

Provision and Utilization of Library Resources and Services in Selected Public and Private Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipality, Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the rate of provision and utilization of library resources and services in selected public and private secondary schools in Owerri Municipality, Imo State, Nigeria. Survey research design was used while an instrument titled 'Rating Scale for Resources and Services of Secondary School Libraries' (RSRSSL) was used for data collection. A population of 38,042 students in twenty-two (22) public and private secondary schools in Owerri Municipality in the 2014/2015 academic session was studied with a sample size of 650 students were randomly drawn from the six (6) secondary schools were used for this study. The instrument was validated and its reliability confirmed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Testing Technique. Three (3) research questions were answered while an equivalent number of hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical technique at 0.05% level of significance. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 25 software to calculate the mean, standard deviation and testing of hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on provision of library services. Libraries in public secondary schools performed poorly in rate of use of their resources whereas in the private schools, resources and services of the school library are mostly used on weekdays and examination periods. Result also shows that the respondents experienced some challenges in both public and private secondary schools in the provision of library resources and services. Based on these findings, it is recommended that competent staff should be employed to man libraries in secondary schools. Also, libraries in secondary schools should be properly funded by the proprietors of their parent institution.

Introduction

Government policies in different countries of the world make reference to the role of school library in the production of individuals who can function effectively as sound and productive

citizens. This much can be inferred from Nigeria's *National Policy on Education* (2004) which acknowledged that school libraries are among the most important educational services and advised every State Ministry of Education in

Keywords

Provision, Rate of Use, Library Resources, Library Services, School Libraries

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the country to provide for the establishment of libraries in all educational institutions. Any educational institution without a library is as lifeless as a motor car without an engine or a body without soul. School libraries are one of the valuable infrastructures in the academic system (Gabasa & Hussaini, 2021).

library contains a diverse range of books and other materials arranged to support information services that enhance the teaching and learning programs of the school.

Some terms used interchangeably with "school library" include Learning Resource Centre (LRC), Learning Centre (LC), School Media Resource Centre (SMRC), and Media Resource Centre (MRC), reflecting the inclusion of non-book materials and teaching/learning aids. These libraries serve as laboratories for various activities and experiments aimed at the development of children and the nation as a whole (Akanwa cited in Owate and Iroha, 2013). School libraries differ based on the environment and the type of school they serve. The types of school library can be inferred from the comments of Mbagwu and Akanwa (2012) to the effect that a school library is an information service centre located in a primary, post-primary school, or in a Teachers' Training College (TTC) whose objective is to provide information services in support of learning activities in the school. Agbo (2015) mentioned libraries sited in pre-tertiary institutions such as nursery, primary and secondary as school libraries. It is therefore easy to classify school libraries as either nursery/kindergarten, primary, secondary or TTC libraries.

School libraries are organized collection of books placed in schools for teachers and students. It may comprise of reference books and books for home reading under the care of a professional librarian. They are an indispensable unit in any school, regardless of its educational philosophy (Ogugua, Unegbu & Esievo, 2019). Essentially, a school

The resources of the school library have been broadly categorized into five (5) groups, namely: accommodation, collection (both book and non-book materials), finance, staff and equipment/furniture (Nnadozie, 2007). Bernard and Dulle (2014) citing Fayose, listed books, periodicals, films, and filmstrips, video tapes, recordings of all types, slides, computers, study kits and other information-bearing sources that are housed for use by pupils, students and teachers in school libraries. By and large, school library information resources consist of print and non-print media. Print media are those materials that are in print format. Examples include: fiction, non-fiction, reference books, textbooks, and supportive books. On the other hand, non-print materials include audio-books, e-books, compact discs (CDs), cassettes, videotapes, digital video discs (DVD), realia, games, simulations, teaching aids, as well as, computers and internet (Iheagwam, 2020).

