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A survey of children literature as the bedrock for the Nigerian child education and cultural change

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Abstract

The researcher survey on children literature as the bedrock of the Nigerian child education and cultural change because any good thinker will always think about the place of the Nigerian child in the society and proffer solution to the challenges faced by the younger generation in our society today, he sample four secondary schools in Oghara area of delta state Nigeria. It was noted that most of the schools visited don't have a functional library.

Children encounter diversity on a regular basis in their interactions with others at home, in school, or around their neighborhood. As our nation continues to diversify, it is essential that children learn to understand the important role of their culture and the cultures of other people in creating an overall global culture respectful of differences.

Keywords: children literature, bedrock, Nigerian, child education, cultural change

1. Introduction

The Nigerian child is that person in the society who is young in age from one day old, to sixteen years. The age terminating childhood may differ from one place to another and from one culture to another. It however, remains a universal knowledge that the child and young person is that person who is under adult guidance that is, parent, teachers, librarian as the case maybe. They are the pillar of every nation, they grow from childhood to adult to acclimatize with the cultural change of their society. Ray Doiron and Marlene Asselin (2010) deposit that, A well-known African proverb teaches that "It takes a village to raise a child". This reminds us that everyone in a community plays an important role in the welfare and development of children. This proverb could also apply as we explore the complexity of developing children's reading habits by suggesting "It takes a village to raise a reader". This implies that educators, parents, community leaders and librarians all play a vital role in the development of children who not only can read, but who do read.

Literature is the body of writings that are valued as works of art. (Hornby, 1995) cited by Ugboma 2007. It is a universal means of communicating the emotional, spiritual or intellectual concern of mankind.

Giving children access to all varieties of literature is extremely important for their success.

Educators, parents, and community members should help students develop a love and passion for reading. Not only is reading literature important in developing cognitive skills to be able to succeed in a school or work setting, but it is valuable for other reasons as well.

Although there are countless values in exposing children to literature, Donna Norton (2010) identifies the value of literature for young people in her book *Through the Eyes of a Child*.

Children's literature is important because it provides students with opportunities to respond to literature;

It gives students appreciation about their own cultural heritage as well as those of others;

It helps students develop emotional intelligence and creativity;

It nurtures growth and development of the student's personality and social skills; and it transmits important literature and themes from one generation to the next.

The history of the development of children's literature is fraught with the consuming desire to impose adult values on children. The Bible was considered the only reading material necessary for children (Clyde, 1983), and all early efforts in reading instruction were ultimately directed at achieving comprehension of this work.

In the nineteenth century, works of literary merit, although not specifically aimed at children, were made available but only to children of middle and upper classes. This century has seen the development of literature specifically for children, catering to their wants and needs.

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Development in this area is continuing as educational theories evolve and specific requirements of individual learners are identified.

Children literature are literary works created specifically for children, as distinct from works written for adults and young adults, including poetry and prose, fiction and nonfictions. Children literature began with the oral transmission of nursery rhymes, songs, poems, fairytale and stories. During the early 17th century, the horn book came into widespread use in Britain and the American colonies, but it was not until the late 17th century with the publication of the popular tales of mother goose by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) that written literature for children emerged as a separate genre. By the mid-18th century, the British writer, printer and publisher John Newbery (1713-1767) perceived that a market existed for children's books and began publishing illustrated works intended to be morally instructional (little goody two-shoes). Not until the 19th century did children's literature break away from didacticism, first with the publication of the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson (1805-1875) and the brothers Grimm and later with Edward Lear's book of nonsense (1846), Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and the sequel through the Looking in Glass (1871).

Ugboma (2007) opines that the body of children's literature is designed, to get the attention of the child to put in visual and audio expression, the images and thoughts of a child's world, and to keep them well informed about all spheres of life. The child entire environment constitute literary expression to him. This is because, what he sees, hears and experiences from adults and peers alike, all build up experiences for him that even contribute information for the development of his person. She further states that literary designs for children begin right at the mother's bosom. While he is yet sucking at his mother's breast. You can visualize a mother with a crying baby in her arms, how she coos to the child. This are forms of literary expressions that send information to the child. These information form the bedrock of the personality and knowledge of child.

Education can take many forms and serve many needs. The earliest of civilizations more than 3,000 years ago in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China bears this out. Over times instruction of the young, which has previously occurred through interaction with knowledgeable and skilled adults in the context of daily life, shifted to institutional settings such as royal courts and temples, each with its own standardized body of knowledge. Schools with prescribed curricular and appointed teachers were founded for various purposes: to transmit knowledge and information, societal values, and useful technical skills; to socialize individuals to particular roles. The advent of public schools all over the state of Nigeria and the introduction of feeding and proper monitoring of the children from home to schools by some state by some state governors has really helped the Nigeria child in growing academically in this era. The social cultural changes have been a prime focus of the social science. From the very origins of their disciplines in the late 1800s, sociologist and anthropologist have asked what role education play in helping human society to reproduce themselves from one generation to the next without falling into disarray.

Education can be thought as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In this sense it is equivalent to all social scientist term socialization or enculturation. Children whether conceived among Nigerians or any part of the world are born without culture. Education is designed to guide them in learning a culture, molding their

behavior in the way of adult hood and directing them toward their eventual roles in the society.

Statement of problems

The position of the Nigerian child in the society is vital for human survival. The children contribute to the growing population of the nation and therefore they need to be introduced to the diverse literature that will enable them compete with other children of the world and imbibe in the education and culture change which will make them stand out in the area of reading culture and acclimatized with the diverse culture as they transit to adulthood.

