

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the percentage response of respondents with respect to their sex, qualification, teaching experience and marital status as well as the relationship between school principals administrative skills and development of school library services. Survey research design was used. Questionnaire method was the main instrument used to elicit response from respondents. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting 368 respondents from the 18 local government areas of the state. The result revealed that male, first degree holders, those between 10-19 years of teaching experience and those who are married constituted the majority of the respondents with 82.88%, 58.42%, 48.64% and 76.36% respectively. It is also indicated that, there is a significant relationship between school principals' planning and organizing skills and development of school library services with very high calculated r-values of 0.167 and 0.520 respectively at 0.05 level of significance. Recommendations are also proffered.

KEYWORDS: *School Principals, Administrative Skills, School Library Services, C.R.S; Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process through which people are trained either formally or informally to enable them acquire desired knowledge and skills. Schools are established for the acquisition of formal education. Education is an information intensive industry, hence libraries are established in schools to cater for the information needs of pupils, students and staff. There is a generally accepted opinion about the falling standard of education in Nigeria especially at the primary and secondary school levels. School libraries, if effectively managed and used can play important role in saving the situation (National Teacher's Institute, 2002).

Inwang and Nna-Etuk (2010) describe school libraries as those established as integral part of primary and secondary schools with sole aim of providing instructional materials to enrich the curriculum, to supplement classroom instructions and to give students unlimited opportunities for learning. These libraries are designed to create awareness in children on wide range of knowledge available in order to stimulate them to search, explore and collect information that is relevant to their general educational and individual needs. The school library remains "the child's first exposure to the information universe". It molds his information gathering behaviour for an adult role in the society. It is a known fact that an efficient and well organized library represents the foundation on which a strong educational programme is built. Any attempt to teach and learn without the use of good school library will result in a shallow and restrictive type of education, which will not be suitable and desirable for the future leaders of any country.

According to Obi (1977) cited in Nkanu and Ugobo (2010), children have natural curiosity: that questions of whom, what, when, where arise naturally with them. In a normal school setting especially secondary schools, these questions are bound to be answered to stabilize the curiosity of the students. As these questions are answered, develop their inquiry minds, find self-fulfillment and satisfaction, and a life-long habit of using books and libraries. The modern day school library offers a wide variety of materials so that they not only supply information in printed form, but also in pictures, films, tapes, slides and other electronic media to make learning more real and exciting.

School libraries provide pupils/students with skills required to transform the gathered information into knowledge. School libraries are known to be service oriented units in schools. According to Edoka (2000), the services provided by school libraries range from administrative, acquisition, cataloguing, reader's services, reference and information services, e-mail services to photocopying services. As pointed out by Lawal (2005), school library services are evident in core services among others such as; supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum, developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives etc. The main purpose of providing thoughtful and purposeful leadership by school principals of these libraries is to ensure sustained quality service to stimulate students' satisfaction in utilizing the library resources.

The various services provided in school libraries are complemented by the initiative and creative ability of the school principals to plan, organize, coordinate, direct and control available facilities, reading materials and personnel of their school libraries. However, school libraries are established in a broad sense to encourage reading habit and to develop in students the ability to learn from books without a teacher, affirmation to this that the National Policy on Education (2004) recognizes the importance of libraries to education when it enjoins every State Ministry of Education to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for the services.

Being one of the physical facilities where school principals perform their roles and where their management skills and expertise must be demonstrated, school principals must as a necessity showcase for their development. Compared to other types of libraries, Etuk (2010) opined that libraries have responsibility to students and teachers as they are one of the instruments for teaching and learning. It is on the basis of this that the administration and management of school libraries cannot be treated in isolation from the traditional objectives of libraries in schools, because the success of the administration would in due course be measured in terms of the objectives and organization of both human and non-human resources to provide efficient service to meet the needs of students. Ordinarily, the effectiveness of school library services depend not only on the quality of books and non-book materials available in the library but also on the administrative and professional performance of the school principal and other non-professional staff in the library.

In practical terms, administration of the school libraries is basically the responsibility of the school administrator (principal) and the teacher librarian. On the other hand, the success or failure of the administration depends also on the cooperation and understanding existing between the two. The school principal has a crucial role to play in school library administration with particular reference to policy formulation, implementation and evaluation and evaluation. The process of administration of school libraries begins with the school principal and goes down the classroom teachers. In the administration of school libraries, the school principal plans for the development of the library by making policies that will affect positively the library after due consultation with relevant authorities, initiate and recommend appointment of the school librarian, give approval for ordering and acquisition of new library materials and equipments, ensure the

