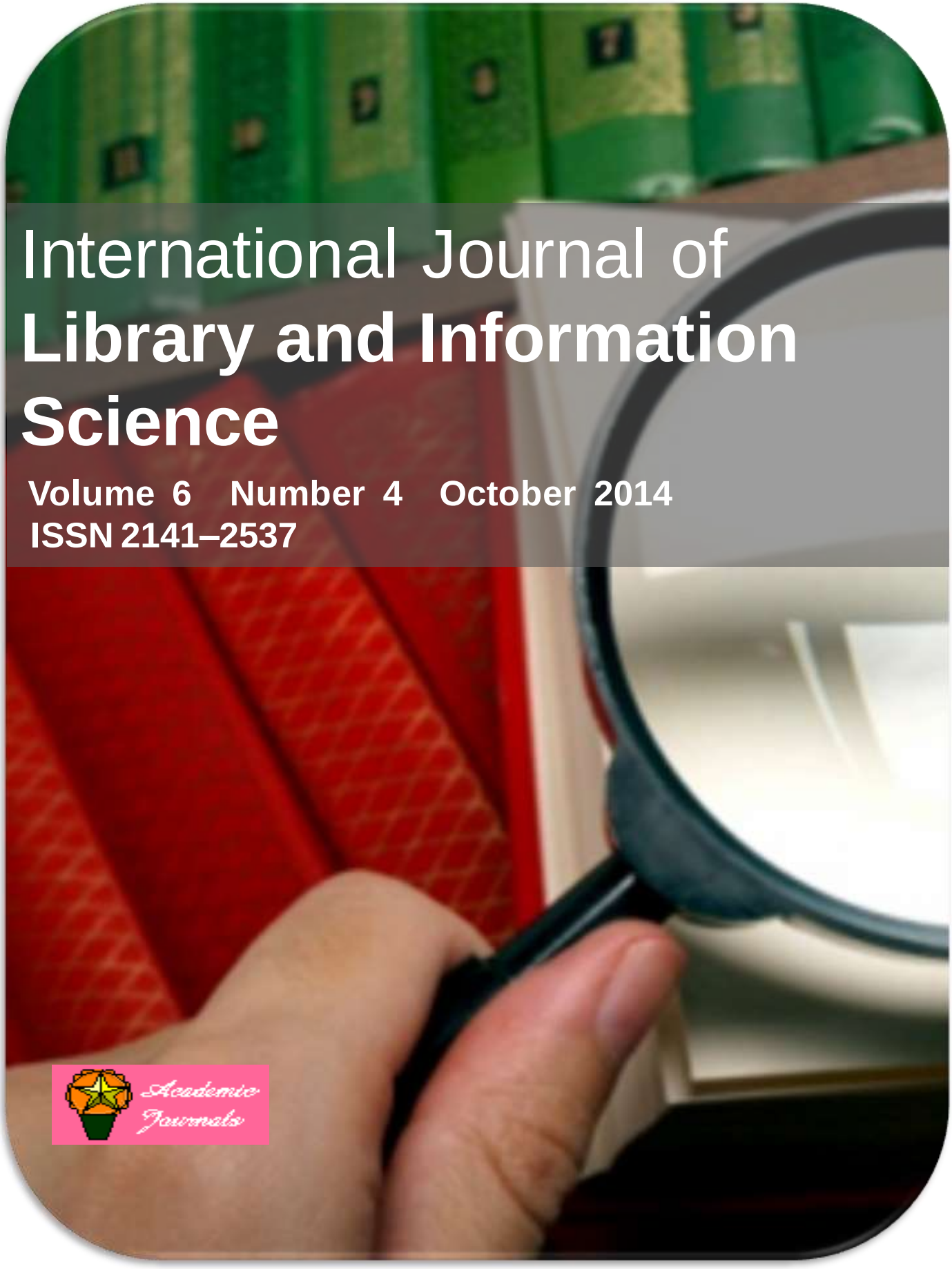

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Full Length Research Paper

Strengthening information technology in Pakistani libraries

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Advances in computer technology combined with communication technologies have exerted unprecedented pressures for change on libraries. This study investigated the measures to be taken for strengthening information technology in Pakistani libraries. The critical issue identified provides closer insight into the issues affecting overall implementation of IT. This study found out that condition of IT implementation in Pakistani libraries is very pathetic. It highlights the status of existing information technology facilities in Pakistani libraries. It highlights the barriers in the way of IT implementation e.g. scarcity of funds, low level of IT education in library schools, shortage of expertise, obsolete syllabi of library schools, no arrangement for continuing education, lack of planning in IT implementation projects. There seems to be a direct correlation between the IT education in library schools and level of IT implementation in libraries. There is a widening chasm between LIS education in developing countries and those in developed countries. In the light of research questions data were analyzed and elaborated. On the basis of findings, recommendations were given.

Key words: IT education, IT implementation Pakistani libraries

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN PAKISTANI LIBRARIES

The library environment is currently undergoing a rapid and dynamic change. Today, library means not only a storehouse of books and documents but also a service institution. There is an increasing demand for processing of data and retrieval of information in the quickest possible time. Libraries are in a business of information with their various functions such as acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination. This is the age of information explosion. The traditional tools and techniques are inadequate and slow to harness the flooding information. Therefore, it is inevitable to take help from science and technology for collecting, storing and disseminating information to cater to the increasingly sophisticated needs of information seekers. The modern system of information technology helps a fast flow of information stored or generated at any place if connected through any networking system. This can speed up the decision, the research or educational activity with more factual, latest and comprehensive coverage of information available world over.

According to the Webster's new encyclopedia (1992), information technology is the collective term for the various technologies involved in the processing and transmission of information. They include computing, telecommunication and microelectronics, whereas information technology is a development of information sources handled by computers and communicated by electronic channels, databases can thus be accessed by telephone and television links, and computer output can be transmitted in an electronic format directly to a remote

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receiver.

Rowley (1998) opines that Information technology means the collection, storage, processing, dissemination and use of information. It is not confined to hardware and software, but acknowledges the importance of man and goals he sets for employed in making the choices,the assessment criterion used to decide whether he is controlling and being enriched by it.

Libraries and librarians have often adopted the major information technologies of their age in order to provide information to their patrons. The librarians of Assyria adopted the medium of the mud brick and filled their libraries with thousands of clay tablets to provide a written record of the laws, deeds, and accounts of their rulers. The Egyptians used paper made from papyrus to store their documents. Later, the library at the Ancient Greek city of Paragon adopted the use of parchment as the medium for storage. In late antiquity, the parchment scroll gave way to the codex or book. Paper made from wood gradually replaced parchment, although the form of the book remained relatively unchanged. Although the book continues to be one of the main methods of storing information, computers, beginning with large time-shared machines in the late 1950s and continuing with the small, powerful personal computers of today, have taken over many, if not most, of the information storage and other functions of the library (Morgan, 1999).

Information technology emerged after the convergence of data processing techniques and telecommunications, the former providing the capability for processing and storing information; the later serving as a vehicle for communicating it. The application of computers and communication technology has provided one of the best innovations in the history of libraries, and changed their role from 'holding to access' (Wilkins, 1995).

Abbas and Charles (2003) remarked that,

Technology is a second aspect of the external environment that affects the organization in its strategic management process. In the past two decades, technology has changed drastically. Although technology is commonly interpreted as applying to automation, it has a broader meaning and is defined as the systematic application of scientific knowledge to practical purposes, including new ideas, inventions, techniques, and/or materials. The broader concept of technology could include a new method of planting trees. Since most industries' competitive advantages are predicated upon some type of advanced technology that changes rapidly, many industries are highly dynamic, e.g., electronics.

The short history of computer IT development can be divided into three eras: the mainframe era from the 1950s to the 1970s, the microcomputer era from the 1980s to the early 1990s, and the Internet era from the 1990s to the present. The mainframe era is characterized by centralized computing, where all computing needs were serviced by powerful computers at the computer center.

The proliferation of microcomputers led to decentralized computing. Computing resources become readily accessible to more users. This is a period that witnessed improved user performance and decision-making quality. When computer networks became pervasive in the Internet era, decentralized computing evolved to distributed computing, where computing resources are located in multiple sites, as in decentralized systems; but all of the computing resources are connected through computer networks. People in the Internet era are far more empowered than in previous eras, because they have access to not only technology tools as before, but also to shared knowledge from others.

In 1968, computers were first used in Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Center (PASTIC). PASTIC helped to produce the country's first Union Catalogue of Scientific Periodicals, and profiles of 100 scientists. In 1990s, Netherlands Library Development Project (NLDP) for Pakistan was started which influenced the library scenario significantly. Ramzan (2002) said that establishment of libraries in institutions like Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIK) of Engineering Sciences and Technology, Dr. A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories, The Aga Khan University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Hamdard university, FAST-National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, National University of Sciences and Technology, and other institutes have accelerated the pace of IT application in their libraries. The reasons for this advancement could be their user levels, highly qualified faculty, students, and competent library staff.

The Netherlands Library Development Project (NLDP) for Pakistan, which was started during the 1990s, influenced the library scenario significantly, a fact which is well acknowledged by library professionals. They worked very closely with Pakistan Library Association and contributed in introducing information technology, in the development of human resource management, hardware provision, software development, information networking, and curriculum development. They helped in accelerating the overall IT environment and created awareness amongst librarians, and removed their hesitation. In addition, they provided a platform for further activities (Mahmood, 1998a, b). Shafique and Mahmood (2010) described the present scenario of information technology development in libraries and said that "The basic hurdle in the proper use of available information systems and networks is that existing information systems are not robust and well planned, as a result unable to facilitate the actual users in realistic planning and decision making" (p.15).

Haq and Ahmed (2012) said that,

No doubt, Pakistan is advancing but the present scenario manifests gloomy picture in this regard and Pakistan ranked 98th out of 134 countries. This is indicative of a weak information and communication technology base. In order to improve its network connectedness, Pakistan

Table 1. Types of libraries participated in the survey.

Rank	Type	Frequency	Percent
1	University	24	31.20
2	College	6	7.80
3	Public	7	9.10
4	Special	35	45.40
5	Others	5	6.50
Total		77	100.00

should invest more in ICT infrastructure, related services and more broadly, innovation. ICT has encouraged transparency in government processes and improved countries' efficiency and services to citizens (http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/haq-ahmad.htm).

Statement of the problem

Keeping in view the previous discussion, it seems desirable that information technology facilities in Pakistani libraries should be surveyed, problems of libraries in using information technology should be found out and measures to be taken to strengthen the information technology facilities in Pakistani libraries should be suggested.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the existing information technology facilities provided in Pakistani libraries;
2. Search out the barriers in the way of modernization of IT facilities existing in Pakistani libraries;
3. Find out the measures to be taken and give recommendations for strengthening IT facilities in Pakistani libraries.

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to unveil the existing information technology facilities in Pakistani libraries. Attempts made by librarians to implement information technology facilities in Pakistani libraries were analyzed. Barriers in the way of IT implementations were found out. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology was used to increase the validity rate. This study was conducted in three phases. In the first phase of research, a comprehensive review of literature was carried out. That helped to understand previous studies and formulate new questions. In the second phase, on the basis of literature review's findings, instrument for data collection were developed. The researcher collected the primary data through library survey and interviews of library science experts. A random sample of 100 libraries was selected for questionnaire survey. Having at least one computer in the library was included in the sample. To apprehend the real situation, questionnaires were filled up by the professional librarians. Likert scale is "a summative scale based on responses to a set of statements for which respondents are asked to their degree of agreement or disagreement" (Portney and Watkins, 1993, p.686). Likert scale of five options was used for taking the concern of respondents:

1. Strongly disagree (SDA)
2. Disagree (DA)
3. Undecided (UD)
4. Agree (A)
5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Seventy seven questionnaires were analyzed. Response rate was given in the following Table 1.

Qualitative data regarding strengthening of existing information technology facilities in Pakistan's libraries were collected by interviewing library experts. With the consultancy of senior professional colleagues, a list of library leaders/experts was prepared. Interview time was taken from the interviewees resided in the cities of Pakistan (Lahore, Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Faisalabad) through phone calls. On the basis of literature review and with the help of some senior professionals, an unstructured questionnaire for interviews was developed. It was sent to the interviewees on their request. An interview schedule was prepared. The researcher visited respondents at their offices or homes according to the schedule of visit, and interviewed them with the help of an audio tape recorder. Eighteen Interviewees were interviewed. Eight research questions were developed.

