LIFELONG READING: A ROADMAP TO AN ENDURING POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract:
The study investigated lifelong reading as a roadmap to an enduring positive change in the Nigerian society. The study dissected the conceptual clarifications; enunciated the inherent benefits of lifelong reading; enumerated the stakeholders in lifelong reading and their roles; articulated the challenges of sustaining lifelong reading and proffered the way forward. The study highlighted that libraries, librarians, parents, teachers, authors and publishers, among others are fundamental to actualization of sustained lifelong reading. Libraries are integral part of the educational development of the children, youths and adults. Thus, the study recommended that there is the need for establishment and maintenance of functional libraries at all levels of Nigerian educational system. Moreso, in this digital age, children, youths and adults should make functional and positive use of information and communication technology (ICT), social media platforms/networks, handheld devices, so as not to allow it form a sort of distraction to creating and sustaining lifelong reading. Parents should provide supportive home environment, establish family libraries, and monitor how their children use their time at home. Parents and teachers should also assist the children in discovering educative websites, where extensive reading, sharing of ideas among peers, and connecting readers can be achieved. Adequate fund should be provided to the National Library of Nigeria to enable more extensive and fruitful readership promotion campaigns (RPCs). In addition, the National Library of Nigeria through its advocacy programmes, should solicit TETFund sponsorship of RPC so as to take it to the grassroots, among others. This is sequel to the realization that llifelong reading has the capacity of making the citizenry to be better informed, have a better understanding of oneself, as well as others, understanding the country, its environment and the world at large; becoming thoughtful and constructive contributor to a democratic and cohesive society, thereby bringing about a positive change in the nation. Thus, positive change engendered by lifelong reading will enlighten reform, and reawaken individuals and also make the Nigerian society better.

Keywords: Reading, Lifelong Reading, Positive Change, Roadmap, Nigeria, Readership Campaign.

Introduction

The need to encourage effective reading culture in the Nigerian society has been receiving attention from organizations especially the National Library of Nigeria. National Library of Nigeria took up the responsibility of sponsoring readership promotion campaign in the country since 1981, as it forms part of her mandate. Readership promotion campaign ever since 1981 has always been an annual ritual of the apex library as part of the strategies to stimulate reading culture/habit in the Nigerian citizenry so as to make the country a reading nation. The objectives of the readership promotion campaign include but not limited to the following: to encourage more reading Nigerians; to promote the increase in production of reading materials in Nigeria, both in quality and variety and; to identify the major obstacles that inhibit reading in the country and also find ways of eliminating them. However, IFLA (2001) encapsulated that one of the problems with the above objectives is that the readership promotion campaign has been restricted largely to Abuja, Lagos, and some few State capitals. The impact has therefore not really been felt in other parts of the country because the National Library of Nigeria has not been adequately funded to put the campaign in prints or electronic media and further extend it to remote locations. It is gratifying to note that the present Director/ Chief Executive Professor L. Aina, with his management team have taken a bold step in the right direction to extend this all important program to all the States of the Federation and even to public libraries in Nigeria. It is equally hoped that with adequate financial support from the government and willingness on part of the National Library of Nigeria, readership promotion campaign (RPC) will in no distance time be extended to local government areas and equally remote areas of the country so as to have more grassroots representation and achieve the much desired objectives of making Nigeria a reading nation with lifelong reading capabilities.

It is important to note that every year, the RPC comes up with a different theme but all geared towards the same goal of making Nigeria a reading nation. The 2018

theme titled 'Sustaining Lifelong Reading for Positive Change' is apt. It is designed to make Nigeria a lifelong reading nation, with the view of imparting positively on individuals and the nation at large through exposing them to the inherent benefits of lifelong reading, and also ameliorating the challenges. The theme is coined based on the premise that the National Library of Nigeria having carried out many themes on inculcation of reading habit acknowledges that the Nigerian society should be of age to move to the level of sustaining the habit /culture instilled in them, and becoming lifelong readers. Moreso, it is equally believed that sustaining lifelong reading will bring about positive change, as the country has been passing through a lot of challenges that require positive change on individuals and the nation at large; and the conviction that reading liberates man, reading maketh a man, reading widens horizon, reading makes man governable, reading brings lifelong development, readers are leaders, reading brings wisdom, reading is living, and reading emancipates, among others.

It is however, unfortunate that as many are moving to the stage of nurturing reading habit created and sustaining lifelong reading, some are yet to inculcate reading habit, owing to many reasons like poverty, distractions, and particularly the incursion of information and communication technology and its paraphernalia like computers, handheld electronic devices, and social media platforms/ networks; while the last group comprise those that have imbibed reading culture, have the ability to read but owing to one reason or the other, decide not to continually read and could be termed to have relapsed to alliterates. Sequel to the foregoing, the author has coined the title of this paper **'Lifelong Reading: A Roadmap for Enduring Positive Change in the Nigerian Society'.** This is geared towards accommodating the three different categories enumerated.