It has been observed that reading culture among Nigerian children is tragically deficient when compared to the Western world. In this era of high level technological development, it is disheartening to note that reading culture is missing as the younger ones are now embracing watching of home video and accessing the Internet.

Objective of the study

In a broader perspective, this study intend to expand the scope of knowledge on children literature as the bedrock of the Nigerian child education and culture change by looking at it from other angle, specifically, it seeks, among other thing:

1. To determine the value of children literature and how it influence the child positively.
2. To understand the role play by various angle e.g library and librarian in promoting reading culture.
3. To build a culture for reading in a multilingual and multicultural society like Nigerian and the rest of the world.
4. To confront the child with the reality of human problem.
5. To expose the child to his own historical and cultural value.

Literature review

Children literature and their values to the Nigerian child

We are fully aware that children literatures are very vital for the Nigerian child education and cultural change and we are of the known that children in our society today represents almost half percent Nigerian population, therefore they need to be introduced to good literature that will add values to their life. Over the last decade, Nigeria's exponential growth in population has put immense pressure on the country's resources and on already overstretched public services and infrastructure. With children under 15 years of age accounting for about 45 per cent of the country's population, the burden on education and other sectors has become overwhelming.

The word children literature is a dynamic word that need proper definition and explanation for the interest of the populace, the term is not easily defined, it has been an issue for scholars to crack. Lobban (1989:10) discusses the purpose of literature, but has difficulty defining the concept. Nearly a decade later, the matter has not been completely clarified, with various authorities stressing different aspects of the material collectively known as literature. Similarly, 'children's literature' defies definition. Hanson (1998) produces a selection of quotations in order to demonstrate the difficulties of producing a single, concise definition of 'children's literature'. She recommends that an appropriate definition is: "...the material created for and widely read, viewed and heard by children, that has an imaginative element..." but to some it mean something different, it is of this note, that Zhang and Alex (1995) states that its use as a resource for language development, an extension tool for gifted readers (Collins &

Alex, 1996), a vehicle for metacomprehension assessment (Standiford, 1984), an alternative text (Van Sledright & Kelly, 1998), a utility for disabled students (Williams & McLean, 1997) and a vehicle for addressing equity issues (Sulzby *et al.*, 1993). These are authentic statements from erudite scholars in this area. To support this view I will posit that children literature are inspirational intellectual write up to preserve human communication and to extend its duration to the sound of all human voice and beyond the memory of mortal man. They can also be seen as the professional composition of intellects for the younger generation. The illustrated dictionary of library and information science (2008) explain that it is a literary works created specifically for children, as distinct from work written for adults and young adults.

Children's literature is important because it provides pupils with opportunities to respond to literature; it gives them appreciation about their own cultural heritage as well as those of others; it helps develop emotional intelligence and creativity; it nurtures growth and development of their personality and social skills; and it transmits important literature and themes from one generation to the next. Ugboma (2007), state the following values:

1. Children literature confront the child with the reality of human problem
2. It enriches the imagination of child
3. It engage the child in a maturing activities both mental and emotional.

To add to these, Martha Crippen analyze the values and gave a clear understanding on the values and states clearly the good and the bad of the values: The first value to note is that children's literature provides students with the opportunity to respond to literature and develop their own opinions about the topic. This strengthens the cognitive developmental domain as it encourages deeper thought about literature. Quality literature does not tell the reader everything he/she needs to know; it allows for some difference in opinion. One reader may take something completely different away from the piece of literature than the next reader, based on the two personal viewpoints and experiences. Students can learn to evaluate and analyze literature, as well as summarize and hypothesize about the topic. Norton says that for children, "wordless picture books are excellent stimuli for oral and written language" (2010, p. 9). Students reading wordless books like *A Ball for Daisy* (Raschka, 2011), *The Yellow Umbrella* (Liu, 1987), or *The Red Book* (Lehmann, 2004) will be able to analyze the illustrations and develop their own dialogue for the story. This strengthens students' cognitive functions in being able to form opinions on their own and to express themselves through language in summarizing the plot of a wordless book.

Second, children's literature provides an avenue for students to learn about their own cultural heritage and the cultures of other people. It is crucial for children to learn these values because, "developing positive attitudes toward our own culture and the cultures of others is necessary for both social and personal development" (Norton, 2010, p. 3). In saying this, however, when teaching students about the cultural heritage of others, one should be very careful in selecting which books to recommend to young readers. There are many stories, some folktales, which contain blatant stereotypes and inaccuracies about certain cultural groups. This includes books such as *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* (Jeffers, 1991), or *The Rough-Face Girl* (Martin, 1992). Both of these stories depict Native Americans in a misguided way and contain misinterpretations of what actually occurred in history. For

example, the Iroquois tribe in *The Rough-Face Girl* (Martin, 1992) historically lived in longhouses, but the illustrator depicts these Native Americans as living in teepees. This is a clichéd view, and it can be very damaging in perpetuating stereotypes if we as adults are not cautious in the books we have in our classroom and home libraries. However, there are some children's books that are more accurate in teaching the cultural differences of others. A story called "Eric" from *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (Tan, 2009) is a touching story about a family who takes in a foreign exchange student and must learn about their guest and accept the differences between their cultures. It has a positive message about encouraging acceptance of the cultural differences between people, which is something that we want to help nurture in our students. Another book that helps discuss culture is *Going Home* (Bunting, 1996), which is the story of a Mexican immigrant family with the children who were born in the U.S. There is a difference in what "home" is for the parents and the children, and when they take a trip to Mexico, the children realize how important their parent's culture and homeland is for them. Many books are available that depict culture as an important piece of society that is to be treasured and valued, and those books can have great value for students.