1. What is the status of information technology in Pakistani libraries?
2. Are funds available for the development of information technology in libraries?
3. Do library schools impart proper education to their students?
4. Are library school's syllabi updated to cope with the frequent changes in technology?
5. Is there any regular arrangement for the continuing education of professionals?
6. What methods and measures should be taken for successful development of information technology in libraries?

FINDINGS RELATING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Efforts were made to answer eight research questions set out for this study. Major findings regarding these questions are summarized below.

What is the status of information technology in Pakistani libraries?

The condition of IT implementation in Pakistani libraries is very pathetic. This study revealed that 39% did not have internet access, while 59% did not have intranet and 25% of the libraries were using purchased software. In purchased software, 9% were using LAMP which is outdated now. Others were working manually or using donated or in house developed software which does not keep standards. This reflects a rather discouraging position with regard to the availability and usage of even the most common IT tool.

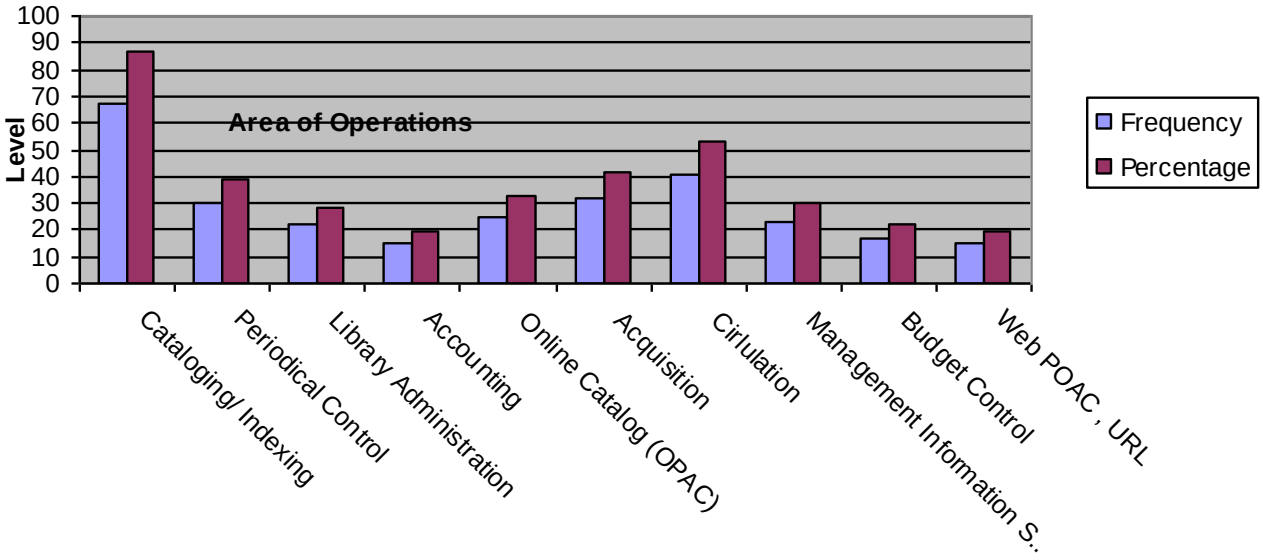

Figure 1. View of computerisation of libraries operation

The position with relatively more sophisticated IT application was even more discouraging. With respect to hardware, key tools such as CD Writers, projector and printer etc. were available only in a very small number of cases. For example, 77% of the respondent did not have microfilm reader, 79% did not have microfiche reader, 75% did not have barcode reader, 64% did not have Multimedia projector, 43% did not have CD Writer, 85% did not have DVD drive, 64% did not have fax machine. Even a sizeable number of respondents, 35% were without photocopying facility.

In case of software, only 25% of the libraries purchased library software. Among them, a very small number were according to the international standards. 38% were using donated softwares which have their own draw backs and limitation. 19.50% used in house developed software. Standards were not maintained in their development.

A glance at computerization of libraries operations shows that 87% of cataloguing/indexing of libraries is computerized (Mahmood, 1999), while 39% periodical control, 29% of library administration, 15% accounting, 33% online catalogue, 42% acquisition, 53% circulation, 30% management information system and 22% budget control were computerized which is not very hopeful (Figure 1).

As library services were analyzed, by using internet only 8% provide reference services through voice chat, 21% has web OPAC, 38% provide SDI (Figure 2) (selective dissemination of information) through internet, 58% provide CAS (current awareness services).

A large majority of the interviewees perceived the poor status of information technology implementation in Pakistani libraries. In the eyes of the interviewees, IT implementation in Pakistani libraries has been started but it has no comparison with developed countries. We are much behind. One of the respondents mentioned that we are at least one hundred years behind the developed countries in every field of life. Some of the respondents disclosed that standards are not maintained in information technology projects' implementation. Some of the interviewees professed that the minimum level of information technology is being used in libraries of Government sector. Most of them were of the opinion that condition is very pathetic. Some confessed that condition in private sector is comparatively better than government. Respondents divided the IT implementation case into two sections: private and government sector. In the opinion of the experts of librarianship, updating of libraries with the frequent changes of technology is the marketing requirement of private sector. They want to market their products, their departments and even their strategy. They give IT base education; therefore they are well aware of the importance of information technology and want its implementation. There is hardly such a library in private sector which is using card catalog. Most of them are using OPAC. Government universities are improving in this regard. With the help of HEC some universities are taking individual initiatives.

Are funds available for the development of information technology in libraries?

A majority (66.30%) of respondents agreed that expenditure for IT maintenance and supplies is very high as compared to printed resources, fifty three (68.90%) of the respondents mentioned that special staff training budget is not provided, fifty six (72.80%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that cost of IT tools is very

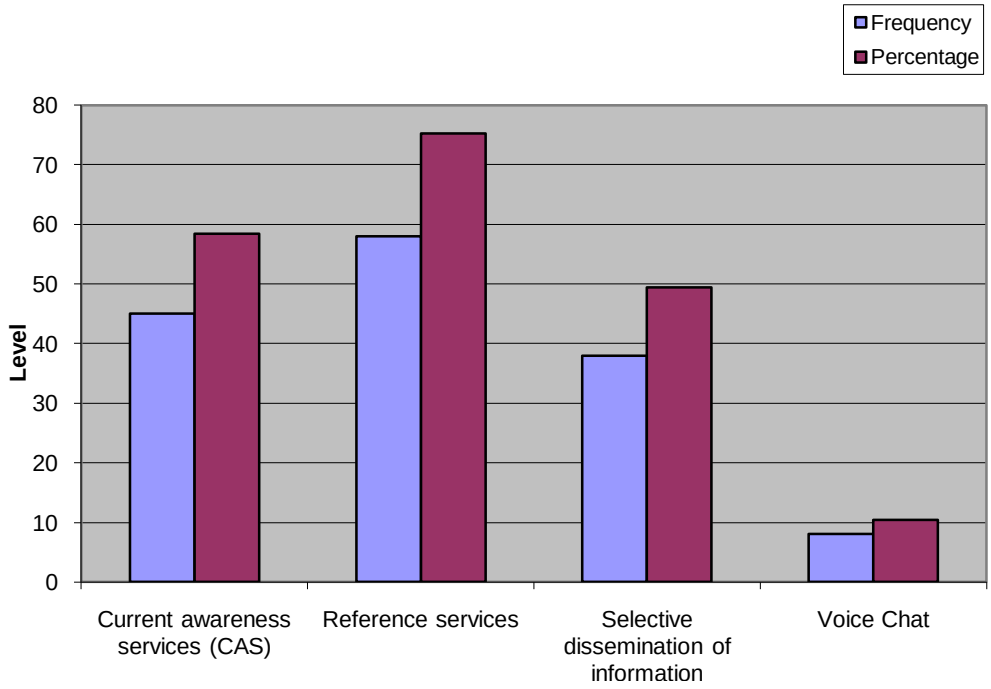

Figure 2. Provision of certain facilities through internet.

high. The majority, (66.30%) of the respondents gave their opinion in favor of the absence of special IT maintenance budget (Table 2).

Eleven interviewees said that fund is not a problem. Most of them mentioned that if librarian is competent and he is fully aware of the changes in information technology and can present his requirement in the effective ways, he can get funds. Some of the respondents stated that IT implementation is the priority of this government but not the IT implementation in libraries. Some of them were of the opinion that libraries have not been on the priority of the government. Policy makers in this country do not know the importance of libraries in social and economic development. Some of them stated that education is the last priority of the Government and in education libraries stands on the last which is the most common reason for poor funding. Some of them informed that government is not aware of IT benefits in libraries; they consider it a luxury. The respondents gave reason that our professional associations and our parent department are weak: 'We don't have forums to convey our problems or requirements. If we get such forums, funds will be no more problem for us'.

Some of the interviewees explained that funds in public universities are not a problem. Some suggested that librarian should first improve his services and generate the requirement. Librarian must first create will and then should strive for the way. Some of the respondents expressed with sorrow that Government sector is suffering with the scarcity of funds. Some professed that funds are available but are not used for library purposes. They said that mostly the budget allocated for library is used in some other areas. One of the respondents expressed with sorrow that donor agencies who work for the development of developing countries do not work for the development of libraries, neglecting this fact that libraries can play an important role in indirect education.

Do library schools impart proper education to their students?

A large majority of interviewees perceived that library schools are not providing proper information technology education to their students. One of the contestants scholarly said, "Information technology is the marriage of information and technology'. There will be no progress until information and technology remains separate. Library schools have to take a policy decision. Presently they are trying to make librarians computer literate. The education which they are imparting is basically user end awareness. They can be aware and intelligent user of the computer but they cannot exploit the features of the computer.

Another respondent expressed his views that library schools gave very cold response toward IT. They can play a key role in the promotion of IT education. However, it is a paradigm shift and they did not change themselves with changing trends. This paradigm has been shifted from information management to knowledge management but still does not understand information management.

Table 2. Insufficient funds.

Insufficient funds	Mean	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
		F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%
Cost of IT tools is very high	3.70	18 (23.40%)	38 (49.40%)	04 (05.20%)	14 (18.20%)	03 (03.90%)
Expenditure for IT maintenance and supplies is very high as compared to printed resources.	4.01	15 (19.50%)	36 (46.80%)	03 (03.90%)	18 (23.40%)	05 (06.50%)
IT has bad effects on regular budgeting provision	2.64	06 (07.80%)	14 (18.20%)	09 (11.70%)	42 (54.50%)	06 (07.80%)
Special IT maintenance budget is not provided.	3.69	20 (26.00%)	31 (40.30%)	08 (10.40%)	18 (23.40%)	----
Special staff training budget is not provided.	3.79	25 (32.50%)	28 (36.40%)	09 (11.70%)	13 (16.90%)	02 (02.60%)

Table 3. Library school's syllabi.

Library school's syllabi	Mean	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
		F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%
Syllabi of Pakistani library schools are obsolete and not updated with the frequent changes in Technology.	4.27	37 (48.10%)	30 (39.00%)	04 (05.20%)	06 (07.80%)	

Table 4. Faculty in library schools.

Faculty in library schools	Mean	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
		F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%	F/%
There is shortage of basic computer competency in library staff.	3.68	19 (24.70%)	36 (46.80%)	03 (03.90%)	16 (20.80%)	03 (03.90%)
Library schools in Pakistan lack expertise and facilities needed to teach students the latest technological developments.	4.47	43 (55.80%)	28 (36.40%)	05 (06.50%)	01 (01.30%)	

The majority (92.20%) of the interviewees agreed with the statement that Pakistani library schools lack expertise and facilities needed to teach students the latest technological developments (Table 4). A significant number (71.50%) of the respondents agreed that there is shortage of computer competency in library staff. The library leadership in Pakistan is of the opinion that lack of expertise is the main reason of poor IT education in Pakistani library schools.

Is there any regular arrangement for the continuing education of professionals?

In response to the statement that there are no training centers to facilitate continuing education for staff, thirty three (42.90%) respondents agreed with the statement, thirty (39.00%) strongly agreed, ten (13.00%) disagreed. Only one of the respondents strongly disagreed, while three (3.90%) remained undecided. The mean score, 4.05 indicates the high level of respondents' agreement with this problem.

