CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY AND THE ROLES IN PROVISION OF READING MATERIALS ON EXERCISES AND SPORT FOR THE ELDERLY: A CASE STUDY OF LIBRARIES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess library roles in the provision of reading materials for exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom state. The targeted population for the study comprised all librarians in Akwa Ibom state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 220 respondents which formed the sample size used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Library and Sport Material for Elderly Questionnaire (LSMEQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.88, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical technique such percentage analysis to answer research questions. The result of the analysis revealed that the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom state was "very high" and that among other roles libraries prominently provide access to specialized resources as one of the roles in providing reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State. The study concluded that by offering relevant and accessible resources, libraries can help the elderly maintain an active lifestyle, thereby improving their overall well-being. One of the recommendations was that libraries should curate and regularly update collections with materials specifically tailored to the elderly, focusing on low-impact exercises, senior fitness programmes, and safe sports practices.

KEYWORD: Library, Reading material, Exercises, Sport and Elderly

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are essential for maintaining the physical and mental health of senior citizens, especially when it comes to books about sports and fitness. This evaluation explores

how libraries in Uyo Metropolis contribute to healthy ageing by providing chances for participation and well-chosen materials. Libraries function as vibrant centres for encouraging active lives among the elderly by providing access to books, educational resources, and community events based around sports and fitness.

According to the National Institute on ageing (2021), research indicates that regular physical activity is vital for maintaining health and preventing age-related diseases among the elderly. Libraries, as accessible community spaces, contribute significantly to this effort by offering a diverse array of reading materials on exercises and sports tailored to the needs and interests of older adults. Through partnerships with health organizations and experts, libraries in Uyo Metropolis can curate collections that encompass a wide range of topics, from gentle stretching routines to specialized sports techniques, catering to the varied abilities and preferences of elderly patrons. Furthermore, the role of libraries extends beyond merely providing reading materials; they serve as catalysts for social interaction and knowledge exchange. Libraries create a feeling of community among senior citizens by holding seminars, workshops, and group activities centred on sports and fitness. This promotes peer support and cooperative learning. These kinds of programmes not only support physical well-being but also fight social isolation, which is a major problem for senior citizens.

However, challenges such as limited funding and resources can impede the effectiveness of library initiatives aimed at promoting elderly health. To address these obstacles, partnerships with governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and local businesses are crucial. By pooling resources and expertise, stakeholders can enhance the reach and impact of library programmes, ensuring that elderly individuals across Uyo Metropolis have equitable access to quality reading materials and supportive environments for staying active. Libraries in Uyo Metropolis play a vital role in promoting healthy ageing through the provision of reading materials on exercise and sports, as well as community engagement initiatives. By leveraging partnerships and innovative programming, libraries can continue to serve as invaluable assets in enhancing the well-being of elderly populations, contributing to a healthier and more vibrant community.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Libraries are essential for providing diverse reading materials for individuals around the world. The elderly, no doubt, are also in need of reading materials for diverse purposes, including exercises and sports that are pertinent to their health needs and improvement. This study sets out to assess the roles that libraries in Akwa Ibom State play in the provision of reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly. The result of this study will be used to improve the provision of these required materials for the elderly across the state.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State.
- To find out the roles of library in provision of reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State?

- What are the roles of libraries in providing reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State?

CONCEPT OF LIBRARY

A library is defined as an arrangement of books along with maybe other resources and media that are available for use by members of the library as well as members of affiliated institutions. Libraries offer both digital and hard copy resources; they might be virtual spaces, real locations, or both. In addition to printed items that may be checked out, a library's collection typically consists of publications in a reference area that can only be used on campus. Estabrook (2024) and Bassey and Umoh (2023) explained that a library is traditionally a collection of books, media or resources used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collection is kept.

According to Bassey and Umoh (2021) library is where books and other non-book materials are housed for use such as for learning and relaxation. A library is a collection of materials in many formats that are arranged by information specialists or other professionals who offer targeted services and programmes with the aim of enlightening, educating, or amusing a range of audiences as well as encouraging individual learning and improving society at large. Libraries also offer convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access to their resources. Bassey & Bantai (2021) defined a library as a place where books and other sources of information are stored. They make it easier for people to get access to them for various purposes.

