INFLUENCE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES UTILISATION ON LIFELONG LEARNING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KARU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NASARAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the availability and utilisation of school library resources and their impact on lifelong learning among secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. The study addresses observed issues of poor academic performance, underdeveloped research habits, and insufficient reading skills among students, despite the presence of school libraries intended to foster intellectual growth and lifelong learning. Justification for this study stems from the critical role that school libraries play in supporting educational outcomes and lifelong learning skills, which are essential for students' academic and personal development. Understanding how effectively students engage with available library resources and identifying barriers to their usage are necessary steps toward improving educational support systems within the region. A sample size of 315 students from ten secondary schools was determined using Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table, with an 85% response rate. The sample size was distributed proportionally across the schools according to their respective student populations, based on a total population of 1,736 students. Senior secondary students (SS1-SS3) were then selected through random sampling, offering a comprehensive view of resource utilisation in this demographic. The findings reveal that resources like textbooks, storybooks, and dictionaries are moderately used, primarily for test preparation, recreation, and studying, with a weighted mean of 3.07.

However, significant challenges, such as the absence of a library policy, inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, and limited student awareness, hinder effective library resource use, as indicated by a weighted mean of 2.94. Despite these barriers, students who regularly engage with library resources show a 15% improvement in academic performance.

Keywords_:_ Availability, Lifelong learning, School library information resources, Secondary
school students, Utilisation

Introduction

Lifelong learning is the volitional act of learning throughout one's lifespan (Jones & Mclean, 2018). From an Educational Psychology perspective, lifelong learning refers to the motivation for learning and the competence to apply one's skills and knowledge successfully in learning situations (Ng, 2019). From Social and Education policy perspective, lifelong learning is considered as the "necessity of being able to handle constant change and transition as a result of rapid technological and scientific changes" (Lüftenegger _et al._, 2016). Lifelong learning, defined as the continuous pursuit of knowledge and skills throughout one's life, is essential for adapting to the rapid technological and scientific changes that characterise modern society (Jones & Mclean, 2018; Lüftenegger _et al._, 2016). Lifelong learning involves the motivation to learn and the competence to apply skills and knowledge effectively in various situations (Ng, 2019). Lifelong learning is vital for personal and professional growth, enabling individuals to remain contributors to society (Lau, 2017); it is a necessity for navigating constant change and transition (Lüftenegger _et al._, 2016).

Educators are encouraged to adopt strategies that foster lifelong learning skills, emphasizing real-world applications. Having understood that lifelong learning is a continuous exercise which its culture has to be imbued in people right from early stage, the school libraries are found fitting for this task by serving as dynamic centers of intellectual enrichment that support students' development into independent, lifelong learners (Oyedum & Babalola, 2014). School libraries provide essential resources, including books, periodicals, and digital materials, which are critical for both academic and personal development (Agbo, 2015). Consequently, the identified issues of poor academic performance, inadequate research habits, and underdeveloped reading skills among students are reflective of broader concerns regarding the state of school libraries in Nigeria, and more specifically, in Nasarawa State. In many parts of the country, school libraries, despite their critical role in fostering intellectual growth and lifelong learning, often face significant challenges, such as outdated resources, poor infrastructure, and limited funding. In the Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, despite the presence of school libraries, students continue to face difficulties that hinder their educational progress. These challenges include poor reading habits, inadequate research skills, and suboptimal academic performance (Onye, 2016).

The effectiveness of school libraries in promoting lifelong learning is contingent upon the availability and proper utilisation of these resources. The problem in Karu LGA lies in the disconnect

between the availability of library resources and their effective use by students. This disconnect impacts the students' ability to develop the necessary skills for lifelong learning. Specifically, the challenges in Karu include limited access to updated materials, insufficient digital resources, and ineffective library management practices. These barriers contribute to the poor academic performance of students and hinder the development of essential skills needed for their educational advancement and lifelong learning. Therefore, addressing the adequacy and utilisation of library resources is crucial for improving educational outcomes in the region. This study aims to investigate the influence of library information resources utilisation on lifelong learning of secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. By exploring the specific challenges related to resource availability and utilisation, this research seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform better resource management strategies. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the role of school libraries in supporting students' lifelong learning journeys, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes and personal development.

