

CHALLENGES AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS: CASE STUDY OF MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE DEMONSTRATION SECONDARY SCHOOL, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined the challenges affecting the development and utilization of the school library at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUUAU DSS), Abia State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 70 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics involving mean ratings and standard deviations were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that although the school library contributes to teaching and learning, reading culture, information literacy, and students' academic performance, its effectiveness is constrained by inadequate funding, outdated resources, insufficient ICT infrastructure, limited space, shortage of qualified staff, and weak policy support. These challenges as identified also, contribute to inconsistencies in teaching and learning, reduced student engagement, and lower academic performance. The study further identified strategies for improvement, including adequate funding, provision of ICT facilities, employment of qualified librarians, improvement of library infrastructure, and formulation of functional school library policies. Addressing these challenges will enhance the development, utilization, and relevance of school libraries in supporting students' educational development in Nigeria.

Keywords: School libraries, Library development, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Library utilization, Information literacy, Nigeria

Introduction

School libraries play a central role in teaching and learning, serving as intellectual hubs that provide students and teachers with access to relevant information resources, conducive study environments, and opportunities for independent learning. They support the curriculum, foster a reading culture, and equip learners with information literacy skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning (Ogunniyi, Adeyemi, & Ajayi, 2022; Oyesiku & Oduwole, 2020).

In today's digital era, the benefits of school libraries have expanded beyond print collections to include access to e-books, online journals, and digital databases. This shift highlights the need for continuous development of school libraries through improved facilities, modern technology, and enriched collections. However, in Nigeria, many school libraries remain underdeveloped due to chronic underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, outdated resources, and weak integration of ICT (Eze, 2021; Issa, Amusan, & Daura, 2020). These challenges may hinder their effectiveness in supporting student learning and preparing learners for the demands of the 21st century.

The problem is particularly evident at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUAW DSS), where the school library has received insufficient attention in terms of development and utilization. This neglect restricts students' access to relevant information, limits opportunities for digital literacy

acquisition, and adversely affects their academic performance. While existing studies have examined the challenges facing libraries in Nigeria, few have focused specifically on secondary school libraries, leaving a gap in the literature. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the challenges affecting the development and use of the school library collections at MOUAW DSS, with the aim of identifying practical solutions to enhance its relevance, effectiveness, and contribution to student learning outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

School libraries are intended to play a crucial role in enhancing teaching, learning, and research by providing access to relevant resources and promoting a culture of reading and information literacy. However, many school libraries in Nigeria remain underdeveloped and are unable to fully meet these expectations. The library at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUAW DSS) exemplifies this challenge, facing issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited and outdated resources, poor integration of information and communication technologies, and low utilization by students and teachers. These constraints hinder the library's capacity to support the school curriculum, foster independent learning, and equip students with the digital and information skills essential for success in today's knowledge-driven society. If left unaddressed, these problems may continue to adversely affect students' academic performance, impede effective teaching, and compromise the overall quality of education in the school.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the benefits of the school library at MOUAAU Demonstration Secondary School?
2. What challenges affect the development and utilization of the school library at MOUAAU DSS?
3. What impact do these challenges have on the educational development of students at MOUAAU DSS?
4. What strategies can be adopted to improve the development and utilization of the school library at MOUAAU DSS?

Literature Review

School libraries, established in primary and secondary schools, play a central role in supporting students and teachers in achieving educational goals. Beyond serving as repositories of books, they foster lifelong learning, literacy development, and critical thinking, ensuring equitable access to information from an early age (Usono & Usanga, 2017). By cultivating independent inquiry skills, school libraries contribute to sustainable educational development. They provide diverse resources, including books, journals, electronic databases, and multimedia tools that support curriculum delivery and extend learning beyond the classroom (Kimmel, 2021).

School libraries promote information literacy by teaching students how to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively, skills that are essential for academic and professional success (Johnston & Green, 2020). They also foster literacy and reading culture through varied reading materials and programs that improve comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking (Williams & Wavell, 2019; Todd, 2021). Moreover, libraries serve as safe spaces for self-directed study and intellectual exploration, enhancing curiosity and problem-solving abilities (Lance & Kachel, 2018). To ensure inclusivity, many libraries provide adaptive technologies such as screen readers, audiobooks, and Braille resources for students with disabilities (Neuman, 2020). Librarians further collaborate with teachers to integrate resources into lesson plans and design research-based assignments, thereby enriching classroom instruction (Neuman, 2023). Research consistently shows that students in schools with well-equipped libraries and professional librarians perform better academically, particularly in reading and standardized tests (Lance & Kachel, 2021; Krashen, 2023).