Despite their importance, the school library does not receive the attention it deserves. Emphasis is placed on physical structures rather than library resources. In addition, corruption, extremely high exchange rate, inconsistent of policy at state or local levels of government, non-implementation of education policies, insecurity, banditry, terrorism, emergence of

strange disease COVID-19 lock down and poor technologically driven librarians among others are affecting the libraries (Ternenge & Agipu, 2019; David-West & Bassey, 2017). However, the extent to which these claims are applicable to secondary school libraries in Owerri Municipality is examined in this study of the state of the resources and services of selected secondary school libraries.

Research Questions

The study will answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on provision of library services?
2. To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on rate of use of library resources and services?
3. To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on constraints to the provision of library resources and services?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on provision of library services.
2. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on rate of use of library resources and services.
3. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on constraints to provision of library resources and services.

Literature Review

School Library Defined

Basically, a school library is not an adjunct to a school, but an integral part of it. Hence, Ogugua, et al. (2019) defined school libraries as an organized collection of books placed in schools for teachers and students. It may comprise of reference books and books for home reading under the care of a professional librarian. They are an indispensable unit in any school, regardless of its educational philosophy. School libraries are libraries that are set up in nursery, primary and secondary school to cater for the teaching and learning needs of the pupils, students and their teachers. They provide printed and non-printed materials to facilitate learning.

School libraries in the educational institutions such as pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are important to the life wire and foundational up-bringing of children. This is because they primarily stock materials that are of interest and developmental growth for young teenagers and youths of the era (Ternenge & Agipu, 2019). School libraries are known as learning laboratory for the school. They provide the total learning package required by the students and their teachers. They exist to provide a range of learning opportunities for both large and small groups as well as individuals with a focus on intellectual content, information literacy and the learner. Books are indispensable tools in education and a child who has learnt to use books and enjoy them is better able to continue his studies when he leaves school. But books are not the only information resources found in the modern school. It is a multipurpose establishment and a driving force in

the realization of the school's aims and objectives (Ogunbawo, Issa, Akinboro & Ahmed, 2020; Okuonghae & Igbinovia, 2019). It can be regarded not only as a reading centre or a material centre but also as a service and teaching centre of its parent institution.

Resource and Services of the School Library

Gabasa and Hussaini (2021) citing Akanwa noted that the resources of any library, be it academic, public, special, national or school, are made up of information resources, human resources and financial resources. The functions of these resources, according to her are interwoven and no library can do without them. This is why school libraries seem to be synonymous and often referred to as school media resource centre, media resource centre, learning resource centre, etc. School library facilities are the corner stone of education system. They are essential ingredients in the effort to realize effective teaching and learning outcome. Iheagwam (2020) citing Adeboyeje and Ayodele have pointed out that the availability of adequate chairs, desks and other facilities are necessary for the accomplishment of any educational goals and objectives. Facilities to be provided include reading tables adequate enough for users, sitting chairs, book shelves, library space, fans, lighting, ventilation, flooring, restaurant, location of exit point, notice board/bulletin, photocopiers, vehicle parking space, computers, carrels, periodical racks, circulation desks and other facilities that would make users comfortable for reading.

Asuata & Emasealu (2022) pointing Elaturoti maintained that a rich and balanced collection in a School Library Media Centre does not

guarantee usage without the planning and implementation of essential media programmes that will promote utilization of the learning resources. These programmes include:

- a. Teaching the skills of using books, non-book media and libraries to teachers and pupils.
- b. Developing in children reading habits, through story-hour and book-talks;
- c. Creating awareness for library collections through displays and preparation of booklist;
- d. Working with the teachers to plan class assignments;
- e. Teaching the skills in design, production and the use of instructional media to teachers and pupils and creating a circulation system that will facilitate the effective use of library resources in the School Library Media Centre.

Library services are the totality of the assistance and help which the library provides for the benefit of its clientele. These services are provided by the school library on the understanding that the material resources in the school library will be meaningless to the student/pupils if they are not organized, arranged and interpreted in a way that will encourage usage by the students and the teachers (Mogaka, 2019). The school library personnel perform various activities to make these resources readily available for use.

