

Full Length Research Paper

Information a tool for social advocacy protection services for children in Gwagwalada area council, Abuja

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The challenge of social vices effects among children in Gwagwalada town is worrisome as their life destiny is been truncated. These children or teenagers no longer have interest in education or acquiring any vocational skill that will shape their lives for a better future. So this study is set out to determine available types of social protection services in Gwagwalada, how the services reach the children and the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of the knowledge for child protection. The study adopted the descriptive survey design and the population consisted of all the 120 agencies staff on child protection. Structured questionnaire and interview was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores of four-scale rating. The finding reveal low level involvement of information managers in packaging, disseminating and communicating knowledge on child protection against social vices by the agencies responsible for designing and coordinating programs. The results also showed dissatisfaction of few teachers and some members of the community over the unavailable access to the knowledge on how to counsel and manage cases of social vices among children when the need arises. The study suggest that adequate integration of the services of information managers into the services of child protection agencies is necessary since their major task is to create and disseminate information to various kinds of information seekers.

Key words: information, social, advocacy, protection, children.

INTRODUCTION

Information is a resource that influences the determination of any person or group of persons to arrive at the attainment of set goals. In other word, every rational being needs some vital information for their day-to-day existence and wellbeing. The fact still remains that no individual or society can grow beyond the quality of information at their disposal. Information is seen as the strategic tool for virtually every person or group of person

in organization or establishment be it public or private for growth and sustainability (Emmanuel, 2012). Information can be used as an important tool in advocacy for the protection of children's social life, as they grow in learning and comprehension of what they are being taught.

In the era of technological advancement, children are highly vulnerable to social vices due to their exposure to social media and other technological devices. The

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inherent curiosity learning could make them imbibe both negative and positive values. Thus, to protect these young ones from the negative social influence that could occur in the super information high way or platforms, appropriate information sources should be properly scanned to filter off negative components that encourage wrong values in the children. Therefore, agencies such as Child Protection Services (CPS), UNICEF, social welfare etc which are vested with the responsibility of providing advocacy protection services to redesign their programmes and services to focus more on transformation work in the younger ones in order build up positive values in them. This will go a long way to reduce the pains incurred from any kind of the social vices.

Social vices are unacceptable character exhibition by children, youths and/or adults that are against moral believe of any society. Authentic News Giant (2019) view social vices as acts and conditions that violate the societal norms and values. The news further states that social vices are habits or behaviours of immoral activities such as cultism, robbery, ritual killing, kidnapping, smoking and drug peddling etc. Also, Olaitan et al. (2014) added that social vices are deviant behaviour in a disapproved direction that exceeds tolerance limit of any community. Supporting, Olaitan et al. (2014), Omonijo et al. (2013) said social vices are thorn in the flesh of human peace and tranquility. Hence, social vices are major problems that affect the growth and development of ones' life and the society at large. Then, the understanding of social protection services' goals will act as a good source for preaching values in children from early stage.

Social protection is defined as the set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance, social services, social insurance and social equity measures in an integrated manner that addresses all aspects of poverty and vulnerability as experienced by children (UNICEF, 2009). Furthermore, UNICEF noted that social protection programmes addresses several dimensions of child wellbeing. Although, these programmes are designed to curtail or manage the spread of all negative values learned from the wealth of knowledge and experiences available to them. Yet, the impacts of these programmes are not being felt in our societies and the nation as a whole. However, the lack of impacts could be attributed to so many factors, one of which is the identification of appropriate information channels for disseminating and packaging of the information to the targeted audiences. To achieve major results, these agencies (UNICEF, CPS and social welfare) etc should collaborate with information managers and libraries to enhance proper dissemination of the information on preferred children platforms for adequate utilization.

Dissemination is the interactive process of communicating knowledge to target audiences so that it may be used to lead to change (Muriel and Oliver, 2017).

Although, Fisher et al. (2003) are of the view that the values of any knowledge product hangs on its effective dissemination to present and future audiences, without outreach the efforts of knowledge workers are wasted.

