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Bibliotherapy Intervention in Schools: Knowledge, Perception and Attitude of School librarians

Abstract: This article explored the theoretical, conceptual and empirical review of school librarians' perception, knowledge and attitude towards bibliotherapy in Nigeria. It focused on the review of relevant and related literature on theme of the article. The paper presented the conceptual clarifications on the theme and nuances of bibliotherapy and its goals just as it considered how librarians perceive the use of bibliotherapy in schools as well as their knowledge of and attitudes towards bibliotherapy use in schools. Recommendations were made based on the need for the use of bibliotherapy by school librarians in addressing diverse issues confronting students in schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Bibliotherapy, Perception, Knowledge, Attitude, School librarians.*

Introduction

The introduction of bibliotherapy in Nigerian schools is new such that most school librarians need to be intimated on the integration of this intervention method in addressing diverse problems confronting students. Bibliotherapy can simply be described as the use of books for healing and therapeutic purposes. It is generally believed that therapeutic changes happen in every moment of people's daily lives. Routine activities such as talking with a friend, reading a book, seeing a movie, engaging in an argument or ruminating on past experiences elicit certain changes in humans. The changes brought about by such experiences may include emotional reactions, sudden realisations, interpretations, revelations, processing of critical information, and other changes, many of which are likewise goals of bibliotherapy (Lampropoulos and Spengler, 2005).The current state of today's schools is changing as the populations of nations become more diverse in terms of new family formations; rapid growth of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity; increase in mental health issues, economic troubles; and a range of other trending demographic shifts that contribute to society's make-up (Sanacore, 2012; Gavigan and Kurtts, 2011; Hyun, 2006).

Observations have revealed that, over the years, children and adolescents have been experiencing a range of issues that have the potential to put their well-being at risk, such as divorce, family dysfunction, society dysfunction, racism, death, homelessness, disruptive behaviours, illnesses, disabilities, violence and abuse, emotional or mental health disturbances, substance abuse, bullying, and poverty. These problems are not limited to just the homes and neighborhood of children and adolescents but can spill over into their schools and influence many aspects of their developmental and academic performance (Digges, 2016; Harvey, 2010). These changes may leave children and adolescents, without experienced and consistent adults to help them in coping with personal issues and stresses, especially in cases of minors, with emotional and psychological trauma (Sanacore, 2012). In line with the foregoing, the World Health Organisation (2017) reported that 20% of the world's children and adolescents have mental disorders or problems while 1 in every 4 adults experience some form of mental and emotional stress.

With various people facing a high level of mental and psychological challenges globally, the situation

in developing countries such as Nigeria seems to be more acute. Overall patient attendance at the Federal Neuro-psychiatrist Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, went up 11% while the number of new patients increased by 59% within the first 11 months of 2016. The deepening economic crises in Nigeria, global increase in substance abuse, war, disaster and human rights abuse have been identified as major sources of emotional stress among individuals(World Health Organisation, 2017). One of the major therapies that can be administered on individuals with emotional, psychological as well as other related problems to help them out is Bibliotherapy which involves the use of books.

Bibliotherapy is a process where books are used for correcting negative attitudes. It is an expressive therapy that involves the reading of specific texts with the purpose of healing and using an individual's relationship with the content of books and poetry as well as other written words as therapy. It is a tool that can stand alone in working with children or with other approaches to counseling, such as group therapy. Bibliotherapy is suitable for individual, small group, and large group counseling contexts.

Setting the Context
The practice of bibliotherapy aligns with some other similar practices, such as art therapy, dance therapy, music therapy, play therapy, et cetera. (Read To Connect, 2017). (Shechtman, 2009) confirms that the idea of healing through books is not new; it can be traced far back, to the first libraries in ancient Greece. Bibliotherapy's place in librarianship is not new as librarians have been debating it since its first use by a trained librarian in 1904, when E. Kathleen Jones used it with patients in a mental hospital (Bemis, 2011). The use of books to change behaviour and to reduce distress has a long history, dating back to the middle Ages when Crothes (1916) formulated and conceptualised healing through therapeutic reading of books as 'bibliotherapy'. Reading high-quality literature enriches human soul. The use of books for treatment purposes received special and widespread attention following World Wars I and II. With many soldiers returning from battle with posttraumatic disorders or symptoms,

