Review Article

Educational Role of School Library in Curriculum Implementation for Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The school library which is part of the school system is established to achieve the educational objectives and complement curriculum implementation as stated in the National Policy on Education. This paper addresses the relevance and role of school library and Teacher Librarian in curriculum implementation in the school. The problems and the need for adequate relevant resource materials for teaching and learning to enable Teacher-Librarian, Teachers and Learners to play their role satisfactory in curriculum implementation was emphasized.

Introduction

Education in Latin word is "educare" meaning "to vear". The full form is educo, educare, educari, education, from which the word education derives. According to Ojoade (1992), in the simple illiterate and non-technological society, education is merely an informal way of passing on the cultural heritage from one general to the next. Encyclopedia Britannia (2007) also defined education as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. As societies grow more complex, however, the quality of knowledge to be passed on from one generation to the next becomes more than any one person can know, and hence there must evolve more selective and efficiency

means of cultural transmission, as society gradually attaches more and more importance to education, it also tries to formulate the overall objectives, content, organization, and strategies of education. Literature becomes laden with advice of the rearing of the younger generation. Balogun (1999) stressed that education not only liberates, it is a vital tool for empowerment that allows meaningful contribution to society.

To understand the value of education in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2004) outlined the philosophy of education which is based on:
    a. The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen

    b. The full integration of the individual into the community and

    c. The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary level both inside and outside the formal school system.

The broad aim of secondary education however within the overall national objectives reflects this:
  (a) preparation for useful living in the society and

  (b) Preparation for higher education.

In specific terms the secondary education shall:
    (a) Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;

    (b) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;

    (c) Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce as sub-professional grades;

    (d) Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;

    (e) Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;

(f) Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;

(g) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goal and live as good citizens;

(h) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

In view of the above objectives which provide comprehensive guidelines set out in the National Policy for achieving qualitative education, it goes without saying that effective secondary school libraries should be a great asset for obtaining the desired results i.e. quantitative education (Ojoade 1992). Buttressing the value of library in learning environment, Traveline (1997) remarked that today's library is like a big playground waiting to be explored and the librarian the best playmate; one that makes the playground worthwhile.

Usoro and Usanga (2007) stressed that the mission of educating children can only be achieved through a well- equipped library and users must be educated on how to retrieve the use of available library resources to meet their information needs.

The purpose of a library be it traditional or automated is to acquire, process, store, retrieve and disseminate information as well as to facilitate easy retrieval to library patrons. It is when the library is able to satisfy all these five areas that one can say that the library has achieved the aims and objectives of the institution it serves. The library is therefore regarded as the hub of all activities in educational institutions, a research institutions or any information intensive organization.

The library as a depository and store house of knowledge has shifted from the conventional library where basically books and other printed texts are consulted and borrowed. Computers and telecommunication have emerged to yield synthesized information dissemination globally. (Iromatu, 1998).

Available evidence even without a survey, suggest that library provision in support of secondary education in general is not better than in primary schools. The result is that

students entering higher institutions such as Universities, Polytechnics, and College of Educations have not acquired the habit of consulting information resources; in general their education has been purely oral or they need the prescribed books on each subject. They have no idea of how to handle catalogues or reference books and the world opening up before then is the very restricted on of the textbooks. They will therefore need considerable help before they could efficiently use any library resources made available to them in adult life (Penna 1967).

This paper briefly highlights the relevance of school library in teaching and learning environment, the need, functions, role of teacher- librarians, qualifications, problems confronting school library development with proffered solutions were emphasized.

Why school library service:
As an information centre, the library has a part to play in developing a teaching force capable of breaking with traditional methods which are inadequate at a time when both social concepts and the content of knowledge are changing rapidly. No less relevant is the role of school library service as an ally of education in helping to form attitudes, develop abilities and provide tools and practical skills for tackling economic and social problems. Library service in the school therefore has a special part to play in educating a generation of young people, (students) capable of thinking for themselves and willing to accept and promote innovation.

Omoni (2002) opined that an ideal educational school environment consist of the teachers, the students and the world of knowledge to the student and more importantly, it trains the student to learn independently by being able to select important and relevant materials on various subject.

Usoro and Usanga (2007) also stressed that the mission of educating children can only be achieved through a well –equipped library and users must be educated on how to retrieve the use of available library resources to meet their information needs. For teacher and student to complement each other in teaching, learning, process, there should be a standard library, which would prove the much desired suitable academic environment in terms of adequate structure, qualified personnel, learning resources such as textbooks, serials; journals, reports magazines, daily newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets etc. audio-visual and computers are required. Similarly, Ojoade (1992) emphasized that an effective secondary school library is the one which provides for its users that is teachers and

students services and facilities for executing their curricular and co-curricular activities. Such services and facilities must include the provision of recorded knowledge relevant to their academic and recreational needs and available in various formats. These are in print and non-print format such as maps, audio and video cassette, tapes, slides, films, microforms and in more recent time computers.