Table 5. Continuing education.

Continuing education	Mean	SA F/%	A F/%	UD F/%	DA F/%	SDA F/%
There are no training centers to facilitate Continuing education for staff.	4.05	30 (39.00%)	33 (42.90%)	03 (03.90%)	10 (13.00%)	01 (01.30%)
Refresher courses for library staff are not Conducted on regular basis.	4.42	41 (53.00%)	31 (40.30%)	01 (01.30%)	04 (05.20%)	
No research literature is available on the use of IT in Pakistani libraries.	3.68	23 (29.90%)	29 (37.70%)	03 (03.90%)	21 (27.30%)	01 (01.30%)

Majority of the respondents agreed that there is shortage of computer competency in library staff, nineteen (24.70%) strongly agreed, thirty six (46.80%) agreed, sixteen (28.08%) disagreed, three (3.90%) strongly disagreed, while three (3.90%) remained undecided. The mean score shows overall agreement at 3.68 level.

Twenty three (29.90%) strongly agreed with the statement that no research literature is available on the use of IT in Pakistani libraries, twenty nine (37.70%) agreed, twenty one (27.30%) disagreed and three (3.90%) remained undecided. There is only one respondent who strongly disagreed with the statement. The mean score, 3.68 indicates the overall respondents' agreement with this problem.

A large majority of the interviewees stated that there is no arrangement for the continuing educating of librarians (Table 5). One of the respondents mentioned that libraries in educational institutions are set up only to get affiliation with the university. A professional librarian and fix number of books are the requirement of UGC. It is not bothered either the services are provided or not. Our minister of science and technology purchased the databases and distributed in the universities free of cost. But the community who will provide the services was not prepared for it. No training programs have been arranged researchers can get maximum benefits from these resources. One of the respondents criticized the librarians and said that you may blame the government but you never present any concrete proposal to her. It needs a team work, and sincere efforts and sincere leadership is scanting in this community.

One of the respondents professed that library courses and visits are offered. What happens? Non professionals are sent instead of librarians. Some of the respondents stated that refresher courses for library staff are not conducted on regular bases.

What methods and measures should be taken for successful development of information technology in libraries?

A large majority (98.00%) of the respondents strongly recommended that libraries budget should be increased in order to acquire hardware, software and IT based collections. Majority (98.00%) of the respondents suggested that special IT maintenance budget should be provided for libraries. A significant number 70(90.90%) recommended that charging for IT facilities should be planned carefully as users are not used to pay for printed sources.

One of the respondents suggested that government should give funds or should make education a full fledge industry. He alleged that education is one of third largest industry in Germany. In this way the institutions in Government sector will manage every thing on their own. They will have to compete in the market and have to improve them with the latest technologies.

Some suggested that library should market its services. Subject of marketing must be introduced in Library Science syllabus. A term Philanthropy is used in NGOs nowadays. You gather the people and arrange seminars. You get some contribution from it, and then request some persons and institutions to renovate your library. You may give them marketing incentives and improve library services. However you have to strive for betterment. They recommended that library foundations like Punjab Library Foundation should be established in all provinces. Some of the interviewees appreciated the efforts of HEC and especially of Dr. Ata-Ur-Rehman and expressed their hopes for betterment. Now there is a ray of light which will lead us towards our destination. Majority (96.10%) of the respondents recommended that Government should support the research on IT facilities in Pakistani libraries.

Majority (96.10%) of the respondents suggested that librarians should be trained in marketing techniques to offer IT based services effectively. Seventy two (93.50%) respondents suggested that library schools should invite bright students by giving them incentives. Seventy five (97.40%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that library schools should have the expertise and facilities to teach students the latest technological development. Most of the respondents recommended that practical aspect of the training should be given more importance. Computer labs should be opened for students' practice.

Seventy four (96.10%) respondents and eleven of the interviewees strongly recommended that syllabus should

be updated to cope with the frequent changes in technology. Few of the Library experts suggested that as library schools have started self finance, they must keep up the minimum standards of private sector, e.g. what are the trends and needs of the market, how we can improve our IT education which will practically be beneficial for students in the field. Some of them said that a blend of library and computer science is needed for creating expertise in this field. One of the interviewees suggested that 50% subject of library science and 50% subjects of information technology must be taught in library science departments.

Some interviewees recommended that library schools should have expertise to teach students latest technological developments. Teacher of library schools should be sent for fellowship and Government should support them for improving IT skills. Some of the interviewees recommended the provision of needed equipment to teach students about the latest technological developments. Some of the respondents stressed on the need to recruit bright students in library science departments. They suggested that aptitude test must be taken at the time of admission. Some of them showed their hopes about the IT implementation policy of HEC.

Data collected through survey and interviews revealed that majority of respondents strongly suggested that seminars/ workshops should be conducted at least once a year for discussing the latest technological developments in the field. Seventy three (94.80%) respondents strongly recommended that IT training programs should be arranged for new recruitment. A significant number i.e. Seventy four (96.10%) respondents agreed with the statement that IT training centres should be established to facilitate continuing education. Most of the interviewees suggested that library schools should play basic role in the training of librarians. Need oriented courses should be introduced. Some of the respondents expressed their views about the role of PLA (Pakistan Library Association). They said that PLA should play an active role and directory of librarians must be compiled.

One of the respondents said that HEC should make it compulsory for the institution to arrange for the continuing education of the librarians. Some of them recommended that government should arrange for it. While another said that the system of continuing education must be imbedded in the promotion setup.

Few of the respondents strongly stressed the need to separate and fully authorize national library and department of library science for the implementation of rules. Their heads must be dedicated. Another respondent said that Pakistan library Association must play an active role in the implementation of information technology and its head quarter should not be rotated. It should be made compulsory for the librarians to get the registration of Pakistan Library Association. Job structure of librarian must be improved. One of the respondents strongly recommended the establishment of a committee on nation level. This committee will work for the development of IT in libraries. It will present the projects and gather the scattered ideas and efforts on one platform. Through this committee we can get the benefits of IT in the real sense. One of the respondents scholarly said that creation of nationalism is strongly needed in this society.

Conclusion

The condition of IT implementation in Pakistani libraries is very pathetic. It is not conceived in the real sense. Standards are not maintained in the implementation of IT projects. Situation in private sector is better than government sector. Public universities are improving in this regard.

There is a scarcity of funds in government sector. The reason for this dilemma is poor economy of Pakistan and policies of the government. In private sector funds are not a problem; if librarian is competent and he is fully aware of the latest technologies and can present his requirement in effective ways he can get funds. Librarians do not have forums to convey their problem and requirements; if they get such forums, funds will be no more problem for them. Funds in public universities are not a problem.

Library schools are not providing proper information technology education to their students. The education which they are imparting is basically user end awareness. They can be aware and intelligent user of the computer but they cannot exploit the features of the computer. Syllabi of Pakistani library schools are obsolete and not updated with the frequent changes in technology. Practical aspect of the training is very weak. Pakistani library schools lack expertise to teach students the latest technological developments.

There is no arrangement for the continuing education of library professionals. Refresher courses for staff are not conducted on regular bases. Recommendations are shaped on the basis of findings and conclusion, which will not only facilitate the library planners of the future in Pakistan but will also be equally beneficial for the libraries of other developing countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IT implementation in Pakistan libraries is still in the stage of infancy. It has no comparison with the developed countries. We are at least one hundred years behind. We should keep it in consideration and should not try to jump that level at once. Hard work and gradual efforts are needed to reach the destination. For getting maximum benefits, information technology in Pakistani
2. libraries must be conceived in the real sense. We must maintain standards in the implementation of IT projects.
3. Library budget should be increased in order to acquire

hardware, software and IT based collections.
4. Special IT maintenance and special staff training budget should be provided to libraries.
5. Library schools should invite bright students by offering them incentives.
6. Librarians should be trained in marketing techniques to offer IT based services effectively. Charging for IT facilities should be planned carefully. Gradually users should be convinced to pay for IT based services by using marketing techniques
7. Continuing education must be regarded as a normal practice in the profession
8. Our education system should be library oriented. The students must be given assignments and compelled to use the given resources in the library.
9. Integrate digital library concept in the curriculum of all disciplines of studies at least at graduation and post graduation level.
10. A committee on national level should be established who work for the IT in libraries. It will develop and present the projects for IT development, and will gather the scattered ideas and efforts on one platform to get the benefits of IT in the real sense.
11. The department of library science and national library must be separated and fully authorized to implement the rules. Their leadership must be sincere and dedicated which is scanting in this profession.
12. Librarian should be independent for funds and IT development plans. Status of librarian must be upgraded.
13. New rules and regulations must be devised to accommodate technology based materials and services.
14. Foundations like Punjab library foundation should be established in all provinces that work for the development of information technology in libraries.
15. Electronic document should be developed locally.
National information policy and National information infrastructure must be developed. Standards for information technology implementation in Pakistani libraries must be developed.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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A survey on the present status of engineering college libraries in Sri venkateswara University area, Andhra Pradesh, India

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The data collected from 29 librarians of engineering college libraries in S.V. University area, Andhra Pradesh, India indicate that all the engineering college libraries work from 9-11 h a day during working days. Most of the librarians (75.9%) possess M.L.I.Sc degree along with post-graduate degree in arts, science or commerce. A high percentage of them (41.4%) get UGC Pay Scales. Most of the libraries (86.2%) follow open access system. Majority of the libraries acquire books from local distributors/agents (55.2%) and procure periodicals directly from publishers (89.7%). Most of the libraries (93.1%) classify books using Dewey Decimal Classification. Most of them (96.6%) catalogue books using either AACR-2 or one of the catalogue modules of various software packages. All the libraries offer circulation, reference and reprographic services. Majority of the libraries offer Internet facility (86.2%), referral service (75.9%) and newspaper clipping service (68.9%). A few of them offer document reservation facility (41.4%), and abstracting and indexing service (34.5%). A majority of engineering college libraries (79.3%) have no separate buildings. All libraries have display racks, water cooler, reprographic equipment, and computers. A majority of them have catalogue cabinets (75.9%) and microfilm readers cum printers (68.9%). A few recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

Key words: Working hours, access system, classification, cataloguing, internet facility and services.

INTRODUCTION

Engineers invent, design, build, and produce most of the things that make up our modern civilization. Roads, bridges, dams, computers, automobiles, airplanes, telephones and thousands of other items are the results of engineering.

Engineers are important for every civilization, either ancient or modern. Nowadays, they are more important than ever before. They play a key role in the socio-economic development of any nation. They find solutions for the practical problems of the society. Engineers are

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of various types and are wide spread in various fields viz., Aerospace and Astronautical Engineering, Civil and Construction Engineering, Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Marine Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgical Engineering, Mining Engineering, Geological Engineering, Nuclear Engineering and Petroleum Engineering.

In India, engineering education is imparted at various levels namely craftsmanship, diploma, degree, post-graduate and research in specialized fields. Engineering graduates today require not only adequate technological ability and problem solving skills, but also must be endowed with soft skills like cooperative working, communication and presentation skills, business ethics and inter-personal relationships. They must also possess deep commitment to safety, reliability, quality and sustainability of all engineering activities in which they take part. Now, engineering institutions have a new responsibility of providing opportunities to every student to acquire these abilities in addition to their technological knowledge.

Importance of engineering college libraries

Libraries provide support to engineering colleges for achieving the goals and vision of respective engineering colleges through ensuring quality based library and information support services to the students, research scholars and faculty members. Librarians are professionally committed to update the collections continuously in order to reinforce and enrich the knowledge base for assisting the stakeholders of engineering colleges to achieve excellence in academic, research and development, consultancy, continuing engineering education, and interaction with external environment. With the passage of time, the needs of engineering users have been drastically changed.

