

## Constraints To Effective Management Of Secondary School Libraries: A Case Study Of 2 Private And 2 Public Schools In Owerri Municipal L.G.A, Imo State Nigeria.

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**ABSTRACT:** This study on the constraints to effective management of secondary school libraries was carried out using the survey method. Questionnaire was used to collect required data and simple tables and percentages were used to analyze the data collected. During the course of the study, it was identified that inadequate funding by the government is the major constraints to effective management of school libraries. Data gathered also showed that the area mostly affected by this constraint is in provision of library/information resources. The libraries under study have been coping with these constraints through alternative funding. However, the researcher made some recommendations among which are inadequate funding by government.

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### INTRODUCTION

School libraries are indispensable in the realization of the aims and objectives of education. The school library is one of the most important organs in the school system and therefore needs adequate attention from both government and authorities of the school system (Edom, 2006).

Libraries are integral components of education which exist in order to provide varied information materials. The school library has a great role to play in improving the reading habits of students which will enable them to be grounded on a solid educational base.

Contemporary school libraries are now centers for the acquisition, processing and utilization of a extensive variety of educational media teaching aids and learning resources. The expansion in the composition o information materials in the school library has brought about a change and hence there is need for its effective management.

The school library is an indispensable resource in the educational development of any country. It is the intellectual, cultural and social product of any educational system. Akanwa (2007) posits that the school library is an integral part of the school, a laboratory where many activities and experiments are carried out and all these activities and experiments are geared towards the development of the child and nation. She went further to say that without it, no profitable or rewarding educational activity can go on in the school environment.

However, there is apparent lack of interest in school libraries by the government. Agwaranze (2004) is of the view that government has not been

able to make finance available for the upkeep of secondary school libraries, the problems inherited in the inadequacy of financial provision to run our educational system.

On the major factors that constitute constraints to the effective management of school libraries, Fayose (1991) identified 3 factors namely government, students and teachers. The government and education commissioners have not adequately addressed the importance of school libraries: there are makeshift services, lack of training for library staff, irregular payment of salaries and poor conditions of services. On the part of students, they steal books, damage library materials and disobey the school librarian. Teachers cannot be exonerated since some of them do not make adequate use of the library. Ahanene (1990) stated that many teachers still see their notes of lessons as the be all and end all in teaching and instruction. Fayose (1995) says that if children see their teachers going into the library frequently, they themselves will always go there frequently too.

A major area that is affected in the management of school library is the manning of the school library by one who does not have any training in librarianship. Aguolu (2002) is of the view that the teacher-librarian should be duly qualified as a teacher and as a librarian. Other non-professional staff such as library officer, library assistants, library attendants are also required for effective management of the school library.

However, most of the secondary school libraries in Owerri Municipal L.G.A can hardly boast of these learning resources to guide teachers and students in their studies. The state government hardly

budgets enough money for libraries, there is lack of funds, materials, infrastructures and maintenance. It is also of note that some of schools lack accommodations for their libraries, bookshelves are not organized thus one cannot lay hands on any books in some of these schools continue to decrease. Principals of these schools lack adequate management skills to instill discipline in their staff and students. It is based on this that this research work seeks to identify the constraints to effective school library management in some secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. The study is aimed at identifying the factors that constitute constraint to the effective management of secondary school libraries under study, determining the areas of school library management that is mostly affected by these constraints, examine how the selected secondary school libraries cope with the constraints on the effective management of these libraries understudy, assess the effects of these constraints on the effective management of these libraries and recommend solutions to these constraints.