bibliotherapy was considered a cost-effective treatment. Since then, the use of bibliotherapy has expanded and is currently employed in nearly every helping profession, with every age group, and with multiple populations. As a part of expressive therapy, bibliotherapy is based on the premise of the healing, consoling power of a book. The psychological basis of bibliotherapy is related to the psychology of reading and the "book-reader" interaction. In bibliotherapy, the value of literature depends strictly on its capacity to encourage a therapeutic response from the participants.

Bryan (1939) outlined six objectives of bibliotherapy to include; showing the reader as not the first to have the problem; permitting the reader to see that more than one solution to the problem is possible; helping the reader to see the basic motivation of people involved in a particular situation; helping the readers to see the values involved in experience in human terms; providing facts needed for the solution of the problem; and encouraging the readers to face his situation realistically. The emphasis is on the individual's active involvement and empowerment in recovery instead of, or in conjunction with, medication to deal with the problem. Stories can provide vicarious immersion into another culture, offering exposure to alternative lifestyles and beliefs. Some studies find multicultural literature leads to an increased appreciation of different cultures, viewpoints and lived experiences. Effective use of bibliotherapy can enhance personal insight, provide information, suggest alternatives, diminish isolation, clarify emerging values, stimulate discussion and extend the counseling process outside of traditional settings. Similarly, a review of the literature in medicine, mental health and education finds bibliotherapy applied therapeutically to an astounding range of problems and issues. These include: aggressiveness, adoption, addictions, family dissolution, cultural awareness and ethnic identity, grief and loss, physical abuse and domestic trauma, dispute resolution, clinical depression, talented and gifted children, homelessness, night terrors, obsessive-compulsive disorder and self-destructive behaviour (Pehrsson and and McMillen, 2005). Empirically, it is necessary to verify the effectiveness of bibliotherapy, particularly with

elementary school children since many professionals advocate the use of developmental bibliotherapy, particularly as a means for; teaching problem solving (Forgan 2002), decreasing fears (Pearson 2003), overcoming math anxiety (Herbert 1997), and supporting students dealing with death (Corr 2004) and divorce (Kramer and Smith 1998).

There are mixed findings as regards to bibliotherapy and its effect upon attitudes. Landreville et al. (2001) investigated attitudes towards treatments for depression. Participants aged 65 years and over were asked to read one of two descriptions of depression (either mild to moderate or severe depression) before reading descriptions of psychotherapy, bibliotherapy, and antidepressant treatments. Participants rated how acceptable they believed that they would find each of the treatments using the modified Treatment Evaluation Inventory (Landreville and Guerette, 1998). Psychotherapy and bibliotherapy were both rated as more acceptable than antidepressants for treating mild to moderate levels of depression (but not for severe depression).

Literature review
A child begins life with books and may not in every case be privileged to scramble about on a library floor before he is able to walk just as few homes maybe so poor as not to provide books of some kind. And it is characteristic of this period that the books used are known through and through. The marvelous memory of the child soaks up from the printed page whatever interests his mind, making all he learns first-hand knowledge.

Bibliotherapy for the normal person facing a major life task may indeed be within the scope of school librarian to perform skillfully. In serving the emotionally ill or deviant, it is very essential that the team approach include physician, psychiatrist, and counselor with the school librarian. The use of books selected is based on content in a planned reading programme that is designed to facilitate the recovery of patients suffering from mental illness or emotional disturbance. Ideally, the process occurs in three phases: personal identification of the reader with a character in the recommended work, resulting in psychological catharsis, which leads to

rational insight concerning the relevance of the solution suggested in the text to the reader's own experience.