enforcement of library rules and regulations, budget for the library and disbursement of library funds in consultation with the school librarian. School libraries being units of their own require the coordination, direction and control of all resources that are required for effective management of the school libraries.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria's educational policies and campaign for mass literacy reveal that in spite of the efforts by successive governments, individuals and organizations in the past and present times towards the development of school libraries, most primary and secondary schools in Nigeria do not have school libraries. Some that managed to have according to Alokun (2008) are poorly funded and stocked with obsolete materials. Despite the fact that the Federal Ministry of Education established libraries in all their secondary and technical schools, no positive impact on the development of school libraries seems to be created. Lawal (2005) noted that the non-positive impact is due to lack of current and relevant text books, comfortable provision of library services for the school clientele and part-time nature of teachers-in-charge who are more busy with their lectures than knowledge dissemination through books constitute problem in the development of school library services. These short-comings reflect the true nature of administration of school libraries in Nigeria in general and Cross River State in particular.

The poor regard for library held by many school principals is demonstrated by their unwillingness to set aside any vote out of their budget for library establishment and development. Nkanu and Ugobo (2010) stated that, the success of any teaching and learning programme is closely related to the quality of its library. Therefore, the school library is to serve as an information centre, bridging together all available resources for the use of students and teachers. It is the view of the researcher that one of the major problems that hamper the rapid development of school library services is the lack of proper acquisition of managerial skills by school library administrators. Their inability to articulate good policies limit their ability to plan, control, direct and coordinate appropriately both human and non-human resources for the realization of set objectives. It is the duty of school library administrators to note that their libraries have basic physical requirements among others is in the areas of accommodation lighting condition, facilities, library equipment, collection, aesthetics and personnel. These presumed inadequacies therefore have made the researcher to undertake this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was;

- To determine the percentage response of respondents in relation to sex, qualification, teaching experience and marital status to the development of school library services in Cross River State.
- To ascertain the relationship between school principals planning skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.
- To ascertain the relationship between school principals' organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses were tested;

- There is no significant relationship between school principals' planning skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.
- There is no significant relationship between school principals organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was used. The population of the study constituted all principals and Teacher librarians of public and private secondary schools in Cross River State. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting 368 respondents from the 18 local government area of the state. Of this number, 130 were principals and 238 teacher librarians. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to elicit response from respondents. Simple percentage was used to analyze the distribution of demographic data or respondents' of response with respect to sex, qualification, teaching experience and marital status of respondents, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance with respect to the relationship between school principals planning and organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

All the 368 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were completed and returned. The percentage or responses of demographic data of respondents in relation to sex, qualification, teaching experience and marital status as well as testing of the "null hypotheses" formulated, are analyzed.

Research question: what is the percentage response of demographic data respondents with respect to their sex, qualification, teaching experience and marital status in the development of school library services in Cross River State? Simple percentage was used to analyze the data as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic data of Respondents' Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage response
Male	305	82.88
Female	63	17.12
Total	368	100%

The data in table 1 revealed that there were more male respondents with a total of (82.88%) than female with (17.12%).

Table 2: Distribution of Demographic Data of Respondents' Qualification

Sex	Frequency	Percentage Response
NCE	147	39.95%
B.Arts/B.Sc.	215	58.42%
M.A/M.Sc.	6	1.63%
Total	368	100%

Table 2 shows that the first degree holders constituted the majority of respondents' qualification accounting for 215 (58.42%).

Table 3: Distribution of Demographic Data of Respondents' Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage Response
Below 10 years	33	8.97
10-19 years	179	48.64
20-29 years	104	28.26
30 years and above	52	14.13
Total	368	100%

The data in table 3 showed that the highest number of 179 (48.64%) of the respondents spent between 10 to 19 years in teaching while those who had spent below 10 years were 33 (8.97%).

Table 4: Distribution of Demographic Data of Respondents' Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage Response
Married	281	76.36
Single	59	16.03
Separated	23	6.25
Widow	5	1.36
Total	368	100%

The data in table 4 shows that married respondents were 281 (76.36), while the single were 59 (16.03%), and the widows' respondents were 5 (1.36%).

HYPOTHESIS ONE

There is no significant relationship between school principals planning skills and development of school library services in Cross River State. "The independent variable in this hypothesis is school principals planning skills", while the dependent variable is development of school library services. Pearson's product-moment correlation statistical technique was used in testing for significance. To carry out the test, data on planning skills were correlated with their scores on development of school library services. The result of the analysis are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Pearson's Correlation of the Relationship between School Principals' Planning Skills and Development of School Library Services

Variable	N	XY	Y ²	XY	r
School principals planning skills (X)	5446	83040			
	368			309069	0.167*
Development of school library services (Y)	20845	1284439			

Significant at .05 level df = 366; critical r - value = 0.098.

