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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Power of Imageries in Community Information and Engagement:  
Repositioning Audiovisual Resources

**Ngozi Perpetua Osuchukwu & Angela Ebele Okpala - - - - - 1**

Internet of Things (IOT): An Indispensable Tool for Smart Library  
Services in Nigerian University

**Kudirat Abiola Adegoke - - - - - 8**

Predictors for the Adoption and Utilization of E-Resources by Undergraduate  
Students in University of Ibadan

**Mojisola Omowumi Odewole, Folasade L. Kolawole &  
Catherine Omolola Odu-Mojinyinola - - - - - 17**

Perceived Usefulness of Electronic Health Records System by Medical  
Doctors in Private University Teaching Hospitals in South-West, Nigeria

**Blessing Damilola Abata-Ebire & Saheed Abiola Hamzat - - - - - 31**

A Survey of Library Resources for Story-Hour Programmes in  
Public Libraries in Anambra State

**Cynthia Nkiru Okey-Okafor & Prof. Anthonia Ukamaka Echedom - - - - - 45**

Dusty Print Resources and Its Health Hazard on Library Staff

**Maryam Muhammad Liman - - - - - 54**

Acquisition and Utilization of Government Publications in  
Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

**Ebisemen Pat. Lulu-Pokubo & Comfort N. Owate - - - - - 64**

Attitude of Librarians Towards the Use Of E-Resources for Collection Development in  
University Libraries in South East Nigeria

**Nkechi Roseline Obiozor Ekeze - - - - - 75**

Availability of Internet Facility and Utilization by Undergraduate Students of  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria

**Mercy Ekenma Echem & Comfort N. Owate - - - - - 81**

Emerging Issues in Library and Information Science Education in the Covid-19 Era

**Victor Wagwu, Kolawole Francis Ogunbodede,  
Adaora C. Obuezie & Comfort N. Owate - - - - - 89**

# A SURVEY OF LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR STORY-HOUR PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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## Abstract

This study is a survey of library resources for story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The entire population was used for the study. Population of the study comprised children's department of the 11 public libraries in Anambra State. This is a combination of professional and non professional staff of the library as well as the information resources owned by the children's section of the eleven public libraries in Anambra State. Two validated instruments; observation checklists and structured interviews were used to generate data for the study. The findings of the study showed that there are three categories of personnel employed to coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State with few professional children's librarians among them. Most public libraries in Anambra State do not employ professional children's librarians to coordinate story-hour programmes in their public libraries. The findings also revealed that there are print information resources for effective story-hour programmes in the public libraries. However, they are not used the story-hour programmes are not observed in most of the public libraries. The study also found that there are no audio-visual information resources in the public libraries. Based on the findings, it was recommended that more professional children's librarians should be employed to coordinate the story-hour programmes. It was also recommended that the use of audio-visual information resources should be adopted in the story -hour programmes to make it more interesting and effective.

**Keywords:** *Library Resources, Children Librarian, Public Libraries, Children Story-hour Programme, Anambra State.*

## Introduction

Libraries exist in order to satisfy the information needs of their users through the provision of effective information resources and services in line with the needs of the users. Ogbemor (2011) defined the library as a collection of sources, resources and services, as well as the structure in which it is housed. The basic objective of libraries and information centres is to support the educational and overall information needs of their users through the provision of meaningful resources as well as process-based activities that will enable their users to become effective in the use of ideas and information for life-long learning. This objective can only be achieved if the libraries provide adequate library resources.

Library resources include the personnel and information resources that aid the library in achieving its objective of satisfying the information needs of its users. The personnel represent the entire staff (professional librarians and other support staff) who strives to offer effective information services to meet the needs of library users while the information resources represent all forms of print and non-print resources which support curricular and personal information needs. The print resources on the other hand include books, magazines, reference books, textbooks, journals, periodicals as well as other forms of bound volumes found in a particular library while non-print resources

include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, computer discs, computer software, etc. Print information resources in libraries and media centres may be either fiction or non-fiction. Fiction resources are those resources created from the author's imaginative ability. They include drama, poetry, storybooks etc. Non-fiction resources, on the other hand, are materials that depict real experiences and as such contain real and verifiable information. This is the major reason why non-fiction resources are preferred for educational instruction (e.g. teaching in schools). The public library as well as other information centres provide a rich source of print materials.

