libraries in the secondary schools in Imo State has not undergone any form of training in the area of librarianship.

Table 7 reveals the kinds of new media found in secondary schools in Imo State. 1(11.1%) indicates that scanner is available in their school while 2(22.2%) indicates the availability of computers in their school libraries.

Finding therefore shows that new media are not available in secondary schools studied.

Table 5: Importance of staff development in school libraries

	Frequency	Percentage
It improves productivity	7	77.8
It helps trainees to improve in services to customers	2	22.2
It boosts morale of staff	1	11.1
It reduces supervision in work place	1	11.1
It reduces industrial accident	1	11.1

Table 6: Areas of training

	Freq.	%
Cataloguing and classification	2	22.2
Readers services	1	11.1
Reference services	1	11.2
ICT in school libraries / media centres	-	-
None of the above	5	55.6
Total	9	100

Table 7: Kind of New media

	Frequency	Percentage
Slides	-	-
Micro-film	-	-
Micro-fiche	-	-
Overhead projector	-	-
Scanner	1	11.1
Computers	2	22.2
internet facilities	-	-

Table 8: Factors affecting staff development

	Freq.	%
Lack of funds	8	88.9
Lip service/Lukewarm attitude of the government	1	11.1
Lack of qualified resource persons	7	77.8
Lack of education of the impact of training	5	55.6

Table 8 reveals the factors affecting staff development in secondary schools being studied. 8(88.9%) sees lack of fund as a factor, 1(11.1%) indicates lip service or lukewarm attitude of the government. Also 7(77.8%) sees lack of qualified resources persons as a factor affecting staff development while 5(55.6%) sees lack of evaluation of the impact of training as a factors affecting staff training and development in school libraries.

Findings therefore shows that lack of funds, lack of qualified resource persons as well as lack of evaluation of the impact of training are the factors affecting effective staff training and development in secondary schools in Owerri municipal.

Conclusion

From this study it can be concluded that the secondary schools in Owerri municipal have libraries but there is dearth of qualified personnel and you cannot talk of staff development when the basic foundation is not there. Most of the school libraries are manned by non- professionals and this account for the poor growth of school libraries in Nigeria. This ugly scenario calls for urgent need for staff development programmes in school libraries and information centres in a developing country such as ours. There can be no structure when the foundation is not there; This means that the stakeholders of these school libraries and information centres have to play a significant role by ensuring that the right people are place in the right place for efficiency and productivity without which the objectives of setting the school library will be defeated.

Recommendations

1. Government should make it a policy that only personnel with minimum National Diploma (ND) in librarianship should be allowed to managed the school library. It is a truism that the biology teacher or chemistry teacher cannot be employed as a nurse, then what is wrong with our noble profession; it is not an all comers affairs
2. The Association of School Libraries should liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure that secondary schools that did not meet the standards required to operate should not be given license to operate.
3. The proprietors of private schools should grant the staff working in their libraries study leave to enable them acquire the necessary experience or at best be sending them to conference so as to afford them the opportunity of being exposed to trends and development in librarianship because librarianship is not all about

shelving books and discharging of book, it goes beyond that.

4. Qualified personnel's or resources persons should be engaged when organizing seminars / workshops for school librarians/ teacher-librarians. Adequate facilities should be provided, the seminars / workshops should be theory and practice oriented.
5. Provision of funds: adequate fund should be provided for school libraries and Information centres. Government should ensure that budgeting allocations made to school libraries covers staff training and development while those in private sector should also make provision for staff training and development in their budget.

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