Third, children's literature helps students develop emotional intelligence. Stories have the power to promote emotional and moral development. Children's literature "contains numerous moments of crisis, when characters make moral decisions and contemplate the reasons for their decisions," an important skill for children to see modeled (Norton, 2010, p. 34). *Guji Guji* (Chen, 2004), for example, is a story about a crocodile who is adopted into a family of ducks. Ultimately he must choose between betraying his adopted family and going back to his own "species," and he decides to remain true to his beliefs and not betray his family. *The Scar* (Moundlic, 2007) is an effective book to read with students in order to teach them about responding to grief, as it is about a boy whose mother dies. This requires a complex level of emotional intelligence, as many young children do not understand death.

The topic of death would be more appropriate for an older grade level, but it is an important topic to discuss with students. Another book that encourages emotional intelligence is *Selma* (Bauer, 2002), which discusses what it takes for a young sheep to be happy. It is a philosophical story within a picture book, and challenges students to think about what happiness really is. *The Big Box* (Morrison, 1999) is a story about children who have their freedom taken away by being put into a box and the deeper problems that exist with not being given one's freedom. Children's literature encourages students to think deeper about their own feelings.

Children's literature also encourages creativity. Norton stresses "the role that literature plays in nurturing and expanding the imagination" (2010, p. 4). *The House in the Night* (Swanson, 2008) depicts the creativity that a young girl has in her dreams at night, as she flies about the dark neighborhood on the wings of a bird. *The Amazing Pop-up Music Book* (Petty, 1999), *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* (Moss, 1995), and *Look Closer: Art Masterpieces through the Ages* (Desnoettes, 2006) are imaginative and original books that encourage students to learn about music and art, and they are engaging in their design and interactivity. Children's literature promotes the development of students' internal imaginations. Children's literature is of value because it fosters personality and social development.

Children are very impressionable during the formative years, and children's literature can help them develop into caring, intelligent, and friendly people. Developmental psychologist Jean Piaget says that when students move from the pre-operational to the operational stage of cognitive development, they become less egocentric. Whereas students in preschool and kindergarten may be entirely focused on themselves, as students grow older they begin to take into account the feelings and viewpoints of others. Being able to understand other people's viewpoints and to not be selfish are important skills that adults must nurture in children, as Norton says that "acceptable relationships require an understanding of the feelings and viewpoints of others" (2010, p. 27). Children's literature can foster social development by encouraging students to accept other people and their differences. Books like *And Tango Makes Three* (Parnell & Richardson, 2005), *Molly's Family* (Garden, 2004), *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Newman & Souza, 1989) and *Daddy's Roommate* (Wilhoite, 2000) present situations that might encourage students to become more open-minded to different types of families and understand that love is the most important thing in a family. Children's literature can also encourage students to develop relationships with people, encouraging social contact. An atypical friendship is depicted in *Loop the Loop* (Dugan, 1992), where a young child and an elderly person become good friends and share the common joy of playing with yo-yo's. In *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* (Frazee, 2008), the boys learn to think of the needs of others when they build a diorama for the grandpa who is fascinated with penguins. Literature encourages students to be considerate and friendly people, and these traits may be consistent with developing students into quality citizens. Finally, children's literature is of value because it is a timeless tradition, one in which "books are the major means of transmitting our literary heritage from one generation to the next" (Norton, 2010, p. 3). Classic stories like Dr. Seuss' *And to Think That I heard it on Mulberry Street* (Geisel, 1989) and *The Cat in the Hat* (Geisel, 1957) are important books to read to children because of their literary heritage.

For a younger audience, children could build their cognitive and language skills through exposure to Mother Goose rhymes. One example of a good collection of these classic rhymes is *Hey Diddle Diddle and Other Mother Goose Rhymes* (dePaola, 1998). Children in older grades can learn to appreciate the classic plays and messages of William Shakespeare in picture books that aim to make the plays more accessible. Many versions of Shakespeare's works are available in abridged and picture book formats, including *Romeo and Juliet* (Coville, 1999) and *The Tempest* (Mayer, 2005). Children are only young for a short time, and so we must give them access to a basic heritage of timeless books. Quality children's literature has the great power to captivate audiences for many generations. Children's literature is extremely valuable in both the school setting and at home. Teachers and parents should both be able to differentiate between quality and mediocre literature, in order to give students access to the best books to encourage these important values of literature and considering developmental domains. Children's literature is valuable in providing an opportunity to respond to literature, as well as cultural knowledge, emotional intelligence and creativity, social and personality development, and literature history to students across generations. Exposing children to quality literature can contribute to the creation of responsible, successful, and caring individuals.

The library and the librarians impact in the Nigerian child reading culture

Oyedepo (2008) opine that every committed reader is a potential leader. This suggests that a person who is committed to reading will not only become a leader, but a successful adult leader who is able to surmount the challenges and problems encountered in life. In other words, reading is synonymous with leadership. Leaders are readers (George, 2013). An important aspect of childhood development is mental or cognitive development. There are cognitive implications of reading that extends beyond the lifting of meaning and vocabulary of the content of a passage being read (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, devotion to an uninterrupted reading lifestyle helps to improve the cognitive abilities of the reader in addition to the acquisition of vocabulary and knowledge. Ilogho (2002) stressed that reading remains one of the most powerful positive preoccupation of children during childhood development, adding that children and youths constitute the bulk of active readers in any nation. It was noted from the Nigerian Tribune (2010) that lack of reading is one of the limiting factors to development in Nigeria.