Constraints to Utilization of School Library Resource and Services

Notwithstanding the importance of school libraries, Gabasa and

Hussaini (2021) citing Okiy described the state school library resources and services in Nigeria as most deplorable, very regrettable, neglected and under-developed. Asuata and Emasealu (2022) in their own study on "Availability and Utilisation of Library Information Resources in Secondary Schools by Special Patrons", identified poor funding, poor maintenance culture, inadequate structures, unavailability of a librarian, poor knowledge of available resources and developmental gap, poor maintenance culture, unavailability of a librarian, inaccessibility of the library information resources, unavailability of library information resources, lack of internet services, inadequate education and training programme, technophobia, difficulty in communication and lack of library orientation affect the utilisation of library information resources by students in school libraries.

However, the authenticity of these claims about the state of secondary school libraries would be examined in the present assessment of the resources and services of selected secondary school libraries in Owerri, the capital of Imo State of Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was survey research. The population of the study comprised thirteen thousand, eight hundred and two (13,802) students in the twenty-two (22) secondary schools in Owerri Municipality, Imo State. The sample size used for this study was derived from the total number of students in the six (6) secondary schools covered in this survey. A sample of 650 which is 5% of 13,802 was subsequently used for the study. The sample size for this study

is made up of 511 respondents from public schools and 139 students from private schools. This sample size was chosen in line with Gall, Gall and Borg (2009) recommendation that when the population is 1000, use 20%; for 5000, use 10% and for 10,000, use 5%. Since the population of the study is more than 10000, 5% was considered closest to the recommendation (i.e. Gall, Gall and Borg, 2009) considering that it covered a larger percentage of the population under study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. However, the schools selected were: Federal Government Girls College, Owerri, Government Secondary School, Owerri, Comprehensive Development Secondary School, Owerri, Alvana Model Secondary School, Owerri, Lighthouse Secondary School, Aladinma, Owerri and Rochas Foundation Secondary School, Owerri. Additionally, the major instrument used to collect data for this study was a questionnaire-Likert rating scale. This instrument titled '*Rating Scale for Resources and Services of Secondary School Libraries*' (RSRSSSL) was designed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation) were used to analyze the research questions where the independent sample test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05% level of significance.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Research Question 1: To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on provision of library services?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of Responses on Provision of Library Services in Public Secondary Schools under study (N = 381)

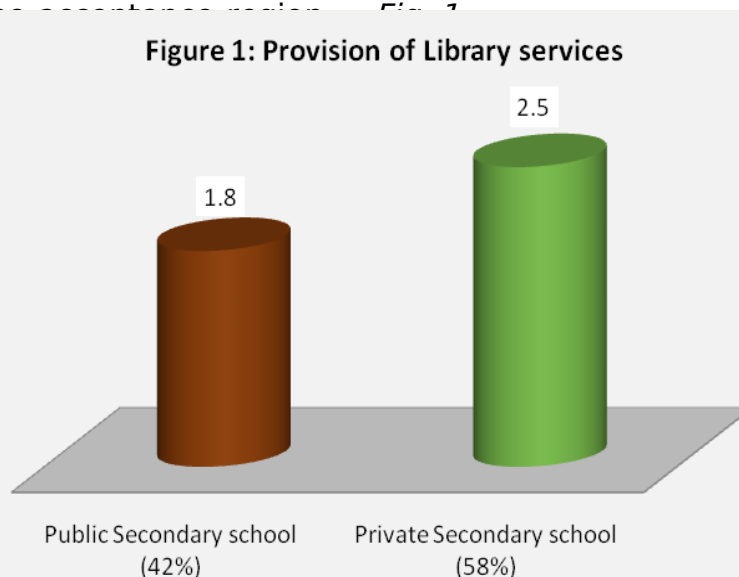
S/ N	Provision of Library Services	$\bar{X}_{Pub.}$	$\bar{X}_{Priv.}$	$\bar{X}_G$	S.D	Remark
1	Readers Advisory Services are provided in my school library	1.94	1.66	1.80	1.73	LE
2	My school library provides Current Awareness Services to readers	1.91	2.9	2.41	2.65	LE
3	References/referral services are available in the school library	1.06	2.81	1.94	2.37	LE
4	The library in my school engages in inter-library lending	1.99	2.27	2.13	2.20	LE
5	Reprographic services are provided in my school library	1.94	2.21	2.08	2.14	LE
6	My school library provides lending services	1.92	2.16	2.04	2.10	LE
7	Staff of the school library undertake literature search for library users	1.76	3	2.38	2.69	LE
8	Bindery services are provided in the school library	1.63	2.2	1.92	2.06	LE
9	The school library gives library instruction/orientation to readers	1.81	3.02	2.42	2.72	LE
Pooled Mean		1.80	2.50	2.12		LE