Results of analysis in table 5 show that the "calculated r-ratio of 0.167" was greater than the critical r-ratio of 0.98 at .05 level of significance, with 366 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is a significant relationship between school principals' planning skills and development of school library services in Cross River State. The null hypothesis by this result is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

There is no significant relationship between school principals' organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State. The "independent variable" in this hypothesis is school principals' organizing skills, while the dependent variable is development of school library services. Pearson's product moment correlation statistical technique was used in testing for significance. To carry out the test, data on organizing skills were correlated with their scores on development of school library services. The results of the analysis are presented in table 6.

Table 6: Pearson's Correlation of the Relationship between School Principals' Organizing Skills and Development of School Library Services

Variable	N	XY	Y ²	XY	r
School principals' organizing skills (X)	5335	80255			
	368			302883	0.520*
Development of school library services (Y)	20843	1284439			

Significant at .05 level df = 366; critical r - value = 0.098.

The result of analysis presented in table 6 shows that the calculated r-ratio of 0.520 was greater than the critical r-ratio of 0.098 at .05 level of significance with 366 degrees of freedom. This result implies that there is a significant relationship between school principals' organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State. By this result the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study clearly reveals that male first degree holders, between 10-19 years of teaching experience and those who are married constituted the majority of respondents. The result of the first hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between school principals planning skills and development of school library services. Planning is one of the most basic administrative functions that school principals need, to affect positively the development of school library services. It was observed in the course of the study that, the principals' planning skills, if we channeled, will enabled him to achieve pre-determined objectives, describe tasks to be performed by teacher librarians and a library attendant and also adopt a particular system through which library resources can be selected and acquired for the library. It is not surprising to note that respondents' opinions sought for, confirmed that school principals planning skills have high relationship with the development of school library services in Cross River State as shown in table 5. This result corroborates remark that, proper planning will guide the principal in allocating funds to the different sections that make up the school system. This attests to the importance of planning at every stage of administration.

The significance of the relationship between school principals planning skills and development of school libraries is not however surprising. The tested hypothesis which clearly shows a very high calculated r-ratio of 0.167 against the critical r-ratio of 0.098 suggest that the availability of equipment/facilities, library resources, accommodation/space etc. enhance adequate provision of library services in school libraries.

Anijah – Obi (2011) supports the findings when she asserted that planning is establishing where one wants to go and how to get there. This means that school principals must have stated policies that will provide guiding principle in taken decision and providing framework for consistency on matters that affect the school in general and the library in particular. These stated policies guide his course of action for the achievement of set goals. A library policy may describe a set of regulations, principles that govern the operations and conduct of the school library and the library objective, policy on acquisition of library resources. Therefore, school principals must be guided by programmed decisions embedded in guided policies for effective development of school library services. The high responses of respondents to principals' planning skills were linked to the principals' ability to formulate guided policies and stated objectives for the school library. The result of these findings is that the school principals' planning skills is significantly related to development of school library services.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between school principals' organizing skills and development of school library services. This is revealed in table 6 where the tested hypothesis shows a high calculated r-ratio of 0.520 against critical r-ratio of 0.098. This implies that there is significant development in the areas of equipment, library collection, accommodation/space etc. and this enhance adequate provision of library services in school libraries. The findings of this hypothesis is in agreement with Bryson (2009) who emphasized that organizing helps in achieving coordinated effort through a planned, mapped-out, designed activities and tasks to staff in an organization. A school system consists of staff in the library, school laboratories, and school gardens, dormitories with specialized tasks and functions that have to be coordinated to make for proper functioning of the school system.

Adesina (2008) supported this by explaining that organizing is the grouping of activities in a manner so that the aims and objectives of the organization are attained by the assignment of activities appropriate staff. In the library, school principal, with the assistance of the teacher-librarian and other library staff contribute to the activities of the library in such a way that they systematically contribute to the achievement of the organizational goal. The organizing variable of management enables the principal to define the essential relationships among staff in the different sections/units in the school library. It will be worthwhile to state that the principal's organizing skills, when well-articulated, make for goal-attainment and organizational efficiency. This result suggests that the principals' organizing skills significantly related with development of school library services.

CONCLUSION

The study findings is anchored on Tella's (2011) observation, that "poor library services can be traced to the absence of effective administrative skills". For school library services to be effective, school principals must exhibit expertise in administrative skills to harness the physical and non-human resources that are in their school libraries. This calls for stated policies that will provide guideline for action. This study therefore revealed that, there is significant relationship between school principals planning, and organizing skills and development of school library services in Cross River State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- School principals' decision on school library matters in Cross River State should be guided by state policies.
- The principals should consult with their teacher librarians before implementing decisions that border on school library matters.
- They should liaise with appropriate authorities for adequate funding and provision of relevant library facilities to enhance effective teaching and learning.

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