Also Kwakpovwe (2019) attested knowledge is power and one must understand that power that cannot be tap into is useless. This means that only applied knowledge brings results. For this reason, information dissemination is a core responsibility of any organization tasked with generating and sharing knowledge products. In other word, achieving optima utilization/applicability of the services provided by the advocacy protection agencies, the information managers and libraries should be carried along due to their expatriates (the Librarians and Information Managers) in attending to the various needs of users in addressing their information needs. Managers of information are saddled with the tasks of selecting, managing, providing access, and sharing of information in a manner that attracts its users. Roger et al. (2019) describe information manager as someone who collects, records, organizes, stores, preserves, retrieves and disseminates printed or digital information. Lawrence, (2009) attested that information managers regulate the flow of information, either electronically or procedurally, within or among systems. Furthermore, information managers ensure that information exchange and collaborative working are facilitated in the project process.

The study is aimed at finding out the available types of social protection services in Gwagwalada area, how the services reach the children, how often the services are offered to children and lastly, the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of the knowledge on child protection to children in Gwagwalada Area Council.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study which is geared towards understanding information as a tool for social advocacy protection services of children in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is concerned with systemic description of events as they are, because it is aimed at collecting data on something and describing the characteristics and facts about the population of a given study. The research population consisted of the 120 children social protection advocacy staff and 30 randomly interviewed teachers and members of the community in the study Area Council, Abuja. The purposive sampling technique was used for the study. Hence the entire population was considered convenient as the sample because of its homogeneity and size. The instrument consists of 31 items structured questionnaire and interviews with some primary school teachers and some individuals in the community. This was structured on a 4 – point rating scale of SA, A, D and SD and 1, Yes and No question. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher within three days and the researcher personally interviewed the teachers and the few persons in the community verbally. The data collected were analyzed using mean statistic, percentages and graphical representations.

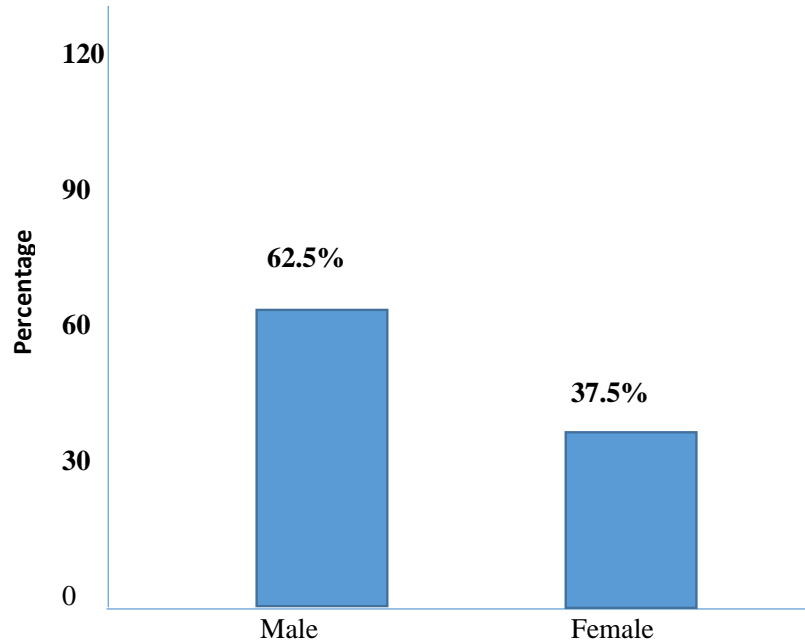


Figure 1. Gender distribution of the respondents.
Source: The authors' computation

