

Implementation of the Minimum Standards in Federal Government College Libraries in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the extent of the implementation of some aspects of the "minimum standards for school libraries" in Federal Government College in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. The study investigated the nature of accommodation, library collections, staffing situation and services offer in relation to the standards. Survey research method was adopted and the population comprised 23 Federal Government Colleges. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 16 FGCs. Questionnaire was the main research instrument and 16 copies were randomly administered to 16 FGCs. Simple tabulation, frequency counts and percentages were used. Out of 16 colleges studied 12 FGC's responded. Results showed that eight libraries are sited far away from games field, eating places and noisy environment. On the other hand, seven (7) Federal Government Colleges had purposeful built school libraries. The other five (5) responding school libraries had their libraries attached to classroom, staffroom and administrative block and the five school libraries are facing North and South directions respectively. On school library collections, only two school libraries adopted 10% standards for the acquisition of reference books and one (1) school library adopted 10% to acquire periodical collection. None of the school libraries meet the staffing requirement both in terms of categories and educational qualifications as the 12 responding school libraries were managed by 17 staff as against the expected 72 staff. While library services were not fully offered going by the frequency against each of the library services. It was concluded that Federal Government College libraries in North-Central Nigeria are ignorant about the minimum standards as a document. The study recommends that Federal Ministry of Education should make this document available for all Federal Government Colleges and their libraries in North-Central Zone of Nigeria; while school library legislation be enacted at the three tiers of government in Nigeria for the establishment and development of school libraries.

Introduction

Every organization, institution or an association is expected to have standards in order to achieve the set objectives. There is usually a monitoring body that is responsible for the standards. This shows that standards are usually designed and measured by the regulating bodies. For example, Nigeria set standards for various disciplines or professions and are expected to be followed.

The Minimum Academic Standards for Library and Information Science programme in Nigerian Universities as published in 1999 by National Universities Commission contains the philosophy of education based on national objectives. It is document that contains undergraduate courses in librarianship in Nigerian Universities.

The concept of standards as view by Maurice (2006) "is guidelines or criteria by which services are measured" and that the guidelines are not always indentified with standard. Library standards are vital instrument use for measuring and assessing the adequacy or otherwise of library services and activities.

The Minimum Standards for School Libraries in Nigeria (1992) is a publication of the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development, Lagos-Nigeria. The contents of the publication include: accommodation, furniture and equipment; library collection, services, staffing and funding.

The then Minister of Education and Youth Development (Prof. Babatunde Fafunwa) posits that despite the great importance attached to school libraries in Nigeria, they are still at "embryonic stage of development" characterized by inadequate funding, staffing, collection, furniture and equipment as well as services offered. The document was drafted and produced by 12-man committee and were mostly librarians drawn from National Library of Nigeria, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs; the presidency, Lagos State Library Board, Abadina Media Resources Centre and the Department of Library, Archival and Information Science University of Ibadan. Other committee members were drawn from Federal Ministry of Education Youth Development and Queen's College, Lagos. School libraries are expected to cater for the information needs of their users through acquisition and provision of learning materials and other services so as to enhance teaching and learning activities of teachers and pupils / students. The minimum standards for school libraries in Nigeria (1992) contains six (6) different elements, thus:- (1) Accommodation (2) Furniture and equipment (3) Library collections (4) Staff requirement (5) Library Services (6) Funding. Out of these six elements, accommodation, library collections, staff requirement and library services are used for this study.

Literature search revealed that most school libraries in Nigeria are not performing up to expectation. Is it that the learning resources, accommodation and staff are not adequate? Maurice (2006) in a studied of school library Standards in Imo state revealed some barriers to the application of school library standards such as "lack of commitment by school authority and inadequate library collection" were among the popular barriers. Ibrahim and Saleh (2009) examined the role of school libraries in secondary schools in Borno State. Part of the study findings were that the collections from four school libraries. Textbooks collection were 12,800 volumes, while fictions were 5150 volumess periodicals and/or visual materials and reference books were negligible. The schools surveyed include Federal Government College Maiduguri, Government Girls College, Yerwa comprehensive, secondary school and Bolari Day Secondary School.

In order to ascertain whether or not Federal Government College Libraries in North-Central Nigeria adopt Minimum Standards (1992), four (4) research questions (being parts of the standards) were designed to provide answers:-

1. What is the nature of accommodation for school libraries understudy?
2. What type of collections are available and at what percentages?
3. What is the staffing situation in school libraries under study?
4. What type of services are offered in school libraries under study?