Libraries are the soul of any research or academic institution. They form the most vital forum of education, especially in the field of engineering education. Due to the rapid development taking place in various fields of science and technology, it becomes imperative for the libraries to remain up-dated so that information becomes accessible to its pursuers. The main purpose of engineering libraries is to support the teaching and research programmes of engineering colleges.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The studies that were conducted on engineering college libraries are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Sharma (2001) conducted a survey on engineering college libraries in Haryana using questionnaire method. The results show that four out of sixteen librarians are on the regular basis and get proper pay scale and status as well. Ninety per cent of the libraries are kept open for eight hours a day to suit the college working hours. Seventeen responding libraries use DDC scheme to classify the library material. As far as cataloguing is concerned, 60% of the responding libraries use AACR-II and 15%, CCC while 25% of libraries did not respond to this question. Only nine libraries have the catalogue in card form. Chandra (2002) described the various factors that motivate engineering colleges for implementing resource sharing. Various considerations for networking of engineering college libraries and major potential problems for resource sharing are examined as well. Saibaba (1994) conducted a study on cooperation and networking among engineering and technological libraries in India. His study revealed that cooperation and networking among libraries facilitate saving of money and time, especially in the escalation of prices and shrinking of budget. Raj and Verma (1992) conducted a survey on engineering college libraries in India by using a mailed questionnaire method. Twenty five out of 34 libraries indicated the number of Indian and Foreign journals subscribed separately. Regarding classification, 23 libraries use Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), 8 libraries use Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) and 2 libraries use Colon Classification (CC). One library has not given any information in this regard. Regarding the Catalogue code followed, one library follows ALA Code, 14 libraries follow AACR-I, 8 libraries follow AACR-II and 11 libraries follow Classified Catalogue Code (CCC).

Need and purpose of the study

Excellent engineering colleges are essential to prepare engineers with good knowledge and skills in engineering. Teachers, laboratories and libraries are important components in providing good engineering education. Engineering college libraries have to serve a special type of users. Unless these libraries have adequate resources such as finance, building, furniture etc., they may not be able to render necessary services to their users.

The review of literature indicates that no survey has been undertaken so far on engineering college libraries with regard to their resource, services and facilities in Sri Venkateswara University area.

Hence, the present study has been undertaken with a purpose to examine the existing conditions of engineering college libraries so that the necessary measures can be undertaken to improve their sources, services and facilities.

Objectives of the study

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To examine the qualification, experience and scale of pay of librarians of engineering college libraries;

Table 1. Distribution of librarians according to their qualifications.

Qualifications	Librarians	
	No	%
P G with M.L.I.Sc.	22	75.9
P G with M.L.I.Sc. and M.Phil. (L I Sc)	06	20.7
P G with M.L.I.Sc. and Ph.D. (L I Sc)	01	03.4
Total	29	100

Table 2. Distribution of librarians according to their experience.

Experience (in years)	Librarians	
	No.	%
5 or less than 5	12	41.4
6-10	08	27.6
11-15	06	20.7
More than 15	03	10.3
Total	29	100

2. To examine the working hours of the library and to know the type of access system followed in the libraries;
3. To study the acquisition procedure of books and periodicals, and technical processing in engineering college libraries;
4. To know the procedures for lending documents in engineering college libraries; and
5. To examine the services and physical facilities of these libraries.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire method is used for collecting the required data for the present study. The questionnaire consists of questions on qualification, experience, pay scales of librarians, library working hours, access system, acquisition, classification, cataloguing, services and physical facilities. There are 36 engineering colleges in Sri Venkateswara University area at the time of investigation. This area covers the districts of Anantapur, Kadapa, Kurnool, Chittoor, and Nellore. Each college has its own library. The investigator selected 29 engineering college libraries out of 36 by simple random sampling to examine the present conditions of these libraries. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to the librarians of these engineering college libraries and the filled in copies were collected personally from them.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The data collected from the librarians were analyzed and interpreted in the following paragraphs.

Qualifications

A question has been put to the librarians to know their qualifications. The responses given by them are shown in Table 1.

It is observed from Table 1 that most of the librarians (75.9%) have P.G. with M.L.I.Sc degree, 20.7 per cent of them have P.G. with M.L.I.Sc. and M.Phil (L I Sc) and the remaining 3.4 per cent have P.G. with M.L.I.Sc. and Ph.D (L I Sc). Hence, it can be concluded that most of the librarians have P.G. with Master's Degree in Library and Information Science.

Experience

A question has been put to the librarians to know the number of years of experience they possess. The responses given by them are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that a high percentage of the librarians (41.4%) have 5 years or less than 5 years of experience, 27.6 per cent of them have 6-10 years, 20.7 per cent of them have 11-15 years and the remaining 10.3 per cent of them have more than 15 years.

Scales of Pay

In order to know the scales of their librarians working in engineering colleges, a question has been put to them. The responses given by them are shown in Table 3.

It is evident from Table 3 that a high percentage of the librarians (41.4%) get their scales of pay according to UGC, 31 per cent of them get scales of pay according to A.P. State Government and the remaining 27.6 per cent of them get consolidated pay.

Library working hours

The functioning of the library on working days and on holidays is described in the following paragraphs.

Working hours on working days

A question has been put to the librarians to know the library hours on working days. The responses given by them are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that a high percentage of the librarians (41.4%) work from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on working days; 24.1 per cent of them, from 9.30 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.; 20.7 per cent, from 9.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., and the remaining 13.8 per cent, from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. It is also evident from the study that all the libraries function

Table 3. Distribution of librarians according to their scales of pay.

Scales of pay	Librarians	
	No.	%
UGC	12	41.4
State Government	09	31.0
Consolidated pay	08	27.6
Total	29	100

Table 4. Distribution of libraries according to their working hours on working days.

Working h (a.m. – p.m.)	Libraries	
	No.	%
9.00 – 7.00	12	41.4
9.00 – 7.30	6	20.7
9.30 – 8.00	7	24.1
10.00 – 7.00	4	13.8
Total	29	100

Table 5. Distribution of libraries according to their working hours on holidays.

Working h(a.m. – p.m.)	Libraries	
	No.	%
9.00 – 12.30	15	51.7
9.00 – 1.00	9	31.1
10.00 – 2.00	5	17.2
Total	29	100

from 9 - 11 h a day on working days.

Working hours on holidays

A question has been posed to the librarians to know the library hours on holidays. The responses given by them are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that the majority of the librarians (51.7%) work from 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on holidays; 31.1 per cent of them, from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and the remaining 17.2 per cent, from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. Hence it can be concluded that all the engineering college libraries work for 3 - 4 h a day on holidays.

Access system

The library can follow either open access system or closed access system. In open access system, the reader has the freedom to choose the books he/she likes in the stack area of library. In closed access system, the reader approaches the librarians for the book he/she needs. A question has been put to the librarians to know the type of access system followed in their libraries. The responses given by them are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to type of access system followed.

Response	Librarians	
	No.	%
Open access	25	86.2
Closed access	00	00
Both	4	13.8
Total	29	100

Table 6 shows that the most of the librarians (86.2%) said that their libraries follow open access system and the remaining 13.8 per cent of them replied that their libraries follow both open access system and closed access system.

Acquisition

One of the most important activities of a library is the acquisition of library materials. These materials can be acquired by purchase, exchange and gift. The basic activities of an acquisition department include selecting and ordering materials, checking in receipts and verification of materials following upon non-receipts and paying invoices.

Methods of purchasing books

A question has been put to the librarians to know the methods of purchasing of books in their libraries. Their responses are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 shows that the majority of libraries (55.2%) acquire books from local distributors/agents, 27.6 per cent of them get directly from publishers and the remaining 17.2 per cent obtain by inviting quotations.

Subscription of periodicals

Primary periodicals usually report the results of recent researches more quickly than books. The other types of periodicals are abstracting, indexing and reviewing periodicals. All these are essential to users of engineering college libraries. Librarians were asked to know the methods of subscribing to periodicals in their libraries. The responses given by them are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 shows that the majority of librarians (89.7%) replied that their libraries procure periodicals directly from publishers and the remaining 10.3 per cent of them procure through agents.

Table 7. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to methods of purchasing books.

Methods of purchasing books	Libraries	
	No.	%
By inviting quotations	5	17.2
Directly from publishers	8	27.6
Local distributors/Agents	16	55.2
Total	29	100

Table 8. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regards to methods of subscription to periodicals.

Subscription method	Libraries	
	No.	%
Through agents	3	10.3
Directly from publishers	26	89.7
Total	29	100

Table 9. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to classification of books.

Response	Libraries	
	No.	%
Yes	27	93.1
No	02	06.9
Total	29	100

Table 10. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to classification scheme used.

Classification schemes	Libraries	
	No.	%
C.C	00	00
D.D.C	27	100
U.D.C	00	00
Total	27	100

Table 11. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to suitability of classification scheme.

Classification schemes	Libraries	
	No.	%
C.C.	00	00
D.D.C.	29	100
U.D.C	00	00
Total	29	100

Evaluation on present subscription to periodicals

According to latest AICTE norms, there should be a minimum of 12 technical journals – 6 Indian and 6 International for each branch of engineering. Librarians were asked to know the number of engineering periodicals subscribed (Indian and foreign) in each branch of engineering.

The analysis of periodicals revealed that majority of the college libraries (58.6%) fulfill the norms of AICTE with regard to the subscription of periodicals and the remaining 41.4 per cent of them do not fulfill them.

Classification and cataloguing

Every library should classify and catalogue the documents so that they should be made available to users on the shelves.

Classification of books

Irrespective of the size of the library collection, it is essential that the library classification should make each document readily available. In other words, it should enable one to locate the document immediately. A systematic arrangement will lead to maximum use of the library collection. The distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to classification of books in their libraries is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 reveals that most of the librarians (93.1%) replied that they classify books, and the remaining 6.9 per cent of them replied negatively.

Classification scheme used

The distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to classification scheme used in their libraries is shown in Table 10.

Table 10 shows that all librarians replied that their libraries use Dewey Decimal Classification scheme for classification of documents.

Suitability of classification scheme

In order to know the scheme that is suitable for classification of documents in engineering college libraries, a question has been put to librarians. The responses given by them are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 shows that all librarians opined that Dewey Decimal Classification scheme is more suitable for classifying the engineering documents.

Table 12. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to cataloguing of books.

Response	Libraries	
	No.	%
Yes	28	96.6
No	01	03.4
Total	29	100

Table 13. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to catalogue code used.

Response	Libraries	
	No.	%
AACR-II	16	57.1
Catalogue modules of Software packages	12	42.9
Total	28	100

Table 14. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to the physical form of the library catalogue used.

Physical form of catalogue	Libraries	
	No.	%
Book form	05	17.2
Shelf form	00	00
Card form	11	38.0
Computerized catalogue	13	44.8
Total	29	100

Cataloguing of books

Cataloguing is the process of creating a catalogue in libraries. This usually includes preparation of bibliographic description, determination of access points, assignment of subject headings and activities involved in physically preparing the item for the shelf. The distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to cataloguing of books in their libraries is shown in Table 12.

It is observed from Table 12 that most of the librarians (96.6%) said that the books are catalogued in their libraries, and the remaining 3.4 per cent replied negatively.

Cataloguing code used

In order to know the catalogue code used in engineering college libraries for cataloguing of documents, a question has been put to the librarians. The replies given by them are shown in Table 13.

Table 15. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to type of charging system used.

Charging system	Libraries	
	No.	%
Ledger system	7	24.1
Browne system	2	6.9
Newark system	5	17.3
Computerized system	15	51.7
Total	29	100

Table 13 shows, the majority of the librarians (57.1%) said that their libraries use AACR-II for cataloguing of books and the remaining 42.9 per cent use one of the catalogue modules of software packages.

Physical form of library catalogue

There are different types of physical forms of library catalogue, namely book form, sheaf form, card form and computerized catalogue. In order to know the physical form of library catalogue in engineering college libraries, a question has been put to the librarians. Their responses are shown in Table 14.

Table 14 shows that a high percentage of the librarians (44.8%) said that their libraries use computerized catalogue. It is obvious that 38 per cent use card form and the remaining 17.2 per cent use book form.

Charging systems

Librarians were asked to inform the charging systems used in their libraries. The responses given by them are shown in Table 15.

It is evident from Table 15 that the majority of librarians (51.7%) replied, their libraries use computerized system for issue and return of books, 24.1 per cent of them use Ledger system, 17.3 per cent of them use Newark system and the remaining 6.9 per cent use Browne system.

Services

Library services are the facilities provided by a library for the use of books and the dissemination of information. Engineering college libraries provide certain essential library services to their users. The services provided by them are circulation service, Inter-library loan service, document reservation facility, reference service, bibliographical service, indexing/abstracting service, referral service, CAS/SDI service, reprography service, newspaper clipping service and Internet facility.

In order to know the type of services provided by

Table 16. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to library services offered.