Series of questions may come to one's mind, which include: who is a reader? how can lifelong reading be inculcated? what does it mean to be a lifelong reader? who plays the role of building lifelong readers? what could be the impediments to lifelong reading? how can one tackle these impediments in order to achieve and sustain lifelong reading which has the ability of bringing about positive change?, and many more questions. The author will attempt to address these questions in this study.

Conceptual Clarifications / Overview

The concept of 'reading' has attracted several definitions from various authors. According to Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007), reading is defined as the process of recognizing written or printed words and understanding their meaning. Okilagwe in Gbadamosi (2007) defined reading as reasoning that involves meaningful interpretation of words, phrases and sentences, which require all forms of thinking like critical, analytical, imaginative, evaluative, judgmental and problem solving. Reading can be seen as the foundation upon which other academic skills and activities are built. It offers a productive approach to improving vocabulary, word power, and language skills .Reading is the art of interpreting printed and written words, the most effective process of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgement and action of readers (Devarajan & Gray in Edeole & Adejoke, 2016).

Reading is a means of obtaining meaning or information, especially by looking at printed words or symbols. Reading involves learning through developing conscious efforts and skills in order to be informed. Reading is a complex skill requiring the co-ordination of a number of inter-related sources of information (Nnadozie & Egwim, 2010). Okebukola (2004) affirms that, through reading, humans have the tools to transmit knowledge to each succeeding generation. Makotsi (2005) sees reading as a very important issue that brings not only enjoyment or pleasure but is a necessity and basic tool of education. Eyre (2004) opines that reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. According to Nssien (2007), reading is the only form of entertainment that

is also an essential life skill. Thus, reading can be viewed as a skill according to Clark and Rumbold (2006), which must be nurtured from a child's earliest years. In the same vein, Fisher in Haliru, Abdulkarim, Mohammed and Dagani (2016) maintained that reading is an intellectual exercise which is possible only when a child forms the habit and practice it right from childhood. Thus, it is imperative to note that once a child knows how to read, that child equally needs support to be able to reach his full potential as a lifelong reader, which requires the efforts of all the stakeholders in readership promotion campaign.

Consequently, Sisulu (2004) observed that reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Igwe (2011) added that becoming a skilled reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond, and also emphasized that reading is not just for school, as it is for life. In addition, Tella and Akande (2007) opined that the ability to read is at the hub of self-education and lifelong learning and also an art capable of transforming life and society.

People read for different purposes, which include passing examination; doing assignment given; for professional growth; preparation for interview when seeking employment, while few read for pleasure, which has culminated in not having enough lifelong readers in the society. Murphy (2013) stated that why people read include the following: for self- understanding; improvement on social relations; for cognitive and academic development; improvement on well- being, as reading is noted to have therapeutic effect; and lastly, for cultivating the disposition to participate in civic society.

It is noted that lifelong reading is at the heart of self-education; increased knowledge; building character and maturity; critical thinking and widening awareness on social, economic, political and environmental issues of life. Yet, reading culture in Africa and particularly Nigeria is not encouraging. Trelease (2006) states that "we are not a reading society in Africa but chatting society ...prefer listening and chatting more than reading". However, the absence of a widespread culture of reading

in the case of Nigeria acts as a barrier to our development and international competitiveness (Igwe, 2011). Thus, the economic, social and political well- being of our nation, and particularly realization of an enduring positive change depend on building lifelong readers that read widely and apply it practically for individual and national development. This is why 2018 theme of the readership promotion campaign strongly believes that lifelong reading is the solution to the current state of the nation, and has the capacity of bringing about the desired positive change in Nigeria.

Lifelong reading is identified as the single most important determinant of individual's success in education and positive change in our modern complex society (Nssien, 2007). Furthermore, lifelong reading is the process of building up positive reading attitude among individuals (young and old) over a period of time. This building process may be said to be effective when it is developed in the formative age (between ages 1-10 years). Similarly, when an individual habitually and regularly reads books and other information materials that are not necessarily required for him to advance in his profession or career he is said to have a lifelong reading ability (Gbadamosi, 2007:44). Lifelong reading, in essence therefore, is the kind of culture that imbibes reading and studying as the basis of growth and development. It is the type that sees continuous and dedicated reading of information resources by pupils, children, students and adults for knowledge acquisition, which will be applied practically for decision making and development.

