

Public Library Legislation Implementation Strategies and Library Development in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo States of Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: The work examines the relationship between public library legislation implementation strategies and library development in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo.

Design: Survey research design was employed. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument to elicit responses from 320 librarians in the three libraries under studied. A-3 point scale response option of Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Undecided (U) was used in measuring responses to research questions, while the data collected was analyzed using simple percentage (table 2). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out on the scores from the three states to identify differences in the extent of implementation strategies of Public Library Legislation (table 3). While the relationship between the extent of implementation and library development in the three states was computed using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient (*r*) table 4.

Findings: The study discovered among other things that there is no significant difference between the implementation strategies of public library legislation and library development in the three states understudied as the library boards of these states do not function commensurate to the appropriate legislations.

Research Limitations: The findings of this study will help to arouse genuine and conscious action plan which when scrupulously implemented will benefit Library administrators, students and researchers. Similarly the attendant development of public libraries will trickle down to other types of library in Nigeria.

Originality/Value: The outcome of this paper will enable Library administrators, Information providers and library patrons embrace the effect of library legislation implementation strategies on development of public library services.

Key words: Public libraries, Library legislation, Library legislation implementation, Strategies, Library development, Nigeria

Paper type: Empirical research

Introduction

The public library is a vital agency in supporting the cultural and intellectual development of citizens of a given community. This is why it is often referred to as the people's university. The public library to a large extent aids national development. Hence, its operation and services can form useful indices in the measurement of the level of development of any people(s) or group(s). It has therefore become evident that countries or states that are developed have good public libraries. However, Public library should be based on legislation which assures their continuance and their place in government structure. Development of public library is intended to enhance the greatness of a nation but

this can be achieved only through commitment to implementation of public library legislation. No wonder then that the acclaimed father of Nigerian librarianship, Professor John Harris, stated that the development of public library in Nigeria should be measured by appropriate legislation.

The need for library legislation became a reoccurrence decimal in the mouth of every librarian in the early 70's. Library laws are enacted to address the fundamental principles and the values that regulate behavior with respect to what is right or wrong (Pollack & Hartzel, 2006). In practice library laws/legislation are enacted to support a more legal and ethical work place that provides a clear guiding philosophy especially when making

decision concerning the well being of an legislations in nearly all the states of the federation, the issue being considered currently is the implementation strategies of these legislations and its effect on library development vis-avis its desired impact on the citizenry.

Strategy implementation is a term used to describe the activities within an organization which seeks to manage the execution of a strategic plan. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English (2005: 461) defines strategy as a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. Thus, strategy shows appropriate steps chosen to accomplish stated objectives. It shows ways of doing things for success to be achieved. It is a written document that strategically stipulates the processes of implementation and which when implemented makes the plan a reality. There is need to adopt appropriate strategies in the implementation of public libraries legislation to ensure adequate development. The term legislation means the preparing and enacting of laws. Library legislation is an act to provide for the establishment, maintenance and development of effective public library system and the organization and development of a comprehensive rural and urban library service (Shachaf, 2005)

The needs for library legislation are as follows:

1. It provides the guidelines for the structure of the public library system that is appropriate for the area and concerned authorities.
2. It saves the public libraries from any type of interference of bureaucracy and politics and thus the system functions effectively and smoothly.
3. It eliminates the perennial problem of negligence and ensures adequate finance for the development of the public libraries.
4. Library legislation provides the opportunity to the representative of the public for participating in the functioning of the public libraries at all levels.
5. It defines the responsibility of the government for the development of the public library system.

The development of public libraries has probably been hampered by the paradox that they were in fact recognized as instruments of

organization..Having put in place these popular education and social welfare long before the conception of compulsory education and before the legal framework of the modern state was established. The concept of a public library has been that of a local community project. Ebiwolate (2010) remarked that the establishment of public libraries in Nigeria has been mostly limited to urban areas which have resulted to illiteracy and ignorance among young people in the rural areas. The presences of public libraries in rural areas that are not accessible by roads are lacking not to talk of its development.

However, public library should live up to expectation as agency for social and personal development as well as agency for positive change in the community. It should provide a wide range of materials to support education and making information accessible to all and bringing economic and social benefits to individual and to the community. Eke (2009) corroborates the foregoing when he stated that public library contributes to the creation and maintenance of a well informed and democratic society that helps to empower people in the enrichment of their lives and that of the community in which they live.