Services	Libraries			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Circulation service	29	100	00	00
Inter-library loan service	2	6.9	27	93.1
Document reservation facility	12	41.4	17	58.6
Reference service	29	100	00	00
Bibliographical service	5	17.2	24	82.8
Abstracting /Indexing service	10	34.5	19	65.5
Referral service	22	75.9	7	24.1
CAS/SDI service	10	34.5	19	65.5
Reprographic service	29	100	00	00
Newspaper clipping service	20	68.9	9	31.1
Internet facility	25	86.2	4	13.8

Table 17. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to the provision of library buildings.

Response	Libraries	
	No.	%
Yes	6	20.7
No	23	79.3
Total	29	100

engineering college libraries, a question has been put to respondents. The responses are shown in Table 16.

It is evident from Table 16 that all the libraries offer circulation, reference and reprographic services. It is also evident from the table that the majority of libraries offer Internet facility (86.2%), referral service (75.9%) and newspaper clipping service (68.9%). It is evident from the table that a few libraries are offering document reservation facility (41.4%), abstracting/indexing service (34.5%) and CAS/SDI service (34.5%). A very few libraries offer bibliographical services (17.2%) and Inter-library loan service (6.9%).

Physical facilities

Good physical facilities in the libraries are essential for comfortable reading and to sit in the library for longer hours to utilize the resources properly.

Library building

The library building itself plays a vital part in the important mission of bringing the library's materials into the lives and thinking of those who normally might not make use of this treasure house of knowledge.

Table 18. Distribution of librarians according to their responses with regard to adequacy of furniture and equipment.

Furniture and Equipment	Libraries			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Binding equipment	10	34.5	19	65.5
Book trolleys	03	10.3	26	89.6
Display racks	29	100	00	00
Catalogue cabinets	22	75.9	7	24.1
Water cooler	29	100	00	00
Vacuum cleaners	03	10.3	26	89.6
Reprographic equipment	29	100	00	00
Microform readers cum printers	20	68.9	7	24.1
Computers	29	100	00	00

A question has been put to the librarians to know the provision of a separate library buildings in their colleges. The responses given by them are shown in Table 17.

Table 17 shows, the majority of the librarians (79.3%) replied that their colleges have no separate buildings for the library and few rooms are allotted for the library. It is observed from the table that 20.7 per cent of colleges have separate library buildings.

Furniture and equipment

Among the items included in the furniture and equipment category are books shelves, chairs, tables, staff desks, vertical files, card catalogue files, small book trucks, phonograph record players, sound motion picture projectors and screens, microfilm readers, type writers, supply cupboard, staff lockers and exhibition cases. The cost of furniture and equipment will vary in relation to the amount, style and type of equipment selected.

In order to know the adequacy of furniture and equipment in engineering college libraries, a question has been put to the librarians. The responses are shown in Table 18.

It is evident from Table 18 that all the libraries have display racks, water coolers, reprographic and electronic equipment and computers. It is also evident from the table that the majority of libraries have catalogue cabinets (75.9%) and microform readers cum printers (68.9%). A few libraries have other types of furniture and equipment.

FINDINGS

The followings are the findings of the study:

1. About three-quarters of the librarians (75.9%) have PG with the M.L.I.Sc., degree.
2. A high percentage of them (41.4%) have 5 or less than 5 years of experience.

3. A high percentage of them (41.4%) get their scales of pay according to UGC norms.
4. A high percentage of the engineering college libraries (41.4%) work from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on working days. However, on holidays the majority of the libraries (51.7%) work from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
5. The majority of the libraries (86.2%) follow open access system.
6. The majority of them (55.2%) acquire books from local distributors/agents.
7. The majority of them (89.7%) procure periodicals directly from publishers.
8. Most of the libraries (93.1%) classify books using Dewey Decimal Classification. All the librarians opined that Dewey Decimal Classification scheme is more suitable to classify the engineering college books.
9. The majority of the libraries (96.6%) catalogue books either by using AACR-2 or one of the catalogue modules of software packages.
10. A high percentage of the librarians (44.8%) said that their libraries are using computerized catalogue.
11. The majority of the libraries (51.7%) use computerized system for issue and return of books.
12. All the libraries are providing circulation, reference and reprographic services.
13. The majority of them are providing Internet facility (86.2%), referral services (75.9%) and newspaper clipping service (68.9%).
14. A high percentage of them (41.4%) are providing document reservation facility.
15. More than one-third of them (34.5%) provide abstracting/Indexing service.
16. More than one-third of them (34.5%) offer CAS/SDI service.
17. The majority of colleges (79.3%) have no separate buildings for their libraries concerned.
18. All the libraries have display racks, water cooler and reprographic equipment and computers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

More than one-fourth of librarians (27.6%) are not getting either the UGC Scales of pay or State Government Pay scale; they are getting only consolidated pay. Hence, the AICTE should take necessary steps for providing UGC/State Government Pay scale to librarians working in engineering college libraries so that they can serve the users with more devotion. Hence, the Government of India, State Government and AICTE should raise the quality of education in engineering by taking appropriate measures to improve the facilities and services in engineering college libraries.

A few engineering college libraries did not classify (6.9%) and catalogue (3.4%) books. The authorities concerned should take necessary steps to classify books according to DDC and to catalogue them according to AACR 2 as the majority of engineering college libraries have been using DDC and AACR 2. For providing subject headings, all engineering college libraries can use Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), or Sears List of Subject Heading.

According to latest AICTE norms, there should be a minimum of 12 technical journals – 6 Indian and 6 International for each branch of engineering. The study revealed that 41.4% of engineering college libraries do not fulfill the norms of AICTE pertaining to the subscription of periodicals. Hence the State Government and AICTE should insist the college authorities follow the norms in this regard at the time of accreditation or inspection.

The majority of engineering college libraries do not offer Inter-library loan (ILL) service (93.1%), document reservation facility (58.6%), bibliographical service (82.8%), CAS/SDI service (65.5%), and abstracting and indexing service (65.5%). A few of the engineering college libraries do not offer referral service (24.1%) and newspaper clipping (31.3%). The libraries, which are not offering the above services, should introduce these services after ascertaining their feasibility.

As per AICTE guidelines “The central library for an admission of 240 students per year will have a carpet area of 400 sq.m. But 17.2% of libraries do not have plinth area of 400 sq.m. as per AICTE norm. The study also revealed that 79.3% of libraries do not have independent buildings. Hence, it is suggested that the library authorities concerned should take necessary steps to provide a minimum plinth area of 400 sq.m. and also construct independent buildings for their libraries if feasible.

The majority of libraries do not have binding equipment (65.5%), book trolleys (89.6%), vacuum cleaners (89.6%), catalogue cabinet (24.1%), and microform readers cum printers (24.1%). Hence, the authorities of these engineering colleges should make necessary provision for adequate equipment in their libraries concerned.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Study habits, use of school libraries and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

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The study was on study habits, use of libraries and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Survey technique was adopted for the study, and the instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Complete enumeration was the procedure used for the study. 296 copies of questionnaire were administered and retrieved but 14 copies were invalid. Thus, 284 (95%) copies were valid for analysis. Major findings of the study revealed among others that irregular use of school libraries by the students was one of the factors for poor scores in test and examination, many students did not study outside the school, and academic performance of the students was poor in Mathematics and English Language. The study concluded that study habits of the students were bad and academic performance of the students was poor. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that library study hours should be included on the school time table to allow students to have a specific time to use the school library on a regular basis; school libraries should open beyond school hours to enable the students the opportunity to study after school hours, students should find suitable and comfortable places to study outside the class each day, and amount of time used by the students for study must be increased both at school library and at home in order to devote quality time to study.

Key words: Study habits, academic performance, library influence, reading and learning, access, information.

INTRODUCTION

A good study habit is very important for good academic performance, and such every parent and teacher would desire their children to be avid and excited readers. Therefore, it is essential to create captivating, inviting and comfortable place for the students in order to help them cultivate good study habits. Library, more than any other place, provides ideal environment and vital information resources for students to develop and sustain good study habits necessary for excellent performance in academic works. Thus, it is imperative for the students to cultivate good study habits that will equip them for excellent performance in their academic work through the use of a school library. A habit is a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up. Alex

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(2011) described a habit as something that is done on scheduled, regular and planned basis that is not relegated to a second place or optional place in one's life. It was further stated that a habit is what is simply done, no reservation, no excuses and no exceptions. Thus, the habit formed can be improved upon by constant practice; and it is very hard to give up a habit once it is formed.

According to Alex (2011) … to study is to buy out the time and dedicate self to the application and task of study, and to become engrossed in a process of learning, practice, enlightenment and education of one's self. Therefore, study habit can be derived from the above as buying out a dedicated schedule and uninterrupted time to apply one's self to the task of learning. Study habit is an action such as reading, taking notes, holding study groups which the students perform regularly and habitually in order to accomplish the task of learning. Study habits can be described as effective or ineffective depending upon whether or not they serve the students well. Many of the issues concerning success in school revolve around developing good study habits. Reading habit refers to the behavior which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and taste of reading (Busayo, 2011 cited in Sangkaeo, 1999). It is a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading in order to cope with new knowledge in the ever changing world. African, and indeed Nigerians are not used to reading because the predominantly medium of communication is oral. Africans are not reading society, but chatting society; the background of learning through culture, the cultural habit of people… prefer listening and chatting to reading (Busayo, 2011, cited in Sangkaeo, 1999). In the light of this, creating good study habits is very germane to African children/students' success in schools. Traditionally, parents are often advised to have a particular study area in their home for their child's home work, stick to a specific schedule, and do one task at a time (Stephens, 2010). Parents can certainly play a major role in providing the encouragement, environment, and materials necessary for successful studying to take place at home. However, at school, library provides a quiet, well-lit study place and environment that is conducive to mental concentration. Adesoji (2007) cited Omoniwa (1995) to posit that libraries have been associated with the concept of life-long reading and learning. It was stated further that library especially school libraries are desirable in order to inculcate into the students very early in life the habit of reading for various purposes, education, pleasure, information, culture etc.

Students' academic performance is predicated on study and reading skills. There is a direct correlation between study habits and students' academic performance. Without good study and reading habits, students would not be able to perform excellently in their tests and examinations. According to Bakare (1994) as cited by Asikhia (2010) poor academic performance is any performance that falls below a desired standard. Poor academic performance of students in promotion examination or terminal examination will hinder the students from being promoted to the next class or securing admission to higher institution of learning. Poor academic performance can make the students to become frustrated. It can also lead to students' drop out especially if the poor academic performance persists for a long

Statement of the problem

Secondary school education is supposed to be bedrock and foundation toward higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. The National Policy on Education {2004} stipulated that secondary school education is an instrument for national development that fosters the worth and development of the individual for further education and development, general development of the society and equality of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children, irrespective of any real or marginal disability. However, the above mentioned aim of secondary school education is being threatened by students' poor academic performance. Asikhia (2010) attested to this and affirmed that the poor performance of secondary school students in examinations hampers the realization of aims of secondary school education in Nigeria. Poor performance in test and examination is caused by poor and defective study habits employed by the students. De Escobar (2011) argued that students need to be familiar with the relation that good study habits and academic achievement have to accomplish great success. Moghadam and Cheraghia (2008) submitted that academic performance is affected by a lot of factors; study habits is one of them. Williamson (2010) contended that many students suffer low grade in schools because of bad study habits. Also, students' failure to use the school library and its' resources to expand their study habits has a negative effect on their academic performance. Dent (2006) reported a study conducted by Lance (2000) to show that students in middle school with libraries had 18 percent higher achievement test scores than their counterparts without a library. Therefore, this study examines study habits, use of school library and academic performance of senior secondary school students to show the current trend of these variables in the secondary schools.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to find out:

1. Whether school libraries have professional staff
2. Whether the school libraries are connected to the internet
3. Find out the students' study habits.
4. Determine the pattern of students' use of school library.
5. Investigate the relationship between study habits, use

of school library and students' academic performance.