At this point, it is imperative to define what makes a lifelong reader. The following among others make a lifelong reader: access to reading materials; a supportive home environment, functional libraries; motivation and attitude, having a choice and control over what to read. Nielsen (2013) identified ways of building lifelong reading and becoming a lifelong reader to include the following: becoming a lifelong learner with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and driven by passion; making one's love for books contagious in which stakeholders like teachers, parents, students and librarians are encouraged to make their love for books contagious by being

excited over books they read and having willingness to share such so as to enable the enthusiasm to rub off on the students. Others include harnessing peer pressure, as it is noted that lifelong readers reach out to their peers; and creating a culture of sharing favourite titles in classrooms by kids, teachers and even at home by parents. The author also suggested that students should discover educative websites so as to recommend books, reach out to larger social networks, thereby connecting readers; marketing books, which involve displaying new releases; and giving kids lots of time to read by incrementally building how long they can sustain their reading with stamina building activities. In addition, seeing reading as pleasurable exercise makes a lifelong reader. Thus, the Stenhouseblog (2014) averred that developing lifelong readers is not determined by the level of reading but level of enjoyment experienced as readers. In corroboration, Sanacore (2002) maintained that becoming a lifetime reader is predicated on developing a love of reading. Lifelong reading is vital to being better informed, having a better understanding of oneself as well as others, making a man to be a thoughtful and constructive contributor to a democratic and cohesive society, thereby bringing about a positive change.

Change is defined by *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2007) as "to become different; to stop doing something and start doing another; become or make different; start something new". The author also explained that positive means "completely certain; believing that good things will happen or that a situation will get better (optimistic); showing that a situation is likely to improve". Positive change therefore means having a situation that will turn around for good; a situation that will get better; improved and moving to an encouraging position. It is also applicable to individuals or nations turning from one bad state to another, which is definitely good.

Positive change in this context is referred to a change that will make, enlighten, reform and reawaken individuals, and make the Nigerian society better than it is presently. It is the main factor that leads to the increased interest in sustaining lifelong reading. Furthermore, sustaining lifelong reading especially at the nursery, primary

and secondary schools bring about reforms at all levels and an enduring positive change, both on the side of the individual, society and nation at large. Enduring positive change requires people capable of adapting to changing circumstances for good. Such adaptations require the individual to read early in life, later in life, as well as the ability to actually read at various points in his/her life, and see reading as pleasurable.

The clarion call for positive change is made at the political scene and educational sector sequel to the state of the nation. Nigeria has faced a lot of challenges since independence. The challenges which are as a result of lack of effective reading include but not limited to: bad governance/ leadership, corruption, poverty, among others, with such consequences as kidnapping; drug addiction, widespread of diseases like HIV/AID; high blood pressure, diabetics; illegal migration; human trafficking; youth restiveness arising from (Bokom haram, Miyetti Allah, herdsmen and cattle rustlers; Niger Delta Militants, agitation by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP), among others. This study has therefore been coined to x-ray how sustaining lifelong reading can bring about positive change in the country, as reading has a lot of benefits. It is therefore believed that sustaining lifelong reading will liberate the Nigerian society from all the vices that have threatened the peace, unity, progress, love, health, literacy status, and even life, as enduring positive change will be engendered. This is sequel to but not limited to Ngoboka (2011) assertion that reading boosts self-esteem and equally increases understanding and sensitivity. Furthermore, Yani in Haliru, Abdulkarim, Mohammed, and Dagani (2015) revealed that reading enables people to be better informed, have understanding of their environment, and affords opportunity for better understanding of one's own experiences and equally is an exciting voyage to self-discovery. As Tella and Akande (2007) buttressed that reading is at the hub of self-education and lifelong learning, and equally an art capable of transforming life and society, reading, therefore has the

capacity to bring about positive change in the society. These attributes of reading make the lifelong reader to critically analyze issues before reacting, quite unlike those that do not read.

Roadmap according to the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007) is 'a plan or sets of instructions that makes it easier for someone to do something. From this perspective, lifelong reading is what that makes positive change occur without tears.

The Benefits of Lifelong Reading

Lifelong reading enables the reader to continually know about the world and its environment, through reading books, newspapers, magazines and other information resources. Omekwu (2001) opined that students and youths who read are likely to have background knowledge, familiarity with new topics or subjects, and thus, find learning easier and interesting. EduNote (2017) highlighted eight benefits of reading as follows: Reading gives satisfaction to the reader; enhances concentration power and focus; imparts knowledge, which will assist the reader to participate in fruitful discussion and decision making; and exercises /stimulates the brain. Other benefits of reading according to the author involves reduction of stress; enhancing analytical thinking, as reading not only enriches knowledge but sharpens the reader to be able to analyse and evaluate things; and improving the vocabulary and the writing skills of the reader. Lifelong reading can therefore be one important way to help raise educational standards, combat social exclusion and essentially, brings about positive change in the life of the individual and nation at large. Murphy's (2013) study revealed that reading for pleasure results in self-understanding, expanding the readers social world, developing relationships, and improved well-being. It also has positive effects on cognitive and academic achievement. Yusuf (2007) also maintained that reading is one of the avenues for acquiring information, which is an indispensable tool in bridging the gap between knowledge and ignorance. The benefits of reading are so

rewarding that it makes man to be complete, as knowledge gained from reading makes the reader able to carry on with life without tears.

