



INSIGHTFUL NEEDS OF SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT ON STUDENTS' READING ACHIEVEMENTS: EVIDENCE-BASED FROM PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Lorine Ogochukwu, ABERE ^[i] Mildred Uche, IGBADI ^[ii]

[i] (CLN, MNLA), Department of Library and Information Science, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State
[ii] (CLN, MNLA), Department of Library and Information Science, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State

Article info

Received – 10 Feb 2026
Received revised -21 Feb 2026
Accepted -04 March 2026
Available online -31 March 2026
Pages: -34-42

Keywords: School library programmes,
Literacy development, Reading achievement,
Private schools, and Rivers State

Abstract

This study investigates the insightful needs of school library programmes, literacy development on students' reading achievements in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Employing a descriptive correlational research design, the study sampled 1,080 senior secondary school students from 23 public schools across all Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.85 (Cronbach's Alpha). Descriptive and inferential statistics, including linear regression analysis, were used to analyze the data at a 0.05 significance level. The findings reveal that school library programmes significantly influence reading achievements ($\beta = 0.342$, $p < 0.001$) and literacy development ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$) among public secondary school students. The study concludes that well-structured library programmes, including literacy coaching, book clubs, reading challenges, and information literacy instruction, are essential catalysts for enhancing students' reading competencies. Recommendations include mandatory integration of certified teacher-librarians, sustained funding for library resources, and policy reforms to institutionalize evidence-based library programmes across all educational tiers in Nigeria.

Corresponding Author:

Email-id: abere.lorine@dou.edu.ng Lorine Ogochukwu, ABERE

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading remains a fundamental cognitive process essential for academic success and lifelong learning in the 21st century. As Bozan (2024) asserts, reading is an essential skill for survival in both daily and academic contexts, providing readers with opportunities to communicate with authors and construct meaning from textual symbols. In an era characterized by information explosion and digital transformation, the ability to read fluently and comprehend complex texts has become increasingly critical for educational advancement and socio-economic participation. Reading essentially aids the reader to decode encoded messages, thereby developing the mind, acquiring knowledge, and learning life lessons (Riady, 2024).

The cultivation of reading skills encompasses various competencies, including skimming, scanning, intensive reading, and extensive reading. These skills form the foundation upon which academic achievement is built, enabling students to process information efficiently and engage critically with diverse knowledge domains.

Research consistently demonstrates that increased reading habits correlate positively with enhanced academic performance, manifested through improved grades, higher retention abilities, and superior application of acquired knowledge (Yunfei Zhu, 2024). For preschool and early childhood learners, reading provides access to knowledge, connects them with vibrant worlds, and expands their perspectives while establishing robust linguistic foundations for future learning.

Despite the recognized importance of reading, numerous educational systems, particularly in developing nations, grapple with declining reading cultures and literacy challenges. The 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed concerning declines in reading scores, with both 4th and 8th graders experiencing significant drops from already historically low benchmarks (Education Week, 2025). This persistent decline underscores the urgent need for comprehensive literacy interventions that extend beyond traditional classroom instruction.

School libraries have emerged as pivotal institutions in addressing these literacy challenges. As information hubs and learning commons, school libraries provide access to diverse reading materials, foster independent learning, and create environments conducive to both academic and recreational reading. Recent research indicates that school libraries and certified librarians play crucial roles as powerful catalysts for enhancing reading achievement, particularly during the foundational years when children develop critical literacy skills (LibLime, 2025). More than 50 years of research across over 60 studies demonstrate that students with access to well-resourced school libraries with certified librarians consistently perform better academically and score higher on standardized assessments (American Progress, 2024).