Research questions

1. Are there professional staffs in the school libraries?
2. Are the school libraries connected on the internet?
3. What are the study habits employed by the students for their academic works?
4. What is the pattern of students' use of the school library?
5. In what ways do the study habits and students' use of library influence students' academic performance?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies have shown that there is strong connection between the students' use of school library and their academic performance. Students that use the school library often perform better in test and examination than students who fail to use the school library. For instance, Wikipedia the free encyclopedia (2010) stated that researchers have demonstrated that school libraries have positive impact on students' achievement. It contended that more than sixty (60) studies have been conducted in nineteen (19) U.S. States and one Canadian province. It maintained that the major finding of these studies is that students with access to well-supported school library media programme with a qualified school library media specialist scored higher on reading assessments regardless of their socio-economic statuses. Also, it observed that a study conducted in Ohio revealed that 99.4% of students surveyed believed that their school librarians and school media programmes helped them succeed in school. It cited Lonsdale (2003) who reported a similar conclusion in Australia.

In addition, eHow (2011) posited that extensive, modern research that controlled for confounding variables such as socioeconomic students shows a positive correlation between school libraries with qualified librarians and high students' performance. Moreover, Dent (2006) conducted a research on the observations of school library impact at two rural Ugandan schools and submitted that the purpose of the study is to explore connections between the presence of a library and certain students' academic engagement indicators, such as scholastic performance, reading and library use patterns.

Research findings have revealed that there is a strong connection between the students' study habits and their academic performance. Good study habits lead to good academic performance but bad and defective study habits result to poor academic performance. Moghadam and Cheraghian (2008) corroborated the assertion and posited that academic performance is affected by a lot of factors; study habit is one of them. They claimed that considering the importance of study habits in academic performance, they embark on a research on study habits and their relationship with academic performance. De Escobar (2011) observed that students need to be familiar with the relation of good study habits and academic achievement to accomplish great success in any level of education. She contended that by learning good study habits students tend to perform better than struggling students. Also, Gettinger and Siebert (2002) asserted that effective study skills are necessary for a college student to excel academically. They further stated that student must develop these skills in order to retain information learned in the present for their future benefit. In addition, Igun and Adogbeji (2007) observed that study habits have been taken for granted, particularly in developing countries. According to them, in Africa, there is wide spread reading in all scholarly fields, but less is being achieved in writing and publication. They argued that efficient study habits can strengthen writing. They stated further that study habits and skills are particularly important for students, whose needs include time management, note taking, internet skill, the elimination of distractions, and assigning high priority to study. Moreover, they cited Fielden (2004) to state that good study habits help the student in critical reflection in skills outcomes such as selecting, analyzing, critiquing and synthesizing.

Good study habits are study techniques that enhance the students to realize their full potentials. There are tips for good study habits. The highlights of such tips as given by different researchers will be listed. Escobar (2011) listed good study habits among which are:

1. Do your home work at school
2. Prioritize your tasks
3. Involve yourself in sports/arts
4. Prepare for tests ahead of time
5. Clutter free study place

Fleming (2010) enumerated what she described as great study habits; the highlights of many of them include:

1. Write down every assignment
2. Communicate with your teacher
3. Establish a study zone at home
4. Know your dominant learning style
5. Take fabulous note

Many students suffer low grade in schools because of bad study habits. Williamson (2010) posited that some negative study habits are difficult to break and can seriously affect students grades. According to her, the followings are bad study habits that students should avoid in order to break up the bad study habits listed above; she suggested among others that students should:

1. Set a schedule
2. Get rid of distractions Get enough sleep
3. Study soon after class
4. Teach others

Other tips that can enhance good study habits are:

1.Students need to develop good time management
2.Students should acquire a vision
3.Students must choose best study schedule
4.Students must take note and rehearse them regularly

Students must not be afraid to ask for help (Wiki answer, 2011). Alegbeleye (2008) identified stages of reading skills and posited that at the secondary school level, both cognitive and affective development are unifying concepts that are considered in the reading of the secondary schools students. In addition, the following submissions were made among others:

1. Secondary school students must build a large repertoire of vocabulary and recognize tenses that are unique in specific subject area they learn at school.
2. Students develop the habit of extensive and intensive reading in content field areas and other interesting materials for greater cognitive and affective development.
3. Students learn and develop the ability to adjust reading speed according to the purpose for reading and the difficulty of materials read.
4. Students read silently and develop the habit of building more vocabulary, learning to concentrate and develop the idea of note taking.
5. Students take adventure to the library to read for pleasure in novels, comics, journals, newspapers and other materials of interest for recreation.

However, students use and process information better with the help from a school librarian. School librarians guide students through their reading and research process as well as helping them to choose books that fit their interests.

School library according to Busayo (2011) is an integral part of educational system that cannot be ignored without jeopardizing the quality of education in schools. The school library is an important part of elementary, middle and high school progammes without which students would not thrive academically and invariably find it most difficult to conduct academic research before they reach college level. Adefarati (2002) highlighted the following as the aims of a school library:

1. To encourage the development of skill in reading
2. To prompt the readers to some literacy appreciation
3. To be a source of subject information centre and support the school curriculum
4. To be a clinic for intellectual development

According to International Federation of Library Association (2009) the followings are essential to the development of literacy, information literacy, learning and culture; and are core school library services:

1. Supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school mission and curriculum.
2. Developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives.
3. Offering opportunity for experiences in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment.
4. Supporting all students in learning and practicing skills for evaluating and using information, regardless of form, format or medium, including sensitivity to the mode of communication within the community.
5. Providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions.
6. Organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity.
7. Working with students, teacher, administration and parents to achieve the mission of the school.
8. Proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy
9. Promoting reading and resources and services of the school library to the whole school community and beyond.

School library is very important in shaping students' habit as regard reading for leisure, to pass examinations and to obtain information on different aspects of life (George, 2011). It is an inexhaustible store house of unrestricted information resources in diverse formats systematically organized for users. Thus, a school library cannot be separated from the school – parent institution and expect all round development of the students. Library users make use of library for different purposes. While some users use it for reading their notes and personal books, others use library to do assignments. Yet, others visit library to prepare for examination, recreation and relaxation. Ogunbote and Odunewu (2008) cited Kumar (1991) and stated that the performance of students could be improved considerably if they use the library regularly. Students should therefore maximize the use of school libraries to their advantage since school libraries provide favourable environment where the students can discover and develop their abilities and talents as well as improving their reading and study skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive survey research was adopted for this study. The researchers used questionnaire instrument for data collection. The

Table 1. Availability of a professional staff.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	206	72.54
No	78	27.46
Total	284	100

Table 2. Library access to internet.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67	23.59
No	217	76.41
Total	284	100

population of this study consists of students from four secondary schools. The target population comprises senior secondary students, one to three (SSS 1-3). These levels of secondary school students were able to respond appropriately to the questionnaire of the researchers because they had spent three years in the school system. There were twenty seven arms out which nine were randomly selected. The total population of the nine classes was two hundred and nine eight. Complete enumeration was the sampling technique employed for this study. The researchers used all the students in the nine classes selected because the academic records of the students were done on class basis. The academic records of the sample students were one of the data needed for this research; and they were obtained from the school authorities of the respondents. The instrument for data collection for this research work is a slightly modified standardized study habits inventory devised by Muskingum College-Centre for Advancement and Learning and Cook Counseling Centre. The administration of the questionnaire took place in the classroom of the students.

Data presentation and analysis

The data collected were presented in table form with columns for frequency and percentage. Analysis was done in simple percentage The researcher retrieved all the two hundred and ninety eight (298) copies of the questionnaire they administered on the students (respondents) used for the study. Fourteen (14) of the retrieved copies of the questionnaire were invalid. Thus, two hundred and eighty four (284) copies were valid for analysis. This represents approximately ninety five percent (95%) of the respondents.

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents' schools libraries had professionally qualified librarian (72.54%). 78 respondents (27.46%) indicated that their school libraries had no professionally qualified librarian. School libraries of most respondents had professional librarian who systematically organizes the resources of the school libraries for ease of access and use. The finding is in tandem with the recommendation of Ogunniyi et al., (2011) that school library should be manned by professional librarian

It could be observed from Table 2 that the school libraries of the majority of the respondents were not connected to the internet (76.41%). Only 67(23.59) respondents indicated that their libraries were connected to the internet. Majority of the school library of the respondents did not have access to the wealth of the information resources on the net. Ogunniyi et al. (2011) found out that most school libraries were not hook on the internet, and therefore recommended that school libraries should be connected to the internet.

Table 3. Students' pattern of library use.

No. of library use	Frequency	Percentage
Once	98	34.51
Twice	31	10.92
Thrice	62	21.83
More than 3 times	35	12.32
Not at all	58	20.42
Total	284	100

Table 4. Students' reason for visiting library.

Reasons for using the library	Frequency	Percentage
To read notebook	84	29.58
To relax	46	12.20
To read library books	124	43.66
To read newspapers	18	6.34
To do assignment	12	4.22
Total	284	100

Table 3 shows that 98 (34.51%) respondents used the library once in a week. 31 (10.92%), 62 (21.83%) and 35 (12.32%) respondents used the library twice, thrice and more than three times respectively in a week. 58 (20.42%) respondents did not use the library at all in a week. Majority of the respondents did not use the library regularly. The researchers observed that there was no library period on the school time table. The schools opened 8:00 am and closed at 2:00 pm.

Table 4 reveals that 124 (43.66%) respondents visited library to read library books and 84 (29.58%) visited the library to read notebooks. Only 12 (4.22%) visited the library to do assignment. Majority of the respondents visited the library to read library books and notebooks. .

Table 5 shows that 94 (33.10%) respondents never study outside of class each day but 90 (31.69%) respondents always study outside of class each day. While 194 (68.31%) respondents always keep up to date in assignments, 20 (7.04%) respondents never keep up to date in assignments. Majority of the respondents (203 or 71.48%) made specific preparations for exams. Only 24 (8.45%) respondents indicated that they never made specific preparations for exams. 123 (43.30%) respondents never knew what was covered in each exam but 79(27.82%) respondents knew.

Table 6 reveals that 159 (55.99%) respondents indicated that there were few distractions in the places they study, but 125 (44.01%) respondents admitted that there were no distractions in the places they study. The temperature of the places of study of the majority of the respondents (174 or 61.27%) was very comfortable for studying. The chairs and tables in the places of study of most of the respondents were suitable for studying, 187 (65.85%) and 197 (69.37%) respondents respectively. 185 or 65.14% of the respondents indicated that the lighting in the places of study was conducive to studying but 99 or 34.86% of the respondents had the contrary opinion.

Table 7 reveals that 46.48% of the respondents scored less than 40 marks in English Language. 7.37% of the respondents scored between 60-69 and only 3.17% of the respondents scored between 70 and above.

In Mathematics, 50.70% of the respondents scored less than 40 marks and only 13.38% respondents scored between 70 and above. 47.54% of the respondents scored less than 40 marks in

Table 5. Students' amount of time spent on study activity.

Study activity	Scale									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Studying outside of class each day	94	33.10	35	12.32	65	22.89	90	31.69	284	100
Keeping up to date in assignments	20	7.04	28	9.86	42	14.19	194	63.31	284	100
Reviewing regularly each subject covered	19	6.69	36	12.68	58	20.42	171	60.21	284	100
Surveying a chapter before reading in detail	36	12.68	34	11.97	42	14.79	172	60.56	284	100
Reading assignment to answer questions	30	10.56	32	11.27	51	17.96	171	60.21	284	100
Trying to get meaning of important new items while reading the chapter	20	7.04	28	9.86	70	24.65	166	58.45	284	100
Reciting each section of the chapter at the end	29	10.21	33	11.62	66	23.24	156	54.93	284	100
Knowing what will be covered on each exam	123	43.30	31	10.92	51	17.96	79	27.82	284	100
Making specific preparations for exams	24	8.45	16	5.63	41	14.44	203	71.48	284	100
Studying what you got wrongly on a test	35	12.32	16	5.63	45	15.85	188	66.20	284	100

Note: 1 stands for almost never, 2 for less than half the time, 3 for more half the time and 4 for almost always.

Table 6. Statement about place of study.

Place of study	Option				Total	
	MT		MF			
	F	%	F	%	F	%
There are few distractions	159	55.99	125	44.01	284	100
The temperature is very comfortable for studying most of the time	174	61.27	110	38.73	284	100
The chair is very conducive to studying	187	65.85	97	34.15	284	100
The desk/table is very suitable for studying	197	69.37	87	30.63	284	100
The lighting is very conducive to studying	185	65.14	99	34.86	284	100

Note: MT stands for Mostly True and MF stands for mostly false

Table 7. Students' academic performance.