Reading is one of the avenues for personal advancement in social, civic and economic development (Holden, 2004). Beach (1996) suggested that children should be immersed in a print-rich environment where they listen to books being read and are encouraged to discuss the stories, bearing in mind the age factor. It is not enough to provide children with quality and interesting reading materials, especially picture books. Children should have an improved reading home environment, school environment, community, including improving the image of reading, so that reading is not only school centred, it should include improved access to quality local literature (UN Resolution 54/122, 2002, p. 6). Gupa (2010) observes that reading is the finest habit a person can have.

Reading culture or habit as the case may be describes a regular engagement in the act of reading on a continuous basis. It is an addiction to read with provable, positive effects on addicts. Reading culture involves the acquisition of positive attitude to reading among children, students and adults alike (Gbadamosi, 2007). Reading habit is the key to students' academic success (Nssien, 2008). Reading culture, therefore imbibes reading as an instrument for growth and development (Igwe, 2011). Reading is simply consistent, dedicated reading lifestyle. It is the underlying basis for lifelong learning, long after graduating from school.

The library is a conservator and transmitter of recorded information and knowledge; identifies, interprets and organizes its collections in order to facilitate the communication of the recorded information. Dewy (1983) state that, "libraries are schools and the librarian in the highest sense a teacher. Obaitan,(2004) cited in Ishola B.C and Dele(2014);stated that the modern concept of library makes it defy the definition to it in former and later times; the library themselves change with time and are now agents of educational, social economic and political changes. Libraries seek to enrich young people by introducing them to good reading literature which will increase their understanding, broaden their horizons, develop their aesthetic sense, and help them develop their moral, spiritual and psychological growth. Reading helps develop and promote local culture. Libraries help facilitate publication of good children literature based on culture and provide future reading public for such publications. The role of the libraries in promoting reading is

especially crucial in countries like Nigeria where education is emphasized in scientific, reflective thinking and creativity. Librarians would help children and youths develop relative ability, critical and independent thinking through their exposure to a wide variety of instructional resources and learning opportunities. With provision and usage of library resources, readers would learn and understand why and how certain decisions or conclusions are reached; the effect of conflicting or incomplete information. Available reading materials in the library would show the presentation of information in different ways. The library would also afford the users (children and youths), the opportunity of balancing objective and subjective arguments and develop ways of self-thinking and independent judgment.

When selecting books for the library collection or to use in library programs, it is imperative that children's librarians choose materials representative of a wide range of perspectives and cultures. Opportunities should be provided for children and caregivers to hear stories and interact with characters whose lives and experiences are different from their own. Children need a global perspective on the world in order to develop cultural competence and move beyond their immediate environment. They need to hear more than one story once a year about a particular cultural group. Adichie (2009) warns that a single story can create or perpetuate stereotypes about a particular culture, offering children their only foray in the experiences of the "other" in society.

The library have a superb role to play in the life of the Nigerian child in so numerous way as they transit to adult because our world today is now the era of information pollution and if these upcoming once are not been followed with the saying that says catch them young there will be problem in bringing them to reading culture because they already tagged with this stigma of not having reading culture. The library and various agent need to stand firm to erase this bad feelings by providing the Nigerian child with the basic reading materials needed for their upbringing for them to stand upright in the midst of children with diverse orientation and good reading culture. The federal government with the help of the National Library of Nigeria, the Reading Association of Nigeria and the Nigerian Book Development Council played a pivotal role in assisting the Nigerian child in inculcating reading culture in them. In 1981 the National Library of Nigeria started sponsoring the readership promotion campaign in the country. This is done as part of the strategies to ginger up the reading culture in Nigeria. the readership campaign includes: (i) To encourage more reading Nigerians (ii) To promote the increase in production of reading materials in Nigeria, both in quality and variety and (iii) To identify the major obstacles those inhibits reading in the country and find ways of eliminating them. The problem with the above program is that the readership promotion campaign has been restricted largely to Abuja, Lagos and some few state capitals. The impact has not really been felt in other parts of the country because the National library has not been adequately funded to put the campaign in prints or electronic media.

Ilogho (2015) opine that the role and contribution of libraries to reading culture promotion among Nigerian children cannot be overemphasized. Libraries may, therefore, contribute to reading promotion in some of the following ways: Authorities in libraries must ensure that personnel's to man the libraries are properly trained for the job, The professional librarians and library engaged in capacity building through reading, Avid readers are always ahead of others, and discovering new

knowledge, learning new experiences from past leaders, becoming aware of current trends, acquiring skills for quality decision making, acquiring wisdom that gives them an economic advantage over others, especially in areas of ideas generation and innovations. Otike, presented a paper at the WIPO Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, May 3 – 4, 2012 on the theme: Enhancing the Culture of Reading and Books in the Digital Age: copyright as a means to foster creativity and access. He x-rayed the following as the possible ways the library can promote reading culture:

(1) Priority should be given to children: To inculcate a reading culture, priority should be given to children by providing materials that attract their interest. Public library should liaise with school authorities to ascertain the kind of information services children will require. Where possible, the public library should complement the efforts made by school libraries Public library should conduct seminars and workshops for teachers and school librarians on the basics of providing information services to school children.

(2) Provide information materials that appeal to all categories of users: The public library should identify its users and thereafter provide the materials that appeal to them Since the public library is "the Peoples University," it should be open to all users starting from a street beggar to a university professor Library staff should avoid bias or self-censorship in acquiring information materials. Library Bill of Rights, 1948 and other related doctrines should be upheld.