In the school setting, bibliotherapy is appropriate for all grade levels of students, though the selection of appropriate reading materials suitable for a healing process is very important in bibliotherapy. The selection of reading materials which includes fiction and non-fiction books can be used to guide readers to realise greater self-understanding, self-reflection and comfort when faced with problems, loss, disabilities, illness and other challenges. Consequently, bibliotherapy has been applied in a variety of settings to many kinds of psychological problems. For instance, practitioners have reported successful use of bibliotherapy in treating eating disorders, anxiety and mood disorders, agoraphobia, alcohol and substance abuse, and stress-related physical disorders (Fitzgerald, 2017). Also, several articles such as *Baruchson-Arbib (2000);* Kanarowski (2012); Canavan (2014) as well as Moldovan, Cobeanu and David (2012) have been published that deal broadly with the definition, goal, and practical results of bibliotherapy which is to broaden and deepen students understanding of the particular problem that requires treatment.

Recent recommendations from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) have advocated the use of bibliography (self-help books) in the treatment of depression, as they are more cost-effective (NICE, 2004; 2011). The written materials may educate the client about the disorder itself or be used to increase the client's acceptance of a proposed treatment. Many people find that the opportunity to read about their problem outside the therapist's office facilitates active participation in their treatment and promotes a stronger sense of personal responsibility for recovery. In addition, many are relieved to find that others have had the same disorder or problem and have coped successfully with it or recovered from it. From the therapist's standpoint, providing a client with specific information or assignments to be completed outside regular in-office sessions speeds the progress of therapy.

Furthermore, unlike many standard forms of

psychotherapy, bibliotherapeutic approaches often include specific examples of ways to deal with relapses or setbacks. As a part of expressive therapy, bibliotherapy is based on the premise of the healing and consoling power of a book. The psychological basis of bibliotherapy is related to the psychology of reading and the "book-reader" interaction. Hence, the value of literature depends strictly on its capacity to encourage a therapeutic response from the participants. The individual's feeling-response is more important than an intellectual grasp of the work's meaning (Learn-to-read, 2017). Another main goal of bibliotherapy is universalisation which implies that an individual is not the only one who feels a certain way. Bibliotherapy helps an individual to understand that he or she is not the first or the only one to face a specific problem or challenge. Other important goals of bibliotherapy include, relieving emotional or mental pressure; developing an individual's self-concept; communicating new values and attitudes with regards to the problem; and providing clients with alternative solutions to the problem.

Digges (2016) asserted that life challenges indirectly provide leverage for people to adopt bibliotherapy. It could be midlife angst, career change, or literary indecision. When an individual begins to feel uninspired and need direction, if the individual keeps following bibliotherapeutic approach and materials, getting back on track will follow suit. In most settings, bibliotherapy is used as an adjunct to more traditional forms of psychotherapy. Practitioners of cognitive-behavioural therapies are among the most enthusiastic supporters of bibliotherapy, particularly in the development of individualised treatment protocols, including workbooks, for specific disorders. Bibliotherapy has usually assumed that reading is a worthwhile and effective method of treatment which is important and helpful, hence, facilitating personal development or problem resolution through books is utilised in many helping professions. However, few has been found in the literature regarding the preparation of emerging counselors, librarians, teachers and mental health personnel for theoretically grounded, ethical use of this approach (Pehrsson and McMillen, 2006).

Researches have shown that bibliotherapy can be used with people of all ages, children, young adults, adults and seniors. Studies by Digges (2016) and Oyewusi and Adeyeye (2017) show that bibliotherapy could be successfully implemented to help individuals to deal with a wide range of physical, psychological, emotional and social issues, such as physical health problems and disabilities (chronic and life-threatening illnesses); general mental health problems (anxiety, fears and depression); stress; isolation; addictive behaviour (alcohol and drug addiction); low self-esteem; learning disabilities; family relationships (divorce, single parents, siblings, adoption); death and loss; grief and bereavement; abuse (physical, emotional and sexual); life changes and adjustments (immigration, refugees, homelessness); man-made disasters (acts of war, terrorist attacks, or school shootings) and natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunami, or hurricanes) as well help to boost individuals' well-being, self-confidence, self-esteem and overall quality of life and can be a very practical and discreet way of learning new coping strategies.