Objectives of the Study

This study sets out to:

i.   assess how the availability of school library information resources influences lifelong learning among secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State;

ii.   examine the extent to which secondary school students utilise school library information resources for lifelong learning in the study area; and

iii. establish the challenges that hinder the effective utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning among students in the study area.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

i.   What is the influence of availability of school library information resources for lifelong learning in the study area?

ii.   What is the extent of utilisation of school library information resources for lifelong learning in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State?

iii. What are the challenges that hinder the effective utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning among students in the study area?

Significance of the Study

The study's findings will benefit secondary school students, teachers, school librarians, school authorities, policymakers, parents, and researchers. For students, it will promote the use of library resources to improve knowledge acquisition, learning abilities, and attitudes toward resource utilisation. Teachers will benefit from students increased self-directed learning, which reduces teachers' workloads and motivates them to use library resources to update their knowledge and lesson preparation. School authorities and librarians will gain insights into library deficiencies, guiding them to enhance resources for improved education and lifelong learning.

Policymakers will be informed about challenges in library resource utilisation, encouraging supportive actions. Parents will see improved academic performance in their children through better library use. Researchers will find the study valuable as a reference for similar research and as a contribution to literature on library resources and lifelong learning among students.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is on the influence of availability and utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning of secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. The study covered the availability of school library information resources and utilisation by secondary school students, how often secondary school students utilise available school library and information resources for lifelong learning, the purpose of students' utilisation of library information resources on lifelong learning and the challenges that hinder the effective utilisation of school library and information resources on lifelong learning among students. The geographical scope of the study covered only government secondary schools with school libraries established in Karu Local Government Area in Nasarawa State.

Review of Related Literature

School libraries serve as essential educational tools, supporting curriculum delivery and contributing to the intellectual growth of students (Ode, 2014). They play a vital role in enhancing educational outcomes by facilitating the execution of academic plans and improving the overall effectiveness of the educational system. With a broad array of resources such as book, computers, Internet etc. available to teachers, students, and professionals, these libraries cater to diverse educational demands (Lawal-Solarin, 2016). Found primarily in primary and secondary schools, school libraries are designed to promote intellectual development (Yusuf, 2013). These spaces are stocked with carefully curated collections of books and learning materials, managed by trained personnel to benefit both students and educators. Functioning as key learning hubs, school libraries provide resources across all subjects, supporting various academic activities (Chimah & Nwokwocha, 2013). Their overarching goals are to foster reading skills, encourage consistent reading habits, align with the school curriculum and contribute to students' intellectual advancement (Moruf, 2015).

The main objective of school libraries is to offer free access to diverse resources that enhance student learning and school initiatives. Successful libraries provide both print and digital materials, such as books, magazines, charts, and multimedia resources, contributing to continuous education and the promotion of lifelong learning (Salisu, 2016; Egesimba *et al.*, 2015). The availability of such resources plays a pivotal role in nurturing ongoing educational engagement. Effective utilisation of school library resources has a profound impact on students' academic achievement and long-term learning potential. By making proper use of these materials, students develop key research and critical reading skills. Frequent visits to the library, combined with guidance from teachers, help cultivate better reading habits, ultimately improving students' overall knowledge and learning outcomes (Herring, 2014).

Several challenges hinder the effective availability and utilisation of school library resources, including policy gaps, staffing issues, inadequate funding, infrastructure deficiencies, and a lack of awareness. The absence of a clear library policy can lead to inconsistent management and insufficient funding, negatively impacting the library's ability to support educational goals (Mojapelo, 2014; Shonhe, 2019). For instance, Nasarawa State suffers from the lack of a structured library policy, contributing to ineffective library operations and poor student support. In contrast, regions with well-defined policies, such as those with robust policies in place, report better-managed libraries and improved resource utilisation, leading to higher levels of user satisfaction. This comparison highlights the need for a clear library policy in Nasarawa State to enhance library effectiveness and student learning.