Whether one is from a wealthy or underprivileged family, libraries have been a vital component of society for thousands of years. As noted by Bassey and Ngajah (2017) and Bassey & Owushi (2023) libraries are indispensable in every aspect of the society as it facilitates learning. They give everyone access to knowledge and information. People may broaden their perspectives, investigate novel concepts, and establish connections with like-minded individuals by using them as a centre for learning, study, and recreation. Libraries provide more than simply book loans; they also provide computer use, informational events, and community outreach. Essential resources for people, communities, and society, they play a critical role in advancing literacy, intellectual liberty, and cultural variety. Ashikuzzaman (2023) mentioned that a library is a place of knowledge and discovery where endless possibilities exist. It is a collection of books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials made available for people to borrow or use for reference. In addition to the vast collection of resources and programmes, libraries provide a welcoming and inclusive environment. They are places where people of all ages, races, religions, and backgrounds can come together and learn from one another. Libraries offer free and equal access to information, which is essential for democracy and civic engagement.

CONCEPT OF READING MATERIALS

Materials are parts that are put together to create something. Material refers to data and statistics for a report, book, or composition. Written resources meant to be read are called reading materials. Since reading resources are tools to support pupils in reading classes, they are quite significant. Reading content becomes significant since it affects learners' interest and quality. But reading materials—which may be any kind of text, from books and articles to digital content—are the main way that people learn new things, hone their critical thinking abilities, and interact with different viewpoints. These materials can be broadly categorized into academic texts, fiction, non-fiction, and multimedia resources, each serving distinct purposes and catering to various audiences (Perrin, 2020). Academic

texts, such as textbooks and scholarly articles, are designed to convey complex information and support educational objectives, while fiction and non-fiction books often aim to entertain, inform, or inspire readers through storytelling and factual narratives.

Furthermore, the learning process has been improved by the inclusion of multimedia components in reading materials. To better engage readers, interactive e-books, augmented reality (AR) apps, and instructional websites use audio, images, and interactive elements. Wang (2019) highlights that multimedia-enhanced reading materials can improve comprehension and retention, particularly for visual and auditory learners. This convergence of technology and traditional reading formats underscores the evolving nature of reading materials in the digital age.

The role of reading materials in education cannot be overstated. Well-designed reading resources are crucial for developing literacy skills, fostering a love for reading, and supporting lifelong learning. Trust and exposure to a variety of reading materials from an early age are linked to better academic performance and cognitive development (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2018). Libraries are the hub of information for learning, it is essential for encouraging individuals reading habits and supports learning (Okonoko, Ukanga and Bassey, 2024).

CONCEPT OF EXERCISES

Exercise is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured, and repetitive and has as a final or intermediate objective the improvement or maintenance of physical fitness. According to Blair (2024), exercise is the training of the body to improve its function and enhance its fitness. Exercise is something that is performed or practiced in order to develop, improve, or display a specific capability or skill. Exercise consists of cardiovascular conditioning, strength and resistance training, and flexibility, as it is essential for improving overall health, maintaining fitness, and helping to prevent the development of obesity, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.

Cautibar (2024) mentioned that exercise also provides health benefits such as maintaining fitness and weight. Furthermore, Dasso (2019) postulated that exercise is a subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and purposefully focused on the improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness. Mayfield (2023) noted that exercising routinely can have several health benefits; regular exercise can have a significant impact on both physical and mental health. Such benefits include improvement of sleep, boosting mood, and management of chronic illnesses and pain. Additional physical benefits include improvements in muscle strength, endurance, and weight management. Felman (2019) stated that exercise involves engaging in physical activity and increasing the heart rate beyond the resting level, as it is an important part of preserving physical and mental health.

Newman (2023) mentioned that exercise means maintaining physical fitness, and maintaining a good level of physical fitness is important as it can be difficult to determine what fitness entails. Physical fitness is the ability of an individual to execute daily activities with optimal performance, endurance, and strength with the management of disease, fatigue, and stress and reduced sedentary behavior. Various components of physical health can help determine physical fitness. Johnston (2023) highlighted that exercise is one of the most effective and safest ways to enhance health and wellness when done properly, as it results in people functioning better, living longer, and avoiding many common disorders.

CONCEPT OF SPORT

Sport covers a range of activities performed within a set of rules and undertaken as part of leisure or competition. Sporting activities involve physical activity carried out by teams or individuals and may be supported by an institutional framework, such as a sporting agency. Guttamann (2024) defined sports as physical contests pursued for the goals and challenges they entail. It is human activity involving physical exertion and skill as the primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition or social participation where rules and patterns of behaviour governing the activity exist formally through organizations and are generally recognized.