Globally, technological innovations are transforming the landscape of school libraries. Integration of digital libraries, online databases, and artificial intelligence (AI) has expanded access to information and enhanced learning experiences (McKnight et al., 2021; Zhang & Lu, 2022). Platforms such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and Google Scholar provide remote access to scholarly resources, while AI-powered tools personalize content delivery and improve research skills (Brown, 2020; Zhang & Lu, 2022). Assistive technologies, including text-to-speech software and audiobooks, broaden accessibility for students with special

needs (Smith & Jones, 2019). Cloud-based tools further enable real-time collaboration, fostering teamwork and problem-solving (Johnson, 2021). These innovations equip students with digital skills that are critical for academic achievement in the 21st century (Mardis, 2020).

Despite their importance, school libraries in many developing countries face persistent challenges that limit their effectiveness. Studies highlight issues such as poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, outdated resources, lack of trained staff, and weak ICT integration (Anunobi & Ogbonna, 2019; Opeke & Opeke, 2019; Edewor et al., 2020). In Nigeria, most school libraries rely heavily on limited government support, operate in undersized facilities, and lack modern resources (Eze & Uzoigwe, 2021). Many are managed by unqualified staff, restricting students' ability to acquire essential information literacy skills (Abubakar & Adetimirin, 2020). While schools in advanced contexts adopt AI, virtual reality (VR), and online databases, Nigerian school libraries often lack even basic internet access (Aina, 2018). Additionally, weak reading culture and limited integration of library use into classroom instruction further reduce utilization (Olanrewaju et al., 2022). These challenges have far-reaching implications, including reduced student motivation, limited digital preparedness, and exclusion from global knowledge networks.

While the literature clearly establishes the critical role of school libraries in fostering literacy, digital skills, and academic success, significant gaps remain in understanding how these challenges affect secondary schools in Nigeria. Few studies have

specifically examined library development and utilization within university-affiliated demonstration schools. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the challenges affecting the school library at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUUAU DSS), with the goal of identifying strategies to strengthen its contribution to teaching, learning, and student development.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for collecting data from a defined population to examine opinions on the roles, challenges, and strategies for the development and utilization of the school library. The population consisted of teachers and students of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUUAU DSS). From this population, a sample of 70 respondents was selected using simple random sampling to ensure fair representation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers in alignment with the study objectives. The instrument employed a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity were established through expert review by professionals in Library and Information Science and Educational Measurement. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using the Cronbach's Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency.

Results And Discussion

Table one: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaires

Variable	No. Distributed	No. Collected	Percentage (%)	No. not returned	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires	70	70	100	-	-

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 shows that 70 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUUAU DSS). All 70 (100%) were duly completed and returned, while none were unreturned. This 100% response rate demonstrates high cooperation among the students and confirms the reliability of the data collected.

Research Question One: What are the benefits of School Libraries at DSS MOUUAU?

Table 2. Mean rating & standard deviation of the benefits of school libraries at DSS MOUUAU (n = 70)

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	STD	Remark
1.	It supports teaching and learning	35	15	14	6	2.98	1.14	Accept
2.	It promote reading culture	40	14	7	9	3.14	1.83	Accept
3.	It provide access to information	7	12	19	32	2.26	1.22	Reject
4.	It enhances information literacy skills	22	32	11	5	3.10	1.56	Accept
5.	enhance academic performance	19	32	7	12	2.85	1.32	Accept
6.	It support curriculum implementation	35	18	12	5	3.22	1.66	Accept
7.	It encourage independent learning	37	21	7	5	3.12	1.43	Accept
8.	It serve as resource centers for teachers	35	20	6	9	3.14	1.37	Accept
9.	It provide a safe and conducive environment for study	34	21	7	8	3.11	1.43	Accept
10.	It promote digital literacy	31	22	15	2	2.96	1.22	Accept
Grand Mean						3.06		Accept

Criterion Mean 2.5.