Function of School Library.
In conformity with the above statement, Douglas (1961) outlines educational function of school library as follows;

(a) to reach and serve every student in the school; the average, the gifted, the slow, the shy, and the problem child;

(b) provide materials of all types and on all subjects, at the various levels of maturity of the students represented in the school, and covering the wide range of demands of the modern curriculum;

(c) provide an ample collection of materials to satisfy the independent reading interest of each child so as to encourage him to broaden his interest;

(d) furnish reading guidance as an effective means of developing in each child an awareness of the rich free to be found in books;

(e) Serve as an important facet in an overall guidance programs;

(f) teach each student the necessary skill in the use of books and libraries so that he will be able to use reference and research materials;

(g) develop personal attributes of responsibility through the sharing of public property, the recognition of the rights of others, and the observant of democratic principles;

(h) supply teachers with materials needed in the instructional programs for their professional growth; and

(i) to serve as a steppingstone to the use of all community library resources.

In recognition of the above, Internal bodies such as International Federation of Library Association (IFLA). Produce a "Manifesto for school libraries in 1979, International standard for school libraries in 1980s, United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Bureau of Education (IBE) etc. Similarly, other developed countries such as Britain America, Australia etc. backed development of school libraries with legislative acts. In Nigeria, besides numerous studies to support the fact that early explore to books through the availability of library services help to strength and maintain the urged to read at adulthood, a lot of interest has been generated on the important of school library in Nigeria. For example the Nigerian School Library Association has been organized as an effective force in fostering interests in school library development (Ene, 2000). Hence School Library is no longer just a national or state affair, but has become a matter of international issue. Therefore it cannot be ignored in our educational system.

Benefits of School Library:
There are many benefits to having a fully integrated school library with a good collection of learning resources and dwell trained teacher-librarian in the school program. Doiron (2003) enumerated five key benefits. These are;

- *Effective use of resources-* There is no doubt that a centralized resource managed and maintained by a qualified teacher-librarian is cost effective and pedagogically sound. Teacher librarian take a great care in choosing good quality resources and also ones that have multiple uses within the school library program. They have effective systems for looking after those resources and being sure everyone has equal access to them. They also provide the school with a much wider range of resources than any educational system could be expected to provide to individual classrooms. This is true of traditional resources and newer electronic resources.

- *Effective use of Teaching Time-* When teachers and Teacher-Librarian work together to plan and teach together, there is the obvious benefit of adding another teacher to the team and of using a wider variety of teaching approaches. So the two could plan together and they teach together by splitting a class into two groups and lower the teacher student ratio. They could design and build learning stations and have student work independently while they act as facilitators of learning or work with individual students who need help. They can assist each other with the evaluation of students' performance, by

conferencing with students and applying many other creative instructional approaches.

- *Integrating of Education Technology-* This has emerged as one of the great benefits of having school library program. Since so much of what we do with technology is to access information, create our own information and share on present what use have learned, it has meant that the information skills developed by the school library program are even relevant that ever. Not everyone needs all of CD-ROM material if it is accessible in the school library. Using the internet can develop the context of planned resource-based learning with every student having equal opportunity. Since the use of these technologies is essential to the work of the teacher-librarian today, their education becomes a leader in helping all teachers and students use these technologies in meaningful ways.

- *Promotion of Literacy-* Every educator is concerned with the development of all aspect of students' literacy. From language arts, mathematics and all subjects areas, through information literacy, critical literacy, media and visual literacy. There are many aspects to this demanding task of making students interested in learning and also motivated to continue learning long after they leave the public school system. School libraries offer a real opportunity to assist in this work. They provide open accessible learning environments where students and teachers can access the most complete resource collection-available to them, where the wider community is easily accessible and where a love for literature, culture and global interdependence is understood and promoted.

- *The Goal of Life Long Learning-* Students will lead their information literacy skills and strategies long after they have leave public school system. They will always need access to a wide range of resources and they will need to know how to learn if they are to keep pace with the demands of work and life in the future. We may not be in the same job all of our lives, we may need to learn new approaches to doing things all of the time, and will need to be able to solves problems in creative and innovative ways. Simply sorting through the vast amounts of information we receive each day is a big job. No doubt, as students become adults, they will need the benefits of information literacy and

technological competence, both of which are effectively developed in school library programs.