(3) Teachers should encourage effective use of the school library by children: To boost the use of library resources, teachers should provide assignments that require students to use library resources. Emphasis should be placed on student-centered as opposed to teacher centered learning Students should learn how to use the various retrieval tools to access information.

(4) Information materials must be affordable: The materials must be pocket friendly to an average person The library must be able to afford purchasing or subscription The publishers should be considerate in pricing their products Costly materials put considerable pressure on library's limited finances.

(5) Library services should be extended to rural areas Library services should not be confined to the urban centers where the elites stay: Rather, it should be extended to rural areas where the majority of the population live. Extension of services assists to reduce the poverty level between the urban and rural population. In this regard, the present initiative by KNLS to reach the rural population through the book mobile, community library services, camel library services is appreciated.

(6) Library staff must be impartial in providing services: They should be self-motivated. Ill-motivated staff can be a disaster in discharging services particularly to children who need to be motivated to read. Library management should be particular about the kind of staff they recruit The staff should have been "called" into the library profession, the same way priests, medical doctors and nurses are called! Authorities should ensure that library staff are appropriately motivated by way of training, compensated and their contribution appreciated

(7) The public library should mount book exhibits and displays: These help to show the range of information materials available in the library for usage. They help to publicize the new materials acquired in the library they bring new materials to the attention of users. In so doing, they act as a form of current awareness service.

(8) **Book Fairs** Unlike book exhibits, a book fair is a bigger event: It can be organized with assistance of book publishers and suppliers. The exhibitors normally pay a fee to display their materials and in so doing, it can serve a source of revenue for the public library. It draws the public to arrange of materials available on the market. Schools, institutions of higher learning, the general public are informed of what is in the market. It brings together a cross section of people, namely, students, library staff, members of the community, etc. Materials from the fair can be donated to the hosting library for use by clients.

(9) **Book Clubs:** They bring together people who have interest in reading for pleasure. They meet frequently to exchange ideas on areas of their reading interest

(10) **Discussion Groups:** This is similar to the Internet discussion groups. Here people meet to discuss emerging topics such as constitutional review, etc. They may use the library to boost their understanding of the topics discussed.

(11) **Public Speakers:** The library may invite prominent personalities to talk to library users on topical issues. These could be politicians, lecturers, religious leaders, etc. In such presentations, the presenter could make reference to some information materials which listeners could turn to after the presentation.

(12) **Story Telling for Children** They public library could invite people to present folk tales to children. After the session, children are referred to similar stories in the books in the library.

(13) **Reading Tents.** The library may from time to time in conjunction with book publishers' conduct this program to encourage children to read for pleasure. It can also assist to expose people to new information materials.

Types of materials that can build the child in our multilingual and multicultural society

Nigeria is a unique nation blessed by God with so much in every aspect of life, the language and culture are diverse. It therefore means that the various organization leading the younger generation to adulthood need good materials of this interest to get them close to the information bearing materials of diverse language and culture. The researcher survey Delta state which is one of the most highly known multilingual and multicultural state in Nigeria that comprises the Uhrobo's, the Ijaw's, Itsekiri's, Aniocha Oshimili's, Okpe's, Isoko's, Uvwie's, Anioma's and the Ukwani's people all in delta state and they speak different languages and have their various cultural heritage. In building the children from these multilingual and multicultural state to books, they need materials that bears what they practice and believe in their society and other societies at large. Children encounter diversity on a regular basis in their interactions with others at home, in school, or around their neighborhood. As our nation continues to diversify, it is essential that children learn to understand the important role of their culture and the cultures of other people in creating an overall global culture respectful of differences. One way that children learn about the world around them and other cultures is through the social messages found in stories. Stories help children understand how society perceives their culture as well as the cultures of their classmates, teachers, caregivers, and others, thereby influencing their social and identity development. Stories can be found in traditional print materials for children or in newer digital formats. Regardless of the format for delivering a story's message, children are greatly influenced by the stories they encounter. One place that children can interact with stories on a regular basis is the library.

The School Cataloguing Information Service (1997) provides a list of genre headings which allow an overview of the material which can be included in the broad category of children's literature. These include: Adventure Stories, Love Stories, Animal Stories, Mystery and Suspense Stories, Australian Stories, New Zealand Stories, Choose your own Stories, School Stories, Crime Stories, Science Fiction Stories, Family Sagas, Stories in Rhyme, Fantasy, Supernatural Stories, Historical Fiction, Westerns, Horror Stories and Wordless Stories whilst the traditional view of literature in general focuses on text-based material, it is appropriate to include interactive software (Johnstone, 1997), hyperfiction (Snyder, 1998) and visual material (Whitin, 1996) in the classification of children's literature. Children's picture books are some of the earliest forms of media that teach children about diversity in the world. Social messages that young children glean from picture books will likely stay with them for the rest of their lives (Roethler 1998; Henderson 1991).

In all the numerous reading materials for children, picture books are very captivating and having a powerful influence on young readers. According to the research study of Talk (2005) on "reading picture books is serious fun" has shown that reading picture books stimulates and advances the imagination and thinking of the children. Thus, young people enjoy reading picture books more than other text materials. The bright and coloured pictures and sometimes funny looking images are simply inviting, compelling and stimulates children's interest to read more. The images that appears on the picture book stimulates the imagination of a reader to begin to make connections and relate the pictures to what is already known to the unknown, in order to gain understanding of the message being projected. Children learn to read pictures first before reading only worded print materials. Comics are special type of visual medium that combines written word with visual concept. Comics provide the platform for graphic storytelling, where images are more direct than written texts (Tiemensma, 2009). The American Library Association describes a picture book as being distinguished from other books with illustrations. Essentially, it provides the child with a visual experience. Another outstanding information bearing materials that bring the child back to book is folktales. Folktales have been shared in every society to entertain, educate, and preserve culture. As emphasized in UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), folktales play an invaluable role, along with other cultural traditions, in bringing people closer together and "ensuring exchange and understanding among them." As globalization and social transformation demand renewed dialogue among communities, educators and artists are more motivated to protect and promote oral traditions and related cultural heritage. Today's children may think of folktales as old-fashioned or even irrelevant. However, the influence of folktales is alive and well even today. Despite the advent of contemporary literature, folktales are unique and different from other types of literary fiction in many ways, some of which are enumerated below by Dr Hae-ri Kim.