Criterion Mean = 2.5; $\bar{X}_{Pub.}$ = Public secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_{Priv.}$ =

Private secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_G$ = Grand mean; S.D = Standard deviation; LE = Low extent

From Table 1, it can be concluded that public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on provision of library services. This is evident as the grand mean of responses on the provision of library services in public secondary school, did not reach the criterion mean (i.e. 1.80 <

mean for private secondary school was accepted as it equivalent to the criterion mean (2.50 = 2.5). The percentage representation of the grand mean scores for provision of library services in public and private secondary schools is displayed in Figure 1.



Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on provision of library services.

Table 2: Result of Hypothesis 1

Category	Mean	df	t _{cal} (±)	P-value	t _{crit}	Decision
Public Secondary School	1.80	16	3.746	0.0002	1.746	Significant
Private Secondary School	2.50					

The t-calculated value = 3.746 is greater than t-critical value (1.746). It is therefore concluded with 95% confidence that there is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on provision of library

services. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is rejected.

Research Question 2: To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on rate of use of library resources and services?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of Responses on Rate of Use of Library Resources and Services in Public Secondary Schools under study (N = 381)

S/ N	Rate of Use of Library Resources and Services	$\bar{X}_{Pub.}$	$\bar{X}_{Priv.}$	$\bar{X}_G$	S.D	Remark
10	Many teachers use library resources and services	1.90	2.11	2.01	0.50	LE
11	Some students in senior classes (SSS) do not use the services of the school library	1.81	3.29	2.55	0.64	HE
12	Many students in SSS classes do not utilize the resources of the school library	1.88	3.06	2.47	0.62	LE
13	Resources and services of the school library are mostly used on weekdays	3.64	2.96	3.30	0.83	LE
14	There is higher use of the resources and services of the school library on weekends	1.66	2.07	1.87	0.47	LE
15	Many students use library resources and service during mid-term break	1.79	2.13	1.96	0.49	LE
16	Students use library resources and services mostly during examination periods	3.68	3.74	3.71	0.93	HE
17	There is increase in the use of resources and services of the school library during holidays	1.63	1.65	1.64	0.41	LE
Pooled Mean		2.25	2.63	2.44		LE

Criterion Mean = 2.5; $\bar{X}_{Pub.}$ = Public secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_{Priv.}$ = Private

secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_G$ = Grand mean; S.D = Standard deviation; LE = Low extent; HE = High extent

The analysis of the responses to *Research Question 2* which seeks to examine the extent to which public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on the rate of use of library resources and services, as summarized in *Table 3* shows that the respondents faulted the public secondary schools on the rate of use of library resources and services. This was indicated by the mean score of 2.25 credited to public secondary schools which did not pass the criterion mean test.

However, the mean score of 2.63 credited to private secondary schools, surpassed the acceptance region of 2.5. This result leads to the conclusion that private secondary schools differ from public secondary schools on the rate of use of library resources and services.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean



scores on rate of use of library resources and services.

Table 4: Result of Hypothesis 2

Category	Mean	df	t _{cal} (±)	P-value	t _{crit}	Decision
Public Secondary School	2.25	14	0.935	0.366	1.76	Not
Private Secondary School	2.63				1	Significant

The t-calculated value = 0.935 is less than t-critical value (1.761). This leaves the researcher with 95% confidence that there is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on rate of use of library resources and services. Based on

the result presented in Table 4, H₀₂ is hereby accepted.