As shown in Table 2, respondents perceived the library as an important support system for teaching and learning, promotion of reading culture, enhancement of

information literacy, encouragement of independent learning, and provision of instructional support for teachers. The grand mean of 3.06, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates a strong recognition of the library's positive contribution to students' academic performance and educational development. These findings agree with previous studies which established that school libraries play a significant role in improving literacy, supporting curriculum implementation, and fostering lifelong learning (IFLA, 2015; Anunobi & Ogbonna, 2019). However, the benefit of providing access to information was rejected ($\bar{X} = 2.26$), suggesting that although the library is valued, its ability to provide timely, current, and sufficient information resources is inadequate. This indicates that students are not able to obtain all the materials they require for learning and research, possibly due to outdated collections and limited digital resources. This finding highlights the need for improved infrastructure, updated library collections, and better information delivery systems to enhance access to information.

Research Question 2: What are the Challenges Affecting the Development and Utilization of School Library at MOUAU DSS?

Table 3. Mean rating & standard deviation of the respondents on the challenges affecting the development and utilization of school library at MOUAU DSS.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	STD	Remark
1.	Inadequate fund to finance most of the library programmes	31	15	15	9	2.98	1.14	Accept
2.	Inadequate and outdated library resources to support teaching and learning	40	14	7	9	3.14	1.83	Accept
3.	Inadequate space in the library to accommodate students	32	12	19	7	3.16	1.22	Accept
4.	Lack of qualified library staff	25	29	11	5	3.10	1.56	Accept
5.	Insufficient library facilities	15	36	7	12	2.85	1.32	Accept

6.	Lack of ICT infrastructure	32	21	12	5	3.22	1.66	Accept
7.	Lack school library policy	21	32	10	7	3.01	1.19	Accept
8.	Absence of guide on how to use the library	16	35	7	12	2.85	1.32	Accept
9.	Poor government support	35	18	12	5	3.22	1.66	Accept
10.	Irregular power supply	31	19	18	2	2.96	1.22	Accept
GRAND TOTAL						3.19		Accept
Criterion Mean 2.5								

The results in Table 3 show that several challenges hinder the effective development and utilization of the school library at MOUAU DSS. Respondents identified lack of ICT infrastructure ($\bar{X} = 3.22$), poor government support ($\bar{X} = 3.22$), inadequate library space ($\bar{X} = 3.16$), and inadequate and outdated resources ($\bar{X} = 3.14$) as the most serious problems. Other challenges include insufficient funding ($\bar{X} = 2.98$), lack of qualified library staff ($\bar{X} = 3.10$), inadequate library facilities ($\bar{X} = 2.85$), irregular power supply ($\bar{X} = 2.96$), absence of user guides ($\bar{X} = 2.85$), and lack of a formal school library policy ($\bar{X} = 3.01$).

These challenges indicate that the library is constrained in terms of technology, human resources, infrastructure, and institutional support. Similar challenges have been reported in many Nigerian school libraries, where poor funding, lack of ICT, and shortage of professional librarians limit effective library service delivery (Ogunniyi, Ekere, & Obiora, 2022; Igwe, 2021). These constraints reduce the capacity of the library to support teaching, learning, and information access.

Research Question 3: What are the Impact of School Library Challenges on Educational Development of Students at MOUAU DSS?

Table 4. Mean rating & standard deviation of the respondents on the impact of school library challenges on educational development of students at MOUAU DSS.

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	STD	Remark	
1.	Reduces school library programmes	21	32	10	7	3.01	1.19	Accept	
2.	Students will not have access to current information resources and access to such will be limited.	37	15	11	7	3.09	1.24	Accept	
3.	Widen educational inequalities due to lack of space	33	23	14	4	3.18	1.57	Accept	
4.	Limitations in attending to users (students) due to lack of professionalism.	37	18	7	8	3.12	1.43	Accept	
5.	Limitations in the use of library facilities including ICT resources	35	20	6	9	3.14	1.37	Accept	
6.	Inconsistencies in teaching and learning	25	29	11	5	3.10	1.56	Accept	
7.	Reduced student engagement and lower academic performance	16	35	7	12	2.85	1.32	Accept	
8.	Ineffectiveness of school library utilization and hindrance to learning experience by student.	35	18	12	5	3.22	1.66	Accept	
9.	Negative learning environment	40	14	7	9	3.14	1.83	Accept	
10.	Reduction in time spent on teaching and learning	31	19	18	2	2.96	1.22	Accept	
Grand Total							3.06		Accept

Criterion Mean 2.5.

