TRAINING SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS FOR NIGERIAN SCHOOLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PROGRAMME OF ABADINA MEDIA RESOURCE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The importance of training school library media specialists for the attainment of quality education in the school system cannot be overemphasized. The role of the school library media specialist has changed with developments in information communication and integration into library and information service which has necessitated a new set of skills that could be attained through training. In view of the fact that the role of the school library media specialist has evolved over many years, this article examined the training programme at Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Keywords: *Training, School library media specialists*

Introduction

The role of school library media specialists and the competencies they need in order to succeed have changed and would continue to expand. In developed countries for example, the recruitment and preparation of a new generation of school library media specialists has become acute as states and school districts face shortages likely to last for several years (Shannon, 2001). This is because many new school library media specialists will be needed due to increasing school enrollments, expansion of full-time positions, and retirements. However, developed countries like Nigeria are just beginning to appreciate the role of the school library media specialist because most schools do not have well equipped school library media centre.

As a result of the introduction and utilization of information communication technology (ICT) into school libraries, school libraries are also called "learning resource centres" "school library media centres" and the school librarians has also assumed different designation such as "learning resource centre managers' "school library media specialists". In this paper they are used interchangeably. Technology will continue to transform teaching and learning and impact information access and retrieval. According to IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2000), the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society.

The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination that would enable them to live as responsible citizens. School librarians in Nigeria were originally teachers who had received some training in librarianship. Training is an integral part of vocational or career development and it is fast becoming a global and pervasive phenomenon in any establishment, the absence of which spells

doom for such an institution and the presence of which determines the success of any enterprise (Ajidahun, 2007). According to him, education and training are generally indicated as the most important direct means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. Thus training would enhance productivity among school librarians and other staff of the school library.

By early 2000, there appeared to be little staff development of any type available for school librarians and where such programme existed, they were not reported in literature (Murray, 2000). However, with the advancement of information communication technology, school libraries now have innovative programmes and services for children and young adults. In other words, effective school libraries require learning resources in varying format, that is, print and non print media. School libraries are learning hubs with a full range of print and electronic resources that support student achievement and have significant impact on learning outcomes. This can be achieved when libraries are supervised by a qualified school library media specialist, who works collaboratively with teachers and students to become skilled users of ideas and information, and explore the world of print and electronic resources (NCLIS, 2008). Modern trainings for personnel in school libraries can take the form of regular or part-time courses in the university (diplomas, degrees), seminars, or workshops.

Earlier research by Murray (2000) identified professional reading, attendance at conferences and seminars, training provided by school districts, involvement in professional associations, and formal tertiary education courses as being the chief training activities engaged in by school librarians. In addition, a qualified school librarian may hold both teaching qualifications and librarianship qualifications. These qualifications ensure that the school librarian is both an educator and an information manager, integrating both areas. Knowledge of the school curriculum, teaching strategies and learning styles are also combined with knowledge of resource management, information services, personnel management and information systems. This knowledge enables the librarian to take an active role in curriculum support and implementation (Hinckley and Foltz, 2000). The school librarian maintains literacy as a high priority, engaging students in reading, viewing, and listening for understanding and enjoyment.

In training school librarian, the expected learning outcomes should include:

- more understanding of the role of the library and its relationship to the curriculum
- input into library policy and plans
- methods for supporting pupils' learning, reading and library skills
- knowledge of resource acquisition and classification
- new ideas for library layout, guiding and display
- greater confidence in managing and developing the school library
- acquisition of technology and the right software

Although there are many benefits of being qualified to the school librarian, the library and education system would also benefit. According to Kearney (2000) there would be increased faculty morale; leadership would emerge from among the staff; people would

feel an ownership of and commitment to the school's programs and the learning process. A school librarian's job involves constant discovery of ideas and interaction with both students and teachers. Traditionally school libraries offered conservative lending services and reading room facilities wherein students would borrow books and browse through some newspapers and magazines. There was no concept of innovative personalized services (Ahmad, 2011). Traditional responsibilities of the school librarian includes sorting and shelving materials (lifting and shelving books and climbing ladders to access upper stacks is usually part of the job). With the advent of ICTs, school librarians now spend most of their time helping students use the Internet and locate printed materials for resources and information. Their job also requires a considerable amount of time viewing computer monitors and walking students to source locations.

Research conducted by International Association of School Librarianship (2012) has shown that school library personnel who run school libraries are often teachers, parents, volunteers and sometimes the children themselves, who have received various levels of (or virtually no) training in library and information science. A review of the literature has shown that in many countries, a school librarian / teacher librarian is actually a teacher who has been put in charge of the school library, often on top of a full teaching load (IASL, 2012). School libraries are not just for books, they have become "school library media centres" with ICTs that enable children to engage meaningfully with a wide variety of information (NCLIS, 2008).