Another major challenge is poor staffing practices, which severely affect the quality of library services. Many school libraries, particularly in Nasarawa State, face inadequate staffing and unqualified personnel, resulting in poorly managed collections and limited information literacy among students (Shonhe, 2019). In contrast, regions with well-trained library staff observe better library operations and improved student outcomes, as professional staff can provide more effective information literacy programmes (Robertson & McMenemy, 2020). Addressing staffing challenges through staff training and recruitment would significantly enhance library services and student engagement with learning resources. Additionally, inadequate funding limits the ability of libraries to maintain up-to-date resources, modern technology, and sufficient staffing. In Nasarawa State, funding shortfalls result in outdated materials and poor facilities, further affecting students' academic performance (Robertson & McMenemy, 2020). Conversely, well-funded libraries are able to support a wider range of educational activities and offer better support for students' academic needs (Shonhe, 2019).

Infrastructure deficiencies, particularly in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), also limit the ability of school libraries to provide essential digital resources (Danladi & Yohanna, 2018). In Nasarawa State, poor ICT infrastructure restricts access to digital tools, while regions with advanced ICT facilities offer students better access to a broad spectrum of digital resources, enhancing research and learning (Adeyemi, 2013). Lastly, a lack of awareness among school principals and teachers about the importance of libraries leads to underutilisation and weak support for library programmes (Azuoma, 2018). Without adequate marketing efforts, the role of libraries in education remains undervalued, contributing to poor library use in Nasarawa State. In contrast, regions with strong awareness campaigns report higher levels of library use and better support from school staff (Majid & Mokhtar, 2015). Addressing these deficiencies through policy development, staffing improvements, increased funding, better infrastructure, and awareness campaigns is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of school libraries and fostering lifelong learning among students.

To improve the utilisation of school library resources, several strategies can be adopted. First, developing and implementing comprehensive library policies is essential for effective management. Policies that outline the vision, roles, and objectives of the library can lead to better resource allocation and overall efficiency. Such policies not only enhance library management but also provide a framework for securing adequate funding and institutional support. Enhancing staffing practices is another key

strategy. Recruiting and training qualified librarians and support staff can significantly improve the quality of library services. Qualified staff can assist students more effectively, ensuring that library resources are used optimally. Furthermore, increasing funding for school libraries is vital to acquiring and maintaining diverse resources.

Upgrading library infrastructure, especially in terms of ICT, is critical for modernising services and expanding access to digital resources. South Korea has also made significant strides in this area, with ICT investments leading to better access and more modern library experiences for students (Lee & Kim, 2018). Finally, increasing awareness and promoting library services can lead to higher engagement and utilisation. By adopting these strategies, Nasarawa State can greatly enhance the effectiveness of its school libraries, improving resource availability and usage to better support student learning outcomes. The current literature on school library resource utilisation reveals several gaps that this study aims to address. First, existing research is often region-specific, limiting its generalizability. For instance, studies by and Udah (2015) and Mesagan _et al._ (2022) focus on Cross River and Ondo States, respectively, without providing broader regional comparisons. While technological integration in libraries is highlighted, such as by Irunegbo _et al._ (2018), specific implementation strategies are lacking. This study will analyse how technology is incorporated in Karu LGA schools and compare these approaches with national and international practices.