The findings in Table 4 show that the challenges facing the school library have serious negative effects on students' educational development. With a grand mean of 3.06, respondents agreed that these challenges reduce school library programmes, limit access to current information resources, and widen educational inequalities due to inadequate library space. The findings further reveal that lack of professionalism limits effective user support, while poor ICT facilities restrict students' access to digital learning tools.

The results also indicate that the challenges contribute to inconsistencies in teaching and learning, reduced student engagement, and lower academic performance.

Ineffective utilization of the library and the creation of a negative learning environment further hinder students' learning experiences. These findings are consistent with previous studies which show that poorly resourced school libraries negatively affect students' motivation, academic achievement, and information literacy development (Lance & Kachel, 2021; Eze & Uzoigwe, 2021).

Research Question four: What are the Strategies can be adopted for Improving School Library Development at MOUAU DSS?

Table 5. Mean rating & standard deviation of the respondents on the strategies can be adopted for improving school library development at MOUAU DSS.

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	STD	Remark
1.	Provision of adequate funding to finance most of the library programme	38	19	17	3	3.19	1.47	Accept
2.	Provision of adequate and dated library resources to support teaching, learning and other educational programmes	40	11	14	12	3.02	1.32	Accept
3.	Making available adequate space in the library to accommodate many students	27	19	21	10	3.09	1.47	Accept
4.	Employment of qualified librarians capable of handling and managing the library	25	29	11	5	3.10	1.56	Accept
5.	Provision of sufficient library facilities to improve usage by students	16	35	7	12	2.85	1.32	Accept
6.	Curriculum of adequate ICT infrastructure in the library	35	18	12	5	3.22	1.66	Accept
7.	Enactment of school library policy and its adequate implementation	40	14	7	9	3.14	1.83	Accept
8.	Provision of guide on how to use the library	31	19	18	2	2.96	1.22	Accept
9.	Advocacy for school library by librarians to attract government support	39	14	18	6	3.11	1.39	Accept
10.	Provision of regular power supply	29	24	15	9	2.94	1.18	Accept
	GRAND TOTAL					3.10		Accept

Criterion Mean 2.5.

The findings in Table 6 show that respondents strongly agreed on several strategies for improving the development and utilization of the school library. With a grand mean of 3.10, all the suggested strategies were accepted. The most highly rated strategies include provision of ICT infrastructure ($\bar{X} = 3.22$), adequate funding ($\bar{X} = 3.19$), and enactment and implementation of a school library policy ($\bar{X} = 3.14$). Other important strategies include employment of qualified librarians ($\bar{X} = 3.10$), provision of adequate and updated resources ($\bar{X} = 3.02$), and improvement of library space and facilities ($\bar{X} = 3.09$; $\bar{X} = 2.85$).

Respondents also emphasized advocacy for government support, provision of user guides, and regular power supply as important measures. These strategies suggest that improving the school library requires an integrated approach involving funding, technology, infrastructure, policy support, and professional staffing. When these measures are implemented, the library can better support students' learning, research, and academic success.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the challenges affecting the development and utilization of the school library at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Demonstration Secondary School (MOUUAU DSS). The findings revealed that although the school library supports teaching, learning, reading culture, and information literacy, its effectiveness is limited by inadequate funding, insufficient ICT infrastructure, outdated resources, shortage of qualified staff, limited space, and weak policy support. These challenges negatively affect

students' access to information and their educational development. The study concludes that addressing these constraints through adequate funding, ICT integration, professional staffing, improved infrastructure, and effective policy implementation will significantly enhance the utilization of the school library and strengthen its contribution to students' academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School management should provide adequate funding for the acquisition of current print and electronic resources to support teaching and learning.
2. Adequate ICT infrastructure, including computers and reliable internet facilities, should be provided to enhance access to digital information resources.
3. Qualified librarians should be employed and given opportunities for continuous professional development to improve service delivery.
4. A functional school library policy should be formulated and effectively implemented to ensure sustainable development and utilization of the library.

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