Research Question 3: To what extent do public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on constraints to the provision of library resources and services?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviations of Responses on Constraints to the provision of Library Resources and services in Public Secondary Schools under study (N = 381)

S/N	Constraints to the provision of Library Resources and services	$\bar{X}_{Pub.}$	$\bar{X}_{Priv.}$	$\bar{X}_G$	S.D	Remark
18	My school library is not adequately funded	3.64	3.10	3.37	0.84	HE
19	Shortage of staff affects the services of the school library	3.36	3.21	3.29	0.82	HE
20	Books and other information materials used in my school library are very expensive	3.47	3.12	3.30	0.825	HE
21	The school library does not have sufficient accommodation for its resources and services	3.49	2.06	2.78	0.695	HE
22	There are no basic working tools in my school library	3.48	2.23	2.86	0.715	HE
23	The reading chairs and tables in my school library are few	3.17	2.20	2.69	0.67	HE
	Pooled Mean	3.44	2.65	3.04		HE

Criterion Mean = 2.5; $\bar{X}_{Pub.}$ = Public secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_{Priv.}$ =

Private secondary school mean; $\bar{X}_G$ = Grand mean; S.D = Standard deviation; LE = Low extent; HE = High extent

The analysis of the responses to Research Question 3 which seeks to examine the extent to which public and private secondary schools are constrained in the provision of library resources and services, as summarized in Table 5 shows that the respondents experienced some challenges in both public and

private secondary schools in the provision of library resources and services. This is indicated by the mean score of 3.43 and 2.65 respectively which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. However, the high mean scores of 3.43 suggests that these constraints are more in public secondary schools



than in private secondary schools where the mean score is 2.65.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on constraints to provision of library resources and services.

Table 6: Result of Hypothesis 3

Category	Mean	Df	t _{cal} (±)	P- value	t _{crit}	Decision
Public Secondary School	3.44	10	3.397	0.007	1.860	Significant
Private Secondary School	2.65					

The t-calculated value = 3.397 is greater than t-critical value (1.860). The analysis of this result produced a 95% confidence that there is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on constraints to provision of library resources and services. Based on the above interpretation, H₀₃ of this study is rejected.

Discussion of findings

Provision of Library Services:

There is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on provision of library services. The analysis of data in *Tables 1* buttresses this point. For instance, in *Table 1*, the weighted mean score for all the items i.e. 1 – 9) were low leading to a grand mean score of 1.80 which is less than the criterion mean score of 2.5. This result indicates the existence of very poor and unsatisfactory library services in public secondary schools in Owerri Municipality, Imo State. There is no other plausible explanation for the low mean rating of all the items in *Table 11*. On the other hand, items 28, 29, 33 and 35 in *Table 12* had weighted mean scores of 2.90, 2.81, 3.00 and 3.02, respectively. This accounts for the grand mean score of 2.50 for provision of library services in private secondary schools.

Based on the results presented in *Tables 1*, it is not difficult to conclude that libraries in private secondary schools provide more

qualitative services than those in public secondary schools. The existence of a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in terms of library services was proved in *Table 2* where the t-calculated value (3.746) is greater than t-critical value (1.746). This result cannot be described as completely unusual considering that the libraries in private secondary schools ranked better than those in public secondary schools in terms of print and non-print materials, as well as relevance of library resources. This result supports the submission of earlier writers like Olajide and Ariwodola (2009) who drew attention to the poor quality of library services provided in educational institutions, especially, public-owned secondary schools.

Rate of Use of Library Resources and Services:

There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on rate of use of library resources and services. Despite the gap between the mean scores in public and private secondary schools (*Tables 3*), the absence of any significant difference between public and private secondary schools in terms of rate of use of library resources and services was established in this study. This can be seen in *Table 4* where the t-calculated value (0.935) was less than the t-critical value (1.761) in the test of hypothesis. However, a closer study of *Table 3* showed that libraries in public secondary schools

performed poorly in rate of use of their resources as only two (2) out of the eight (8) items (i.e. items 13 and 16) made the benchmark mean of 2.5. This clearly accounts for the low grand mean score of 2.25 for *Table 3*.