Subject	Score											
	Less than 40		40-49		50-59		60-69		70 & above		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
English Lang.	132	46.48	66	23.24	56	19.72	21	7.39	9	3.17	284	100
Mathematic	144	50.70	41	14.44	31	10.92	30	10.56	38	13.38	284	100
Biology	135	47.54	35	12.32	45	15.85	34	11.97	35	12.32	284	100
Economics	119	41.90	16	5.63	41	14.44	39	13.73	69	24.30	284	100
Yoruba	95	33.45	47	16.55	52	18.31	70	24.65	20	7.04	284	100

Biology and 12.32% of the respondents scored between 70 and above. In Economics, 41.90% of the respondents scored less than 40 marks and only 5.63% scored between 40-49 marks. 33.45% of the respondents scored less than 40 marks in Yoruba and only 7.04% of the respondents scored 70 and above.

The academic performance of the respondents as shown above was poor. Awosiyan and Opki (2012) cited West African Examination Council analysis of candidates' performance for 2008, 2009 and 2010; and only 23, 21 and 20% respectively passed. The poor academic performance of the students could be attributed to the

failure of the students to study outside of the class each day (Table 5). Another reason is that students studied in places where there were distractions (Table 6). In addition, students did not use the school library regularly nor spent quality time in the library (Tables 3 and 5). Demola (2012) reported that 'Facebook, Yahoo, Twitter, MySpace, English Premier League, European Football Leagues among other things have taken over the time students could have used for reading and studying.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Professional staffs were employed to manage most school libraries; and this would ensure the systematic organization of the resources and efficient services to the users. The finding is in tandem with the recommendation of Ogunniyi et al. (2011) that school library should be manned by professional librarian There was no internet access in most school libraries, and thus denied the students' access to vast information resources on the net. There was no library hour on the school time table; the school opened by 8:00 am and closed at 2:00 pm; and the school library opening hours is the same with that of the school.

The irregular use of the school libraries by the students of secondary schools could lead to poor scores in test and examination. Dent (2006) reported that a study conducted by Lance (2000) showed that middle level class that used school library regularly had 18 percent higher achievement tests scores than their counterparts without a school library. The findings of Acido (2010) also revealed that two students who scored above average in reasoning skills studied regularly. The academic performance of the students was poor, especially in English Language and Mathematics. The implication of this is that many students would not have the basic requirement for tertiary education. The result supports the findings of Asikhia (2010) that showed that the poor academic performance of secondary school students in examination and test hampers the realization of aims of secondary school in Nigeria which is the provision of basic qualification for further education at tertiary level.

Conclusion

The school library opening hours was tied to school opening hours- 8:00am - 2:00pm besides the non inclusion of library period in the school time table; these arrangements did not afford the students ample opportunity to study in the library. The absence of internet access in most school libraries poses a grave danger to students' access to unrestricted resources around the world in this digital age. The responses of the respondents have shown that majority of secondary school students did not use the school libraries regularly and many others did not use the school libraries at all. Students use the school libraries to read notes and library textbooks. Many students never study outside of the class each day, and never know what was covered in exam. The study habits of the students were bad and the academic performances of the students were also poor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be a library study hour on the school time table to enable the students to have a specific time to use the school library regularly
2. The inclusion of library study hour on the school time table would afford the students the opportunity to study more than thirty (30) min in the library on regular basis.
3. The library opening hours should be extended beyond school hours- 2:00 pm to give students the opportunity to study in the library after school hours
4. School libraries should compulsorily connect to the internet to enable the students to explore the wealth of information resources worldwide.
5. Students should find suitable and comfortable places to study outside the class each day, especially at home to compliment the study at school.
6. There is need for the students to study and cover the syllabus on each subject in order to know what will be covered in each exam.
7. The amount of time used in studying must increase in order to devote more time to quality study both at school library and at home to prevent poor academic performance currently being experienced in the secondary schools.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests

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The use of libraries among children in primary schools in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the use of libraries among primary school children in the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis. Using a survey design method and structured questionnaire, data were collected from a total of 366 participants. The findings showed that generally, there was a high level of reading interest and proficiencies among the children which are good indicators of use of library resources; but a low level of volume of books read, which indicates low level of library use. The test of the three research hypotheses, revealed that (i) There was insignificant difference in interest in reading among the children based on the type of school they came from (f(2,358)=8.6.7,pc.01).(ii) There was no significant difference in reading proficiency among children from the public, private, or missionary schools (f(2,352)=0.99,p>.05) and (iii) There was significant difference in the volume/extend of reading materials among the children from the three categories of schools investigated. It was discussed and concluded that although the children reported high interest and proficiencies in reading, their low volume of reading materials indicates low use of library. It was recommended that the government and private schools should provide and encourage children to use the library frequently.

Key words: Interest, proficiency, use of library, reading, education.

INTRODUCTION

It is a common saying that children are the leaders of tomorrow. This is because children are the foundation and hope of a feature generation and they ensure the survival and continuity of the human species on earth. Furthermore, the transition of leadership from an average population to the next generation depends on children. With the coming of civilization made possible and enduring through the invention of the symbols of writing for documenting human thought which constitutes the vehicle for invention, arts, science and technology, it is important that societies prepare children for leadership task by equipping them with the ability to read and write. Reading is recognised as an art capable of transforming man's life and his entire society (Busayo, 2011). It is a very important issue which is not only about enjoyment but a necessity and basic tool of education (Makotsi, 2005). It is further contended that reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self discovery. It is the art of interpreting printed and written words, the most effective process of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the altitudes,

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morals, beliefs, judgement and action of readers.

Reading therefore plays a foundation role and is the pivot and anchor of the education of the child. It is a recognized fact that reading has a crucial role to play in creating independent learners, literacy promotion, and educational attainment of individuals in every society of the world. Adeniji (2006) support this view point, observing that reading especially the effective type is the bedrock to a learner's success whether in the primary, secondary or tertiary level of education. In tandem with this view, Obanya (2002) extensively discussed the paramount role reading plays in children's educational pursuit and submitted that it promotes a deep awareness and builds the child up emotionally and intellectually. This is even so when reading is voluntarily undertaking helping to enhance students' achievement. Reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed of students.

Education plays prominent roles in the leadership and the well being of any nation that wants to sustain its prominence on the global scene (Usoro and Usanga, 2007). In fact it is the engine room of development of any nation culturally, scientifically and technologically. This is more so as education not only liberates, but as a vital tool for development that allows meaningful contribution to society. Functional education for children needs books as "books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation (Busayo, 2011:2).Makotsi (2005) emphasised that children (and adults) need access to a wide range of reading materials to help them acquire and maintain fluent reading skills, broaden horizons, and think independently and critically. He surmised further that improving access to relevant information and promoting a reading culture are prerequisite for strengthening literacy skills, widening education and learning opportunity and helping people to address the causes of poverty. The library as the storehouse of books and other reading materials is therefore the bridge between school children and functional education in Nigeria. This could be a public library or better still a school library. In this regard, Adeniji (2006) sees the school library as the heart and soul, as it impacts all categories of learners from the slowest learners in the kindergarten to the most intelligent senior in the higher schools through the provision of print and non- print materials to aid learning.

Statement of the problem

There is a general outcry in the Nigerian society of the wanton reading habits, especially among children and young people. This is made worse by the fact that mass media through electronic means daily update the Nigerian child with information through the cable televisions, cell phone, the World Wide Web or the inter-net so much that children have lost interest in reading The result in fact is poor reading habits and the attendant poor performance/achievement in their educational pursuits. This study therefore intends to investigate the use of library facilities among children in the primary schools in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

i. To assess the level of interest in reading among the children in the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.
ii. To investigate the proficiency of reading among children from the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.
iii. To compare the extent of reading among the public, private and missionary schools children
iv. To identify the reason children engage in reading.
v. To find out the extent of encouragement the school and the family give to children to read.

Research hypotheses

Three research hypotheses were postulated and tested in this work.

HO1: There is no significant difference in the influence of reading among children in public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.
HO2: There is no significant difference in the reading proficiency of children in public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.
HO3: There is no significant difference in the extent of reading materials among children in the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading habit or interest constitutes an important foundation to the use of library resources. It is Particularly important for children because as Alegbeleye (2010) reveals, it is best formed at a young impressionable age in school and once formed, it can last one's life time. Sangkaeo (1999) refers to reading habit as the behaviour which expresses the likeness (interest) of reading of individual types of reading and taste for reading. Self interest for reading is considered important for children as it is believed that reading children become reading adults. It has been found that frequent reading is related to the development of sophisticated language structures, higher level of comprehension, improved word analysis, skills and fluency in significant amount of voluntary reading, and that these are associated with a greater interest and skill development (Arriving International reading Association, 2002). This view supports the finding of Pilgreenand Krashen (1993) that the longer free reading is practiced the more consistent and positive the result,

and that people who read more write better. Krasher surmised that reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed of students. Udoh-Ilomechine (2008) found the role of the library in laying the foundation for children's interest in reading, reading habit and interest in critical reading. In her study, *the significance of school libraries in the educational development of student*, it was found out that 42%(n=84) of the respondents indicated that the school library plays a very important role in the development of students' reading habit. 33%(n=640) correspondent were undecided with only 25% (n=50) disagreeing. These studies show the relevance of children's interest in voluntary reading as a foundation for success in terms of present and future achievements. On children's proficiency vis-à-vis the role of the library, literature generally lends support to the importance of the role of library in achieving this important task; for instance, a wide range of review, "Every Child Ready to Read" (2010) surmised that there is a clear and abundant evidence that certain physical design feature in environment (represented adequately by the library) supports young children's literacy engagement and subsequent achievement. They include physical design features, use of space and resource may help to focus and sustain children's literacy activity providing greater opportunity to engage in language and literacy behaviours. This research indicates that a more deliberate approach to selection and arrangement of materials according to specific design critical (as libraries do) may enhance children to use library's object and related print resource, thereby enhancing the children's reading proficiency.

With regard to the extent of reading or volume of resource materials children utilized in or out of library setting, a growing body of evidence tends to suggest that a supportive learning environment in which children have access to a wide variety of reading and writing resource such as the library is imperative (Every Child Ready to Read, 2010). In line with this view, Simisanye and Quadri (updated) assert that public libraries have been working intensively to accumulate and promote reading programme for children by organising summer reading programmes in Nigeria. Similarly, Busayo (2011) has surmised that proximity of the school library to pupils and children in primary and secondary schools respectively enhance the extent to which children's use of library resources by the sheer volume of available literacy resources.

It has also been found that a number of factors serve as motivator for children's interest in reading and enhance the use of library resource. These include the home environment as represented by parents (Dent and Yannot, 2005 as reportedin Busayo, 2011; Every Child Ready to Read, 2010) as well as the public and schoollibraries(Usoro andUsanga, 2007;Udoh-Ilomechine, 2008; Every Child Ready to Read, 2010; Busayo, 2011).

The summary of the review reveals that children's interest in the use of library can be promoted by the public/schools themselves through provision and arrangement of relevant reading materials in a quiet and attractive environment. This will enhance children's interest and proficiency in reading. The extent to which children use these resources can be enhanced through the library planned promotion activities such as the summer reading programme for children, reading competitions and celebration of yearly library week to sensitize the children of library facilities and resources as well as public awareness creation on new arrivals and anything that is new in the library by librarians. Parents can also serve as motivators for library use by being personal examples and encouragement for their children.

METHOD, MEASURES, AND PROCEEDURE

Design: The descriptive survey design was employed for this study. Descriptive surveys are those studies which aim at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. This study aims at obtaining data on use of library among children in primary school in Makurdi metropolis, Benue State – Nigeria.

Participant: A total of 336 participants took part in the study and they were all pupils of primary class six. They were drawn from three primary Schools in Makurdi metropolis. 122 participants, representing 33.3% were drawn from each one of the public schools and one each from missionary schools and private schools. A self-developed validated questionnaire tagged "use of library questionnaire (ULQ) was employed for data collection. It consists of 35 items. The internal consistency of the questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of .70 cronbach's alpha.

The questionnaires were administered to the pupils during school hours. Permission was first obtained from the headmasters of the schools, who then introduced the researcher to the class teachers of the selected classes (i.e. class six). Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that no punishment will be given to any of them for refusal to participate. Questionnaires were collected from them on the spot after completion. The data were then collated and analysed. One-way analysis of variance statistic was used to answer the study hypotheses. Frequencies, percentages, as well as means and standard deviations were used to interpret the data.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Description of the three main variables of the study, i.e. Children's interest in the use of library, proficiency in library use and extent of reading materials among the three types of schools are presented in Tables 1-3.