According to The World Bank (2008), most schools in Africa are with functioning libraries managed by using a junior teacher to do extra work as a teacher-librarian. It is in rare occasion that schools can afford to hire even a partly trained school librarian. In addition, limited research has specifically examined the preparation or training of school library media specialists in Africa, but results of several studies in developed countries have implications and sometimes specific recommendations for the education of school library professionals. Thus, school librarians frequently have little or even no training in library management or book maintenance and repair and this has an adverse impact on the efficiency and use of the secondary school library. Hence, the need for school library media programme at the University of Ibadan, was designed to train personnel that would assist Nigerian schools acquire, organize and maintain vital resources managed by experts to assist teachers and learners achieve the objectives of their curricula.

Review of literature
Literature has revealed that a good and adequate training programme should identify the specific skills that are lacking in the school library personnel and the resources that are available to provide the skills. However, the school librarian is the professionally qualified staff member responsible for planning and managing the school library, supported by as adequate staffing as possible, working together with all members of the school community, and liaising with the public library and others (UNESCO/IFLA, 2006). The provision of opportunities to meet the basic learning needs of information professionals is a first step towards preparing library and information science schools in Nigeria for the emerging global society. The relevance and viability of library and information science education in Nigeria requires looking at both the access to and

quality in new ways to enhancing the quality of products turned out from the universities into the labour market (Edegbo, 2011). Some of the responsibilities of a school librarian for which training is required as seen in literature (Edogbo, 2011; Ajegbomogun and Salaam, 2011) include the following:

- Analyzing school and student needs to determine appropriate informational sources
- Finding reliable source information and distributing it
- Classifying information in a user-friendly way
- Writing summaries and abstracts
- Showing students and teachers how to access information
- Overseeing library management and administration
- Supervising employees and volunteers
- Fundraising and public relations
- Managing the school library budget
- Teaching basic library use skills (Information Literacy Skills)
- Teaching each student the necessary skills in the use of books and libraries so that they will be able to use reference and research materials;
- Complementing classroom instructions by exposing the students to a wider selection of books and other resources;
- Inculcating in students the habit of reading for pleasure;
- Providing students with vocational information which will help them in their selection of suitable careers;
- Helping students to discover and develop their own special gifts and talents;
- Developing personal attitudes of responsibility through the sharing of public property, the recognition of rights of others and the observance of democratic principles;
- Providing users of the library with information on current issues through the use of display materials;
- Making available to teachers materials needed for the professional growth.

Effective school library education should provide training and experience in research and information access skills, which are both essential skills for quality performance in higher education and lifelong learning. According to Henri et. al (2010), the role of a school librarian, operating in a modern multi-media library resource centre, and equipped with the technical and professional skills acquired in an accredited librarianship education programme, is absolutely crucial to the economic and social progress of every country.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria according to Edogbo (2011), stated that the goals of tertiary education are to:

- contribute to the national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- develop and inculcate proper value for the survival of the individual and society;
- develop the intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;

- promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- forge and cement national unity;
- promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Thus, a school library media specialist when adequately trained would be an experienced librarian with personal interest especially in reading and children's literature, in addition, they would be competent in handling their enormous responsibility as a school librarian. Most schools in Africa are with functioning libraries managed by using a junior teacher to do extra work of a school library media specialist.

It is in rare occasion that schools hire even a partly trained school librarian/school library media specialist. Thus, school library personnel may have little or even no training in library management, organisation of the library or weeding and this would have an adverse impact on the efficiency and use of the school library media centre. Hence, the need for school library media programme at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Discussion

Library and Information Science Schools in Nigeria
The article examined the websites of Nigerian universities to see if there were any Nigerian University offering degrees in school librarianship. The study also took an in-depth look at the school library programme (diploma and postgraduate) at Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The regulatory body that provides a platform for the delivery of quality library and information service in Nigeria, the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) website as at 2011 provided a list of library science schools in Nigeria. The list included Nigerian universities and departments that offer courses in library science and it was discovered that none of the departments offered diploma or degrees in school librarianship. They offer a few courses in school librarianship as elective or required which is not adequate to produce qualified and competent SLMS. There are 25 Nigerian universities offering library and information science programmes (LRCN, 2013).