Brief history of the libraries under study: Imo state library board

Following the creation of Imo state out of the former East Central State on 3rd February, 1976 the East Central State library board broke into Anambra and Imo State library boards respectively. However, it was in September 1976 that the indigenous Imo State staff in Enugu transferred to Owerri to establish the administrative Headquarter of Imo state library board (Owerri divisional library) at Okigwe road, Owerri. The library was opened to the public on the 12th of November, 1976. In 1977, Imo State promulgated the Imo State library board edict. Similarly, Abia State library board was carved out from Imo State in September, 1991, following the creation of Abia State. In 1992, Abia State Library Board edict was promulgated and the divisional library at Umuahia became the new headquarter of Abia State Library board. Akwa-Ibom State library board was an offshoot of Cross River state which was formally under the South-Eastern State. In 1987, the Cross River state was split into Cross River state and Akwa-Ibom state. The Akwa-Ibom state inherited the Cross River state branch library at Uyo. The law regulating the

Akwa-Ibom State Library board was still the Cross River State board edict No. 16, 1973 until in 1995 when the Akwa-Ibom state library board edict was promulgated.

Statement of the problem

Public libraries are now acknowledged to be an indispensable part of community life as promoters of literacy, provider of a wide range of reading for all ages and centers for community information services. However there appears to be similar pattern amongst the states of the Federation in the implementation strategies of public library legislation. There seems to be apparent lackluster attitude amongst the government of the three states under study in implementation strategies of library legislation. This makes library development slower than the overall advance in other field such as politics, education and sports, etc.

The lack of uniformity in application of library board edicts; the slow pace of implementation of library legislation and the variation of the Ministry from education to information constitute some constraints to library development. The study among others is carried out to find out how public library legislation implementation strategies would enhance library development.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the implementation of public library legislation and its effect on the development of the libraries in Abia, Akwa-Ibom, and Imo states. Specifically the study seeks to:

- Identify the implementation strategies of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom, and Imo states, Nigeria.
- Find out the differences in the implementation strategies of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo States, Nigeria.
- Determine the relationship between the extent of implementation of public library legislation and library development in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo states, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the strategies used in the implementation of public library legislation Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State, Nigeria.

2. Are there any significant differences in the implementation strategies of public library legislation in the three states aforementioned?
3. What is the relationship between the extent of implementation of public library legislation and library development in the three states under study?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

H01. There is no significant difference in the implementation strategies of public library legislation in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo state.

H02. There is no significant relationship between the extent of implementation of library legislation and library development in the three states under study.

Literature review

The first public library legislation in Nigeria was enacted on 1st July, 1955. Dada (1982) cited Harris who stated that “the permanence and development of public library should be measured by appropriate legislation”. Library laws are enacted to address the fundamental principles and the values that regulate behavior with respect to what is right or wrong (Pollack & Hartzel, 2006). In practice library laws/legislation are enacted to support a more legal and ethical work place that provides a clear guiding philosophy especially when making decision concerning the well being of an organization. Shachaf, (2005) expressed the view that legislation is necessary in order to serve as a useful guide to the librarian and the library authority on the administration of libraries. Therefore, legislation commits a government to a library programme; and is a necessary condition for development in any field.

The UNESCO seminar on public library development in Africa, held at Ibadan in 1953, was the first international conference on libraries ever held in Africa. It gave further stimulus to Dr. Azikiwe’s quest for library services in Nigeria. It was not only a catalyst—spurring on the champions of public or national libraries in African countries, but also helps to stimulate African governments to enact public library legislation to set up public library boards. The

seminar emphasized that “only legislation can empower the appropriate authorities to provide services and ensure adequate financial support and efficient administration according to national standard. Only legislation can define the functions of the providing authority, create the conditions in which it may fulfill those functions, and ensure development.”

The result stimulated the enactment of the Eastern Nigeria public Library Ordinance and the Eastern Nigeria publications Law in (1955), Sierra Leone (1959), Tanzania (1963), Uganda (1964), Kenya (1965) and Malawi (1968). In some countries the boards also provide library services to schools and supervise libraries of government departments (Collings, 1972). ,

The value of public library legislation was so obvious that during the creation of states in 1967, the former Eastern Nigeria was split into three states namely: - East Central state which was later split into Anambra and Imo state, Rivers state and Southern Eastern state which was also later split into Akwa-Ibom State and Cross River State. With necessary modifications each of these states in turn re-enacted the former Eastern Nigerian library board law as follows; East Central Nigerian Library Board Law (1971), Rivers State Library Board Edict (1971), Imo State Library Board Edict (1977), Cross River State Library Board Edict (1973) which was repealed in 1991, Abia State Library Board Edict (1992) and finally the Akwa-Ibom State Library Board Edict (1995).

After the civil war in 1970, other state governments in the country enacted public library legislations, set up library boards and provided for legal deposit in respect of publications issued within their states. Today, most states in the federation have passed public library laws and have created public library boards of varying degrees of effectiveness/ineffectiveness.

Methodology

A survey design was adopted using structured questionnaire for data collection. A total of 320 respondents, comprising 108 professional and 212 para-professional librarians in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo were used as the population of study. (See table 1)

A 3-point scale response option of Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Undecided (U) was used in measuring responses to research questions, while the data collected was analyzed using simple percentage (table 2). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out on the scores from the three states to identify differences in the extent of implementation strategies of Public Library Legislation (table 3). While the relationship between the extent of implementation and library development in the three states was computed using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient (r) table 4.

