

## **Assessment of Resources for Story Hour Programs: Review of Public Libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** Regular assessment enables the library to improve its resources in order to meet the needs of the users. A survey was conducted to assess the library resources for effective story hour programs in public libraries in Anambra state, Nigeria. Questionnaires, observation checklist and oral interview were used in data collection. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The results show among other things, the overwhelming difference between the availability of print and total absence of audiovisual resources in almost all the libraries (90.9%). Recommendations made include encouraging regular assessment and provision of relevant resources.

**Keywords:** Assessment, library resources, story hour programs and public library services.

### **1. Introduction**

Assessment is an organized process of analyzing and describing a library's resources that is aimed at determining the existing strength of a library collection. It is an essential part of the ongoing process in the library that provides the opportunity to be deliberative, reflective and creative (Elkins, 2009). It can focus on specific areas depending on the library's need as well as provide several kinds of important information to libraries as it affects collection development, improved circulation, and enhancing professional skill (Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records 2012; Beals, 2006).

Today, the needs and expectations of library users in the current learning have necessitated that libraries envision assessment as the first step to evolve collections and services to meet users' demands (Covey, 2002; Troll, 2001). Thus, the story hour program in the public library, which offers wealth of oral and written literature (Dike, 1993), need regular appropriate performance measures to assess their resources in order to render effective children's services that meet the current learning trends in the society.

### **1.1 Statement of the problems**

The concept of library resources for story hour programs is to contribute to the children's love of books and enhance their learning experiences. Preliminary observations by the researcher showed that resources for story hour programs in public libraries in Anambra State are rarely assessed. There is need to verify and determine the existing strength of library collections in order to improve its quality and relevance to users (National Library of New Zealand, 2012).

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to assess the resources for story hour programs in Anambra state public libraries. Specifically, the study was meant to:

1. Ascertain the audio-visual resources available for story hour programs.
2. Identify the print resources available for the programs.
3. Examine the number of personnel available for the programs.
4. Identify the challenges of assessing resources of story hour programs.

## **2. Literature Review**

There have been studies where a quantitative method of assessment is viewed as an important factor of library resources for story hour programs. The quantitative reports of Irvington Public Library (2012) revealed that the non-print collection, which includes books on tapes, DVD, and CDs, were duly assessed. It noted that it has 35 computers and 6 are stationed in the children's library with introductory Internet classes held weekly, free of charge. Similarly, the Center for Development and Learning (2012) and The Campaign for America's Libraries (2012) indicate that the resources can be of print, audio and visual materials in numerous formats including maps, microform, CDs, DVDs, video games, e-books, audio books and many other electronic resources.

The study of Irvington Public Library (2012) on resource assessment disclosed its collection is more than 180,000 books while its periodical titles are 150. The collection of print resources including all forms of bound volumes, reference books, text books, story books, picture books, journals and other periodicals are assessed to determine their usages and usefulness.

Another feature that requires assessment of significant measure for an effective story hour program is manpower resource. EDUCAUSE (2000) asserted that overall staff size is declining and that libraries are operating with fewer staff than in the past. Besides, unskilled as well as inadequate number of staff prevents smooth operation processes. Hence, Elsevier Foundation (2011) surmised that lack of effective personnel are more intense and can even prevent children from getting the information services they need.

Equally, Troll (2001) found library budget, services and incomplete data as well as inconsistency in library resources across libraries or through time as part of barrier to assessment. Cognizance of the fact that the future of public library is

at stake and that children's attentions are shifting to movies, it is imperative that assessment is carried out regularly with a view to acquire more selective resources.

### 3. Methodology

The survey was carried out in all the eleven (11) government owned public libraries in Anambra state namely: State Central Library, Ifitedunu (SCL); Divisional Libraries in Onitsha, Nnewi and Abagana; Branches/Communities Libraries in Amichi, Ihembosi, Ozubulu, Adazi Nnukwu, Nkpologu, Atani and Ajali. Observation checklist was used to record resources for story hour programs. Designed qualitative and quantitative questionnaires were distributed to the eleven (11) library staff in charge of the children's public libraries services in the state. They were also interviewed. The instruments were collated and analyzed using frequency tables and percentages.

### 4. Results

Major findings of the study were presented in Tables.

**Table 1: Observation checklist of audio visual resources available in the libraries**

S/N	Libraries	Computer /e-resources	TV/ VCD/DVD player	Toy	Picture/art works	Local musical player
1.	SCL Ifitedunu	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Div Lib. Onitsha	0	0	0	✓	✓
3.	Div Lib. Nnewi	0	0	0	0	✓
4.	Div Lib. Abagana	0	0	0	0	0
5.	Comm Lib Amichi	0		0	0	0
6.	Comm Lib Ihembosi	0	0	0	0	0
7.	Comm Lib Ozubulu	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Comm Lib – Adazi Nnukwu	✓	0	0	0	0
9.	Comm Lib	0	0	0	✓	0

	Nkpologu					
10.	Comm Lib Atani	0		0	0	0
11	Comm Lib Ajali	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>18.1</b>

Note: ✓ : Audio visual resources seen in the libraries

0: Audio visual resources not seen.

Observation check here shows a computer in a library (Adazi Nnukwu). No public library in the state has TV, Video/DVD player and toys. Two libraries: Onitsha and Nnewi (18.1%) have local musical players. Art works (paintings, mosaic and carved arts); pictures of alphabets, animals, classes of foods, parts of the body were seen in children's departments in Onitsha and Nkpologu libraries, respectively. Assessment in Table 1 reveals that audiovisual resources are not available for story hour programs in Anambra state public libraries.