School Library Media Programme at University of Ibadan
Abadina Media Resource Centre (AMRC) was established in 1974 and opened its services to the Nigerian children, schools, teachers and school librarians in January 1975. As a research and public service Centre, it has over the years developed many programmes comprising, research, consultancy, library use skills, and offer of regular academic courses in school media at Diploma, Master's and Doctoral levels. It has also initiated and supported many outreach programmes that impacted positively on development of virile school library media programmes in Nigerian schools. The academic courses in school media started in 2006 and many students have enrolled and graduated from the Diploma and Master's degree programmes. The centre has developed a model school library media centre to serve as a model for replication into Nigeria schools and provide reading facilities to children of all ages in her bid to develop the

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reading culture of Nigerian children. The children's library also serves as a resource laboratory for the school library programme.

The approved functions (AMRC Prospectus, 2012) for the Centre are to:

i. Conduct and promote educational research into books and learning resources' management and production for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

ii. Established a model school library media resource centre experimenting on standards for school libraries/media resource centres in Nigeria, and through the use of books and other media, inculcate the love and desire for books in Nigerian children.

iii. Design and promote curricula for library use education in our schools' system thereby equipping children with appropriate learning skills for life-long learning.

iv. Conducts courses of study for school library media specialist, school librarians, teacher-librarians, children's librarians and library assistants and media technician in primary and post-primary institutions;

v. Provide advisory and consultancy services to government, schools, colleges and other organizations in relation to management of school libraries/media resource centres as may be requested from time to time.

The rundown of the courses are as follows:

Diploma in School Media

Purpose
The Diploma in school media is to produce qualified school media specialists, teacher-librarians and reading-teachers required in schools to develop relevant and adequate learning resources collections that would support effectively the teaching of curricula and teach the appropriate usage skills to both pupils and teachers for promoting effective use of learning resources.

Duration
The programme is to run for two years on part-time basis.

Admission eligibility

i. Holders of SSCE or GCE (O/L) with at least four credits including a pass in English Language.

ii. Holders of Grade Two Teachers' Certificate with at least merit in four subjects including a pass in English.

iii. Matured candidates who have at least a pass in 3 subjects including English in WASC, GCE O/L or Teachers' Certificate Grade II and have had 5years of working experience in libraries, educational resource centres and other educational institutions.

Master in Media Resource Management (M.M.R.M) (Professional)

Purpose
The degree of Master in Media Resource Management is to produce professionally qualified media specialists to run the school library media centres at the primary and secondary school levels, manage the state and national education resource centres, establish and run the resource centres for the external study programmes, the Media houses and National Information Centres. The can also be employed as librarians in libraries.

Duration
For the professional degree of Master in Master in Media Resource Management, the minimum period of registration is not less three semesters, and shall lapse, for full-time students, after the candidate has completed twice the minimum number of semesters required for the particular programme, and for part-time, after the candidate has completed thrice the minimum number of semesters required.

Admission eligibility
I.   B.L.S. – with a minimum of 2nd Class (Lower Division)
II.   B. Ed. – with a minimum of 2nd Class (Lower Division)
III. B.A./B.Sc. (Humanities and Science) – with a minimum of 2nd Class (Lower Division)
IV.   B.L.I.S., B.Ed., B.A., B.Sc., 3rd Class plus Postgraduate Diploma
V.   H.N.D. – with at least 3years post qualification experience

Master in School Media (M.S.M) (Academic)

Purpose
The degree of Master in School Media (Academic) will produce researchers into school media who will teach courses in school media and research into establishment and running of school library media centres, resource centres in the media houses, and National Information Centres. They can also work as librarians in libraries and information centres. The degree of Master in School Media is subject to the University regulations governing higher degrees.

Duration
For full-time academic Master's in School Media programmes, registration is not less than three semesters and shall lapse if the candidate does not fulfill the requirements for the award after five semesters or after six semesters for students with part-time registration.

Admission eligibility
I.   B.L.S (Bachelor of Library Studies) – with a minimum of 2nd Class (Lower Division)
II.   B.Ed. – with a minimum of 2nd Class (Lower Division)

III.   B.A./B.Sc (Humanities and Science) – with a minimum of 2nd Class   (Lower Division)
IV.   B.L.S., B.Ed., B.A., B.Sc. – 3rd Class plus Postgraduate Diploma

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

Purpose
The degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in School Media and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) will produce high-level personnel to research into school media and teach school media courses at the University and other tertiary institutions. The product of the programme can also work as librarians in libraries and information centres. The programme consists of course work and dissertation/thesis. Candidates for either the M.Phil or Ph.D shall register for a maximum of 8 unit courses at 800 levels which may be either at the Centre or other Departments of the University. These courses should be relevant to the research proposal of the candidate

Duration
Registration for the Ph.D programme is not less than six semesters from the date of first registration for the programme in the case of full time, and not less than eight semesters for part-time.