Agents/Stakeholders Responsible for Sustaining Lifelong Reading

There are empirical evidences on the contributions of many stakeholders in library development and inculcation of reading habit on children and young adults. Sustenance of such effort will help in sustaining lifelong reading in the Nigerian society. These agents play different and significant roles in the life of the lifelong reader. The agents/stakeholders include: the government, educational institutions at all levels, teachers at all levels of education, library, religious organisations, parents/guardians, publishers and authors, philanthropists, non-governmental organizations, international organizations (like UNESCO, Carnegie Corporation, Book Aid International, among others), and individuals.

Government

The responsibility government at all levels (local, state and federal) on lifelong reading is quite clear. The role of government can be viewed from the perspective of supporting the educational institutions; making and implementing policies on education and lifelong reading, and equally sustaining such policies. The activities of some government ministries, departments and agencies, (like readership promotion campaign of the National Library of Nigeria, bring back the book programme of the former President Goodluck Jonathan), building and maintenance of public and national libraries, as the apex library headquarters is still in a rented apartment and some public library buildings are in dilapidated conditions. Government can also donate reading materials to schools. For instance, the National Library of Nigeria has been distributing books (legal deposit materials) to primary, secondary schools and even tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Government can also provide reading centers for its citizens, where they are encouraged to go and read. The role of government could also be seen in the act of organizing reading competitions and further mapping out prizes for the best readers, which is part of what the National Library of Nigeria does.

Government can also sustain lifelong reading by subsidizing cost of

production/publishing books, so as to make it affordable to individuals and libraries. It is noted that government of India has done that, which has led to most of our university libraries being flooded with Indian books. Subsidizing cost of publishing books can equally be replicated in Nigeria by the Nigerian government so as to make reading materials easily affordable to the readers. The role of government in sustaining lifelong reading in the Nigerian society is like "that of the foundation of a house (Okoye & Ene, 2011:50). Nwachukwu (2011) also opined that the recognition of the need to revive reading culture in Nigeria prompted the federal government during the former President Goodluck Jonathan era to embark on "bring back the book program" as a deliberate policy to address the challenges of lifelong reading and quality of education in Nigeria in the past decades. This is sequel to the understanding that "no responsible government will fold the arms and watch such degeneration, while the rest of the World continue to move at supersonic speed through knowledge-based technological and general development" (Okoye & Ene, 2011:71). It is believed that government can still do more by sustaining all the efforts initiated.

Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are important stakeholders in inculcating and sustaining lifelong reading. They include the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The role of educational institutions in sustaining lifelong reading could be in the area of providing adequate access to reading materials to the nursery/kindergarten and primary schools, where the individual is first exposed to the reading of poems and nursery rhymes, and later introduced to reading and interpretation of words and symbols. Furthermore, through the provision of functional libraries in the educational institutions, reading habit is cultivated, while lifelong reading is enhanced and sustained. Organization of adult education classes and mass literacy programmes for adults, and also establishment of different academic programmes and mode of study like distance learning, part-time and sandwich programmes for adults who could not attend regular programmes are also undertaken to sustain lifelong learning. Therefore, the innovative adult education programmes are intended to help improve general

conditions of individuals, promote continuing education, strengthen and ensure sustained interest in continual reading, and also encourage the adults who were not opportune to acquire education in their youthful age, to do so, which forms a basis for lifelong reading to such adults. The inevitability of lifelong reading and learning in knowledge-oriented societies according to OECD (2002) implies that school systems should have different objectives and characteristics than if education were considered to have been completed when a student leaves initial education. Yet in practice, there remains a tendency for school education to be assessed in terms of achievements and targets that the system has set themselves, rather than their broader success in laying the foundation for lifelong reading, among others.

Library

When talking about reading and sustaining lifelong reading, the library plays a very crucial role and should even be ranked first amongst the stakeholders. This is so because the library services and resources are provided to all categories of individuals free of charge or at a token, which enables the reader to register with the library for reading and even borrow books for home reading. Thus, the library regardless of type and size plays great roles in sustaining lifelong reading in individuals. It is important to note that in 2013, the International Federation of Libraries (IFLA), as an umbrella in the field of librarianship, published a report on the project "The Roles of Libraries" where it clearly emphasizes the need for strengthening the educational role of the libraries with principles based on UNESCO's Manifesto, which stipulates that the library is a place of learning and should provide minimum conditions for lifelong learning. IFLA's Section on Information Literacy equally issued guidelines for information literacy, which emphasizes possibility to access, search, use and evaluate information, which could be viewed as a necessary pre-condition and key factor in lifelong reading in any society.