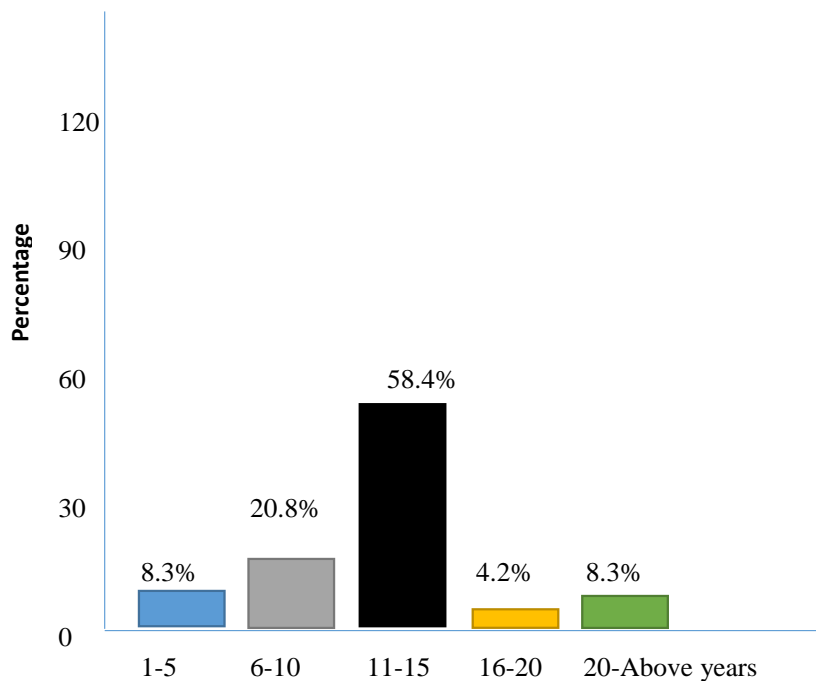


Figure 2. Years of working experience of the respondents.
Source: The authors' computation

RESULTS

Figure 1 above shows that 75(62.5%) respondents were males and 45(37.5%) respondents were females. This

shows that majority of the respondents were males. Figure 2 above shows that 10(8.3%) respondents have working experiences between 1 and 5 years, 25(20.8%) respondents have working experiences in service

Table 1. Types of social protection services available for children.

S/N	Kind of services	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Social Welfare	25	95	0	0	2.9	Accepted
2	Child Protective	40	80	0	0	3.2	Accepted
3	Human Right	10	110	0	0	3.0	Accepted
4	Children NGOs	0	0	53	67	1.0	Rejected

Source: The authors' computation

Table 2. How the services reach the children?

S/N	Ways in which the services get to the children	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Organized seminar	45	75	0	0	2.8	Accepted
2	Camp meetings	5	10	85	20	1.3	Rejected
3	Special outreach to event centres	0	10	90	20	1.1	Rejected
4	Social Media platforms	38	82	0	0	3.2	Accepted
5	Radio	59	61	0	0	2.7	Accepted
6	Internet	55	65	0	0	2.6	Accepted
7	Visits to Schools	29	53	18	20	2.5	Accepted
8	Television	43	60	10	7	2.6	Accepted

Source: The authors' computation

between 6 and 10 years, 70(58.4%) respondents have working experience in services ranges from 11 to 15 respondents have working experiences between 16 and 20 years and 10(8.3%) respondents have working experiences between 21 years and above. The analysis therefore, reveals that majority of the respondents 70(58,4%) have the highest working experiences.

Table 1 above shows that social welfare, child protective and human right with the mean scores of 2.9, 3.2 and 3.0 respectively were accepted as some of the types of social protection services in Gwagwalada Area Council. While children NGOs was rejected by the respondents with mean score of 1.0 as is not considered as type of social protection services for children protection.

Table 2 above shows that respondents with the mean scores of 3.2, 2.8, 2.7, 2.6, 2.5 and 2.6 respectively indicates that seminars, social welfare platform, radio, internet, visits to schools and television are the means through which information on child protection get to the children in need. Whereas, majority representing 88% of the respondents disagreed with camp meetings and special outreach to event centres as means to channel information to children with mean scores of 1.3 and 1.1. The respondents affirmed that camp meetings and special outreach has never been used as means of disseminating information on children's protection.

Table 3 shows that respondents with mean scores of 2.5 and above agreed that organized seminars only holds yearly whereas respondents with less than 2.50 disagreed

with camp meetings been means of social service for children in Gwagwalada. Hence the mean scores of 2.9 and 2.5 agreed that visits to schools holds at the middle of the term before the commencement of serious class work. However, almost all the respondents attested that outreach to event centres were assumptions but never a reality. Interview with few respondents assert that visits to schools by the agencies were never for the children's benefits at all. Respondents with the mean scores of 2.9, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.7 respectively, that is items number 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e and 3f agreed that children often get information on social protection through social media platforms and the internet. Radio/Television are major means through which information on children protection against social vices gets to children as opined by majority of the respondents with the mean scores of 2.9, 2.6, 2.7, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.7 that is items 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d and 4e.