Due to the present economic and political issues in the country, students are likely to experience a wide range of difficulties which may include anxiety, stress, depression, bereavement or relationship issues. Therefore, reading self-help books and materials can be the first step for individuals to get support on whatever issues they are facing as this can be helpful to know that one is not alone and that one is not the first or the last person likely to face these problems. Kessler, Berglund, and Demler (2005) asserts that addressing mental, emotional and psychological health needs of students is critically important because 1 in 5 children have a diagnosable emotional, behavioural or mental health disorder and 1 in 10 young people have a mental health challenge that is severe enough to impair how they function at home, school or in the community. Many estimates show that even though mental illness affects so many of students between aged 6-17, 80.0% of them do not receive the mental health care they need (Kataoka, Zhang, and Wells, 2002). Therefore, being able to recognise and support students' psychological, emotional and

mental health matters because they are common and often develop during childhood and adolescence. One common place to get range of books to be used for different purposes by individuals is the library, hence the library can be a good place to source for books for therapeutic purposes.

Library serves as the nerve centre of all educational institutions and a crucial factor in the educational development of human at all levels especially in educational institutions. It is associated with all forms of education; formal, informal and non-formal. It consists of collection of books and other materials maintained and managed for reading, consultation, study and research and organised to provide access to users, with a well-trained staff to provide services to meet the needs of its users. It is considered as the hub of any educational set up, provides information and idea that are fundamental to functioning successfully in the increasingly information and knowledge-based society. It is, therefore, able to equip pupils and students' imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens (IFLA/UNESCO, (2002) cited in Bamigboye, Alegbeleye, and **Aramide,** 2016).

The school library is a place where children and teenagers absorb cultural values and knowledge, hence it is seen as a powerful agent of learning, central to engaging students in the transformation of information into deep knowledge and understanding, and providing them with life skill (Gordon, 2012). In addition to the educational aspect of the school and library, it is also set up to educate pupils to take an active part in a healthy and constructive society. During the years that children are in school, they cope with personal and social problems, some of which are ordinary and natural, such as learning difficulties, parent-child relations, growing up, and sexuality. However, sometimes they must also cope with more unusual problems, such as the divorce of parents, a death in the family, or a serious health problem (Baruchson-Arbib, 2000).

School librarians *are information specialists who work collaboratively with classroom teachers in planning, teaching, and evaluating students. They hold both recognised teaching and librarianship qualification (ASLA, 2007). They are important due to their combined knowledge of teaching curriculum, library and information management.* At this critical time, school librarians'roles are being redefined due to expansion of knowledge, abilities, skills, and habits of mind required for them to fill those roles; and engaging in profound change within their organisations as they cope with new methods of learning, information-seeking, source preferences, and forms of competition, as well as an ever-changing electronic information environment and changing expectations on the part of those they serve. The role of school librarians can never be over-emphasised as they identify important concepts of literature, information literacy, and current trends in library practice and how these relate to one another.

As cross-curricular information coordinators, school librarians consistently provide clear explanations of information literacy content, answers student questions accurately and provides feedback that further enhance their learning just as they seek out content-related information resources for professional development in the area of information literacy. Also, in areas of strategies to ameliorate students challenges which are affecting their academics, the school librarians play critical role as they adapt instructions to diverse pedagogical techniques and are proactive in uncovering students' misconceptions and addressing them before proceeding. The school library is one of the main institutions where developmental bibliotherapy is needed. Consequently, school libraries are encouraged to undertake work that is socially inclusive and working with people with mental health difficulties fulfils this initiative. Partnership working is also important to modern school libraries, and both self-help and creative bibliotherapy schemes enable school libraries to work with other organisations from the health sector, social services, and voluntary organisations. Current government initiatives focus on the health and well-being of a community as a target for improvement. Bibliotherapy can contribute to school libraries' role in meeting these targets.

The process of bibliotherapy as a library service

must be understood to be one that may be initiated by clients with the problem, by a bibliotherapist, or a school librarian in combination with the client or therapist-with-client. The statement of the client's problem is never the librarian's; the librarian may assist in the analysis only in relation to what the school librarian needs to know to make wise selection of the materials that can be useful. The school librarian must know which forms of literature (print, film or recording) can address the client's situation in relation to the problem to select the materials reflecting best the aspects of the problem which need understanding and resolution.