**Table 2: Observation checklist of print resources displayed in the libraries**

S/N	Libraries	Story books	Picture books	Text books	Poetry & song books	Reference books
1.	SCL Ifitedunu	✓	✓	✓		
2.	Div Lib. Onitsha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Div Lib. Nnewi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Div Lib. Abagana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	Comm Lib Amichi	0	0	0	0	0
6.	Comm Lib Ihembosi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7.	Comm Lib Ozubulu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8.	Comm Lib Adazi – Nnukwu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

9.	Comm Lib Nkpologu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10.	Comm Lib Atani	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Comm Lib Ajali	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>90.1</b>

**Note:** ✓ : Print resources displayed in the libraries  
 0: resources not displayed

Checklist in Table 2 shows that all the libraries except one (community library: Amichi) displayed all the children's print resources recorded. The head of children's services in Amichi answered during the interview that the children's books were packed in cartons. The researcher was shown a room filled with cartons of children's books, most of them new. They are yet to be shelved and displayed as all the shelves were filled with adult prints.

**Table 3: Observation checklist of number of children's books seen**

S/N	Items	Number of libraries	Percentage
1.	Under 500	2	18.1
2.	1000-2000	7	63.6
3.	2000-3000	2	18.1
4.	Above 3000	-	-
Total	Above 3000	11	100

Another important variable related to print resources is the number of volumes of printed materials. The result shows that two libraries in Onitsha and Abagana (representing 18.8%) have between 2000 -3000 volumes. The libraries in Ifitedunu, Nnewi, Amichi, Ihemboji, Adazi Nnukwu, Nkpologu and Ajali (63.6%) have between 1000 – 2000 volumes. The libraries in Atani and Ozubulu have below 500 volumes each. Also discovered was that storybooks and picture books dominated the print resources. All the books are in good conditions. Hence, it is evident from Table 3 that public libraries in the state are stocked with print resources.

**Table 4: Personnel in charge of the libraries**

S/N	Items	Number of libraries	Percentage
1.	Professional	4	36.3

	Librarians		
2.	Library officers	4	27.27
3.	Library Assistants	3	36.3
Total		11	100

Responses on Table 4 show that four libraries (36.3%) have professional librarians (Ifitedunu, Onitsha, Nnewi and Abagana) and Library Officers (Ihembosi, Ozubulu, Adazi Nnukwu and Nkpologu) while three libraries (27.27%) have library assistants (Amichi, Atani and Ajali) respectively. Therefore, research findings in objective question three shows that professional librarians are not adequately spread over all the libraries for children's library services.

**Table 5: Challenges of assessing resources in the library**

S/N	Items	Respondent	%
1.	Poor funding	11	100
2.	Lack of professional librarians	7	63.6
3.	Non existence of relevant departments	7	63.6
4.	Lack of patronage by users	6	54.5
5.	Non availability of relevant resources to assess	7	63.6
6.	Lack of story hour program	9	81.8

From this Table, all the respondents (100%) ticked poor funding of library, seven respondents (63.3%) voted for lack of professional librarians, non-existence of relevant departments and non-availability of relevant resources to assess, respectively. Lack of patronage by users and lack of a story hour program were rated 54.5% and 81.8%, respectively. During the interview, the respondents disclosed that very tight budget affects provision of library resources, thereby creating no basis for assessment.

## 5. Discussion of findings

The absence of non-print resources (audio-visual) in all the libraries studied implies that the state libraries may not have acknowledged the importance of technological advances (Table 1). This contradicts Irvington Public Library (2012) & Center for Development and Learning (2012) reports on non-print collection which includes computers, DVD, CD-ROMs, e-books on tapes and other electronic materials.

The verification of print resources of fiction and non fiction in almost all the libraries (Table 2) shows that the public libraries have the available children's

reading resources. This relates well with the study of Sage (2003); McKie (2003) & Allison (2002) that library print resources are very important as they ignite interest in reading and produce excitement in infusing joy as well as stimulate voluntary reading in children. Interestingly, the quantitative method of assessment used in ascertaining the number of volumes in each library (Table 3) adheres to the significant importance of QQM as a popular tool for librarians (Basili, 2012) for excellent evaluation of resources for collection development. Results of low volumes of print resources in some libraries relate to Troll (2001) account of inconsistency of resources across libraries.

The results of the personnel in the libraries indicate that the professionals are not adequate for rendering of services (Table 4). This confirms the submissions of Elsevier Foundation (2011) & EDUCAUSE (2000) that inadequacy of personnel affects library services. Perhaps the embargo on employment placed by state governments caused this which implied absence of children's services and assessment of resources.

The hindrances to assessing library resources for story hour programs (Table 5) has been established by Troll (2001) that library services and budget across libraries or through time are barriers to assessment. The implication is that the library assessment and development which should be on-going to match the developmental trends and benefit to the children will be eluded. This if not checked could lead to a situation where total disregard would be accorded the services of libraries while other units outside the libraries could assume the professional position of enriching the children's reading experiences.

## **6. Conclusion**

Assessing resources for story hour programs is a sure way of bringing to the fore the needed library and information collections relevant in imparting a culture of reading. For story hour program to take its center stage in integrating positive attitudes for a reading culture and lifelong reading, the resources required to achieve the objectives must be regularly reviewed and provided. Therefore, trainings, workshops and seminars on the need for regular assessment and provision of relevant resources should be organized for effective and efficient children's library services.

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