The picture is, however, quite different in *private* where four (4) of the eight (8) items (i.e. items 11, 12, 13 and 16) each had mean scores above the criterion mean resulting in a grand mean score of 2.63. Although the test of hypothesis showed no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in respect of rate of use of library resources and services, a closer and more detailed analysis of *Tables 3* exposed the fact that libraries in public secondary schools are poorly utilized. These point to the fact that these school libraries are not adequately equipped and stocked.

The possible reason for these results could be found in the fact that use of library is often predicated on availability of resources and services capable of satisfying the information needs of clients. Use of library can neither be guaranteed nor sustained where these resources and services are not provided. The result of this study is in tandem with earlier research report of Gabasa and Hussaini (2021) whose findings indicated that out of the numerous resources and services of the library, textbooks, dictionaries, maps, atlases and encyclopedias were the most utilized in the school libraries.

Constraints to Provision of Library Resources and Services:

There is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the mean scores on constraints to the

provision of library resources and services. The data analyzed in *Tables 5* buttressed this point. For example, in *Table 5*, the mean scores for each of the items were more than the criterion mean of 2.5 which is why the grand mean score came to 3.43. This result indicates that public secondary schools contend with series of challenges in the provision of library resources and services. On the other hand, *Table 5* equally showed that out of the six (6) problems captured, libraries in private secondary schools only contend with three (3), namely: insufficient accommodation, lack of basic working tools and shortage of reading chairs. The grand mean of 2.65 obtained for private school libraries is equally above the criterion mean score of 2.5. The existence of a significant difference between public and private secondary school libraries in the provision of library resources and services is proven in *Table 6* where the test of hypothesis yielded a t-calculated value (3.397) which is greater than the t-critical value (1.860).

The reason for the wide gap between the two sets of school libraries in terms of constraints emanates from the fact that libraries in public secondary schools are neglected and under-funded by governments across various tiers. This is not exactly the fate of libraries in private secondary schools which are better funded as a result of the comparatively higher charges levied in these schools. The result of this study in respect of constraints to provision of library resources and services in public and private secondary schools is in agreement with some other published surveys which have

captured some of the problems militating against the operation and efficiency of school libraries in Nigeria (Iheagwam, 2020; Gabasa & Hussaini, 2021; and Fakunle, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that public and private secondary schools differ in mean scores on provision of library services as private school libraries provide better current awareness services to readers, references/referral services and library instruction/orientation to readers. Libraries in public secondary schools performed poorly in rate of use of their resources whereas in the private schools, resources and services of the school library are mostly used on weekdays and examination periods. In furtherance, public secondary schools contend with series of challenges in the provision of library resources and services such as: inadequate funding, shortage of staff, very expensive books and other information materials, the school library does not have sufficient accommodation for its resources and services, no basic working tools, and reading chairs and tables. On the other hand, libraries in private secondary schools majorly contend with three (3), namely: insufficient accommodation, lack of basic working tools and shortage of reading chairs.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that:

1. Competent staff should be employed to man libraries in secondary schools. Foremost amongst these staff is the teacher-librarian who should provide the needed leadership and professional direction.

Besides the teacher-librarian, other cadre of staff like technologist, library assistant, clerk, messenger, etc should be employed to work in libraries in secondary schools. This recommendation is based on the fact that most of the secondary schools included in this study were not adequately staffed.

2. There is need to provide basic working tools in secondary school libraries. Without basic tools like catalogue cards and cabinet, classification schemes, subject heading lists, cutter table, the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition, accessions register, book shelves, etc, it would be impossible for any library to function effectively. In addition, reading chairs, tables, computers and other facilities required to enhance the comfort of staff and readers should be provided for libraries attached to secondary schools.
3. At the heart of every successful organization is adequate provision and prudent management of funds. Thus, libraries in secondary schools should be properly funded by the proprietors of their parent institution. Through regular and adequate funding, the library would be able to procure the necessary working tools, reading materials, accommodation, mount new services and recruit different cadre of personnel needed to provide quality library services.

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