## METHODOLOGY

A survey research instrument (questionnaire) was administered on 4 senior principals, 4 junior principals and 4 teacher librarians in the 4 secondary schools under study in Owerri Municipal L.G.A of Imo State, Nigeria. The secondary schools are: Government Secondary School, Owerri, Girls Secondary School, Owerri, Federal Government Girls Secondary School, Owerri and Government Technical College, Owerri. All the 12 questionnaires administered were returned representing 100%. Frequency and percentages were used to analyze data collected

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 below showed that inadequate funding by the government is the major factor that constitutes constraints. This is shown by 8 (67%) response rate. Ranking second is inadequate library/information resources with 2 (17%). Nature of the library building and unqualified library staff got 1(8%) each with non of the respondents ticking lack of teacher interest as a factor that constitute constraints. This is in agreement with Agwaranze (2004) who stated that government do not provide adequate fund for the management of school libraries.

**Table 1: Factors that Constitute Constraints**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Inadequate funding by the govt.	8	67
Lack of teacher interest	-	-
Nature of the library building	1	8
Inadequate library/information resources	2	17
Unqualified library staff	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

On the areas affected by the constraints, majority of the respondents 7 (59%) indicated library/information resources. Others pointed out staffing 2 (17%), library building 1 (8%) and library infrastructures 1 (8%). This implies that either the library/information resources are inadequate, outdated an/or foreign based. Oduagwu (2002) stated that one of the problems associated with school libraries is appalling shortage of reaching materials (Table 2).

**Table 2: Areas Affected by the Constraints**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Library/Information resources	7	59
Staffing	2	17
Library Building	1	8
Library Services	1	8
Library Infrastructure	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of the 12 respondents that answered this question, 1(8%) responded seeking advice from other schools as a way of coping with management constraints, 3 (25%) indicated borrowing, 1 (8%) affirmed involving students in management of school library while alternative funding ranked highest with 7 (59%) response rate. Based on this result, the researcher went further to know the sources of alternative funding (Table 3).

6 (50%) indicated philanthropists, 4 (34%) said PTA levies whereas 2 (17%) affirmed library legislation and charges. This implies that the management should devise other sources of funding and not to rely entirely on the government for provision of funds.

**Table 3: Ways of Coping with Management Constraints**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Seeking advice from other schools	1	8
Borrowing from other sources	3	25
Putting in extra hours at work	-	-
Involving students in the management of school libraries	-	-
Alternative funding	7	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 below reveals that 7 (59%) indicated that inadequate use of the library by teachers and students happen to be the most serious effect on the effective management of school library. 3 (25%) pointed out inadequate library materials, whereas 1 (8%) each affirmed ineffective library service and dissatisfaction to staff and students.

From the analysis, it can be deduced that ineffective management has consequences on the school library and its users.

**Table 4: Effects of the Constraints**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Inadequate library materials	3	25
Ineffective library services	1	8
Inadequate use of library by teachers and students	7	59
Dissatisfaction to staff and students	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

On how to solve the constraints, a half of the respondents 6 (50%) said funding of school library by government, 3 (25%) employment of qualified staff, 2 (17%) provision of conducive library environment while 1 (8%) said provision of relevant information resources. This implies that proper and adequate funding of school library by government will offer the best solution to constraints to effective management of school libraries in secondary schools in Owerri Municipal L.G.A (Table 5).

**Table 5: Possible Solutions to these Constraints**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Funding of school library by government	6	50
Employment of qualified staff	3	25
Provision of relevant information resources	1	8
Provision of conducive environment	2	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

## CONCLUSION

From the study, it was observed that inadequate funding as a result of lack of government interest in the secondary school library constitutes the major constraint. Moreso, lack of information resources, furniture and equipment and also unconducive library environment constitute constraints to effective management of secondary school libraries in Owerri Municipal L.G.A.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the results of the research carried out, the researcher recommends the following:

There is need for government to intervene in the management of school libraries through adequate funding and their interest should always be there since it is their responsibility to oversee the management of school libraries.

There is also need for recruitment of professional librarian in school libraries studied.

The management of school libraries should always create alternative source of funding instead of relying solely on the government.

More of the relevant information resources that will assist the teachers and students in their educational pursuit should be procured.

Finally, there is also need for separate library building instead of makeshift arrangement as observed in some secondary school libraries.

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