Admission eligibility
Eligibility to Proceed to M.Phil and Ph.D
  I.   Admission is normally open to candidates with M.Sc, M.L.S, M.Ed and Masters degree in relevant academic areas.
  II.   Candidates must posses at least two years of post qualification experience before being considered for the M.Phil or Ph.D programme.
  III. Candidates must have a weighted average mark of:
       • 50% - 54% for M.Phil
       • 55% - 59% for M.Phil/Ph.D
       • Above 60% for Ph.D

Overview of AMRC Curriculum at Higher Degree level
The Composition of the courses is made up of:
  • Librarianship
  • Education
  • Children's literature & reading Communication
  • ICT

Diploma in school media courses include:

Librarianship
  • School media programmes in curricula implementation
  • Learning resources collection development
  • Organisation of knowledge in school library media centre
  • Routine services in school library media centre

- Media use skills
- Media services to children and teacher
- Practicum in school library media centre/ educational resource centre

Education
- Sociological and philosophical foundation of education

ICT
- Use and management of audio visual equipment and software
- Use of computer in education

Children's Literature
- Pre-reading experiences for children
- Writing and publishing for children

Master in School Media (MSM) courses include:

Librarianship
- Multimedia Collection Development
- Users' Services in School Library Media/Resource Centres
- Local, State and National Education Resource Centres, Information Centres and Study Centres
- Management of School Library Media Centres
- Reference Sources and Services in School Library Media Centres
- Multi-Media Services for People with Special Needs
- Organisation of Learning Resources
- Information Literacy Skills for children's Information Needs
- Professionalism and School Media Programme

Communication
- School Media Organisational Communication strategies

Children's literature and Reading
- Reading Development Strategies for Children
- Children's Literature in Print and Multi Media Formats

ICT
- Information Centre Cooperation & Networking
- Virtual Learning Environment
- etc

Education
- Psychology of Learning and School Media Programme
- Curriculum and the School Media Programme
- Educational Technology application in school media

- Counseling and school media programme

Master in Media Resource Management (MMRM) courses include:

Librarianship
- Multimedia Collection Development
- Curriculum and the School Media Programme
- Marketing Strategies for Media Resources/Information Centres
- Users' Services in School Library Media Centres and Media Houses
- Local, State and National Education Resource Centres, Information Centres and Study Centres
- Management of School Library Media Centres
- Reference Sources and Services in School Library Media Centres
- Multi-Media Services for people with Special Needs
- Information literacy skills for children's information need

ICT
- Information Architecture
- Information Hardware Resources Management
- Information Centre Cooperation & Networking
- Digitalizing School Library Collections for Access
- Virtual Learning Environment
- Educational Technology (ET) Application in School Media

Children's literature & reading
- Reading Development Strategies for children
- Reading Theory and Application
- Children's Literature in Print and Multi Media Formats

Education
- Counselling at Primary and Post Primary Levels of Education
- Educational Assessment and Testing
- Psychology of Learning and School Media Programme
- Educational Technology application in school media

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

At the doctoral level students are required to take 8 units of courses which may include any of the following
- Themes and issues in school media
- Instructional design and development
- ICT in media resources management
- Advance subject reference sources in disciplines
- Nigerian children and young adult literature
- Advanced research methodology

Target Audience

The employers of labour in the Nigerian schools systems are expected to sponsor candidate to the programme particular the Diploma and Master's degrees. The employers include: the UBEC, SUBEB, Post Primary School Management Board, Teaching Service Commission and Proprietors of tertiary institution staff schools and private schools among others. The majority of attendees to date come from the public schools and tertiary institutions. For easy participation, the Centre have put the Diploma programme on Distance Learning mode. The Centre has been graduating students from the Diploma and Masters programmes and is expected to produce its first set of PhD graduates soon.

Conclusion

The success story of the training programme for school library media specialists in Nigeria has provided access to relevant information and professional development materials within and outside the school system that would assist the student to perform better. In addition, training of school library media specialists would help the government to plan, implement and evaluate learning programms which would integrate information resources and technologies into the school library media centre. Graduates from the Masters programme at Abadina Media Resource Centre have been able to work as qualified school library media specialists in primary, and secondary schools. In addition they would be able to teach courses in tertiary institutions offering courses in school media programmes (School Librarianship). The training programmes have enhanced the career prospect of the Centre's students for the purpose of research collaboration and exchange programmes with other relevant international institutions. Some students of the Centre have been muted to attend fellowship programmes in other countries aside from Nigeria.

The development of AMRC model school library media centre that was established to serve as a model has assisted in contributing to a culture which values reading and learning. The Abadina Media Resource Centre (AMRC) remains the only intellectual and social Centre for children's development on a Nigerian University Campus. The Abadina Media Resource Centre (AMRC) remains the only Centre for the training of school library media specialists/ teacher librarians in Nigerian universities and this would help impact positively the education standard in Nigeria.

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