Table 4 shows the percentage distribution of information managers' involvement in the dissemination and packaging of child protection knowledge to children in the area of study. The result shows that 89(74.2%) of information managers are not involved in the service of disseminating and packaging information/ knowledge on child protection to the children in the study areas. Whereas, 31(25.8%) of the respondents admitted that they are involved in the protection advocacy service to children.

Figure 3 above shows the numerical and percentage distributions of the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of knowledge on child protection to

Table 3. How often are the services offered to children?

S/N	Times these services are provided	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Seminar/camp meetings						
	Monthly	24	26	33	37	2.4	Rejected
	Quarterly	0	30	58	32	2.0	Rejected
	Biannually	5	0	43	72	1.9	Rejected
	Yearly	39	78	3	0	2.8	Accepted
2	Outreach to event centres/ visits schools						
	Beginning of every term	5	10	85	20	1.1	Rejected
	Twice in a term	7	0	53	60	2.0	Rejected
	Middle of the term	55	60	5	0	2.9	Accepted
	First week of the term	43	50	20	7	2.5	Accepted
3	Social media platforms/internet						
	Every day	40	70	0	10	2.9	Accepted
	Weekly	30	73	20	7	2.6	Accepted
	Monthly	63	30	20	7	2.7	Accepted
	Quarterly	40	60	10	10	2.6	Accepted
	Yearly	43	50	20	7	2.8	Accepted
	Biannually	30	60	10	17	2.7	Accepted
4	Radio/television						
	Weekly	50	60	3	7	2.7	Accepted
	Monthly	30	50	20	10	2.5	Accepted
	Quarterly	43	50	20	7	2.5	Accepted
	Yearly	23	70	20	7	3.0	Accepted
	Biannually	73	20	16	11	2.8	Accepted

Source: The authors' computation

Table 4. How is the involvement of information managers in disseminating and packaging of knowledge on child protection to children in Gwagwalada?

S/N	Items	No. of information managers	Percentage (%)
1	Information managers are involved in disseminating and packaging knowledge on child protection	89	74.2
2	Information managers are not involved in disseminating and packaging knowledge on child	31	25.8
	Overall	120	100

Source: The authors' computation

children in Gwagwalada Area Council. It was deduced from the analysis that 89(74.2%) of the respondents admitted that information managers or library managers were not involved in the dissemination and packaging works on the protection of children from social vices. While, 31(25.8%) of the respondents confirmed that though, their services are very impactful, they are tailored towards children protection.

From the result, Table 5 shows that 19(64%) of

knowledge/information provided to both the schools and the community are not satisfactory. Whereas 11(36%) of the respondents confirmed that the available information/knowledge on child protection are alright.

Figure 4 above gives the numerical and percentage distribution of the teachers and community members to confirm if the availability of information on children protection in schools and the community are sufficient. But the study reveals 19(64%) of the interviewed teachers

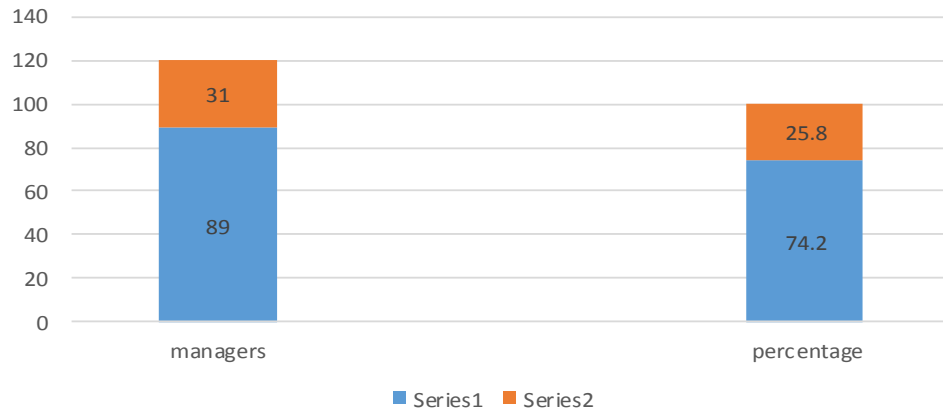


Figure 3. Percentage distribution of the response on the involvement of information managers in disseminating and packaging knowledge on children protection.
Source: The authors' computation

Table 5. Primary schools teachers and members of the community randomly selected for interview on the availability of information on children protection to schools and the community.