First, folktales transcend the generations of people who passed on these stories. The original tales were transmitted orally from storyteller to storyteller and were eventually written down. Folktales continue to evolve, and are shaped according to the conditions of the times. Therefore, folktales never cease to be relevant even today and will remain so in the future. Moreover, the indigenous knowledge and wisdom found in the folktales keep us connected to our traditions and indeed help shape our culture.

Second, folktales take place long ago in a faraway place. Talking animals, giants and fairies, prince and princesses, as well as peasants and ordinary folks are featured characters that give life to stories. Through folktales, children are given a glimpse into a world where fantasy and reality meet.

Third, folktales have obvious and recurrent themes. Goodness is always rewarded, heroes and heroines live happily ever after, while villains are suitably punished. Throughout the generations, the story may change, but its core message remains the same. We, teachers and parents, do not need to try to teach values explicitly. Instead, we just tell tales, thus maintaining folktales as a tool to educate children on how to live with integrity and peacefully with others.

Fourth, folktales reflect society's attempt to give form and shape to its hopes and fears, and answers to its questions. Folktales provide order to seemingly random experiences, as well as express the culture's belief system. Today, many of these old tales are regarded as flights of fancy, but they live on because they capture our sense of wonder and aspirations. Moreover, we recognize their visions which are often more powerful than the explanations science provides.

Fifth, folktales allow children to experience adventures they cannot attain in real life. For example, when heroes from folktales are facing monsters, giants, dragons, and other evil forces, the stories impart courage and wisdom in overcoming problems. Folktales may sometimes frighten children, but at the same time the stories excite and then comfort them.

Finally, the language of folktales is an important part of children's literary heritage. Because of the oral tradition, the language in a folktale is musical, rhythmic and melodic. In addition, the characters' direct dialogue punctuated with quick action excites readers' and listeners' interest. By listening to and reading these tales, children acquire language. Moreover, folktales provide them with writing models.

Challenges in bringing the child close to book

The nation that read is a powerful nation, the way of life of any nation is influenced by the percentage of its citizen who are literate. A reading society is no doubt an informed society. We cannot be considered a reading society if our young generation does not take serious interest in reading. The reading I am referring to here is reading for pleasure. Reading based on passing exams is not reading at all since the practice is likely to disappear after the exam results are announced. To inculcate a reading culture, reading should be started right at the beginning possibly in a nursery school and should be carried out through one's life. These cannot be achieved if proper measure is not meant to cater for the challenges we faced in providing the child with good literatures. The level of reading in Nigeria in particular and other third world countries is nothing to write home about. Okusaga (2008) asserts that being a former British colony, Nigeria's literacy culture ought to be as standardized as that of the Britain. About 99% of British citizen can read and write. The same cannot be said of Nigeria. Henry (2004), states that out of the 814 million illiterates in the world, the third world countries, most especially in Africa, have a huge percentage of these illiterates. However, Latin America, Asia, and others are making frantic efforts to drastically reduce illiteracy rate, but owing to the following reasons, the same cannot be said of Africa.

The following are therefore some of the reasons why we are still having challenges:

1. Poor implementation of government policies: different government regimes have introduced various educational

reforms and policies, but failed at the implementation stage.

2. Cost of publishing: the cost of publishing quality books in Nigeria is very high. This is because the materials used in publishing these books are imported; they are not sourced locally. This explains why most of the books available are foreign and expensive.
3. Most parents cannot afford to buy expensive foreign books for their children when they can hardly eat. In addition, the majority of parents are unaware of the benefits gained by investing in children's literature. Ignorance and lack of awareness of the value and role of good books by parents, has contributed greatly to poor reading culture among children.
4. Failure on the part of the Government in providing an enabling environment for publishers. The Nigerian government has not fared well in that import duty has been on the high side.
5. Inadequate investment in the education sector by Government: inadequate funding has been identified as one of the limitations of the education sector, resulting in problems such as a fall in the standard of education, breakdown and deterioration of facilities, shortage of new books and current journals in the library etc. It has also affected the quality of manpower and quality of teaching.
6. Lack of available libraries in most of our nursery and primary schools. Rarely can we find a Nigerian nursery or primary schools with libraries. Most schools are established without a library and no plan for one in the future. Most children pass through nursery and primary schools without the experience of actually using a library.
7. The library and information professionals have failed to create sufficient awareness of the importance of using good books for promoting reading culture among children. They have also not been sufficiently vocal in preaching the gospel and insisting on the need to have school libraries in nursery and primary schools.
8. The authors focus more on writing text books rather than children's literature because no one wants to invest in books that will not sell. According to Smith (2006) the bulk of the books published in Africa is mainly textbooks rather than books for pleasure and enjoyment. The output of books published in Britain in one year is over 2,000 titles compared to Nigeria that has less than 60 titles.
9. Abject poverty: In sub-Saharan Africa, the impact of poverty is deeply felt. Only a few people are living above poverty line. About 80% of Africans are living under hazardous conditions. The per capital income of an average citizen in Nigeria, "the giant of Africa" with its abundant natural resources, is two dollars. This, in no little measure, affects the reading habits of Nigerians. Many are too poor to send their children to school. They lack money to buy books and pay school fees.
10. Corruption: Corruption affects Nigeria so much. Government is trying to fight corruption which has drastically affected Nigerians reading culture. Corruption is a pandemic that has destroyed the moral fabrics of the society. Corruption is present everywhere in Nigeria from government institutions to private organizations. In schools, for instance, many students prefer to indulge in immoral acts rather than face their studies diligently. Social vices like sex for marks, sales of ungraded textbooks to students at high fees, using money to buy examination marks and indulging in examination malpractices abound in our higher institutions of learning.