Library week is also an avenue for sustaining lifelong reading. Through library week, library associations and their state chapters in Nigeria, on annual basis, visit

schools, radio, television houses, hospitals, prisons and other agencies preaching on the importance of reading. It is advocated that the activity should be carried out on a more regular basis. According to Ononogbo (2012), the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Abia State Chapter in the year 2012 and others years have organized reading competitions among secondary school students in the State capital and gave out prizes to winners. If this is sustained, it will go a long way in sustaining lifelong reading and bringing about positive change, as some of the winners of such competition have been lucky to earn scholarships from philanthropists who were thrilled by their performances.

Library display and exhibitions are also avenues the libraries use to draw attention of individuals to the materials available for reading in the library. Libraries also provide diversified information resources, ranging from children literature, to other high standard reading materials; and equally provide newspapers and newspapers stands where most adults spend their days recreating themselves, as most people cannot afford to buy daily newspapers. Public libraries in Nigeria can also assist in sustaining lifelong reading by resuscitating library extension services – mobile library services through which library services are extended to hospitals, prisons, rural dwellers, among others. Public libraries should also stock their libraries with adequate and current resources, and equally have the capacity of accessing resources via the internet for the satisfaction of their users' needs beyond what is physically available in the library. It is also the responsibility of school librarians to connect students with books so as to ginger the interest that will sustain lifelong reading and positive change..

Non-Governmental Organisations and International Organizations

The international organizations like the Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller, UNESCO, Book Aid International, among others have played great roles in sustaining lifelong reading. Most of these organizations have contributed through various grants and provision of reading materials for the development of libraries in the country. These organizations can still do more through funding of our

public and school libraries; organization and funding of programmes geared toward sustenance of lifelong reading in Nigeria.

Religious Organizations

Churches, mosques and other religious bodies can encourage lifelong reading through Bible studies, sermons and other religious activities. Regular scriptural readings and recitation by the children and young adults could be helpful in sustaining lifelong reading as it stimulates the individual (both Christian and Muslim) to develop the ability to continuously read in order to understand and know the passages of the Holy Scriptures. It is also seen that adults who may not have known how to read other books, are taught and found reading the Holy Scriptures efficiently. Religious organisations have equally contributed to sustaining lifelong reading through the establishment of schools like nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions where lifelong readers are produced, which should be made affordable.

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians have responsibility of sustaining lifelong reading by inculcating reading habits in their children and wards at their formative age, even in the womb. Parents who promote the view that reading is a valuable and worthwhile activity have children who are motivated to read for pleasure (Baker & Scher 2002). Furthermore, parental involvement in the reading of their children has positive results at schools (Dearing et al. as cited in Clark & Foster, 2005). When parents are involved in the reading of their children, they encourage and motivate them to work harder, and by so doing, the children become motivated, work hard and achieve academically. It is established that parental involvement is important in children's reading/learning from cradle. Parents are also involved in inculcating reading habit and sustaining lifelong reading by reading to their children, even when the children are still in the womb; and equally continue to do as the children are growing. It is also observed that when children see parents read all the time, they emulate them, thus, parents should teach by examples.

Parent should also provide a supportive home environment as it is an important factor in development of leisure reading, which sustains lifelong reading. One of the

ways of providing supportive home environment is by establishing viable family library. Murphy (2013) citing Murray study, revealed that early readers came from homes where reading was supported and encouraged, and from homes where parents were literate. The author emphasized that homes where parents value reading, used the library or bought books were more likely to be high achiever homes, as reading exposure, home literacy environment and reading motivation positively relate to the outcome measures of achievement. In corroboration, Clark and Picton (2012) opined that children receiving encouragement from parents or who see parents read are more likely to perceive themselves as readers, enjoy reading, therefore read frequently and have positive attitude towards reading compared to those who do not get any form of encouragement. Moreso, book gifts during birthdays and other celebrations or festivals should be encouraged.

Teachers:

The responsibilities of teachers in sustaining lifelong reading are numerous. Teachers play important role in the life of a potential lifelong reader, lifelong reader and equally occupy exceptional position. Apart from home, they are the next point of contact for the children and even more respected by the children as they see them as role models. As teachers serve as a role model to students, Harolds (2001) opined that students are inspired to read when they see their teachers reading. Okoye and Ene (2011) posited that teachers are central to the teaching-learning process in both formal and non-formal education system. The authors maintained that the teachers' role is fundamental in all learning situations and therefore must ensure that "acquisition of knowledge, development of skills and extraction of knowledge for personal growth and lifelong development" of the pupils and students are all achieved so as to make them lifelong readers. Because of the position the teacher occupies in the life of a child, he/she must be a passionate reader, lifelong reader, show interest and be knowledgeable so as to offer information in various areas of knowledge, and also remain role models. Subject teachers should be able to recommend good texts, constantly and regularly connect readers with books.