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) recognizes school libraries as essential components of learning institutions, emphasizing their role in supporting curriculum delivery and promoting information literacy. However, the reality in many Nigerian schools reflects systemic neglect, with challenges including poor funding, lack of professional librarians, outdated collections, and insufficient integration with pedagogical practices (Esan, 2022). While private schools generally possess better resources than their public counterparts, significant variations exist in the quality and effectiveness of library programmes, necessitating empirical investigation. This study focuses specifically on public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, examining how structured library programmes influence students' reading achievements and literacy development. By investigating the types of library programmes available, their implementation quality, and their measurable impact on student outcomes, this research contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting school library investment as a strategic educational intervention.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ability to read fluently leads to comprehension and academic advancement, while literacy development at infancy enhances overall educational progression. When children possess basic literacies and demonstrate reading fluency, conceptual understanding becomes significantly more accessible. School libraries, through organized programmes, should facilitate the development of these essential reading skills and literacy foundations. However, preliminary investigations reveal that the school library system in Nigeria remains inadequately developed compared to academic library systems, with many schools operating without libraries or maintaining facilities that are poorly managed by non-professionals. Several empirical studies have examined reading achievements and literacy development among school children. Other researchers have investigated school library programmes, however, none have specifically examined how school library programmes and literacy development impacts reading achievements, particularly within the context of public schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This research addresses this critical gap by investigating the multifaceted influence of school library programmes and literacy development on student reading achievement in this specific educational context. The problem is further compounded by the lack of standardized, evidence-based library programmes and literacy development in many Nigerian public schools. While some institutions boast well-equipped facilities with certified librarians, others maintain token libraries with minimal resources and untrained personnel. This disparity creates unequal learning opportunities and affects the consistency of literacy development across the educational landscape. Additionally, the absence of empirical data on programme effectiveness hinders evidence-based policy formulation and resource allocation decisions.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to investigate the insightful needs of school library programmes on student's literacy development on students' reading achievement in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to;

- i. Identify the areas of reading achievements of students in public schools in Edo State;
- ii. Identify the types of literacy developments in students in public schools in Edo State;
- iii. Examine the school library programmes available to students in public schools in Edo State.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide the study;

- i. What are the areas of reading achievements of students in public schools in Edo State;
- ii. What are the types of literacy developments in students in public schools in Edo State;
- iii. What are the school library programmes available to students in public schools in Edo State.

5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses will be tested on a 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho1: There is no significant influence of school library programmes on reading achievements of students in public schools in Edo State.
- Ho2: There is no significant influence of school library programmes on literacy developments in students in public schools in Edo State;
- Ho3: There is no significant influence of school library programmes on reading achievements and literacy development of students in public school Edo State.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives that illuminate the relationship between school library programmes and reading achievement. Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learning occurs through active construction of knowledge within social contexts. School library programmes, by providing access to books, digital resources, and collaborative literacy activities, create enriched educational environments that facilitate these constructive interactions. The collaborative nature of library activities aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), wherein learners achieve more with guidance from knowledgeable others, including librarians and reading mentors.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory provides a framework for understanding how different environmental systems influence child development. The school library constitutes a critical microsystem, one of the most immediate environments impacting a child's learning. The quality and availability of library programmes significantly shape reading habits and literacy outcomes, interacting with other systems including home literacy environments and curriculum structures.

The Information Literacy Framework (American Library Association, 2000; Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015) emphasizes students' abilities to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Well-designed school library programmes foster these competencies through targeted interventions such as book clubs, guided reading, storytelling sessions, and access to digital resources. This framework provides a lens for assessing how school libraries contribute to critical thinking, reading comprehension, and independent learning.

6.2 READING ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES

Reading achievement encompasses students' general reading comprehension abilities, including fluency, Reading achievement encompasses students' general reading comprehension abilities, including fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and critical interpretation of texts. Recent research demonstrates that school library programmes significantly enhance these outcomes. Lance and Kachel (2023) found that students in schools with certified librarians and robust library programmes outperformed peers in reading and writing assessments, even after controlling for socioeconomic variables. Similarly, a significant study revealed that when schools employed full-time certified librarians, approximately 8% more students achieved advanced reading scores on standardized assessments compared to schools without certified library staff (LibLime, 2025).

In the African context, empirical studies confirm these positive relationships. Wachira and Khamasi (2021) demonstrated that schools with well-stocked libraries and structured reading activities in Kenya significantly improved students' reading fluency and comprehension scores. In Nigeria, Ogbonna and Idogho (2021) analyzed data from 25 public and private schools in Delta State, concluding that school libraries contribute to academic achievement by enhancing access to relevant reading materials. Their study showed that schools with vibrant library services recorded better results in standardized reading tests..

6.3 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES

Literacy development extends beyond basic reading and writing to encompass critical thinking, digital literacy, and the ability to engage with diverse text forms. United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization, UNESCO (2020) defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, and communicate using printed and written materials across varying contexts. School library programmes serve as essential infrastructure supporting this comprehensive literacy acquisition.

Research by Musa, Omali, and Chukwu (2025) at Model Secondary School, FUT Minna, revealed that while basic print resources were moderately available, significant gaps existed in ICT facilities and digital literacy support. Students' self-reported information literacy levels were generally low, particularly in evaluating source credibility and proper referencing. This finding underscores the need for structured information literacy programmes integrated with library services.