Among the various types of libraries, the public library is the only library that provides information resources and services for all ages. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2019) defined public libraries as those which serve the population of a community or region free of charge or for a nominal fee. They are libraries that are accessible to the public and generally funded from a public source and may be operated by a civil servant (Dhaiman et al., 2011). Public libraries also provide a rich source of literature for young children through their children's department.

The children's department is an integral part of the public library which is dedicated to the provision of adequate recreation and information resources needed to develop a positive attitude towards reading, writing and long-life learning in children. The children's department also uses library resources to organise programmes that boost children's interests in reading and other related activities. Such activities include arts and crafts, songs, drama, puppet shows and story-hour programmes.

Story-hour programme is a vital service offered by the children's department of the public library. It is directed mainly to young children who are just beginning to read so as to encourage them to learn for themselves more of the same kind of stories. It is a set time or period during which stories are told or read to children, especially as an organized event in the library or as a designated part of the school day (Hornby, 2015). Story-hour does not only feature stories read by librarians but

also actions, rhymes, music and play (Goulding et al., 2014). It therefore, requires good skills and organizational ability to attract the attention of the listener. Story-hour programme is usually organized by professional librarians known as professional children's librarians.

A professional children's librarian is one who has obtained a first degree in Library and Information Science (BLIS) or a degree in Education with specialty in Children's Services or School Library Media. (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2019). A master's degree holder in Library and Information Science is also an added advantage for a professional children's librarian. According to Randkin (2018), an effective and professionally run children's library require trained and committed children's librarians who will design, plan, organize, implement, manage and evaluate services and programmes to meet the needs of children and their families in the communities they serve.

Anambra State is a densely populated state located in the south-eastern part of Nigeria with eleven public libraries. There are so many public and private nurseries and primary schools in the state due to the large population of pupils and pre-school children living within the state. Anambra State is therefore an ideal environment for children to enjoy effective public library story-hour programme if there are adequate library resources. Unfortunately, most children do not have the opportunity of experiencing these exciting moments due to the relative absence of story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State which may be as a result of lack of adequate information resources or the absence of qualified personnel to coordinate the programme. A situation where the right personnel, books and other print and non-print resources are neither available nor accessible for story-hour programmes in the public libraries in Anambra State will amount to producing a future generation of individuals who may not be able to read well enough to make notable impact in today's world. However, having the right personnel and making adequate use of the information resources for story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra state will surely produce a crop of well-informed individuals who will be able to impact their society positively.

### Statement of the Problem

This study sought to conduct a survey of library resources for children's story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State. From the researchers' observation, it does appear that that most public libraries in Anambra State no longer conduct story-hour programmes for children probably because they lack current information resources that could be of interest to children. It does also appear that the few ones that have current information resources do not use them for story-hour programmes. What happened to these public libraries that made them stop organizing story-hour programmes? What can be done to rekindle the interest of children in visiting these public libraries? One of the fundamental principles of librarianship is 'Every book, its reader'. Therefore, providing the right book for the right user should be foremost in the minds of the children's librarian but it appears that there is a missing link as to the acquisition of relevant library information resources for these children. These form the main concern of this study.

### Purpose of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Find out if there are qualified personnel to coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra state.
2. Find out if there are library information resources for effective story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State.

### Research Questions

1. Are there qualified personnel to coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State?
2. Are there library enough information resources for effective story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State?

### Review of Related Literature

#### Library Resources

Library resources are those human and material resources which enable libraries to carry out their functions effectively (Ajegbomogun & Olawepo, 2014). The personnel represent the staff who combine other resources and activities in appropriate proportions to ensure the satisfaction

of the information needs of library users. In the library, the personnel include the professional and para-professional staff that collaborates at various levels to ensure that users' information needs are met. However, the categories of personnel found in the children's department of the public library are professional librarians, library assistants and library officers but the right personnel for story-hour programmes of the public libraries are the professional children's librarians. Recruiting the right personnel for story-hour programmes will create a more viable purpose-driven programme because professional children's librarians will ensure that the aims and objectives of the programmes are achieved through a proper combination of adequate information resources and activities in line with the age and preferences of the child.

Ghoting and Klatt (2014) opined that children's librarians bring out the best in children's learning experience by incorporating a wide variety of resources and play-based activities.