Authors and Publishers:

Authors and publishers through writing and publication of reading materials act as important stakeholders in sustaining lifelong reading. Authors play significant role in sustaining lifelong reading as it is noted that 'without writers, there will be no books and other reading materials'; 'no writing no reading is an undisputable fact" (Okoye & Ene, 2011:59). So authors write in different areas (genres) of knowledge so as to encourage lifelong reading. However, there is need for authors to be encouraged to write books in all spheres of knowledge so as to build a nation of lifelong readers. Furthermore, as Nigerian society needs more books in indigenous languages so as to cater for every category of reader, authors and publishers should be encouraged to write and publish in indigenous languages in order to ensure that the literate and neo-literates are carried along in reading interest and sustenance of lifelong reading.

Publishers in their professional practice, take cognizance of the needs of different categories of readers, and thus publish book and other resources in different fields of knowledge, including resources meant for leisure/recreation. They organize book fairs in order to draw attention of the readers on important materials available for reading. Some equally extend helping hands to schools and libraries in their bid to build a reading nation known for sustained lifelong reading. Some publishers also donate books as a way of assisting to sponsor readership promotion campaigns.

Reduction in publication prices could also be a means of encouraging lifelong reading. Okoye and Ene (2011) maintained that publishers should provide quality reading materials, make the cost of publishing less exorbitant in order not to scare writers and readers away with high cost of production and acquisition of published products. Publishers cannot do this alone as they need government intervention regarding high cost of raw materials for printing and publishing.

Most importantly, publishers and authors should comply with legal deposit obligations and willingly deposit their publications with designated libraries, so as to encourage reading and sustain lifelong reading in Nigerian society.

Others stakeholders are the Booksellers; Corporate bodies; Philanthropists; Reading Association of Nigeria; Nigerian Authors Association, Nigerian Library

Association; Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria; Nigerian Book Trust Fund, among others. These bodies are significantly involved in stimulating reading interest and sustaining lifelong reading in Nigeria.

Challenges of Sustaining Lifelong Reading

Many challenges are militating against sustaining lifelong reading in a developing economy like Nigeria, which could be attributed to advent of ICT, negative attitude towards lifelong reading often shown by these Nigerians generally and other notable factors like absence of reading development at the formative stage, poverty, inadequate or total disappearance of reading materials and absence of functional libraries in most communities and societies, especially in villages, most primary and secondary schools, among other factors. The following, among others are the fundamental challenges.

Advent of Information and Communication Technologies:

Advent of ICT. The advent of information and communication technologies like computers, handheld electronic devices, internet, and social media platforms/networks have significantly affected lifelong reading in Nigeria. This is sequel to unproductive use of ICT by the youths, young adults and even adults. The magnitude of this problem jeopardizes the future of our primary, secondary schools, and has equally extended to tertiary institutions where we are supposed to be boasting of having readers who have graduated to lifelong readers. It could also be seen in the African continent, and Nigeria in particular based on empirical evidence that the reading habits of primary and secondary schools pupils and students, university undergraduates and graduates as well as adults is fading and dwindling at regular interval.

Lack of Interest in Reading: In Nigeria, a study carried out by Henry in Edeole and Adejoke (2016), revealed that 40 percent of average Nigerian adults never read a non-fiction book from cover to cover after finishing school; and that the average Nigerian reads less than one book per year, and only one percent of successful men and women in Nigeria read one non-fiction book per month. The study further revealed that 30 million Nigerians have graduated from high school with poor reading skills. Thus, it is

important to note that as pupils, students and young graduates find it difficult to read, so are the old retirees who may not even afford to buy reading materials or are too weak to visit the library. In a related development, UNICEF as cited in Haliru, et al (2015) equally maintained that nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or write their names. Research has equally shown that this digital age is characterized by much browsing of the Internet and Websites, use of social media, playing with trendy handheld electronic devices and sending and receiving nonstop short message services (SMSs), while reading a book in a library or at home is relegated to the background. It thus becomes that while technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives; lifelong reading is in the decline. The outcome being that most students spend many hours watching television or using their handheld devices for fun and not in a productive way, among others. In addition, many students read only when there is examination to write, some read when they are compelled to read, others claim reading with their cellular phones, while others bluntly refuse to read and thereby eschew lifelong reading activities.

Poverty: In sub-Saharan Africa, according to Awana (2007), the impact of poverty is deeply felt to the extent that only a few people live above the poverty line; consequently, about 80% of Africans live under precarious conditions. The per capita 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 culture of Nigerians as well as sustenance of lifelong reading in the country. The author maintained that many Nigerians are too poor to send their children to school; lack money to buy books and pay school fees.

