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Assessing the Availability of Secondary School Library Materials and Services in Onitsha North  
Local Government Area

By

*\*Nebeolise, Lucy Ndidiamaka, \*\*Ifeyinwa N. Okonkwo and \*\*\*Amaka Rose Alor*

*\*Department of Library and Information Science  
National Open University of Nigeria*

*\*\*Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Igbariam*

*\*\*\*Anambra State Polytechnic, Mgbakwu*

Email: [ndynebe@yahoo.com](mailto:ndynebe@yahoo.com), [Zuco60g@yahoo.com](mailto:Zuco60g@yahoo.com) & [ammyugoamaka@gmail.com](mailto:ammyugoamaka@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*The study assessed the availability of secondary school library print materials and services in Onitsha North Local Government Area. A total of seventy-five (75) questionnaires were raised out of which fifty-five (55) were returned and used for the study. The objective of the study is to determine the type of print resources available in these school libraries, to determine the condition of school libraries in Onitsha South Local government Area, to determine the type of library services provided by the school libraries under study, find out the availability of qualified personnel for the management of school library resources and to identify the factors hindering the provision of library services, among others. In this study samples were not used because the population of the school libraries staff involved was small. The population involved only fourteen (14) government-owned secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra state. The instruments for data collection were questionnaire, checklist, personnel observation and interview. Percentages and frequency tables were used to determine the distribution of responses while questionnaire was distributed to the library staff. The principals and teachers in charge of the libraries of the fourteen secondary schools were interviewed. The findings of the study revealed that print materials available were very few and non-availability of current print resources, condition of the school libraries not fully conducive, no Internet facilities, no professionally trained librarians, acute shortage of space in the various libraries visited, among others. It is recommended that Acquisition of current print resources, audio visual and ICT facilities should be made, students should be provided with ICT facilities and Internet services and allowed to have access to them, professional librarians should be employed to manage the libraries, adequate accommodation and a special building should be set apart for library, and federal, state, local government should allocate funds, among others.*

**Key words:** Availability, Assessment, Print materials, and Secondary school library

### INTRODUCTION

Libraries are store house of knowledge and information that are collected in print and non- print or electronic format to satisfy the information needs of users and it is equally the nerve centre of every academic work. The library means different thing to different people and institutions. To some it is a place where books and non-book materials are preserved for the purpose of dissemination of information and knowledge and for the benefit of the society it is

meant to serve. To others, the library is an institution where books and other information resources are collected, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated. This is the reason Abiola (cited in Bello, 2010) asserts that libraries from time immemorial has been essential constituents of scholastic enterprise and have been established alongside institute of learning. According to Dictionary for Library and Information Science, (2004) 'Library is a collection or group of collections of books and /or other print resources organized and maintained for use (ready, consultation, study, research etc)'.

There are many types of libraries such as school library, special library, national library, university/academic library, public library, private library, research library among others, but this study focuses on the School Library. A school library is one of the libraries that has been established in a primary or secondary school and whose collections are mostly for the young ones (Edoka, 2000 & Amah, 2001). School library is referred to as the collection of print and non-print materials kept in a school for the use of both the pupils & teachers mainly for pupils. Orisan, (2002) states that a well-stocked school library contributes to the total development of its users. This provides materials that support the curriculum, enlarge the horizon of the pupils and stimulate their critical imaginative facilities. In support, Fakomogbon, *et al.*, (2012) argued that school library help to support the school curriculum by providing up-date information to keep teachers and students abreast of new development.

The importance of the school library in the education of children can never be over emphasized. Since primary school is the base of all educational institutions, the school library helps to acquaint the pupils with books, so as to develop a reading habit in them. This helps them to develop likeness for books at the early stage of lives (Alegbelege, 2000). More so, the major essence of establishing school library are not to provide for the young pupils but also to help propagate the culture of reading habit in the early stages of child development Alegbelege (cited in Nwachukwu, Abdul salami, & Salami, 2014). The school library also promotes the development of reading skills and encouraged long term planning habits through reading, listening to and viewing a range of learning print materials. Good reading habit enables children grow to like books and improve academically in their further education. More so, the bedrock in the establishment of school library is to acquire quality published information sources such as books to support teaching, learning and research and provide a sound conducive environment for learning. Library resources for secondary school libraries involves mainly of print and non-print media. Print media involves books, periodicals, newspapers, brochures, pamphlets, handbooks and ephemeral books.