Those who engage in these infamous acts consider reading as a waste of time.

11. Noise culture: There are few conducive and serenity that are characteristics of a learning environment and these are lacking in places used for reading. Most schools are cited in densely populated areas, where distractions prevent smooth flow of learning. Moreover, the "illiteracy syndrome" has an adverse effect on the psyche of many Nigerian citizens. Most people perceive noise to be an integral part of their culture.
12. Undue importance attached to wealth: many Nigerian people usually celebrate mediocrity at the expense of intellectuals. This obviously manifest in our rush for material things. Some people abandon their educational career for the pursuit of money. Many have abandoned their education in search of "quick money" which they believe can be gotten in business and or politics. Many people run away from the village schools to take up jobs in Lagos. Some time ago, a prominent man from the Eastern part of Nigeria cried out that youths are not going to school again. All they want is to go into business and make money. All these throw spanner in the wheel of reading habits.
13. Lack of reading language: In many homes, the language of reading is introduced late; the first contact point of some children with this language is in school. Children grow old to perceive reading and its associated activities as herculean.
14. Dearth of libraries: libraries play important role in the promotion of reading habits. However, these libraries (school and public) are either non- existing or not playing their expected role. State and local government as well as proprietors of schools (government and individuals) have not deemed it fit to comply with library provisions in the National Policy on Education (NPE) public libraries (the peoples university), are not being established, where they are needed, by appropriate governments. The few existing public libraries are neither adequately neither funded nor stocked with reading resources that can impact on the lives of citizenry.
15. Non-integration of storytelling in school curriculum.
16. Lack of materials with Nigerian background.
17. The Internet trend.
18. Home video syndrome.
19. Phone addition.

These are some vital problems that various body need to tackle in this era of bring back the child to book.

Methology

The research design employed by the researcher in this study is the survey inferential research design. This design aimed at studying large population through a representative sample with the view of generalizing the result to the larger population. The population of this study is made of all secondary students in Ethiop west Local Government Area of Delta state. The researcher drew the sample from four schools. The population of the four schools was over 1000 students. In each of the schools, the simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 250 respondents and they were sampled from the four schools. The schools are listed below:

Our lady of Nigeria secondary school oghara, oghareki modern secondary school, oreki secondary school and ogini grammar school ogharefe. A questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was made up of sections A and B. Section A collect data such as schools name, age and class while section B deals with items

aimed at determining the important of children literature and what it takes to bring them close to books in our multilingual and diverse culture. 250 questionnaire was administered 237 were validly completed and returned.

Analysis of result

The data collected is analyzed using simple percentage.

Table 1: Name of school

Name of school	Population	Percentage (%)
Our lady of Nigerian secondary school oghara	95	40.1 %
Oghareki modern schools	46	19.4 %
Oreki secondary school	44	18.6 %
Ogini grammar school	52	21.9 %
Total	237	100 %

From the above table which indicate total number of respondent, is shows that our lady of Nigerian secondary school oghareki has 95 (40.1%) of the total respondent of the study, oghareki modern secondary school 46 (19.4%) respondents, oreki secondary school 44(18.6) rsepondents while ogini grammar school has 52 (21.9) of the respondent.

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Range	Number	Percentage (%)
8-12	98	41.4 (%)
12-16	106	44.7 (%)
16-20	33	13.9 (%)
Total	237	100 %

From the table above the analysis shows that 8-12 we have 98 which is 41.4(%), 12-16 we have 106 which is 44.7(%) while 16-20 is 33 which is 13.9(%)

Table 3: Tells us the class of the respondents

Class of respondent	Number of respondent	Percentage (%)
J.S.S 1-3	53	22.4(%)
S.S. 1-3	184	77.6(%)
Total	237	100%

From the table, JSS 1-3 is 53 making 22.4(%) of the respondents are in JSS1-3 while 183 Of 77.6(%) are in SS1-3.

Interpretation of questionnaire

Statement 1: do you agree with me that it take a village to raise a child?

Table 4: It take a village to raise a child

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	121	51.1%
No	116	48.9%
Total	237	100%

The above table look competitive a bit 121 of the respondents tick yes which is 51.1% while 116 tick no making 48.9% from this analysis one can therefore agree with the proverb that it take a village to raise a child.

Statement 2: The library and librarians play a vital role in bringing the Nigerian child back to books. True or False?

Table 5: The library and librarians play a vital role in the Nigerian child education and cultural change.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
True	196	82.7%
False	41	17.3%
Total	237	100%

196 which is 82.7% Of the respondents agreed that the library and librarians play a vital role in bringing the Nigerian child back to books while 41 that a total percentage of 17.3% disagreed to the statement, it therefore mean that the statement is very correct.

Statement 3: don't you think that this multilingual and multicultural nature of delta is a big challenge to the Nigerian child?