Corruption: Corruption has a profound effect on the Nigerian society, which invariably has drastically affected the nation and individuals lifelong reading ability. The present government is trying to fight corruption, and people have the slogan that 'government is fighting corruption, while corruption is fighting back'. Corruption is ubiquitous 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. Situations like trading sex for grades, sales of ungraded

textbooks to students at high costs, using money to buy examination grades, and cheating in examinations abound in our institutions of higher learning. Those who engage in these villainous acts consider reading a waste of time and face the danger of stopping little reading immediately they leave school. Furthermore, overemphasis on paper qualification has made even parents to bribe their way to ensure their children/wards score very high marks in Joint Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination; and make fantastic results in West African School Certificate (WASC) and National Examination Council (NECO), among other examinations so as to secure admission into choice courses. This has resulted in such students finding themselves in courses they hardly cope with, and consequently, sorting continues for such students.

Noisy environment: A reading environment should be noise free for effective reading/learning. However, it is observed that most schools in Nigeria are sited in densely populated areas, where distractions prevent the smooth flow of learning. In addition, some libraries both school and public are found in noisy environment that is not conducive for effective, intensive and extensive reading, as the noise affects concentration and comprehension. Furthermore, owing to incessant power outage in most cities of Nigeria, generating sets are used by all and this cause noise pollution and thereby affects reading and maximum concentration. This may result in disenchantment and make even a lifelong reader or those that have penchant for reading to degenerate to alliterates.

Undue importance attached to wealth: Many Nigerian people celebrate wealth at the expense of intellectualism. This is manifested in our quest for material things. Consequently, some people abandon their educational careers for the pursuit of money. Many youths have abandoned their education in search of "quick money," which they believe can be realized from business or politics. Many of our students in secondary schools and even tertiary institutions engage in many other things that compete with time of study in the verge of looking for money at the expense of their reading and education. This invariably make them read only to pass examinations and in most cases, indulge in examination malpractices. This in no small measure affects

lifelong reading on such individual even after graduation.

Inadequate libraries: Libraries play an important role in sustaining lifelong reading. Igwe (2011) opined that libraries have a historic mission of fostering literacy and learning, and that the learning and reading have the capacity to change lives and equally play significant role in determining the future of our society. Library and education are inseparable twins, as one cannot do without the other. So are library, reading, learning and education inseparable twins. None of the other three can do without library and library cannot do without them as it is there to support them. The indispensability of library to lifelong reading and education, cannot be overemphasized, as libraries are vital to education. Unfortunately, research has shown that current low levels of proficiency in reading could be attributed to under-funding of libraries and their services. Studies have also reported that proprietors of schools (government and individuals) have not complied with library provisions in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Saliu (2002) averred that public libraries, and their branches are not being established where they are needed. The few existing public libraries are neither adequately funded nor stocked with reading resources that can affect the lives of citizens. Moreso, National Library of Nigeria branches are not yet established in all the states of the Federation which affects use of the library and other services by the citizens in the affected states.

Fadero in Eyo (2007) equally stressed that inadequate provision of libraries in schools is a general disease that is plaguing education in Nigeria. From all the geo-political zones of the country, it is observed that schools are generally without functional libraries to support teaching, learning and the curriculum. This is supported by the survey conducted by Lawal (2004), Odusanya and Amusa in Tella and Akande (2007), which revealed that libraries are almost non-existent in primary schools, while few secondary schools have what could be referred to as reading rooms." In addition, there is no clear cut policy on funding school libraries and so those libraries are generally not adequately equipped, lack proper accommodation, qualified staff, and relevant information resources like books and other educational materials. In corroboration, Unagha (2008) stressed that efforts by Nigerian governments to promote education

and literacy have failed because there was no provision for school libraries in the implementation of programmes. Furthermore, Elaturoti (2001) study revealed that libraries of many primary and post-primary schools are so poor that they impede rather than promote learning and knowledge acquisition. Consequently, there are cases of lack of dedicated library space, inappropriate use of libraries, poorly stocked and unattractive libraries, among others, which lack the potentials of encouraging lifelong reading.

Lack of Adequate and Current Reading Materials in the libraries: Many of our school, public and even academic libraries do not have adequate and current information resources that could be consulted by readers or borrowed for home use. The worst hit in the scenario are the school and public libraries. Most public libraries are stocking very outdated materials that are found not useful for present academic and pleasurable reading. Moreso, the resources are grossly inadequate that borrowing in these libraries has been proscribed. This has equally affected extension services of public libraries as the libraries do not have enough resources to cater for those visiting the library to talk about taking the library services and resources to those, for one reason or the other cannot visit the library. This has invariably affected mobile library services. School libraries, where they exist are grossly affected by the problem of inadequate resources as the librarian if available is never given freedom to exercise autonomy so as to use his professional practice to stock the library adequately. It is however, important to note that at this digital age, public libraries can go beyond what they can stock to what they can access by being ICT-driven, and remotely access information resources for their users.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Sustaining lifelong reading is important because it brings about positive change. The study has established that lifelong reading fundamentally requires starting reading from the cradle to grave. It involves inculcating reading culture at formative age, nurturing to adulthood and till death separates the individual from reading. Sustaining lifelong reading is very important as it brings about positive change in the individual and society at large. Benefits of lifelong reading are

numerous both to the child, young and old, such that all stakeholders are implored to engage themselves in sustenance of lifelong reading so as to enhance positive change in Nigeria.