Olowu (2004) refers library resources to include such materials as books, periodicals that are provided for use by the people. He further states that non-print materials comprises of photographs, audio tapes, film strips, motion films, video tapes, computer diskettes, regalia and other audio visual materials. The school library to achieve its objective, there should be availability of current print resources. This is so because the library cannot play its evaluation effectively without adequate and balance stock and print materials. Availability of print resources involves to the presence of prints and non-print materials in a school library. Logically, the problem of making print resources physically available in the library when wanted by information seekers is central to librarianship (Buckland, 2001). The fundamental rule of library stock control

is that both the print resources and the policy should be related to the level of demand for items. Acquisition policy should help a library to decide on what to buy where and when in order to increase access, ability to needed print resources. In support, Abdulsalami (2013) emphasis that availability requires workable performance measure to back it up even if the ultimate benefit to the individual user and to the community is difficult to assess. The access to print resources of the library is also a factor of availability for without the physical presence of a document a user cannot access anything. Abdulsalami (2013) further avers that “Book availability is an indicator of stock effectiveness”. This is why libraries consider their task to be that of collecting, storing and measuring of books. Most libraries consider it also as their task to make these books available to their users. The intellectual access to available print resources has since properly been a major pre-occupation of libraries. Availability of library print resources also entails acquiring and also providing means by which users could get necessary library resources needed. It tries to ensure that every clientele gets document, which could satisfy his/her quest for information. Indeed, availability of library resources could justify the existence of the library or information center.

These print materials must adequately be staffed with professional librarian that will organize these print materials for the users In order to render effective services to meet these actual needs. A librarian must be technically and professionally trained. If the concept of services is the pivot upon which librarianship is built, it then stands to reason to regard the provision of services as one of the most important responsibility of the library. Morrison (2000) said that “library services to students have always been recognized as being of cardinal important”. School libraries serve the educational needs of the young. Some of these library services according to Green (1996) involves opening hours, borrowing of books, inter-library loan, library hours, essays and reading competition, current awareness services and internet services. That was why Chan (2008) stated that high performing schools have as a third as many library hours compared to low performing schools. This long period of library hour is usually facilitated by a trained personnel or a librarian. Other library services include indexing and abstracting services, references service, and reserve collection.

The need and importance for library services as a social function in school libraries is becoming more fundamental. School libraries should be strongly designed to serve actual needs as well as anticipated demand to its users. It should not be assumed that the users be trained to fit the system, rather a system be designed to fit and satisfy user’s needs. A user is interested in a system that is accurate, dependable and above all, responsive to his needs.

Notably, the assessment encompasses all aspects of librarianship. This involves the library print resources and library service such as personnel, library materials (print and non-print materials), library facilities, equipment building, fund, institutional collection and information stock. Assessment according to oxford dictionary is to access the amount value or quality of something after thinking about it carefully.

The condition of School Libraries in Nigeria emphasized by one the researchers explained that some of the Head Teachers shows that the issue of school library development is not in their plan at all, and they could not be blamed for this lapse as the Federal and State Ministry of Education have no budget allocation for such (Ajegbomogun, 2011). Dike (2000) also concluded that most schools do not have libraries at all. It was observed that as the number of schools

increases, the school libraries development became stagnant and unattended to and the structures constructed were not even conducive for library clientele.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that when these print resources and services are available, the users make a maximum utilization of it for academic and research purposes. Equally, is important that for student to make use of the print resources, the print materials need to be processed by professional librarians. From the point of view, it has been observed that school libraries in Onitsha North are confronted with various challenges relating to non-availability of current print resources, lack of trained librarians, inadequate accommodation of the current materials, inadequate provision of library services, among others.

Consequent on upon these, this study seek to explore availability and assessment of secondary school library print materials and services in Onitsha North local government area. It is also in line with this that the study set to assess the level at which information resources and services are made available and relevance services provided to the users. However, Crossley and Murby (1994) revealed that the inadequacy of relevant information resources in school libraries contributed to low levels of student performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Libraries are referred to as places as well as agencies that acquire and disseminate information. They are charged with the responsibility of collecting, processing and preserving information materials. In support, Ilo (2008) and Nwalo (2003) defined a library as an agency that is in charge of collection, processing, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users. Libraries are indispensable and vital subset of any institution of learning or organization. They are also the center point around which academic activities revolve. Acknowledging the central role of libraries, Aguolu (cited in Salifu, 2014) stated that one cannot expect an excellent academic programme in any secondary school without the hold up of well-equipped libraries.