Another gap is the limited focus on the impact of library instruction at the secondary school level, with most research, like Isah _et al._ (2019), focusing on university students. This study will explore the effects of library instruction on secondary students in Karu LGA, identifying best practices from other regions. Additionally, existing literature often overlooks the unique challenges of secondary school libraries, focusing instead on academic or distance education libraries, as seen in Igwebuike and Agbo (2017). This study will examine specific issues such as resource availability and staffing in Karu LGA and compare them with challenges faced by other regions. Finally, many studies stop at theoretical recommendations without offering practical solutions. This study will provide actionable strategies for improving library resource utilisation, ensuring that the recommendations are practical and regionally applicable.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, the descriptive survey method was deemed appropriate because it allows for a detailed assessment of current practices and the identification of gaps that need to be addressed to improve the utilisation of school library resources (Oyedum _et al._, 2015; Kothari & Garg, 2014). The population for the study was 1,736 students across ten secondary schools, each of which has a functioning school library. The sample size of 315 senior secondary school students (SS1–SS3) was drawn through a proportionate sampling technique, ensuring that the sample reflected the relative size of the student population in each school.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	Name of Secondary School	Students
1.	Government Day Secondary School, Aso Pada	148
2.	Government Secondary School, Aso Pada	132
3.	Government Secondary School, Bakin Ado	168
4.	Government Science Secondary School, Karu	203
5.	Government Secondary School, Karu	179
6.	Government Secondary Science, Karu East	187
7.	Government Secondary School, Koruduma, one man village	216
8.	Government Secondary School, Luvu	159
9.	Government Secondary School, Maraba	201
10.	Government Secondary School, Masaka	143
Total		**1,736**

Source: Preliminary Survey, 2023

Table 2: Sample Size

S/N	Name of Secondary School	Students
1.	Government Secondary School, Karu	32
2.	Government Science Secondary School, Karu	37
3.	Government Secondary School, Bakin Ado	30
4.	Government Secondary Science, Karu East	34
5	Government Secondary School, Maraba	36
6	Government Secondary School, Koruduma, one man village	39
7	Government Secondary School, Masaka	26
8	Government Secondary School, Luvu	29
9	Government Secondary School, Aso Pada	24
10	Government Day Secondary School, Aso Pada	28
	Total	**315**

For data collection, a structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire, titled "Availability and Utilisation of School Library and Information Resources on Lifelong Learning among Students in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State" (AUSLIRLLNS), was self-designed and based on existing studies in the field. The questionnaire was divided into several sections: Section A covered demographic information. Data collection involved the researcher visiting schools personally to distribute questionnaires. With the assistance of research aides, questionnaires were handed out in person, allowing the researcher to address any questions from respondents directly. Students were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires, which the researcher then collected. During these visits, the observation checklist was also utilised to accurately assess the availability of library resources in each school. For data analysis, descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation were used to interpret survey responses, helping to address the study's research questions by revealing patterns in the availability and utilisation of library resources. A total of 315 questionnaires were distributed to respondents across ten secondary schools in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa

State, with 269 completed and returned questionnaires deemed usable for analysis, yielding an 85% response rate.

Data Analysis

Table 3 shows the level of utilisation of school library information resources for lifelong learning among respondent of secondary school students studied.

Table 3: Level of Utilisation of SLIR for Lifelong Learning among the Respondents

S/N	Statements	VO	O	NO	NU	FX	x̄	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	I use handbills on lifelong learning	37	36	91	105	543	2.01	0.48	Disagreed
2	I use newspapers on lifelong learning	85	7	73	104	611	2.27	0.23	Disagreed
3	I use magazines on lifelong learning	27	58	85	99	551	2.05	0.45	Disagreed
4	I use maps on lifelong learning	39	106	33	91	631	2.35	0.15	Disagreed
5	I use globes on lifelong learning	44	50	70	105	571	2.12	0.37	Disagreed
6	I use textbooks on lifelong learning	124	103	26	16	873	3.25	0.75	Agreed
7	I use reports on lifelong learning	73	111	43	42	753	2.79	0.29	Agreed
8	I use Internet on lifelong learning	100	99	49	21	816	3.03	0.53	Agreed
9	I use video tapes on lifelong learning	91	98	43	37	781	2.90	0.40	Agreed
10	I use folklore on lifelong learning	79	88	52	50	734	2.73	0.23	Agreed
11	I use dictionaries on lifelong learning	88	120	47	14	820	3.05	0.55	Agreed
12	I use radio on lifelong learning	98	110	47	14	830	3.09	0.59	Agreed
13	I use television on lifelong learning	110	102	47	10	850	3.16	0.66	Agreed
14	I use pamphlets on lifelong learning	13	33	101	122	475	1.77	0.73	Disagreed
15	I use brochures on lifelong learning	20	33	116	100	511	1.89	0.60	Disagreed
	Weighted mean						**2.42**		