The result from Table 1 indicates that missionary primary school has the highest mean interest (3.57, SD.59) in reading followed by public primary schools. The private schools came last on this variable.

The result from Table 2 reveals that pupils from the missionary schools have the highest proficiency in reading (m = 3.04, SD, = .71), followed by those in the

Table 1. Pupils interest in reading in the type of school.

Type of school	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Public pri. school	117	3.50	.96
Private pri. school.	122	3.16	.87
Missionary pri. School	122	3.57	.59
Total	361	3.40	.84

Table 2. Pupils' proficiency in reading according to type of school.

Type of school	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Public pri. School	112	2.99	.83
Private pri. School.	121	2.90	.82
Missionary pri. School.	122	3.04	.71
Total.	355	2.98	.79

Table 3. Extent of reading materials, by the types of school.

Type of school	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Public pri. School.	121	1.90	1.08
Private pri. School.	122	1.56	0.87
Missionary pri. School.	121	1.70	0.81
Total	364	1.72	0.94

Table 4. One way of analysis of variance showing differences in interest in reading among primary school children based on the type of School.

Source	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	%
Between group	1 11.69	2	5.84	8.67	.01
Within group	241.26	358	0.67		
Total	252.95	360			

public primary schools. Those in the private primary schools have the lowest mean proficiency in reading (m = 2.90, SD = .82).

The result from Table 3 indicates that pupils from the public primary schools have the highest mean score on extent of reading materials. Pupils from missionary schools came next while those in private school came last. It can be observed that on the three aspects of reading pupils from missionary schools score the highest in interest and Proficiency, and second highest on the extent of reading materials. They were closely followed in second position by those from the public schools in that order except on the extent of reading materials where they came top.

Test of hypotheses

HO1: there is no significant difference in the interests in reading among children in public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.

The result from Table 4 indicates that there is a significant difference in interest in reading among children in public, private and missionary schools ($F(2,358) = 8.67$, $P < .01$). On the basis of this finding, the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis was confirmed.

HO2: there is no significant difference in the reading proficiency of children from the public, private and missionary primary schools in Makurdi metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result is presented in Table 5.

The result from Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the reading proficiency of children from public, private and missionary primary schools in Makurdi metropolis $F(2,352) = 0.99$, $p > .05$). Based on this finding, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 5. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in reading proficiency among children from the public school, private and missionary primary school in Makurdi metropolis.

Source	Sum of square	Degree of Freedom	Mean square	F	%
Between Groups	1.22	2	0.61	0.99	.37
Within groups	218.60	352	0.62		
Total	219.82	354			

Table 6. One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing differences in extent of reading materials among children from the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis.

Source	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	%
Between Groups	7.22	2	3.61	4.20	. .02
Within Groups	310.20	361	0.86		
Total	317.42	363			

Table 7. Children's interest in reading.

Response	F	%
Not at all	16	4.4
A bit	35	9.6
Quite alot	97	26.5
Very much	213	58.2
No response	5	1.4
Total	366	100.0

Table 8. Extent of children's proficiency in reading.

Response	F	%
Not at all	12	3.3
Quite a bit	78	21.3
Very well	171	46.7
Excellently well	94	25.7
No response	11	3.0
Total	366	100.0

HO3: there is no significant difference in the extent of reading materials among public, private and missionary primary schools in Makurdi metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result is presented in Table 6.

The result from Table 6 indicates that there is a significant difference in the extent of reading materials among children from the public, private and missionary primary schools in Makurdi metropolis ($F(2,361) = 4.20$, $P < .05$). Based on this finding, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

It can be observed from Table 7 that 26.5% (n=97) of participant reported havingquite a lot of interest in reading and 58.2% (n=213) reported having very much interest in reading. Only 4.4%(n=16) and 9.6 %(n=35) reported no interest at all and only a bit of interest. Taken together, the result shows that majority of children amounting to 84.7% reported enjoying reading.

The result from Table 8 indicates that 25.7% (n=94) of the children reported excellent proficiency in reading and 46.7% (n=171) reported ''very well" proficiency level in reading. However, 24.6 %(n=90) reported poor reading proficiency. Majority of the children amounting to 72.4% reported high proficiency in reading.

The result from Table 9 reveals that 53.6 % (n = 196) of the children read only 1-3 books in a week. Similarly, 27.9% (n =102) reported reading 4-6 books in a week. This result shows that the volume of reading is low, with over 80% reading only between 1-6 books in a week.

Research QIV

Reasons children engage in reading among primary school pupils in Makurdi metropolis. The result to this research question is presented in Table 10.

The result from Table 10 shows that the ten reasons why children engage in reading among the top three are "to do school homework and pass their examinations" (20.20%) to help them understand the world (16.70%). The second top three are for fun (13.70%) "it is a skill for life" (11.20% and "to help me get a job" (8.20%).

Research question 5: to find out the extent of encouragement children receive from (a) School and (b) The family to read.

The results to this question are presented in Table 11a and 11b.

The result from Table 11a shows that only 21.0%(n=77) of the pupils indicate that they receive encouragement

Table 9. Children's extent/volume of reading in a week.

Extent /volume of reading in no of b book	F	%
1-3 book	196	53.6
4-6	102	27.9
6-8	38	10.4
8-10	28	7.7
No response	2	0.5
Total	366	100.0

Table 10. Reasons children engage in reading in primary schools in Makurdi metropolis.

Reasons	F	%
To do home work/pass exams	74	20.20
Help me understand the world	61	16.70
For fun	50	13.70
It is a skill for life	41	11.20
Help me get a job	30	8.20
Teach me about other people	29	7.90
Give me a break	11	3.00
Help me understand myself	10	13.70
Help me find what I want	53	14.50
No response	7	1.90
Total	366	100.0

Table 11a.'My school encourages me to read'.

Response	F	%
Yes	9 77	21.00
No	289	79.00
Total	366	100.0

Table11b. 'My family encourages me to read'.

Response	F	%
Yes	99	27.0
No	267	73.0
Total	366	100.0

from their school to read. Majority comprising 79% (n =289) indicate they receive no encouragement from their school to read.

The result from Table 11b shows that 27%(n=99) indicate that they receive encouragement from their family to read. However majority of pupils comprising 73%(n=267) indicated they receive no encouragement from their family to read.

DISCUSSION

This study surveyed the use of library among children in primary schools in Makurdi metropolis. Three hypothesis and additional two regards questions were investigated. The resultof hypothesis 1 revealed a significant difference in children's interest in reading among those in public, private and missionary schools. Specifically, children from the missionary primary schools had a higher mean score (m=3.57,SD=.59) compared to those from public (m=3.59,SD=.96) and private schools (m=3.16,SD=.87) respectively.

Since interest in reading is a good indicator for the use of library, the implication of this finding is that children who attend missionary schools are more likely to use library resource compared to their counterparts in private and public primary schools. It could also be an indication of availability of school library resource/facilities in missionary schools more than the other type of schools. If this second case scenario holds true then this finding is in line with the position held by other scholars that the school library plays a vital role in developing reading

(habits) interest in children (Simisaye and Quadri, ???; Udoh-Llomechine, 2008; Busayo, 2011). The second hypothesis did not find any significant difference in reading proficiency among the children from the public, private and missionary primary school pupils. Mean score however indicated marginal superior proficiency in children from the missionary schools followed by those from the public schools and least from the private schools.

The low proficiency indicates the general outcry about the dropping reading habits of the Nigerian child in recent time as documented by several scholars (Mokatsi, 2005; Sangkaeo 1999). This leads to low proficiency in reading across children irrespective of which type of school they attend. Low proficiency in reading also indicates low use of library because studies have linked frequent library use with improved literacy level and skills (Every Child Ready to Read, 2010; Alegbeleye, 2010; Busayo, 2011).

The third hypothesis confirmed a significant difference in the extent of reading materials among the children from the public, private and missionary schools in Makurdi metropolis. Children from the public primary schools reported the highest volume of books read; followed by the children in the missionary schools, and lastly the private primary schools. This trend may reflect the fact that students from the public schools founded by the government have greater access to reading materials since school libraries are contained in a national policy on education by the national government (NPE, 1993; Obonya, 2002).

On children's reasons for reading, the study found that reading to do school assignment or to pass exams, to understand the world around them, to help them find what they want as well as for fun constitute the major four reasons for their action.

The findings imply that children's reading and by extension, use of the library is purely for school academic purposes. While this reason is paramount and useful, it might restrict their scope of reading and hence, extend of use of the libraries vast range of resources.

It was also found that both the school and family did not contribute significantly to the development of children's reading habits and by extension use of the library. This may be due to the lack of library facilities in the schools or that families engage their children/wards in other chores at home after school instead of engaging them in reading at home or taking them to a nearby public library. It could also be that parents do not make provision for reading books for the children at home.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this study revealed that although there is a high percentage of interest of reading and by extension use of the library, there was a significant difference in interest among children from the public, private and missionary primary schools. Similarly the children reported high proficiency in reading skills. It means that they can use the library resource well if exposed to or encouraged to do so. It is concluded that the amount of reading by the children was generally low although significant difference exists among children from the three types of schools, that is, public, private and missionary schools. Furthermore, children use the library mainly for academic purpose and less so for self discovering and fun. Furthermore, the schools and families do not give adequate encouragement to children to use the library. It is therefore recommended that the government (federal, state and local) should build and equipped children's library centers in all tertiary institutions, city centers and strategic locations to avail it to the children and get them acquainted with the resources and facilities provided by the library for their use. Also, parents should encourage use of the library in children by introducing the children early to library use, library visitation even as a recreation center rather than other social play centers. The parents can also do well by being good readers at home so that the children can take a cue from them.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests

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Serial Division, University Library,
Benue State University, Makurdi.
Dec. 2013.

Dear Respondent,

Request to complete attached questionnaire on utilization of Library resources as tool for improving the reading habits of children: A case study of selected primary schools in Makurdi metropolis.

I am a staff of the above named university currently carrying out a research on the above topic.
Kindly fill the attached questionnaire as objectively as possible as it will contribute immensely to the successful completion of this study. Information provided will be used in strict confidence and for the purpose it is intended for.

Yours faithfully,

DoosuurAshaver
(Researcher)

Tick only one option for question 1 -3

1. To what extent do you enjoy reading?
   (a) Very much (b) Quite a lot
   (c) A bit (d) Not at all

2. To what extent can you read proficiently?
   (a) Excellent well (b) Very well
   (c) Quite a bit (d) Not at all

3. How many books do you read in a week?
   (a) 1 - 3 (b) 4 - 6
   (c) 6 - 8 (d) 8 -10

   Tick as many as applicable for questions 4 – 9

4. Do you have access to the following educational resources?
   (a) A computer (b) Desk of your own
   (c) Books papers (d) News papers
   (e) Magazine

5. Why do you read? (More than one options allowed if applicable)
   (a) It's a skill for life [ ] (b) Helps me find what I want (c) It's fund [ ]
   (d) Help me get a job [ ] (d) Help me understand the world (f) Teaches me about other people [ ] (g) Gives me a break (h) Help me Understand myself [ ] (i) To do my school home work/passing exams [ ]

6. I would read more if ...
   I had more time [ ]
   I enjoyed it more [ ]
   Books were cheaper [ ]
   Subjects are interesting [ ]
   Books had more pictures [ ]
   Libraries were better [ ]
   My school encouraged me [ ]
   My family encouraged me [ ]
   If there were more books around me [ ]
   If someone read aloud to me [ ]

7. Which activity incentives would motivate you and others read more?
   Reading games [ ]

Helping children [ ]
Prize/competition [ ]
Reading group [ ]
Talking about book [ ]
Writing book reviews [ ]
Rating books [ ]
Library display [ ]
Reading aloud [ ]
Free voluntary reading [ ]

8. Who do you read with?
Mother [ ]
Father [ ]
Teacher [ ]
Sibling [ ]
Friend [ ]
Librarian [ ]

9. Who do you talk about your reading with?
Mother [ ]
Father [ ]
Teacher [ ]
Sibling [ ]
Friend [ ]
Librarian [ ]
Others [ ]

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