A school library can be referred as an organized collection of print and non-print resources placed in a school for the use of the teachers and students. It involves books of references and books for home reading and these books are put in the care of a professional librarian, teacher or teacher librarian. Ekpu (2000) says that libraries have a common objective of collecting books, newspapers, periodicals, magazines, photographs and other forms of records which they assemble, process, preserve and organize in such a manner that will meet the educational, informational and recreational needs of the clientele. In view of these library definitions, the researcher refers library as a place where professionally selected and acquired print and non-print materials are processed and systematically, orderly arranged for easy retrieval, location, research and use.

The availability of current print resources in school library promotes the accessibility by the users for without the presence of these current print resources a user cannot access anything relevant to his interest. In line with this, Njoku (2001) emphasized that most library holdings consist of out-dated and out modeled books which came into the library as gift from donors. Some of these books are either above or below the standard of reading interest of those that are supposed to use them. He further said that few or no periodicals form part of the school

library collection despite the fact that these periodicals carry more up-to-date information than books. The daily newspapers are luxury in our school libraries. Most times, what is designated for school library consists of old books that should better be sent to compost heaps. According to Warner (2003), balanced library materials have become increasingly important especially in an era that demands high level of literacy. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) materials though are costly but should be added to the library resources before it could be said to be balanced.

The quality of library services provided and the satisfaction of the users depends a great deal upon the collection made available". The importance and need for library services as a social function in communication is becoming more fundamental. In this regard, libraries and information systems should be strongly designed to serve actual needs as well as anticipated demand to its users. Sharma (2000) pointed out that it is humanly impossible for a library to have in its holding all the desired books and periodicals which its patrons need. Some materials have to be borrowed from other libraries. Hence the system of inter-library loan by libraries was adopted. By the above point, librarians are advised to be involved in inter-library loan services so as to give information satisfaction to its clientele.

All secondary schools are required to have libraries which almost all of them possess but have the major problem of trained personnel. The libraries which are supposed to be managed by professional librarians were being looked after by a teacher or library clerk with the assistance of students in some cases. It should not be assumed that the users be trained to fit the system, rather a system be designed to fit and satisfy user's needs. A user is interested in a system that is accurate, dependable and above all, responsive to his needs. In order to render effective services to meet these actual needs. A librarian must be technically and professionally trained. If the concept of services is the pivot upon which librarianship and most importantly Onitsha North secondary school library is built, it then stands to reason to regard the provision of services as one of the most important responsibility of the library. This is the reason Opeke (2001) emphasized that all the schools have libraries but have the problem of trained personnel. He further concluded that there is no standard secondary school library in Onitsha North secondary school libraries.

Secondary school principals' place very little value on school libraries. They prefer to deploy their staff in other areas where they adjudged more important. That was why Chan (2008) lamented that some schools have up to three qualified teachers libraries on staffing, yet, none were used to manage the library. In some cases, the library was run by someone with no formal qualification of any kind. Adeyemi (2010) observed that most schools have untrained teacher librarians who work as full-time teachers and part-time librarians. Burton (2002) in discussing the importance of personnel development stated that a collection of books and other learning aids becomes a library only when competent and effective staff is present to organize and maintain the stock of books and non-book materials. This means that secondary schools should employ librarians who are specialists to man their libraries. The librarian must have sound academic and professional competence in the area of information services of the library.

Accommodation stands as one of the factors to be considered in evaluation. Accommodations embrace the library building and furniture. Therefore for effective use of library

materials and resources it is desirable that each school should have an adequate accommodation for library unit. Okonkwo (2003) in his opinion states that there must be adequate provision of space or building for the library to organize the library's work. The reverse is the case. Many secondary schools in Onitsha North, Anambra state use staff room or a small space with a few collections of library resources at their school libraries. Fundamentally, a separate library building should be the goal of any school. This research work is set to investigate into the availability and assessment of school library materials and resources in Onitsha-North L.G.A. in Anambra State.

The quality of a sound school is measured by the library because of unique position in the overall secondary school system. Libraries are the nerve centre of learning activities in post-primary school. For any secondary school to be granted accreditation in Nigeria by the post primary schools service commission- headquarter (PPSC) accreditation board, it must of necessarily provide a befitting library that were equipped with information resources such as prints and non-prints materials and including modern information technology resources to meet the academic and research needs of students teachers and other members of the school. But regrettably, many schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area have either no library or a dilapidated one. Only a few can be regarded as sound school libraries. The states of these libraries are unsatisfactory. Majority of the existing libraries have obsolete materials, inadequate space for the library users, no professional librarians, among others. This means that an English teacher may be approved to be in charge of the library. The teacher librarian as they are generally called combines his/her normal classroom teaching with their primary assignment. These are some of the problems which this study intends to examine the existing school library situation in Onitsha South local Government Area so as to determine ways of making them service oriented.