**Information Resources:** Information resources are those materials (both print and non-print) found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs (Hadley School Committee, 2014). Print materials represent all forms of information resources that appear in paper format. They include books, journals, magazines, newspapers, microfilms etc. The non-print materials include information materials that are in non-paper formats. Examples are films, filmstrips, computer software and other forms of audio-visual materials.

The minimum standards set by IFLA however, shows that the information resources to be provided by the public library should include fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, newspaper, magazines, pictures and posters, records and tapes, audio and video tapes, toys, CD- ROMS and Braille materials. The introduction of the internet however has broadened the definition and content of library information resources in recent times to include digital sources of information such as online encyclopedias, Wikipedia, blogs, video logs (YouTube), e-books, etc. Information resources are principally acquired to meet the information needs of clients (including children). Having the

right proportion of information resources is a major driving force in organizing story-hour programmes as it determines the success or failure of the programme.

**Story-Hour Programme:** Story-hour is a unique programme organized in one of the sections of the public library known as the children's section. According to Mc- Neil (2014), Story-hour should be an effective presentation of early literacy skills and activities; it should be entertaining and heart-warming and should promote interaction between adults and children. It should also be an opportunity for the audience to be exposed to quality literature that builds vocabulary, creativity, awareness of self and others, and knowledge. Modern story-hour programme is structured to include series of activities that promote early reading skills and dialogical reading in children. According to Albright et al. (2009), dialogical reading (i.e. Reading with the child in a way that encourages conversation) is one of the most important patterns practised during story-hour programmes. It is a pattern that makes it possible for the children's librarian to generate questions from given stories and illustrations for the child to answer from his perspective or understanding of the story. The concept of the story-hour can therefore be said to emanate from seeing the library as a possible solution to illiteracy especially as it instils in children deeper reading interests needed for good literacy skills. To this end, public libraries ensure that they provide an array of relevant information resources for their clients in their children's department.

**Public Libraries:** The public library is a public institution and a public utility, freely available and accessible to, and usable by, all members of a given community where it is established (Issa, 2019). It is financed with tax payer's money. Ahiauzu (2009) described the public library as the type of library that is established with the aim of serving the generality of the residents of the towns and communities where it is located (for instance, Kenneth Dike digital library). Public libraries facilitate access to information by all by serving people from all walks of life irrespective of their age, sex, educational qualifications, cultural background or societal status. The major function of the public library is the provision of

information resources in all aspects of knowledge to suit the needs of its heterogeneous group of users and to ensure that individuals in the community are not left uninformed. This is seen in the variety of information resources (for all types of users) housed in the public library including children's materials. One of the ways through which public libraries provide services to children is through the provision of resources to accommodate children's reading interest in their story-hour programmes which are usually conducted in the children's department of the library.

### Research Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Nworgu (2015) descriptive surveys are those studies which aim at collecting data on and describing systematically the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The choice of this research design was deemed appropriate because the findings realized from studying the children's department of all the eleven public libraries will be used to describe the state of affairs of story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State.

The eleven public libraries covered by this study are the public libraries in Awka, Abagana, Adazi-Nnukwu, Ajali, Amichi, Atani, Ihembosi, Nkpologwu, Nnewi, Onitsha and Ozubulu respectively. The headquarters of these public libraries is Kenneth Dike Central e-library, Awka. The public libraries at Onitsha and Abagana serve as divisional libraries while others are branch libraries.

The population of the study comprised the children's department of the 11 public libraries in Anambra State which is made up of a combination of the personnel (professional children's librarians, library officers and library assistants working in the children's departments) and the information resources owned by the children's section of the eleven public libraries in Anambra State.

The instruments for data collection were an observation checklist and interview which were designed in line with the purposes of the study and research questions. The checklist was expanded to include the components captured for specific

purposes. Data was collected by the researcher who personally observed and filled the observation checklist as well as interacted with the staff in the children's department of the public libraries. A total number of ten (10) checklists was finally used because Nnewi divisional library was

temporarily closed down during the time of this study due to location issues with the host community. The response derived from the oral interview was also duly interpreted. Data generated from the study were analysed using frequencies and percentages.

## Results and Discussion

The summary of the analysis of the data collected from the field work were presented in tables according to the research questions that guided the study.