Table 6: Delta state is a multilingual and multicultural state.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	101	42.6%
No	136	57.4%
Total	237	100%

42.6% that make up 101 in total agreed that the statement is correct in the sense that it bring challenges in area of learning but the other group are of the opinion the statement is not correct because they find it interesting in learning other language and culture for them to be able to compete with other children.

Statement: do you agree with the above statement?

Table 7: Good children literatures like picture books, story books are of great values to the Nigerian child education and cultural change.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Agreed	237	100%
Disagreed	Nil	Nil
Total	237	100%

From the illustration one will agree that the statement is very correct that is the major reason all the respondent agree to the statement.

Statement: Do you believe in the above statement?

Table 8: Power failure, low habit of reading culture, home videos and internet exposure pose a great challenge to the Nigerian child in exposing them to education and cultural heritage.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Agreed	186	78.5%
Disagreed	51	21.5%
Total	237	100%

From above illustration, 78.5% agreed that Power failure, low habit of reading culture, home videos and internet exposure pose a great challenge to the Nigerian child in exposing them to education and cultural heritage while 21.5% disagreed to with the statement.

Statement: do you have a functional library in your school?

Table 9: School library and teacher librarian are the machinery that promote reading culture and that can bring the Nigerian child back to book

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	98	41.4%
No	139	58.6%
Total	237	100%

From the table above 41.4% of the total respondent states that there is school library and a librarian while 58.6% are of the opinion that there is no library and librarian in their schools. From this analysis we can understand that most public schools in this community don't have a library.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

From the data collected through the questionnaires, the following were some of the major findings:

1. The respondent agree with Ray Doiron and Marlene Asselin (2010) that, A well-known African proverb teaches that "It takes a village to raise a child".
2. It is quite obvious that the populace are aware of the importance and place of the library and librarians in the Nigerian education and cultural change.
3. The researcher never mince words when he state that Delta state is a multilingual and multicultural state, the respondent support the view and agreed that the nature has no negative effect on them.
4. Power failure, low habit of reading culture, watching of home video and internet exposure pose a big challenge to the Nigerian child.
5. The absent of library and librarian in most of the schools sampled is a great challenge

Conclusion

It can be concluded form the analysis that There is an urgent need to bring the book back to the to the Nigerian child and it will take only those with the book to bring it back to the Nigerian child and librarians are custodians of the book irrespective of the form and as such are in better position to ensure that the Nigerian child imbibe the reading culture. Research has demonstrated that the consolidation of the role of children's literature will produce benefits to the development of language, and thus literacy. Critical thinking will be enhanced, as will the learners' engagement in their learning. The rich variety of material offered by children's literature stimulates language growth, and thus improves the learners' empowerment by increasing communication skills. In addition, children's literature enables equity and access issues to be addressed. The needs of the individual are acknowledged; appropriate action is possible in responding to the individual differences between learners.

Recommendations

In view of the identified challenges, the following recommendations are hereby put forward:

1. Integration of story hour, book talks and exhibition into the school curriculum: Efforts should be made to ensure that story hour, book talks and exhibition are integrated into the school curriculum as this will help to instill reading culture into the Nigerian child.
2. Provision of relevant and current books: you can't just tell somebody to read when there is nothing to read. A survey of our school libraries reveals that they are stocked with outdated and irrelevant materials. How do you expect the secondary

school student to read outdated books when they can access relevant books on the Internet. This apparently stressed the need for provision of relevant information materials in school libraries, more especially ICT oriented library services.

3. Recruitment of qualified teacher librarians: It is a common adage that you cannot give what you don't have, therefore school proprietors/heads should ensure that priority is given to employing of qualified teacher librarians. If the library is seen as an integral component of the educational system then the teacher librarian should us well be recognized.

4. There should be a working library in every secondary schools in Nigeria: libraries serve humanity, respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated, use technology intelligence to enhance service, protect free access to knowledge and honour the past and create the future.

5. Including diversity in library programming and materials for children is important for all librarians meeting the informational and recreational needs of their local communities. Children's print and digital materials should represent all types of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender expression, religious preference, family composition, ancestry, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language fluency, and citizenship status. More children's books representing diverse cultures should be made available to children through library collections to assist in their identity development and to help them make global connections.

6. Children and their families should be exposed to library programs throughout the year that celebrate cultural diversity and provide opportunities for developing bridges of understanding.

7. Publishers should encourage a reading culture by ensuring that quality children literatures like story books, picture books are published for children's consumption.

8. School libraries should stock different types of children literature for all age categories. They should flag of robust advocacy for the compulsory inclusion of library in schools, with sections devoted to good children literatures as well as mount a campaign against all nursery, primary schools and secondary school without school libraries.

9. Every agent of social change and book lover should implement Mackey and Ingrid (1996) suggestion in their study, suggested strategies that encourage reading among reluctant readers. These include: offering classroom reading time, improve selection skills by allowing a limited number of books for selection, discuss selection techniques with students, reading the beginning of a novel openly in class, providing classroom libraries with a wide range of materials such as graphic novels, nonfiction, picture books and books on a variety of cultures.

10. School librarians should encourage children to read for pleasure primarily by embarking on awareness campaigns to educate and enlighten parents, teachers and government.

11. The minister of education under president Buhari of the APC should continue from where former President Goodluck Jonathan stopped when he launched a nationwide campaign promoting a reading culture on December 20, 2010. The campaign was tagged "Bring Back the Book". This singular act of the former president was highly commended and welcomed by Nigerians who appreciate the value of reading and the implication for national development.

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