S/N	Item	No. of primary school staff and community leaders	Percentage (%)
1	Readily Available Information /knowledge on protection children to schools and the community alright	11	36
2	Information provided on child protection are satisfactory	19	64
	Overall	30	100

Source: The authors' computation

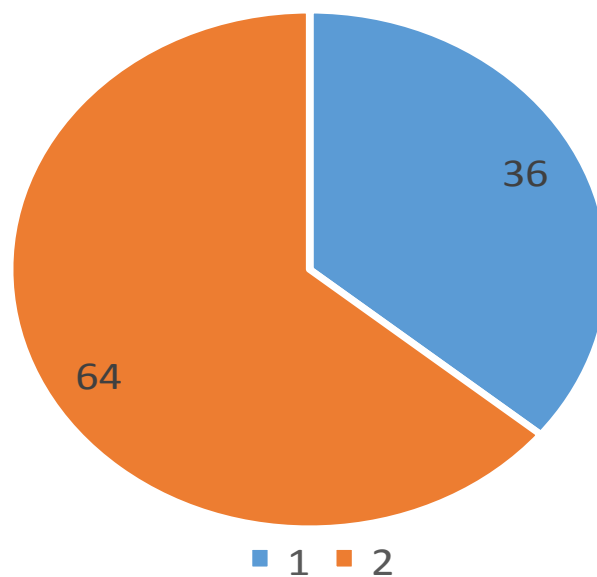


Figure 4. Percentage distributions of randomly selected teachers and members of the community for interview on the availability of information on children protection to schools and the community.
Source: The authors' computation

and the community members attested that the information/knowledge are not alright. While the remaining 11 (36%) are of the view that information provided on children protection are satisfactory.

DISCUSSION

From the findings, the involvement of information managers in packaging and disseminating/communicating knowledge on child protection against social vices by agencies responsible for designing and coordinating programs is very low. The low involvement of these experts reduces the laudable impacts of the programs design to reduce and manage cases of social vices among children. The findings of the study are similar to that of Fisher et al. (2003); they assert that the value of any knowledge product hangs on its effective dissemination to present and future audiences: without outreach, the efforts of the knowledge workers are wasted. Also, Kwakpovwe (2019) view has bearing with the present study of knowledge is power, but one must understand that power that you cannot tap into is useless. Results from the interview with few teachers and members of the community shows dissatisfaction on unavailability of access to the knowledge on how to counsel and manage cases of social vices among children by agencies on child protection. In an age of technological advancement where children are involved in the rot of social vices due to their exposure to social media platforms and other technological devices, it is imperative that their information needs should be made available and accessible for use. This is in agreement with Enenche (2009) which says information known to its user is not enough. The user must apply the known information to make it useful and impactful.

The result from the study, also shows that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are not part of the social protection services for children protection in the area of study even though they are known for their crucial role in delivering effective information to children. This is in contrast to the study of Islam (2009) who stated that NGOs are the main providers of information to rural areas of many developing countries. The study also discovered few days after the researcher's administration of the questionnaire to the respondents at the human right office in the Area of the study, their office was later relocated to Central Area of Abuja. This also affects information dissemination to the targeted audiences.

Conclusion

The researcher concludes that applied information is a tool for positive progress in any person, group of persons, society or nations that embrace it, and then it has become imperative for agencies on child's protection to redesign and strategized their services to capture the

interest of targeted audience for effective applicability of the services. Also, the agencies should incorporate the services of information managers into their services, since their major tasks is to create, generate, acquire, disseminate information and ensure availability and accessibility of the information to the targeted audience. Finally, the knowledge on child protection by the agencies on protection should be readily available to the targeted audience on their preferred platform.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests that information managers should incorporate vocational advocacy services for effective delivery of relevant and timely information in the community. Also the incorporation of NGOs into the agencies services should be considered due to the roles in disseminating vital information to rural areas in a Nation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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