**Research question 1:** Are there qualified personnel to coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Librarians' percentage responses on the qualifications of personnel that coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State**

Libraries	HND LIS		BLIS		BLIS/MLIS		B (Early childhood) / PDGLIS		DIPLIS only		Others		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Amichi	0	0%	1	10%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5.41%
Onitsha Divisional Library	1	12.5%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	2	18.18	0	0%	5	13.51%
Ihembosi	1	12.5%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	2	18.18	0	0%	4	10.81%
Keneth Dike	2	25%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	2	18.18	0	0%	6	16.22%
Nkpologwu	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	9.09	0	0%	1	2.70%
Ozubulu	2	25%	2	20%	1	50%	0	0%	1	9.09	0	0%	6	16.22%
Abagana	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%	6	16.22%
Adazi-nnukwu	2	25%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	8.11%
Ajali	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	9.09	0	0%	1	2.70%
Atani	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	18.18	0	0%	2	5.41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>

The analysis in Table 1 showed that there are few qualified personnel employed to coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State. Analysis of the data from individual public libraries indicates that all the public libraries in Anambra State have personnel working in the children's department of the libraries. However, a greater percentage of these staff do not have bachelor's or master's degree in Library and Information Science thereby making them unqualified to effectively coordinate story-hour programmes which is a professional exercise.

The analysis also showed that public libraries in Amichi, Ihembosi, Abagana and Adazi Nukwu each have one personnel with a bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science. This represents only 10% of staff in the children's department of the public libraries in Anambra State. Amichi and Ozubulu branch libraries also have one staff each (representing 50%) with a master's degree in Library and Information Science. Ajali, Atani and Nkpologwu public libraries have no professional children's librarian at al. Most of their staff are diploma (OND) holders in Library and Information Science and

other fields of study. Prof Kenneth Dike digital library and Ozubulu branch libraries are shown to have 20% of staff with bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science. The Amichi branch library has 5.41% of staff in the children's department out of which 10% possess bachelor's degree, 50% have master's degree in Library and Information Science while the remaining 5.4% are staff with diploma certificates from other profession. The percentage of staff working in the children's department of Onitsha and Ihembosi libraries are 13.51% and 10.18% respectively. Onitsha divisional library has 2 professional children's librarians representing 20% of staff with bachelor's degrees in Library and Information Science while Ihembosi has only 1 professional children's librarian which represents 10% of staff in the children's department. The remaining staffs either possess HND (12.5%) or OND (18.18%) in Library and Information Science respectively and other fields. This represents 18.18% of staff in the children's department of the library.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that Prof. Kenneth digital library, Ozubulu branch library and Abagana divisional library have the highest number of staff in their children's department although Ozubulu has a higher number of professional children's librarians; of which two has bachelor's degree (20%) and one masters' degree holder representing 50%. Two other staff representing 25% have Higher National Diploma (HND) while the remaining staff representing about 9.09% have diploma certificate. Twenty five percent of staff in Kenneth Dike Library have Higher National Diploma (HND) in Library and Information Science.

From the result, it can be observed that out of the 10 public libraries in Anambra State, 7 libraries have one or at most two professional librarians that coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:** Are there library information resources for effective story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State?

**Table 2: Percentage observation of information resources for effective story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State**

S/N	Facilities		Amichi	Onitsha Divisional library	Ihem- bosi	Kenneth Dike	Nkpologwu	Ozu- bulu	Aba- gana	Adazi- Nnukwu	Ajali	Atani	Total			
													Available F	Not available %	F	
1	Story books, picture books, textbooks, and drawing books	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10	100%	0	0%
2	Poetry and songbooks, reference resources, calendars, toys	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10	100%	0	0%
3	CD/DVD, computers, video games, etc	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0%	10	100%
4	Simple musical instruments, television sets	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0%	10	100%
5	Resources in indigenous languages, puzzles/word games	√	√	—	√	—	√	√	√	√	√	√	08	80%	2	20%

As shown by the percentage observation in Table 2, all (100%) the 10 public libraries have

information resources like story books, picture books, textbooks, drawing books, poetry,



songbooks and reference books in their children's departments. The checklist also indicated that none of the libraries has any form of audio-visual resources like television, computers, video games, VCDs etc. Prof Kenneth Dike library however has toy musical instruments and animals which they present to children during story-hour programmes.