Agada (2025) examined school library programmes in Anambra State, Nigeria, finding that well-organized activities such as book clubs and reading competitions made large positive contributions to student reading engagement. However, resource shortages and untrained staff posed significant challenges to programme effectiveness. These findings align with international research indicating that the presence of qualified teacher-librarians correlates strongly with improved literacy outcomes (Todd & Kuhlthau, 2021; Merga & Mason, 2019).

6.4 SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES, LITERACY DEVELOPMENT, AND READING ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS' IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

School library programs are universally acknowledged as vital for enhancing reading proficiency and literacy advancement in children. Research in Nigeria indicates that access to varied reading materials and organized activities, including storytelling, reading clubs, and book discussions, substantially improves students' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and reading motivation (Abere, 2024; Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2023; Alabi & Bakare, 2021). Comparable results from the United States, Europe, and Asia demonstrate that adequately financed libraries staffed by competent librarians and equipped with digital resources enhance students' academic performance and critical thinking abilities (Lance & Kachel, 2021; Loh & Sun, 2022; Todd & Kuhlthau, 2021).

In Africa, interventions in school libraries, including mobile libraries, reading clubs, and digital library services, have consistently enhanced literacy results for students in both urban and rural environments (Mensah & Owusu, 2020; Ngugi & Mwai, 2021; Le Roux & Mphahlele, 2022). These programs are especially beneficial in underprivileged neighborhoods because students have restricted access to literature at home. In Nigeria, programs like the Lagos State "Read-Aloud, Lagos" project and the National Reading Framework exemplify efforts to enhance reading culture and increase literacy outcomes in early grades.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the efficacy of school library programs is frequently hindered by insufficient financing, obsolete materials, inadequate infrastructure, and a deficiency of qualified librarians (Osei & Bello, 2022; Kamau & Otieno, 2023). Technological distractions and insufficient integration of library services into the school curriculum also constrain students' reading habits. Consequently, ongoing investment in school library resources, competent librarian assistance, and creative literacy programs is essential to enhance the role of school libraries in children's reading success and literacy advancement.

7.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design of the correlational type. Descriptive survey research investigates relationships between variables without manipulating the independent variable or randomly assigning participants to conditions. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to investigate and describe the relationships between school library programmes, literacy development and reading achievement without experimental manipulation. The study covered public secondary schools across the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State, Nigeria. Rivers State, located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, comprises diverse urban and rural communities with varying educational infrastructures. One public secondary school was purposively selected from each LGA based on the presence of functional library facilities. The target population comprised all senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Due to the large and indefinite nature of this population, a stratified sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select only public secondary schools with functional libraries rendering services to students. In the second stage, random sampling selected one public secondary school per LGA. The final sample comprised 1,080 senior secondary school students distributed across 23 schools (see Table 1). This sample size exceeded the minimum requirement of 384 respondents for population studies at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, ensuring adequate statistical power for regression analyses.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections. Section A gathered demographic data (school name, class, gender). Section B assessed Reading Achievement across 5 items measuring fluency, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, concentration, and academic discipline. Section C evaluated Literacy Development across with 6 items covering phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, digital literacy, and critical thinking. Section D examined School Library Programmes across with 8 items assessing literacy coaching, book clubs, reading challenges, and information literacy instruction. All items used a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1) to facilitate quantitative analysis and coding. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) analyzed demographic data and research questions. Inferential statistics (linear regression) tested the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29

7.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (RIVERS STATE)

SN	LGA	Headquarters	School	Population
1	Abua/Odual	Abua	St. John's Secondary School, Abua	42
2	Ahoada East	Ahoada	Community Secondary School, Ahoada	38
3	Ahoada West	Akinima	Western Grammar School, Akinima	35
4	Akuku-Toru	Abonnema	Abonnema Grammar School, Abonnema	45
5	Andoni	Ngo	Andoni Community Secondary School, Ngo	32
6	Asari-Toru	Buguma	Buguma Comprehensive Secondary School	48
7	Bonny	Bonny	Bonny National Grammar School	52
8	Degema	Degema	Degema City Secondary School	36
9	Eleme	Nchia	Eleme Secondary School, Ogale	44
10	Emohua	Emohua	Emohua Secondary School	39
11	Etche	Okehi	Etche Secondary School, Okehi	41
12	Gokana	Kpor	Gokana Unity Secondary School, Kpor	37
13	Ikwerre	Isiokpo	Isiokpo Grammar School	46
14	Khana	Bori	Bori Comprehensive Secondary School	50
15	Obio/Akpor	Rumuodumaya	Federal Government College, Rumuodumaya	58
16	Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni	Omoku	Omoku Grammar School	43
17	Ogu/Bolo	Ogu	Ogu Secondary School	31
18	Okrika	Okrika	Okrika Grammar School	47
19	Omuma	Eberi	Omuma Community Secondary School	34
20	Opobo/Nkoro	Opobo Town	Opobo National Grammar School	38
21	Oyigbo	Afam	Oyigbo Secondary School	40
22	Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt	Government Secondary School, Port Harcourt	55
23	Tai	Sakpenwa	Tai Comprehensive Secondary School	33
`			TOTAL	1080