The school librarian as a custodian of this strategy provides clients with any form of encouragement needed to undertake reflection and insight. In the bibliotherapeutic process, the client must make most of the efforts to read, to reflect, to discuss, to articulate insights, and to embody new understanding in changed behaviour or orientation to the situation. Bibliotherapy is not a magic one-time thing, but a cyclic process, with small effects cumulating and the potential of major change coming in a series of small, non-traumatic transformations of attitude or behaviour (Rubin, 1978). Therefore, it is expedient that a school librarian who wish to engage in bibliotherapeutic process must possess certain qualities which include; a balanced personality which implies emotional stability, physical well-being, mature judgement, and the ability to channel personal feelings and to direct them to the best interest of those whom he desires to help, ability to work with people, including the competence to instruct and supervise other personnel and associates, the willingness to familiarise oneself with the community as well as the individual, ability and skill to empathise with the misfortunes and shortcomings of others and react with sufficient facility to be of help, an understanding of the goal desired in each instance, together with a willingness to accept responsibility for the action taken, and the ability to assume, without reluctance and arrogance, the authority necessary to meet each situation.

Zaccaria et al (1978) see the bibliotherapeutic role of the school librarian as having an awareness of the specific needs of the young people. Therefore, it is assumed that the school librarian is in an excellent position to recognise the dreamer, the would-be artist, the incipient delinquent, not only through close observation, but also through specific titles requested. Having organised the material, the school librarian moves forward to see that books reach the hands of the clients for which they would be most profitable - the right book for the right child at the right time. Thus, since bibliotherapy cannot be used with all children, in all settings, or for all purposes, practitioners must be selective in its use. It should be noted that books are useful not only for helping children identify emotions which may be troubling, but for helping practitioners establish trust with them. Thus, bibliotherapist must be aware of the limitations of the bibliotherapeutic approach. Bibliotherapy is intended as an adjunct to treatment, not the core treatment approach. Rubin (1978) noted that a critical issue of using books in treatment is not necessarily what books do to clients, but what clients do to reading. That is, clients may develop unrealistic expectations about solving a problem through a book because they do not understand the limitations of the bibliotherapeutic approach. Therefore, adequate knowledge of bibliotherapy is required of school librarians who intends to use the strategy among the students.

Knowledge is something which each individual learner must construct for and by himself. Gutsche (2010) observed that an increasing number of positions in school libraries are moving closer to the technical end of the scale and that consequently technology competencies are starting to comprise an ever-growing piece of the performance pie, impacting every job in the school library. She contends that new competencies must be defined and that everyone who works in a school library must stay nimble and ready to receive new knowledge and skills. Also, Salter (2003) emphasised that the librarian of the 21st century should be the product of what we observe about ourselves and the critical self-analysis that follows. As to fulfill the needs of children it is important to monitor their development especially in this new era of digital and borderless environment.

Since there will always be one form of issues and

challenges or the other, it is expected that school librarian, as a major stakeholder in the school settings demonstrates vast knowledge of various approaches to tackle students' challenges. Caring about students' lives goes beyond schooling alone, school librarian is charged with the responsibilities to initiate the collection and study of data relating to student needs and differences and use such data to improve the instruction and services provided by the school. Under the guidance of the school librarian, students should create their own tool to either directly or indirectly evaluate themselves in-terms of mood, emotions, psychological and mental health. Upon consultation, school librarian should be proactive in uncovering student misconceptions and addressing them before proceeding. Also, school librarians empower students by instilling in them a love for reading from early ages; teaching new ways of learning; guiding them to read and think critically; and offering technology skills. They also serve as leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher and programme administrator as well as lead in building 21st century skills by collaborating with teachers to provide essential skills of critical thinking, digital literacy and technology; foster love of reading; help students meet the common core standards through bibliotherapeutic approach.