Curriculum Implementation

Literature's shows that curriculum has been defined variably by different authors depending on the context. For example, Doll (1978) conceives the curriculum to be all the experiences that learners have under the auspices of the school. While Posner (1995) describes curriculum as the content or objectives for which schools hold students accountable. However, Tarner (1980) summarizes by giving a multi-dimensional description of curriculum that it is one or more between cumulative traditional of thought, planned learning environment, cognitive/affective content and process, instructional plans ends and or outcomes, and technology system of production. These definitions amongst others portray contradictions on how curriculum can be viewed.

Curriculum implementation however entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabi and subject. The process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge, skill or any other experiences included in the curriculum. The curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner, the learner is central in curriculum implementation. Therefore implementation takes places as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas & attitudes, aiming to enable him/her to function effectively in a society (University of Zimbabwe `1995).

Curriculum implementation is therefore a critical phase in curriculum cycle where selected techniques and strategies are put in into use through selected tools such as the syllabi and scheme of works, lesson plans and notes, teaching- learning resources, relevant textbooks and other reading resources, and above all general conducive reading environment.

It is important to note that the process of development and implementation of curriculum should be seamless and involves major participant such as teachers, school inspectors, examiners, Teacher-librarians, and other staff as well as study representatives this will help to ensure ownership of the new course and more effective implementation.

Role of Teacher-Librarians in Curriculum Implementation
Asselin, Branch and Oberg (2003) defined Teacher-Librarian as a professional teacher with a minimum of two years successful classroom experience and additional qualifications in the selection, management and utilization of learning resources, who manages the school library and works and other teachers to design and implement resource based curriculum program. The teacher-librarian is also known as the School Librarian Media Specialist (SLMS). The different nomenclature notwithstanding is due to changes in the collection and program of school library which vary form one library to another; however the functions of the school library remain the same.

There is a significant body of research that demonstrates that a qualified teacher librarian has a positive role on school culture and student achievement. Several studies have established that teachers collaborate more in schools with a teacher-librarian and students read more enjoy reading, write better, have access and use of information resources more effectively and excel in academic content areas. For example, Eisenberg and Brown (1992) indicates the higher level of involvement a teacher-librarian has in the school curriculum, the higher will be the level of achievement of students in reading skills, vocational study skills, with a wider breadth and quality of reading.

Teacher-Librarians are qualified to take an active role in curriculum support, design and implementation. Curulliance (1994) found that well-funded school libraries with a qualified teacher-librarian tended to achieve higher average reading scores and text scores in all subjects no matter what type of demographic or socio-economic community the students live in. therefore, Tallman (1995) supported these findings by stating that a Teacher-Librarian who is active in a curriculum and instructional role will have a positive impact on student achievement and on the perception of the school by the school community and external community. Similarly Udoh (1986) emphasized that Teacher-Librarian plays a central role in the execution of any educational curriculum of excellence. This is because libraries are the most important component of any viable curriculum implementation. Kolade (1996) stressed that it is important for a school library media center to have adequate and efficient staff because the effectiveness and success of the school library media center's program depends not only on the physical facilities but on the competency of the staff.

In view of the above findings, the role of teacher-librarian in curriculum implementation therefore encompasses a wide range of tasks that is the role is in two fold which has evolved from keeper of the books to information and resources specialist, with

professional qualifications in education and information science/librarianship. The teacher librarian is an educator who teaches and who manage a given school library collection. As a consequence of their two roles, a teacher librarian's day can involve instruction and research as well as maintaining, implementing curriculum by updating the school library resources.

The teacher-Librarian therefore is responsible to the principal for initiating and participating in the teaching of information literacy in the context of the total curriculum, and managing the schools information resources and services to facilitate teaching and learning (Hennessy 1993). Kolade (1986) specifically outlined Teacher-Librarian duties in the following two dimensions, - Professional and Administrative.

(i) Professional Duties:
   (i)   identifying the information need of the school community;
   (ii) selecting and developing the required objectives of the school curriculum;
   (iii) organizing all resource materials;
   (iv) making available materials both manual and on-line;
   (v) teaching the staff and students the basic library skills to promote efficient use of learning resources; and
   (vi) planning learning activities with teachers.

(b) Administrative Duties:
   (i)   general administration of the school library;
   (ii)   formulating library policies;
   (iii) preparing and administering annual budget;
   (iv) ensuring the proper functioning of the school library;
   (v)   soliciting for donation and gift exchange;
   (vi) setting up of library committee.

In addition, the teacher-librarian as a full-fledged and equal member of the teaching staff should work closely with teaching staff to incorporate information literacy learning into the school curriculum and other activities. Supervision of supporting staff such as library technician i.e. assistant, attendants, clerk, or volunteers who assist with the routine tasks is highly essential for smooth running of the library.