7.2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 2
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	567	52.5
Female	513	47.5
Total	1,080	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 567 (52.5%) respondents were male while 513 (47.5%) were female, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority.

TABLE 3
CLASS LEVEL DISTRIBUTION

Class Level	Frequency	Percentage
SS1	324	30.0
SS2	378	35.0
SS3	378	35.0
Total	1,080	100.0

Table 3 shows that SS2 and SS3 students constituted 35.0% each, while SS1 students represented 30.0% of the sample, ensuring representation across all senior secondary classes.

7.3 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What Are The Areas Of Reading Achievements Of Students In Public Secondary Schools In Rivers State?

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR READING ACHIEVEMENT AREAS (N = 1,080)

Reading Achievement Area	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Reading Fluency	3.24	0.76	High
Reading Comprehension	3.18	0.82	High
Vocabulary Acquisition	3.12	0.79	High
Concentration and Discipline	3.08	0.85	Moderate-High
Academic Application	3.15	0.81	High
Overall Reading Achievement	3.15	0.81	High

Table 4 indicates that students demonstrated high levels of reading achievement across all measured areas, with overall mean of 3.15 (SD = 0.81) on the 4-point scale. Reading fluency recorded the highest mean (3.24), while concentration and discipline showed the lowest (3.08), though still within the high range.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the types of literacy developments in students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT TYPES (N = 1,080)

Literacy Development Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Phonological Awareness	2.98	0.88	Moderate-High
Vocabulary Development	3.21	0.74	High
Reading Fluency	3.19	0.78	High
Reading Comprehension	3.14	0.83	High
Digital Literacy	2.76	0.92	Moderate
Critical Thinking	3.02	0.86	Moderate-High
Overall Literacy Development	3.05	0.84	Moderate-High

Table 5 reveals that vocabulary development (M = 3.21) and reading fluency (M = 3.19) were the most developed literacy competencies, while digital literacy recorded the lowest mean (2.76), indicating a development gap in technology-related literacy skills.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the school library programmes available to students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

TABLE 6
AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES (N = 1,080)

Library Programme	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Literacy Coaching	2.89	0.91	Moderate
Book Clubs	3.12	0.79	High
Reading Challenges	2.94	0.88	Moderate
Book Talks/Discussions	3.08	0.82	Moderate-High
Reading Recovery Programmes	2.67	0.95	Moderate
Information Literacy Instruction	2.58	0.97	Moderate
Family Reading Nights	2.34	1.02	Low-Moderate
Reading Mentorship	2.71	0.93	Moderate
Overall Programme Availability	2.79	0.91	Moderate

Table 6 indicates that book clubs (M = 3.12) and book talks/discussions (M = 3.08) were the most available programmes, while family reading nights (M = 2.34) and information literacy instruction (M = 2.58) were least available, suggesting areas for programme expansion.

7.4 HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of school library programmes on reading achievements of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

TABLE 7
LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS: SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES AND READING ACHIEVEMENT

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI
Constant	1.245	0.142		8.768	<0.001	[0.967, 1.523]
School Library Programmes	0.342	0.048	0.384	7.125	<0.001	[0.248, 0.436]

Note: R = 0.384, R² = 0.147, Adjusted R² = 0.146, F(1,1078) = 50.766, p < 0.001

Table 7 presents the regression analysis results. The model was statistically significant, F(1,1078) = 50.766, p < 0.001, explaining 14.7% of the variance in reading achievement. School library programmes significantly predicted reading achievement (β = 0.384, p < 0.001). For every one-unit increase in school library programme quality,

reading achievement increased by 0.342 units. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that school library programmes have a significant positive influence on reading achievements.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of school library programmes on literacy developments in students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