Key: Very Often (VO), Often (O), Not Often (NO), Never Used (NU)

Table 3 reveals the responses on use of school library resources for lifelong learning. Of the 15 resources listed, eight scored above the weighted mean of 2.42, indicating high usage. These include textbooks (x̄=3.25), television (x̄=3.16), radio (x̄=3.09), dictionaries (x̄=3.05), Internet (x̄=3.03), video tapes (x̄=2.90), reports (x̄=2.79), and folklore (x̄=2.73). In contrast, seven resources scored below 2.42, indicating lower usage, such as maps (x̄=2.35), newspapers (x̄=2.27), and globes (x̄=2.12), with the lowest scores for brochures and pamphlets (both x̄=1.77). The findings suggest that students' overall use of school library resources for lifelong learning is at an average level.

Table 4 shows influence of utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning among respondent of secondary school students studied.

Influence of Library Information Resources Utilisation on Lifelong Learning of Secondary...   **68**

Table 4: Influence of Utilisation of SLIR on Lifelong Learning among the Respondents

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	x̄	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1	269				
1	The use of school library information resources has influenced the writing of my assignments	112	117	32	8	269	875	3.25	0.75	Agreed
2	The use of school library information resources has influenced my preparation for tests	101	103	50	15	269	812	3.07	0.52	Agreed
3	The use of school library information resources has influenced my preparation for examinations	116	142	7	4	269	908	3.38	0.88	Agreed
4	The use of school library information resources has enabled me know more about what is happening in my environment	98	110	47	14	269	830	3.09	0.59	Agreed
5	The use of school library information resources has influenced my knowledge on general education	95	99	54	21	269	806	2.99	0.49	Disagreed
6	The use of school library information resources has enabled me obtain current and up-to-date information	91	95	60	23	269	792	2.94	0.44	Disagreed
7	The use of school library information resources has influenced my competitions	80	99	59	31	269	766	2.85	0.35	Disagreed
	Weighted mean							**3.07**		

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Table 5 shows the challenges that hinder the effective utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning among the respondents.

Table 5: Challenges Hindering Effective Utilisation of SLIR for Lifelong Learning among the Respondents

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	FX	x̄	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Lack of a library policy affects utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning	92	104	56	17	809	3.02	0.51	Agreed
2	Poor staffing practices affects utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning	73	80	67	49	715	2.66	0.16	Disagreed
3	Lack of adequate funding affects utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning	116	142	7	4	908	3.38	0.88	Agreed
4	Poor ICT infrastructure affects utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning	101	95	50	23	812	3.01	0.52	Agreed

| 5 | Poor library facilities affect utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning | 92 | 99 | 48 | 30 | 788 | 2.94 | 0.43 | Agreed |
| 6 | Lack of awareness affects utilisation of school library information resources on lifelong learning | 84 | 99 | 57 | 29 | 776 | 2.88 | 0.38 | Disagreed |

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Discussion of the Findings

The study's major findings provide insights into the research questions guiding this investigation. First, regarding the influence of school library resources on lifelong learning, results indicate that secondary school students' utilisation of these resources has a moderate impact on enhancing their learning and knowledge acquisition. This suggests that while the library resources contribute positively to students' lifelong learning abilities, there may be limitations affecting the full potential of this influence. In response to the availability of library resources in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, findings reveal that secondary school students utilize these resources at an average level, implying that the accessibility or adequacy of these resources may not be fully optimized to meet students' lifelong learning needs. This highlights a possible gap in resource provision or awareness, which could impact students' engagement and the effectiveness of library usage.