## **Discussion of Results**

### **Qualifications of personnel that coordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State.**

The personnel that are employed in the children's departments of most public libraries in Anambra State were of three categories namely; library officers (those with HND in Library and Information Science), library assistants (OND in Library and Information Science) and professional children's librarians (having a bachelors' degree or masters' degree in Library and Information Science). Amongst these three categories of personnel, the professional children's librarians are considered the most qualified to coordinate story-hour programmes in the children's department of the public libraries. The result of the findings revealed that there are few qualified personnel employed to co-ordinate story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State. Their percentages range from 10% to 20% with only 2 libraries at 50%.

The findings showed that public libraries in Anambra State employed more library assistants and library officers than professional librarians thereby resulting in the non-availability of few professional children's librarians in the children's department. From the findings also, it can be observed that most of the public libraries in Anambra State do not employ professional children's librarians to coordinate story-hour programmes in their public libraries. Some of these libraries make use of library assistants and library officers while others manage to employ one or two professional children's librarians to work with the library assistants and library officers in the children's departments. This agrees with Simisaye(2018)'s assertion that the lack of trained children's librarians in public libraries is a major hindrance to the effectiveness of story-hour programmes in public libraries in Nigeria. It also agrees with the view of Oyewo (2015) that

insufficient professional staff is a leading barrier to increasing services and resources for children in public libraries in Nigeria.

The presence of professional children's librarians will awaken the initial objective of the story-hour programme because they are trained to understand the information needs of children through a perfect combination of information resources and activities that will instil early learning skills in children during story-hour programmes.

### **Library information resources for effective story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State.**

The result of the findings revealed that all the 10 public libraries in Anambra State have information resources that can be used for story-hour programmes but they are not used due to absence of the programme in most public libraries. The finding supports the observations of Oyewo (2015) that most public libraries in Nigeria lack contemporary books, serials and audio-visual resources for children's services thereby making them look like mere archives. A close observation also revealed that some of the book resources in the public libraries were obsolete while others have become dusty and brittle due to lack of use thereby defeating the programmes' objective of inculcating early literacy skills in children.

The findings also showed a total absence of audio-visual resources in all of the public libraries studied thereby affecting the effectiveness of the programme as shown in table 2. This finding also agrees with Naylor (2020)'s assertion that mass media has taken over as the major source of stories and information for children. Naylor observed that the population of children who visit the library now is radically different from what it was 25years ago due to the influence of ICT and mass media. The use of audio-visual resources during story-hour programmes will attract more children to the public libraries thereby making the programme more effective.

A proper combination of both print and audio-visual information resources will produce excellent result in children if used for story-hour programmes in public libraries in Anambra State. Through story-hour programmes, children can develop intellectual abilities with an

overwhelming love for books and libraries in the long run if the available information resources are used for the programme. The yearning to produce a generation of future intellectuals and lovers of books in the state can only be achieved if the story-hour programme is harnessed and sustained. Finally, the findings of the study revealed that the information resources of public libraries in Anambra State are under-utilized as most public libraries in the state do not conduct story-hour programmes. Some public libraries have not sensitized their residents enough as members of the public are unaware of the existence of such programmes. Again, children hardly have time to visit the library due to tight academic schedules in schools and extra-moral lessons. The story-hour programmes of public libraries in Anambra State do not meet the information needs of the present-day child due to the absence of ICT and other audio-visual resources in the public libraries. This will give the government and public library board an insight into salient areas of improvement so that children will be positively impacted with early literacy skills when they visit the public libraries for story-hour programmes.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of the study show that public libraries in Anambra State have information resources for effective story hour programmes but lack professional children's librarians to coordinate the programme. From the result, it can be concluded that public libraries in Anambra State do not organize story-hour programmes even when there are library information resources needed for the programme.

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government and public library board should employ more professional children's librarians to promote effectiveness during story-hour programmes. Naylor(2020) suggests bridging the gap between the salaries of children's librarians and that of higher administrative heads in public libraries. Library staff who have acquired relevant skills from working for a long period in the children's department should be encouraged to get a degree in Library and Information Science so as to make them more qualified for effective children's library services.
2. The management of public libraries and the state government should join hands to acquire ICT and other necessary audio-visual information resources such as television, decoders, video CDs etc. for story-hour programmes so as to make the programme more interesting for children. Oyewo (2015) believes that this will reduce the competition from contemporary media and provide entertainment and information resources that are attractive to children. Also, outdated books should be replaced with more recent information resources so as to avoid the use of obsolete resources for story-hour programmes.

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