### ***Objective of the Study***

1. To determine the type of print resources available in these school libraries.
2. To determine the condition of school libraries in Onitsha South Local government Area.
3. To determine the type of library services provided by the school libraries under study.
4. Find out the availability of qualified personnel for the management of school library resources.
5. To assess how adequate these print resources are in school libraries.
6. To assess the provision of library services in school libraries.
7. To find out the factors hindering the provision of library services.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was a descriptive survey. This design was adopted because it provided the researcher the opportunity of sampling opinion from significant representative number of respondents in the area of the study. The study was carried out in Onitsha North local government Area of Anambra State. The study basically covers all the Government –owned secondary schools within Onitsha North L.G. A.

The population of the study is made up of fourteen (14) government –owned secondary schools in Onitsha South in Anambra State of Nigeria. These areas follows:-

1. Onitsha High/Our Lady's High School, Osha
2. Government Technical College, Osha

3. Metropolitan College, Osha
4. Prince Memorial High School, Osha
5. Comprehensive Secondary School, Osha
6. Washington Memo Grammar Sch., Osha
7. Inland Girls Sec. Sch, Onitsha
8. New Era Girls Sec.Sch, Osha
9. Eastern Academy Onitsha
10. Dennis Memorial Gram. School, Onitsha,
11. Community Secondary School,
12. Girls Secondary School Girls. Onitsha
13. Ado Girls Secondary School, Onitsha,
14. St Charles Secondary School

In this study all the population was used because the population is small. This simply means that there was no sampling. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire, checklist, open -ended and closed- ended questions, and oral interview. The number of questionnaire distributed was seventy (70), fifteen (15) were returned. Hence, the usable number that formed the basis for data analysis was 55. The researcher delivered the questionnaire personally to the respondents. The respondents completed the questionnaire and the researcher collected them immediately from the respondents to avoid missing any of the questionnaires. Some of the questionnaires were not filled immediately due to the pressing need of the official issues. The analysis of the data was made using frequency and percentages

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Type of print resources available in school libraries

Resources available	Respondents	Percentages
ICT Resources	-	-
Audio Visuals	-	-
Poetry	7	12.7
Newspapers and Magazines	3	5.5
Atlases and Maps	15	27.3
Dictionaries	4	7.3
Text Books	20	36.4
Novels (Fictions)	6	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above discusses the type of print resources available in school library in the North Local Government Area. 10.9% of the respondents expressed that novels (Fictions) are available in school libraries, 36.4% of text books are available, 5.5% of newspapers and magazines are available, 12, 7% of poetry are available while none of the respondents indicated that audio visuals and ICT resources were available. Meanwhile, it is very vital that ICT resources and audiovisuals resources should be available in the school libraries such as Internet, projectors, computer, among others.

**Table 2:** Condition of school libraries in Onitsha North L. G. A.

Items	Respondents	Percentages
Highly Conducive	5	9.1
Not Conducive	15	27.3
Fairly Conducive	35	27.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

The result in table 2 indicated that 9.1% of respondents accepted that the condition of the school library is highly conducive. 27.3% of the respondents agreed that the condition of the school library is not conducive while 63.6% of respondents agreed that the condition of the school library is fairly conducive. With this result, it shows that the condition of the school library is just manageable. This could be as a result of distractions and noise pollutants from other library users and next classrooms respectively.

**Table 3:** Type of library services provided by the school library

Library Services	Respondents	Percentages
Meeting users need	20	36.4
Lending Books	15	27.3
Internet Services	-	-
Book Exhibition	-	-
Shelving of Books	20	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in the table 3 above, the findings of this study revealed that the library services provided by school libraries to students were meeting users need (36.4%), lending of books (27.3), and shelving of books (36.4%), while Internet services and book exhibition were not provided by the school library. Since library is the heart beat of any institution, it is very vital to have services of these natures because the world is globally technologically inclined.

**Table 4:** Availability of qualified personnel for the management of school library and services

Availability of qualified Personnel	Frequency	Percentages
Professional Librarians	-	-
Library Assistants/ officers	5	9.1
English Teachers	35	63.6
Library Prefect	15	27.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that no professional librarian manages the school libraries, a few number of respondents (9.1%) agreed that library assistants/ officers manages the school library, a large number of 63.6% accepted that English teachers manage library and while 27.3% stood in for library prefects. From this result, it simply shows that there are no professional trained librarians available to manage the school libraries effectively and efficiently.