Sport is an outdoor or indoor game, competition, or activity that requires physical effort and skill and is usually carried out according to rules. It is an organized event in which participants want to become winners, strive to achieve the best possible results, show an excellent performance, beat opponents, set or break records, or test their abilities and skills and compare them with those of the other participants while observing the rules and not violating them to avoid being penalized or punished in various ways.

According to Tiedemann (2021), sport is a cultural field of activity in which people voluntarily enter into a relationship with other people in order to compare their respective abilities and skills in the art of movement according to self-imposed or adopted rules and on the basis of socially accepted ethical values. Calumpang (2024) described sports as having a long history dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. It has evolved from informal play to organized competitions with established rules and governing bodies. Sports are forms of play that involve competition determined by physical skill, strategy, or chance, which is characterized as free, separate from ordinary life, uncertain in outcome, non-productive, and governed by agreed-upon rules. Sport is a complex, multidimensional social phenomenon that involves physical activity and is performed according to certain rules for the purposes of entertainment, recreation, and fitness.

Vela (2022) defined sport as an activity that involves competitive individuals meant for others entertainment. And within that definition, other key components of a sport would be that there is some form of point system or way of determining a winner and a loser. Some sports activities that may have once been considered extreme have been modified and structured into mainstream sports. Extreme sports usually involve speed, height, physical exertion, significant risk of death or injury, and may require highly specialized equipment.

CONCEPT OF ELDERLY

A person who has lived for a significant amount of time and is old, aged, or past middle age is referred to as elderly. It is also the range of ages for those who are approaching or past their life expectancy. The terms "old people, elderly, elders, seniors, senior citizens, or older adults" are also used to describe persons who are becoming older. Surrender (2018) mentioned that the boundary between middle age and old age cannot be defined exactly because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. Conventionally, the word 'elderly' refers to those who are 65 years old or older, with those 65 to 74 years old being referred to as "early elderly" and those over 75 years old being referred to as "late elderly. However, the evidence on which this definition is based is unknown.

According to the World Health Organization (2024), although there are commonly used definitions of old age, there is no general agreement on the age at which a person becomes old. The ageing process is, of course, a biological reality that has its own dynamic, largely beyond human control. Stefanacci (2024) stated that people do not become "older" or "elderly" at any specific age. Ageing is a gradual, continuous process of natural change

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that begins in early adulthood. During early middle age, many bodily functions begin to gradually decline.

The process of becoming elderly is a lifetime endeavour. Conception is the starting point, and death is the finish. It follows that from the moment of our birth, we are all ageing. Seniors are more prone to disease and damage than younger ones because they frequently have diminished regeneration capacities. Retirement, loneliness, and ageism are societal issues they deal with. Being contextually sensitive, the term "elderly" or "old age" cannot be defined generally.

Elderly individuals, senior persons, or seniors since middle age and old age have different connotations in different countries, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact line between them. An elder adult is defined as one who lives longer than they expected to; in general, this would be somebody above 65. People can naturally age at different rates, therefore it is difficult to apply a clear definition. For example, a person 75 years old might be healthier than a person 60 years old.

ROLES OF LIBRARY IN PROVISION OF READING MATERIALS ON EXERCISE AND SPORTS MEANT FOR ELDERLY

Libraries play a critical role in the transformation, exchange of knowledge, and communication. They support the development of a culture of reading for people's upward mobility. Libraries have always been essential for facilitating learning, granting access to knowledge, and meeting the educational requirements of the community. Libraries now provide reading materials that emphasize fitness for senior citizens, as part of their expanding activities in response to the growing emphasis on healthy ageing. This programme is vital for encouraging physical exercise, which is necessary to keep older individuals healthy and happy. Libraries perform the following important functions in this regard:

- **Access to Specialized Resources**

Libraries organize and make available a vast array of specialist materials on physical health and exercise that are geared towards senior citizens. These materials include books, diaries, DVDs, and internet resources that provide details on a variety of senior-friendly exercise options, such strength training, yoga, and low-impact aerobics. According to Jones (2018), libraries have increasingly acquired materials specifically aimed at improving the physical health of their ageing patrons, recognizing the unique needs of this demographic.

- **Educational Programmes and Workshops**

Numerous libraries provide seminars and educational activities with an emphasis on physical exercise for elderly citizens. These programmes frequently feature guest speakers—such as health specialists or fitness experts—who offer helpful guidance and walkthroughs of exercises that can enhance balance, flexibility, and strength. Smith and Johnson (2019) indicate that libraries that offer these programmes significantly contribute to the community by encouraging elderly individuals to engage in regular physical activity.