Methodology

Survey research method was adopted with population of 23 Federal Government Colleges in six states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (North-Central Nigeria). The states are Benue, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi, Kwara, Plateau and the FCT, Abuja. The study population are the heads of school libraries. The rationale behind using heads of school libraries as the study population is because they are the administrative heads of the unit/department called library. They supposed to be part of policy implementers. The Federal Government Colleges in North-Central Zone of Nigeria are listed below according to the States and FCT, Abuja.

States	Number	Federal Government Colleges
Benue	1	Federal Govt Girls College, Gboko
	2	Federal Govt College, Otobi
	3	Federal Science & Tech. college, Otukpo
Nassarawa	4	Federal Govt College, Keffi
	5	Federal Govt Girls College, Reana
	6	Federal Science & Technical College, Doma
Niger	7	Federal Govt College, Minna
	8	Federal Govt Girls College, Bida
	9	Federal Govt Girls College, New Bussa
	10	Federal Science & Tech College, Shiroro-kuta
	11	Federal Govt Academy, Suleja
Kogi	12	Federal Govt College, Ugwolawo
	13	Federal Govt Girls College, Kabba
Kwara	14	Federal Govt Girls College, Omuaran
	15	Federal Govt College, Ilorin
Plateau	16	Federal Govt College, Jos
	17	Federal Govt Girls College, Langtang
Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja	18	Federal Govt College, Kwali
	19	Federal Govt Girls College, Bwari
	20	Federal Govt Girls College, Abaji
	21	Federal Govt Boys College, Garki
	22	Federal Govt. College, Rubochi
	23	Federal Science & Technical College Orozo

Out of the 23 FGCs in the zone, 16 were randomly selected and that each state was represented in the sample. A-2 page structured questionnaire was designed to include accommodation, library collections, staffing situation and school library services. The variables of the study were derived from the Minimum Standards for school libraries (1992). The documents was produced / published by Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development, Nigeria.

Being the administrative heads and custodians of records, 16 copies of questionnaire were administered to heads of 16 school libraries with one copy per school library. Two letters of introduction were attached to each copy of the questionnaire for head of school library and the principal, stating the purpose of the questionnaire and the need for cooperation. Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers; colleagues and research assistants as well as through postage.

Out of the 16 copies of questionnaire administered, 12 copies were received giving 71% response rate. The period spent in the administration of questionnaire was the ten (10) months (January to October, 2011). Based on the returned of the completed copies of questionnaire, data were analyzed and interpreted below. Note that the total response rate/frequency is higher than the 12 responding school / libraries. This is because a school library is likely to indicate more than one alternative response in each of the question items asked. In table 1, there are 25 responses, table 2 has 35 responses and table 3 has 17 responses. Responses in table 4 were 25.

Data Analysis And Discussion

Data were analyzed through the use of simple tabulation, frequency counts and percentages where necessary.

Research Question 1: What is the Nature of Accommodation for School Libraries?

Table 1: Nature of Accommodation

Accommodation / Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A purposeful built library	7	28%
School Library attached to staff room / classroom / Admin. block	5	20%
Library facing North and South	5	20%
Library far away from games, fields and eating places	8	32%
Total	25	100%

From the table, it showed that 8 (32%) Federal Government Colleges indicated that their libraries are sited far away from games, fields, eating places and noisy environment. This enhances constant patronage as well as formation of good habits on the part of students. Next to this was that 7(28%) of the responding school libraries had purposeful built school libraries that are not to be used as classroom or any other purpose. The results further revealed that 5(20%) of the responding school libraries are attached to staff room, classroom / administrative block. A well-built school library face North and South direction to avoid penetration of sunlight through windows.

Research Question 2: What type of collection are available and at what percentage for each type of collection?

Table 2: School Library Collections

Library collections (Minimum Standards)	Frequency available	Frequency not available	Minimum standards (%)	% from responding School Libraries
Reference books	7	4	10	20, 50, 10, 22, 35, 98, 10
Non fiction (textbooks)	9	2	45	10, 50, 70, 40, 38, 15, 156, 50, 20,
Fiction (story books / novels)	9	-	25	50, 50, 45, 12, 15, 15, 30, 10, 65
Audio-visual materials	2	-	10	5, 1
Periodicals	8	-	10	10, 80, 25, 25, 15, 5, 30, 85
Total	35	6	100	

Minimum standards (1992) document was used to evaluate the percentages for various responding school library collections. Table 2 above clearly revealed that 35 responses indicated that all collection were available, while six (6) responses, showed non-availability of those collections.