The Nigerian School Library Association and the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria are agents responsible for the development and regulating the practice of school librarianship in Nigeria respectively. In the light that the Federal Ministry of Education develops curriculum and syllabuses for schools and has school libraries as a vital part of facilities to be provided at the primary and secondary school levels. It is very necessary that school librarians in Nigeria possess adequate knowledge of bibliotherapy in order to provide support to students and teachers using books. In such a time of transition, the concepts of knowledge, perception and attitude of librarians towards bibliotherapy as a therapeutic strategy is germane.

Moreover, the researcher is of the opinion, that not all students' problems require medical attention, the school librarian needs to be equipped with vast knowledge of students challenges and various therapeutic strategies such as bibliotherapy to be used to ameliorate these challenges. When school librarians are armed with the knowledge of various challenges facing students' progress in their academics and private lives, they will be able to proffer plausible solution through the help of bibliotherapy as a strategy. Failure of school librarians to equip themselves with various strategies as curative measure to solve students' issue and challenges may negatively affect students' academic performance. Before books are used with a child, it is expected that school librarian should be acquainted with it (Sridhar and Vaughn, 2000). So, in the absence of such prior knowledge and experiences, a working strategy may turn to start having adverse effect on students which may be detrimental to both mental and academic performance of students. Also, school librarian must realise that a particular book will affect students differently, partly because of its uniqueness and individual life experiences. Therefore, some students will appear more moved by a book than others. Prior to using bibliotherapy, the school librarians should first develop rapport with students in which the presenting problem is discussed, and the topic explored. After such time, bibliotherapy may be a useful tool in helping students openly discuss, process, and explore their feelings. However, the perception of school librarians about bibliotherapy would determine the extent of knowledge which they intend to acquire about bibliotherapy.

Perception has to do with understanding issues. It is the psychological ability to process or use information received through the sense organs. Perception is the cognitive impression that formed "reality" which in turn influences the individual's actions and behaviour towards an object. The view of school librarian has a lot to do with students' development. But when such vital personnel in a school system are not alert to students' needs and challenges, this negatively contributes to poor school practices that may result in some students being ill-served by the school. Some school librarians make decisions and recommendations based on self-serving interests, while some does not comply with school and government regulations on

the psycho- social behaviour of students. On the other hand, some school librarians are unaware of the concept of bibliotherapy while others do not read current literature pertaining to information literacy and therefore is unaware of emerging trends in solving students' challenges of life. Therefore, school librarians should engage in professional development, join professional organisations and attend conferences, workshops, meetings, or seminars as these would drive the way at which they view bibliotherapy. It is the responsibility of school librarian to engage school management to implement policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and service for all students. Therefore, perception of school librarian on bibliotherapy is an important predictor of successful education of children with emotional and psychological problems.

Townsend (2009) asserts that bibliotherapy aids in bringing a child's concerns to the forefront, encouraging personal expression, analysing the child's beliefs and behaviours, identifying with a literary persona, facilitating relaxation, providing information, giving insight, discovering new interests, prompting communication, presenting new attitudes and values, creating the awareness of universality of experience, encouraging catharsis, and learning and experimenting with solutions in a fun, non-threatening environment. There are situations whereby school librarian exhibits poor or bad attitude to bibliotherapy as a strategy, then students will continue to languish in problems of different causes which will apparently truncate their learning processes. They often need models to aid them in processing scary and difficult feelings since school librarians' attitude is instrumental to their overall growth and development, hence bibliotherapy is useful not only as a technique for treating clinical struggles, but also as an aid in fostering growth and adjustment.

The bane of viable use of bibliotherapy as an effective therapeutic scheme to instill reading habits and to serve as curative measure on students' challenges is basically due to lack of adequate monitoring of students' development, school librarians' low knowledge, poor perception and non-challant attitude to bibliotherapy. Preliminary

investigation has shown that students spend approximately 14,000 hours at school from kindergarten through high school graduation. Given the vast amount of time spent in the school setting where there is growing non-academic needs of children and adolescents, bibliotherapy represents a valuable tool for school librarians to meet the needs of students experiencing stress and issues. Failure on the part of school librarians to be equipped with productive activity that can promote good mental health, increases empathy, sharpen the mind, and impact positively on the students' behaviour may spell doom. This is a significant concern, especially considering the countless number of school librarians in Nigeria.