The study is of the position that libraries (especially school libraries, public and national libraries)' government, parents and teachers are fundamental to the actualization of lifelong reading. Libraries are integral part of the educational development of school children, youths, and even adults. Without the support of functional libraries, schools cannot successfully achieve the goals of reading, lifelong reading, learning and education, which revolve around engendering positive change in the following areas: "the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills and social abilities and competences that will equip the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016). To this end, the study recommends that:

- Ø Readers should make effective and productive use of information and communication technology, Internet and social media platforms/networks so as not to kill their reading habit and thereby affect sustaining lifelong reading, with its outcome of positive change.
- Ø Government at all levels should develop programmes to sustain lifelong reading interest in the Nigerian society through establishment of functional libraries in schools and rural areas, and also collaborating with organizations in providing reading materials to schools and libraries. Efforts should also be made by the Nigerian government to subsidize the cost of publishing and acquiring reading materials. Government should equally assist in establishment and maintenance of adequate libraries in our schools and provision of adequate information resources to offer more extensive reading.
- Ø Libraries of all kinds, should fight the problem of inadequate funding though lobbying and advocacy, and can also introduce fee-based services. Furthermore,

government should provide adequate funding to libraries by improving upon what is being done presently, in order to sustain lifelong reading and bring about positive change. Libraries should not only depend on the physical information resources but provide adequate access to reading materials by being ICT driven, which will enable school children, youths and even adults to gain access to more information resources, and improve their reading ability and skills for lifelong reading. Libraries should also help to introduce the use of reading for information, pleasure, passing examinations, and personal growth through lifelong reading. Thus, reading should be made interesting and pleasurable.

- Reading should be given deserved attention and effectively taught in schools. In addition, corruption should be eschewed in our society, while undue importance should not be attached to wealth at the detriment of reading, learning and education. Thus, Poverty should be gallantly fought by the individuals and Nigerian governments at all levels, so as to eliminate its effects on reading, learning and education.
- International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should further increase their support for library development and equally ensure that the use of the funds and grants given should be closely monitored in order to make sure that the essence of providing it is achieved.
- Educational institutions should help in inculcating the spirit of voluntary reading in their students and pupils. Voluntary reading helps the individual to develop reading skills and mastery of language, extends students' knowledge, and assists them in their academic work. Furthermore, Schools and libraries should be sited at environments conducive for effective reading, concentration and comprehension. It is also imperative that book/reading clubs should be established in our primary and secondary schools to build lifelong readers.
- Religious organizations should provide avenue to teach and encourage their members the importance of lifelong reading. These institutions should also involve the children in bible study and appointment as lay readers in order to groom them into lifelong readers.

- Communities and societies should support sustaining lifelong reading in their populace through support for libraries, readership promotion campaigns and equally providing conducive environment for lifelong reading.
- All the stakeholders like parents, publishers, authors, libraries and librarians, among others should motivate children, young adults, adults and the old to embrace lifelong reading, while those motivated should develop the right attitude towards lifelong reading. This is in corroboration with, Inderjit (2014) who opined that reading attitude is an integral part of the development of lifelong reading.
- Parents are admonished to understand that providing a supportive home environment is an important element in development of leisure reading and sustaining lifelong reading. Parents are therefore encouraged to establish functional family libraries and ensure that it is regularly updated with new books of interest to their children both for pleasure and academic. It is also imperative that parents should closely guard and monitor the activities of their children and wards at home and build in them the spirit of lifelong reading; ensure that they assist their children by allotting time for watching television and using computers for anything outside reading and education. Parents should learn to read to and with their children and always create an opportunity for the children to emulate their exemplary lives. Parents and teachers should also help their children/wards and students to discover educative websites where extensive reading, sharing of ideas among peers and connecting readers can be achieved.
- National Library of Nigeria should solicit TETFund sponsorship of readership promotion campaign (RPC), so as to take the campaign to the grassroots.
- Nigerian citizens from children, youths, adults to the old, must have access to reading materials, as the first, second and third laws of Ranganathan stipulate that "books are for use; every book its user; and every user his or her book". Furthermore, children, youths and adults should reawaken interest in reading so as to engender a lifelong reading nation. Thus, sustaining lifelong reading is a collective obligation of all stakeholders, as its results are exceeding rewarding, particularly in the area of stimulating positive change in Nigeria.

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