The third column on the table was fixed percentages of various collections as contained in the Minimum Standards. The standard was used to evaluate the percentage collection from school libraries under study. In terms of Reference books, seven school libraries gave various percentages and only two (2) school libraries conform to the minimum standards by allocating 10% to reference books. None of the nine (9) school libraries adopted 45% to acquire non-fiction materials. Also of the nine (9) school libraries, none adopted 25% to acquire fiction (stories, books, novels). Two (2) school libraries acquire Audio-Visual Materials (AVM) but does not use 10% allocation as contained in the minimum standards. The two (2) school libraries used 5% and 1% respectively to acquire AVM

Out of eight school libraries that acquire periodicals, only one (1) school library used 10% to acquire periodicals. All these showed that Federal Government College Libraries in North-Central Nigeria do not use minimum standards to acquire their collection.

Research Question 3: what is the staffing situation in Federal Government college libraries?

Table 3: Categories and Educational Qualifications of School Library Personnel

Category of Library Personnel (A)	Frequency	Educational Qualifications (B)	Frequency
School librarian	02	BLS	02
Library assistant	10	DLS / Cert Library Science	04
		Fed. Govt. Trade Test	-
Typist	01	SSCE or equivalent	04
		RSA, 25-35WPW	-
Technician	-	Pry six certificate	04
Cleaner	4	Others (HND Acct. NCE, BSc)	03
Security	-		
Total	17		17

Each school library is expected to be managed by six categories of staff based on the Minimum Standards (1992). Going by what were obtained from the table, they are far from the Minimum Standards. It is expected that the 12 responding school libraries be managed by 72 staff and not 17 school library staff with various qualifications. Only 2 staff obtained BLS and 4 staff has diploma in library science. This clearly revealed that majority or school libraries in the North-Central Nigeria were headed by personnel that holds qualifications outside librarianship.

Research Question 4: What type of services are being offered in school libraries understudy.

Table 4: School Library Services

Library Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Selection / Acquisition	05	20
Organization of Collection	02	08
Current awareness services	02	08
Reference service	05	20
Circulation / loan service	03	12
Production of instructional materials	-	-

Library week, exhibition, film show, reading competition	03	12
Library use education	05	20
Total	25	100

The Minimum Standards outline eight (8) range of services to be provided by every school library in Nigeria. Selection/Acquisition, Provision of reference services and Library Use Education top the list with each having frequency of 5 (20%). Next to this were circulation / loan services and promotional activities such as library week, film show, exhibition and reading competition. Each of these services has response rate of 3(12%) respectively. Organization of library collection and Current awareness services each has response rate of 2(8%). School library collections can be organized by cataloguing and classification, shelving, etc. Current Awareness services can be by way of display of new arrivals, compilation of table of the contents, etc.

Discussion of Major Research Findings

This research finding showed that eight school libraries are built far away from noisy environment and that seven school libraries were purposely built for library use. This is in line with the Minimum Standards (1992). On the library collection, the results showed that most of the responding school libraries have collection available but not in accordance to the minimum standard. This result is similar to that of Ibrahim and Saleh (2009) where collection were available but neither adequate nor adopt the standards.

The total number of staff in the responding school libraries were 17 with absence of technician and security. Going by the minimum standards, the 12 responding school libraries are expected to be managed by 72 personnel. This is therefore contrary to the standards set. The school libraries do not adopt the standards as two libraries each provide current awareness services, and organize collections respectively.

Conclusion

Based on the major findings, it can be deduced that Federal Government College libraries in the zone are not aware of the Minimum Standards for school libraries in Nigeria (1992) and that there is no school library legislation in the zone particular and Nigeria in general.

Recommendations

1. Going by the conclusion reach the study recommends that the Federal Ministry of Education make this vital document available for all Federal Government College Libraries in the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria.
2. There should be school library legislation at the three tiers of government in Nigeria for the establishment and development of school libraries. This will go in long way to commit government and proprietors of schools in adopting the minimum standards.

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