Data Analysis and discussion of findings

Table 1: No. of Professionals and Para-Professionals in Public Libraries of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State.

States	Professional Librarians in Public Library	Paraprofessionals in Public Library	Total
Abia	38	72	110
Akwalbom	34	74	108
Imo	36	66	102
Total	108	212	320

The table 2, shows that 256 (80%) of the respondents in the three states agreed that the establishment of a board is well reflected and stated in the legislation. About (256 (80%) of the respondents also agreed that the composition of the board which consists of a chairman and not less than three and not more than five members are clearly stated in the legislation. The provision for the condition of service as stated in the legislation had a total response of 240 (75%), while the funding and proper accounting of the board had a total response of 80(25%) as being clearly stated in the legislation. Moreover,

regulations to enhance public library services in the three states had a total response of 256 (80%). On the supervision of the board by the commissioner of education 180(56.3%) of the respondents agreed that the supervision was as clearly stated in the legislation. Similarly 62.2% of respondents in the three states agreed that provisions for board meeting were adhered to as stated in the legislation. Finally, 77% of the respondents agreed that deposit obligation of decree no. 29 of 1970(name the decree) applies which in essence commits all categories of publishers in their respective states to comply.

Table 2: Public library legislation and implementation strategies in the 3 states of Abia, Akwa- Ibom and Imo entails

S/NO	Subject	Agree No. of Resp. (%)	Disagree No. of Resp. (%)	Undecided No. of Resp. (%)
1	Proper establishment of the board	256 (80%)	38 (12%)	26 (8%)
2	The composition of the board is strictly adhered to as stated in the legislation	256 (80%)	37 (11.6%)	27 (8.4%)
3	The tenure of office of the board members are spelt out in the legislation	244 (76.3%)	64 (20%)	12 (3.7%)
4	The powers of the board to properly delegate its functions are adequately spelt out in the legislation	240 ((75%)	64 (20%)	16 (5%)
5	There is adequate provision of the condition of service	240 (75%)	80 (25%)	
6	The board is supervised by the commissioner of education as stated in the legislation	180 (56.3%)	80 (25%)	60 (18.7%)
7	Funding and proper account of the board is strictly adhered to as stated in the legislation	80 (25%)	240 (75%)	
8	Regulations to enhance public library services and development are properly stated	256 (80%)	38 (12%)	26 (8%)
9	Meetings and transitional provision of the board is strictly adhered to as stated in the legislation	198 (62%)	96 (30%)	26 (8%)
10	Deposit obligations of decree no.29 of 1970 is adequately stated and complied by all categories of publishers in the state.	246 (77%)	64 (20%)	10 (3%)

Table 3: Summary of analysis of variance on testing the extent of implementation of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F
Between groups	55721.5	2	27860.7	1342.7
Within groups	6577.1	317	20.7	

Significant at < 0.05

The calculated F-ratio is 1342.7 while the critical value of F at df of 2 and 317 is 3.00 at 0.05 significant levels. Since the calculated values of F is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected hence these is

significant difference in the extent of implementation of the Public library legislation in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State

Table 4: Summary of correlational analysis of relationship between implementation of public library legislation and development in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo States.

	N	X	X ²	Y	Y ²	Xy	R
Implementation (x) and Development (Y)	320	8260	290916	2120	18360	5696	0.06

Not significant at p < 0.05

The computed correlation co-efficient (r) was 0.06 while the critical valued df of 318 and 0.05 level of significant is 0.129. since the computed value is less than the critical value the null hypothesis is accepted hence there is no significant relationship between the extent of implementation of public library legislation and library development in Abia, Akwalbom and Imo States. The data analyzed in table 4 reveals that there is no significant relationship between the extent of implementation of public library legislation and library development in Abia, Akwa –Ibom and Imo State.

- The public libraries in the three states understudied are guided by a well articulated legislation.
- The implementation strategies of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo states are similar and include: establishment of a library board, composition of the board, tenure of office of board members, their functions and provision of condition of service amongst others.
- Malfunctioning in the operations of the library boards of Abia, Akwa-Ibom States

in terms of establishment, management and equipping them for effective service

- Finally, there is no significant difference between the extent of implementation of public library legislation and library development in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo state.

Conclusions

From the data analysis and discussion, it could be deduced that

- Library legislation implementation strategies in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State, Nigeria are similar.”
- There is no significant difference in the implementation strategies of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State, Nigeria.
- There is slow pace of library development in the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State, Nigeria.
- The implementation strategies of public library legislation in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo States are ineffective.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The governments of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo State should make it a matter of urgency to comply strictly with the legislation implementation strategies of public library in their states to enhance effective library services.
- Equipping the public libraries with adequate personnel and infrastructure is required to guarantee adequate flow of information which is highly necessary for survival in our current global competitiveness.
- Governments of the three states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Imo should strive as a matter of priority to maintain functional and up-to-date public libraries, for the overall development and improvement of life of their citizenry.

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