Qualifications of Teacher-Librarian

Setting of school library is a crucial factor in the provision of effective library resources services in the schools. Teacher-librarian, Library Technician, and Clerical Staff play an integral role in achieving the objectives of curriculum and learning outcomes which are the goals of school learning program.

The approach of staffing school library has varied in difference parts of the world. Ojemiren (1986) observed that the school librarian may be a professionally qualified teacher with or without knowledge of teaching. In Great Britain, a committee set up on this issue recommended that all school librarians should be doubly qualified in teaching and librarianship that is having dual qualifications. In Australian, it was recommended that the person responsible for resource services in the school should have qualifications and experience in teaching and librarianship; in addition he should be regarded as a member of the school teaching team. While In United State also recommended dual qualifications. In Nigeria, the word 'teacher-librarian' is used as substitute to school librarian in most schools. The categories of staff are usually teaching staff who has been given additional responsibility to run the affairs of the school library. The teaching work load of such staff in some cases is reduced to afford him/her time to work in the library.

However, for Nigerian school library to develop and in conformity with practice in developed countries, the principle of dual qualifications should be followed. That is, the person responsible for managing a school library should be a qualified teacher-librarian, with dual qualifications. According to Metzger (1992), a qualified teacher librarian is defined as a person who holds a recognized teaching and librarianship qualifications. These qualifications ensure that the teacher-librarian is both an educator and information manager with integrated understandings for both of the areas. As a result, knowledge of the curriculum, teaching strategies and learning styles is combined with knowledge of resources and information access and management system. This will enables teacher-librarians to undertake an active role in curriculum design, support and implementation. As a consequence of their qualifications, teacher-librarians are full fledge and equal member of the teaching staff thereby working closely with teaching staff to incorporate information literacy learning in the school activities.

Problems

Studies conducted by various scholars identified numerous problems militating against the developing of school library in Nigeria. This paper summarized some of the identified problems as follows.

(a) *Funding-* The problem of funding in the development of school library is very crucial. In Nigeria, an ideal funding may be possible if there is adequate budgetary allocation of fund by the supervising ministry or other agency and judiciously utilized for effective running of the library.

(b) *Principal Support-* Lack of support from some principal is another factor. Beside their lukewarm attitude, the school library development levy initiated and collected by some of them is not judiciously spent for the purpose it is meant for. There is the need for the principal to demonstrated active personal commitment for the school library. This can also be done by allocating time for library skills period on the school timetable effectively utilize by the teachers and students.

(c) *Lack of Accommodation-* In some of Nigerian secondary schools, you hardly see a purposely built school library, classroom are converted to school library, this is as a result of lack of adequate planning at the initial stage on the part of supervising ministry or agency. At the planning stage of establishment of school, there is the need to provide and allocate a space for building a befitting library in the school premises.

(d) *Staffing-* Staffing is a crucial factor, in some school library hardly can you find a professional manning the library. Emphasis is mainly on recruitment of classroom teachers. And where a makeshift library is available, a clerk, cleaner or a teachers assigned with additional responsibility to supervise the affair of the library. Recruitment of qualified professional or at least a para-professional to man the library is highly essential.

(e) *Lack of National Policy on School Library Services-* In Nigeria, there are so many National Polices initiated by the government at different sector of the economy. But in Library services, no single effort made by the previous and present government to initiate the idea, even the so called National Policies and vision are merely on paper, there is no political will to implement them.

(f) *Library Resource-* There is nothing to write home on the issue of resource for teaching and learning, there are lack of relevant reading resources and where they are available they are not sufficient current and ill-organized. The adequate and relevant resources in the school library will provide access to information that will complement teaching and learning in the school. The materials and equipment in

(g) a library media program provide information that support active, authentic learning and this ensures that young people develop the information literacy skills crucial to their success as student and as lifelong learners. Therefore, the materials expected to be acquired in the school library must be relevant to the curriculum program of the school.

Conclusion

In any classroom situation, no meaningful learning can take place without adequate resource materials to complement teaching and learning in school environment.

This implies that for curriculum to be fully implemented there should be a school library with resource materials such as current textbooks, teaching aids and above all conducive learning environment to enable qualified teacher-librarian who is information resource specialist and an educator that teaches and manage the resource of the library to play their role satisfactory in the curriculum implementation.

All these roles can be perform in conjunction with school authority particularly support of the head of the school and teachers who are involved in different roles and responsibilities in curriculum organization. While the school is responsible for proper implementation of curriculum, teaches creates lesson plans and syllabi within the framework of the given curriculum, select and decide what to teach from prescribed curriculum. The role and influence of the teacher, Head of school and Teacher-Librarian in curriculum implementation process is also indisputable.

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