Also, there has been little or no research that has been identified to examine school librarians' attitudes toward bibliotherapy which may predict their use of bibliotherapy as a therapeutic technique. Some current researches on attitude towards bibliotherapy did not capture school librarians' attitude of bibliotherapy as a strategy to solving students' challenges. While school librarian attitude towards bibliotherapy play a prominent role in the lives of children of school age. In an ideal situation, every student should receive high-quality mental healthcare to help them cope with tragedies, day-to-day issues and challenges that may want to affect their learning performance, but in reality, Nigerian students do not have access to mental health treatment. Likewise, issues of access, funding, and fear of stigma from any of their challenges can prevent them from getting support. School librarians are often in a unique position within the community to develop long-term, supportive relationships with students and to create spaces in which they might find support, understanding, healing, and growth.

Attitudes influence thinking, serving as behavioural manuals persuading individuals to avoid or engage in certain behaviours. Attitudes are subjective, evaluative, and predispose an individual to act in a particular manner. If school librarians have positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy, then they may be more likely to use bibliotherapy in their work with school children. This study has therefore provided insight and understanding about school librarians'

perception, knowledge and attitude towards bibliotherapy as strategy to solve students' mental, emotional, and psychological issues.

In summary, bibliotherapy influences cognitive and affective changes which occur in the reader that enables him or her to fully or partially satisfy an unfulfilled need. Through bibliotherapy young people can be helped to cope with a multitude of problems. It is for the purpose of rebuilding thought structure. This can be achieved by memorising and meditating upon important passages in the books read. It is important that children of queried or immoral and maladaptive behaviour are carefully and effectively moulded or corrected through the provision of good books since it is to refocus children's emotions. Green (2008) argues that many children suffer from a short attention span, hence reading books refocus their attention because there is nothing more relaxing than sitting outside in the garden with a good book to read, whilst the screen of the computer is bright and makes it hard to relax. Sridhar (2000) opines that bibliotherapy improves reading comprehension, enhances self-esteem and improves behaviour of children.

Conclusion

The study critically engaged literature on how the knowledge, perception and attitude of school librarians can affect the practice bibliotherapy. From the study, it can be established that knowledge, perception ad attitude of school librarians are key to successful implementation of bibliotherapy in schools. Although, the review of literature shows that school librarians need to indicate the possession of basic content analysis skills which would consequently affects their ability to use the information derived from reading literature to solve similar situations around them in the practice of bibliotherapy.

Recommendations

Though bibliotherapy may not solve all the developmental problems faced by library patrons, it could serve as means of anticipating and mitigating against potential developmental issues. Hence, the activities and services of the library can be enhanced to cater for bibliotherapy.

The knowledge, perception and activities of school librarians can influence the actual practice of bibliotherapy. The following recommendations were made to improve the knowledge, perception and attitude of school librarians towards bibliotherapy

1. Stake holders within the school (administrators, teachers and parents) should cooperate with the school librarian in the practice of bibliotherapy by providing the librarian with adequate information about patrons and also giving the librarian the needed freedom and backing to effectively practice bibliotherapy.

2. Stakeholders such as education authorities and parent's association should ensure that the needed resources (books) to adequately practice bibliotherapy are provided during collection development.

3. Library boards, school library associations and library schools should continually make provisions for orientation about developmental issues faced by library patrons and the right bibliotherapy strategy to solve them.

4. Authors and publishers whose goal is to provide books that can be used for bibliotherapy practices should also create notes or workbooks that will make it easier for the librarian to recommend books to the right patrons

5. School librarians should create dedicated time for bibliotherapy in their library timetable and their personal work schedules.

6. Space for bibliotherapy sessions should be created in the physical arrangement of school libraries.

7. Also, the school librarian must continually build rapport with library patrons so as to encourage openness and trust.

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