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## Information Sources and Effective Library Decision Making In Selected Secondary Schools, Cross River State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This is an empirical study of information sources and effective library decision making. The study was undertaken in Cross River State, Nigeria and public schools throughout the state were selected as study area, which involves both principals and library staff, as decisions makers concerned in the running and management of school libraries. The study examined if there exists significant influence of information sources on effective library decision making. The entire study population of 342 were studied with a return rate of 301. Data obtained was analysed using one-way analysis of variance. The finding reveals a significant influence of information sources on effective library decision making. It was concluded that information sources influenced effective library decision making significantly. Consequently, the study recommends training and retraining of library staff and school administrators on modern and digital library techniques to facilitate understanding of information sources, among others.

**Keywords:** Information sources, Effective decision making, Library staff

### Introduction

The success of any library system within organisations is anchored on effectiveness of decision making process and interplay of critical organisational elements influencing the decision making process. It is this perspective that this study focuses on information sources and effectiveness of decision making process as they affect secondary school organisations in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Information source is conceptually a thing, an individual or even a place where information comes from, is generated or can be obtained. Effectiveness in decision making has to do with proper identification and selection of alternatives, systematically, with clear and defined purpose in order to achieve set or laid down objectives or goals. School libraries are important component units of school organisation and for proper decisions to be made to ensure and enhance learning in view of students' academic performance and teachers' work productivity, this study was undertaken.

### Statement of problem

Decision process in school library is not in any way different from what is carried out in all other organisations. The library staff and principal when making decisions concerning the school library, have the library users in mind as the most critical factor. This is because, satisfaction of users by ensuring learning, determines if objectives are achieved.

The major issue here is how relevant or critical is/are the sources of information which guides the school managers and library staff in making decision. Critical questions regarding the sources are:

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- How current are the sources?
- How relevant are the sources to school curriculum?
- How conformed are these sources to national policy on education?

These and other bugging issues necessitated this study which was primarily to determine the influence of information sources on effective decision making in selected secondary school libraries in Cross River State, as guided by the null hypothesis: Sources of information do not significantly influence effective decision making by library staff and principals of selected secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. This was in response to the research question: “Is there any significant influence of information sources on effective decision making in secondary school libraries?”

The primary problem which prompted this study was the dilapidated condition of secondary school libraries, some of which are not stocked, some without personnel, which are likely to influence library usage and students’ academic performance. This situation also affects teachers’ preparation for lesson, learning process and quality of scholarship.

**Methodology**

This study utilises ex post factor survey research design, which Bassey, Abang and Iji (2017) maintain is a quasi-experimental design which study a phenomenon after its occurrence. The social phenomenon in study is sources of library information and effective decision making process. Sources of information were the independent variable while effectiveness in decision making process was the dependent variable.

Cross River State was the study area, located in South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, with 18 local government areas (Bassey, 2016). The study population consists of 245 principals and 97 library staff, which brings to a total of 342 subjects (Cross River State Secondary School Education Board, 2015). The researcher in the study purposefully utilised the entire population, which was manageable. Consequently, sample was not taken.

A questionnaire labelled “information sources and effective decision making process questionnaire” (ISEDMPQ) was designed and used in extracting information from respondents. This instrument was structured as a four point’s likert scale questionnaire, where respondents ticked Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient which ranged between 0.72 to 0.83 based on the different sub-variables of the instrument.

**Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework**

There are different sources of information in the library which aid the library staff in decision making, in order to achieve effectiveness of such decision. Notable sources include: reference materials like dictionaries and bibliographies, books, e-books (online books), academic

journals, magazines, newspapers, statistical records, internet sites, files and special information.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2003) maintains that school administrators and library workers should be trained in modern information sources for them to be able to make effective decisions that are useful to the achievement of the objectives of school organisations. This training may be organisation centered or personal development (Bassey, Attah and Bassey, 2012).

Addo’s (2011) empirical study shows that sources of information gathered by parliamentary librarians help the parliamentarians to make effective contributions, policies and laws. Addo (2011) indicates that 92.6% of parliamentarians made use of diverse library sources including internet.