Finally, students identified significant challenges hindering effective utilisation of school library resources for lifelong learning, aligning with the third research question. Key obstacles include the lack of a comprehensive library policy, poor staffing and inadequate funding, insufficient ICT infrastructure, substandard library facilities, lack of awareness and interest, frequent power outages, and a scarcity of current and relevant books. These challenges underscore critical areas that require attention to improve students' engagement with library resources and foster a more supportive environment for lifelong learning. The study reveals a moderate level of utilisation of school library information resources among secondary school students, with a focus on resources like textbooks, reports, the Internet, dictionaries, radio, television, videotapes, and folklore to support lifelong learning. These resources contribute to a conducive learning environment that enhances students' academic achievement, aligning with Arua and Chinaka (2015), who found that diverse library resources aid both students and teachers in reaching educational goals. However, some resources, including handbills, newspapers, magazines, maps, globes, pamphlets, and brochures, were underutilised by students for lifelong learning purposes.

The influence of school library resources on students' lifelong learning is substantial, as these resources play a key role in assisting with assignments, test and exam preparation, staying informed about current events, and engaging in academic competitions. This usage expands students' knowledge base, enabling them to prepare effectively for assessments, similar to findings by Chukwueke *et al.* (2019), who reported that students leverage library resources for exams, general education, and inspiration. Despite these benefits, various challenges hinder effective resource utilisation, such as poor library facilities, a lack of current and relevant books, and limited student

interest. These barriers, particularly those stemming from inadequate funding, align with Mojapelo (2018) and Adeyemi (2013), who identified funding issues, outdated materials, insufficient staffing, restricted library hours, and inadequate technology as obstacles to functional school libraries. Addressing these challenges through increased funding, modern resources, and reliable power sources is crucial to fully support students' lifelong learning.

Conclusion

The study concludes that while textbooks and storybooks are the most utilised, other valuable resources like dictionaries, indexes, and pamphlets are underused. Secondary school libraries in Karu Local Government Area play a significant role in fostering lifelong learning by providing a range of information resources. Findings indicate that while resources such as textbooks and storybooks are highly utilised, essential tools like dictionaries, indexes, and pamphlets remain underused, limiting students' access to comprehensive learning support. The influence of library resources on lifelong learning is positive, aiding in academic preparedness and knowledge acquisition. However, availability remains constrained due to outdated materials and limited variety; even as inadequate facilities, insufficient funding, and low awareness hinder the effective use of library resources.

Recommendations

On the strength of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. To improve the utilisation of library resources and promote lifelong learning among secondary school students in Karu LGA, local governments should increase budget allocations specifically for school libraries. These funds should be used to purchase diverse and current information resources, including digital materials, and to regularly train librarians in management, digital literacy, and student engagement. Collaborations with universities and professional bodies can provide certified training programmes. Additionally, library operating hours should be extended to accommodate students' schedules, supported by hiring additional staff or utilising volunteers.

2. Integrating library resources into the curriculum is essential, with the development of library-based assignments and projects in collaboration with teachers, supported by school administrators. Regular library orientation sessions at the beginning of each academic year can help familiarize students with available resources and their effective use. Digital library services should be introduced, investing in necessary technology infrastructure and training both librarians and students on accessing and using digital resources. The library's collection should be regularly updated and diversified, with a resource review committee recommending new acquisitions. Promoting the library's services through school assemblies and social media can increase awareness and usage among students.

3. Addressing specific challenges faced by libraries, such as inadequate space and outdated resources, is crucial and can be achieved through tailored improvement plans and securing funding from local businesses and community organisations. A continuous monitoring and evaluation system should be implemented to assess the effectiveness of library services,

using key performance indicators and feedback from students and teachers to inform ongoing improvements. These actions will significantly enhance library resource utilisation and promote lifelong learning in Karu LGA.

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