- **Collaboration with health organizations**

To spread knowledge about physical activity and healthy living, libraries regularly work with nearby health institutions. Through these collaborations, the library may establish extensive resource centres where older citizens may obtain well-crafted booklets, fitness regimens, and health guidelines. The American Library Association (2020) highlights numerous instances where libraries have partnered with healthcare providers to enhance the availability of health-related information.

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- **Digital Access and Technology Integration**

As digital media has grown in popularity, libraries have also used technology to give senior citizens access to fitness applications, e-books, and online workout regimens. Numerous libraries provide instruction on the efficient use of these digital resources. Pew Research Centre (2017) stated that libraries are essential in bridging the digital divide, especially for older adults who may not be as tech-savvy as younger generations.

- **Creating a supportive environment**

Older adults can explore and exercise in a friendly, encouraging environment that libraries offer. Group fitness programmes and workouts may be held in communal areas within libraries, which helps participants build support networks and a sense of camaraderie. Thompson (2021) explained that libraries play a crucial role in creating social connections, which can further motivate elderly individuals to stay active and healthy.

- **Resource guides and bibliographies**

Libraries frequently create and disseminate resource guides and bibliographies with suggested reading lists on senior exercise. These materials may be easily found by seniors and their caretakers with the use of these guidelines. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2022) emphasizes the importance of libraries in guiding patrons to credible and useful information, especially on health-related topics.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom state. The targeted population for the study comprised all librarians in Akwa Ibom state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 220 respondents which formed the sample size used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Library and Sport Material for Elderly Questionnaire (LSMEQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.88, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical technique such percentage analysis to answer research questions.

Research Questions 1: What is the extent of extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom state? To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

Table 1:
Percentage analysis of the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State

EXTENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very High Extent	113	51.36**
High Extent	56	25.45
Low Extent	29	13.18
Very Low Extent	22	10*
TOTAL	220	100%

** The highest percentage frequency
* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field Survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest respondents 113(51.36%) affirmed that the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State was "very high", while the least respondents 22(10%) rated the extent to be "very low". The result therefore is in agreement with the opinion of the American Library Association (2020), which stated that "to spread knowledge about physical activity and healthy living, libraries regularly work with nearby health institutions through collaborations to establish extensive resource centres where older citizens may obtain well-crafted booklets, fitness regimens, and health guidelines.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of libraries in providing reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom state? To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2).

Table 2:
Percentage analysis of the roles of libraries in providing reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State

ROLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Access to Specialised Resources	48	21.82**
Educational Programmes and Workshops	41	18.64
Collaboration with health organizations	38	17.27
Digital Access and Technology Integration	34	15.45
Creating a supportive environment	31	14.09
Resource guides and bibliographies	28	12.73*
TOTAL	220	100%

** The highest percentage frequency
* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field Survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the roles of libraries in providing reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom state. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the role tagged "Access to Specialized Resources" 48(21.82%) was rated as the most prominent role of libraries in providing reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State, while "Resource guides and bibliographies" 28(12.73%) was rated the least role. The result therefore is in agreement with the opinion of Jones (2018), who mentioned that libraries have increasingly acquired materials specifically aimed at improving the physical health of their ageing patrons, recognizing the unique needs of this demographic.

CONCLUSION

The assessment of libraries in Uyo Metropolis regarding their role in providing reading materials on exercises and sports for the elderly underscores the importance of these institutions in promoting healthy aging. By offering relevant and accessible resources, libraries can help the elderly maintain an active lifestyle, thereby improving their overall well-being. Future research and policy efforts should focus on enhancing the capacity of libraries to serve the elderly population, ensuring that they remain vibrant and inclusive

centres of community support. It was also concluded that the extent of library provision of reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom state is very high and that among other roles libraries prominently provide access to specialized resources as one of the roles in providing reading materials on exercises and sport for the elderly in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Libraries should curate and regularly update collections with materials specifically tailored to the elderly, focusing on low-impact exercises, senior fitness programmes, and safe sports practices. This includes books, magazines, pamphlets, and multimedia resources.
- To establish partnerships with local health and wellness organizations to co-develop and promote resources and programmes for the elderly. These partnerships can enhance the credibility and reach of library initiatives.
- Outreach programmes should be implemented to inform the elderly community about available resources and services and collaborate with local senior centres, healthcare providers, and community organizations to reach a wider audience.

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