**Table 5:** Assessment of print resources in school library

Adequacy of Print Resources	Respondent	Percentages
Adequate	15	27.3%
Very Adequate	6	10.9%
Inadequate	34	61.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

The result in table 5 shows the assessment of print resources by the respondents. 27.3% indicated that their resources are adequate, a few respondents of 10.9% agreed print resources are very adequate while majority indicated that print resources are inadequate. This result invites the school libraries to be more involved in the acquisition of more print resources.

**Table 6:** Assessment in the provision of services by school library

Provision of services	Respondents	Frequency
Excellent	6	10.9
Good	30	54.5
Very Good	12	21.8
Fairly Good	7	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

The assessment of school library services in **table 7** indicated that only 10.9% of respondents expressed that their services are excellent, majority of 54.5% indicated good, 21.8% agreed for very good while 12.7% indicated only fairly good. This only gives a generation of pass mark.

**Table 7:** Factors hindering the provision of print resources and services

Hindrances Faced	Respondents	Frequency
Non- availability of current print resources	20	36.4
Lack of professional librarians	12	21.8
Limited reading hours	6	10.9
Lack of reading facilities (infrastructures)	9	16.4
Retrieval of print resources from shelves	8	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 above indicated that the most hindering factor against the provision of school library resources and services is non-availability of current print resources (36.4%), 21.8% agreed on lack of professional librarians, 10.9% said limited reading hours, 16.4% mentioned lack of reading facilities (infrastructures), and 14.6% agreed on retrieval of print resources from the shelves. So there is need to improve on the provision of these resources and services for the school libraries in Onitsha North in Anambra state.

## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

1. The findings of the study revealed that print resources mostly available are textbooks, with 36.4% as indicated by the respondents.
2. It was also observed that 63.6% of the respondents agreed that the condition of the school libraries is fairly conducive which seems to be manageable.
3. The findings also revealed that the type of library services mostly provided by the school libraries were meeting users need 36.4% and shelving of books (36.4%).
4. It was also established in the findings that 63.6% of English teacher who are not professionally trained are mostly manage the library.
5. The findings also indicated that the major factors that hinders the provision of school library resources and services is non-availability of current print resources 36.4% and lack of professional librarian (21.8%).
6. It was observed in the findings that the assessment of print resources in school libraries in Onitsha North which is (61.8%) are inadequate.
7. Finally, based on the findings, it was found that (54.5%) of the respondents indicated in the assessment of library services to be good.

## **CONCLUSION**

Generally, libraries are the heartbeat of any institution. It is also the power house of any good learning institution. In secondary schools, libraries are bedrock and vital instrument of education. More so, library is a general laboratory and a meeting point of all disciplines in the school curriculum.

In respect to the findings of the study, it is evidence that some of the school libraries do not meet up the standard required or mapped out for equitable school libraries as follows: - most print resources are obsolete, some of library services are not obtainable, lack of professional librarians, inadequate funds for provision of library resources and services, lack of ICT facilities, Internet and reading carrels. The text books were mostly available but cannot be fully utilized by the students due to lack of professional trained librarians who can catalogue and classify these print resources so to be easily retrieved by the students.

Therefore, it can be deduced from the findings that the degree of print resources available and provision of library services in Onitsha North local government area, Anambra state were below average. Even the resources and services available are grossly inadequate to achieve the target goal of the schools. Therefore, the acquisition of library resources and services needed to be improved so to enhance teaching and research by students and staff.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made for the assessment of library resources and services in school libraries in Onitsha North local government area.

1. There should be acquisition of current print resources, audio visual and ICT facilities.

2. School libraries should use various methods of acquisition such as solicitation, exchange, inter library loan to increase the print resources and equipment in the library and also be of assistance to the other library that are unable to afford enough information resources.
3. The world is globally inclined in information communication and technology. Students should be provided with ICT facilities and Internet services and allowed to have access to them.
4. Professional librarians should be employed to manage the libraries. Additionally, the English teacher should be trained and allowed to attend workshops.
5. The librarian should encourage students to use more current services in order to be current and be up-to-date in the quest and research of Knowledge.
6. Federal, state, local government, well-meaning individual and non-government agencies should participate in equipping school libraries by allocating greater parts of its annual budget to education.
7. All schools should have a special building set apart for library. This will help in the storage of proposed print resources, audio visuals and Internet services.
8. The librarian should encourage and guide to inculcate reading habits in the students. More library instructions on the use of library should be included in their curriculum to enable students make use of library and retrieval of print resources easily.

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