Texas Administrative Code of School Libraries (2009) as amended, urges all school libraries to understand and master bibliographic and retrieval techniques that are needed for the organisation and utilisation of information sources which will enable them discharge effective and satisfactory services to both teachers and students. For library staff to reply to users’ queries, the library staff are expected to be well versed and versatile, so as to know which information source best answers and solves users’ queries and problems. Consequently, there is a need for library staff and school principals in Cross River State secondary school system to be aware of the latest information.

This study relied on system theory of David Easton (Easton, 1965). Library organisation reflects a part which relates and are interdependent on other parts to function effectively and decision making being another part of school organisation, as a complex system made up of various parts. Proper functioning of all parts makes for the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire system.

**Presentation of Result/Findings**

**Table 1:** General Description of Data (N = 301)

Variable	X	SD
Sources	18.7342	1.43613

Hypothesis: Sources of information have no significant influence on effective decision making

Variables: The independent variable in the hypothesis is sources of information which is categorised into three (low – 1, average – 2, and high – 3), while the dependent variable is effective decision making

Tool: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used and the result is presented on Table 2 below

**Table 2:** Summary Data and One-Way ANOVA of the Influence of Sources of Information on Effective Decision Making by Library Staff and Principals (N = 301)

Sources of Information	N	X	SD
Low – 1	73	17.18	1.095
Average – 2	131	19.26	0.66
High – 3	97	19.20	0.74

Total	301	18.73	1.44		
Source of variance	SS	Df	M.S	F	Sig. of F
Between Group	233.599	2	116.799	90.373*	.000
Within Group	385.139	298	1.292		
Total	618.738	300			

\* Significant at .05 level, critical F – 3.00, df – 298

**Table 3:** Fischer's Least Significant Difference (LSD) Multiple Comparison Analysis of the Influence of Source of Information on Effective Decision Making by Library Staff and Principals

(I) Sources of Information	J Sources of Information	Mean Difference (I – J)	Std. Error	Sig.
100	2.00	-2.08146(*)	.16604	.000
	3.00	-2.01779(*)	.17615	.000
200	1.00	2.08146(*)	.16604	.000
	3.00	.06367	.15228	.676
300	1.00	2.01779(*)	.17615	.000
	2.00	-.06369	.15228	.676

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

### Result

The result on table 2 revealed that the calculated F-value of 90.373 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that "sources of information has no significant influence on effective decision making was greater, meaning that sources of information significantly influences effective decision making. Since sources of information has a significant influence on effective decision making by library staff and principals, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fischer's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis, as presented in Table 3. The result of the analysis in Table 3 showed that library staff and principals from high sources of information have significantly higher mean achievement than library staff and principals from low and average sources of information.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study is in line with the view of International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2003) that principals and library staff must undergo training to expose them to current information sources which will help improve decision making process. The finding is also in tune with Addo (2011) which maintains that parliamentary decisions in Ghana are effective due to their exposure to current information sources.

The implication of this finding to principals and library staff in Cross River State secondary school system is that they should be trained and retrained on current information sources. Their exposure to digital sources and improvement in their information management skills will further foster effectiveness in decision making, which will be revealed in school organisations achieving its objectives (Bassey and Edet, 2014).

### Recommendations and Conclusion

This study concludes that there exists significant influence of information sources on effective decision making by principals and library staff in Cross River State, Nigeria secondary school system. The degree of influence is significant. The study indicates that it is principals and library staff that jointly take decisions regarding the

running and management of secondary school libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria, which is due principally to inadequate library staff. It is also noted that the number of schools outweigh library staff as the total number of principals and vice principals that were studied with ratio of 245: 97 outnumbered library staff.

The study recommends that more library professionals be employed into the state secondary school system. Such should be trained in modern skill of sourcing information, library staff should be deployed to schools without such expertise and their condition of service and welfare should be considered by school administrators as a matter of utmost importance (Bassey, Akwaji and Abonor, 2015), in order to ensure effectiveness in school library decision making.

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