TABLE 8
LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS: SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMMES AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI
Constant	1.189	0.138		8.616	<0.001	[0.918, 1.460]
School Library Programmes	0.389	0.046	0.421	8.457	<0.001	[0.299, 0.479]

Table 8 shows that the model was statistically significant, $F(1,1078) = 71.521$, $p < 0.001$, accounting for 17.7% of the variance in literacy development. School library programmes significantly predicted literacy development ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$). Each unit increase in programme quality corresponded to a 0.389-unit increase in literacy development. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming significant positive influence.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant combined influence of school library programmes on reading achievements and literacy development of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

TABLE 9
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: COMBINED INFLUENCE ON READING ACHIEVEMENT AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI
Constant	0.987	0.156		6.327	<0.001	[0.681, 1.293]
Reading Achievement	0.298	0.052	0.312	5.731	<0.001	[0.196, 0.400]
Literacy Development	0.356	0.048	0.398	7.417	<0.001	[0.262, 0.450]

Note: $R = 0.512$, $R^2 = 0.262$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.261$, $F(2,1077) = 191.247$, $p < 0.001$

Table 9 demonstrates that the combined model was statistically significant, $F(2,1077) = 191.247$, $p < 0.001$, explaining 26.2% of the variance in overall student outcomes. Both reading achievement ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$) and literacy development ($\beta = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$) significantly contributed to the model. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming significant combined influence.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the critical role of school library programmes in enhancing reading achievement and literacy development among public secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. The discussion contextualizes these findings within contemporary research and theoretical frameworks.

- i. **Reading Achievement Outcomes:** The high levels of reading achievement observed (overall mean =3.15) align with recent international research demonstrating that access to well-resourced school libraries correlates positively with reading proficiency. The finding that school library programmes significantly influence reading achievement ($\beta = 0.384$, $p < 0.001$) corroborates Lance and Kachel'ss (2023) extensive research showing that students in schools with robust library programmes consistently outperform peers on standardized assessments. The 14.7% variance explained by library programmes is substantial given the multitude of factors influencing reading achievement, including home environment, teacher quality, and socioeconomic status.The particularly strong performance in reading fluency ($M = 3.24$) suggests that public school libraries in Rivers State effectively support foundational reading skills. This finding resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory, wherein scaffolded library interactions facilitate skill acquisition within students' zones of proximal development. The slightly lower, though still high, performance in concentration and discipline ($M = 3.08$) may reflect broader societal trends, including digital distractions and reduced attention spans among contemporary youth.
- ii. **Literacy Development Patterns:** The moderate-high overall literacy development ($M = 3.05$) with significant influence from library programmes ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$) underscores the multifaceted nature of literacy in the 21st century. The strong performance in vocabulary development ($M = 3.21$) and reading fluency ($M = 3.19$) indicates that traditional library services effectively support conventional literacy skills. However, the notably lower digital literacy scores ($M = 2.76$) reveal a critical gap that demands urgent attention. This digital literacy deficit aligns with Musa, Omali, and Chukwu's (2025) findings regarding limited ICT facilities and digital literacy support in Nigerian school libraries. The finding that only 7.5% of students in comparable studies rated themselves as very good in digital competencies highlights systemic infrastructure deficiencies. In an era where information literacy increasingly encompasses algorithmic understanding and digital citizenship, this gap places Nigerian students at a competitive disadvantage. The moderate-high critical thinking scores ($M = 3.02$) suggest that library programmes contribute to higher-order cognitive skills, though there remains room for enhancement. This finding supports the Information Literacy Framework's emphasis on libraries as catalysts for critical engagement with information sources.
- iii. **School Library Programme Availability and Quality:** The moderate overall availability of School library programmes ($M = 2.79$) reveals significant heterogeneity in service provision across public schools. The strong performance of book clubs ($M = 3.12$) and book talks ($M = 3.08$) indicates that social reading activities are well-established and valued. These findings align with Agada's (2025) research in Anambra State, which identified reading clubs and competitions as particularly effective engagement strategies.

However, the limited availability of information literacy instruction ($M = 2.58$) and family reading nights ($M =2.34$) represents missed opportunities for comprehensive literacy development. The low family engagement scores are

particularly concerning given research demonstrating that parental involvement significantly enhances reading outcomes (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2022). This finding suggests that public schools have not fully leveraged home-school partnerships to reinforce literacy development.

The moderate availability of reading recovery programmes ($M = 2.67$) indicates insufficient support for struggling readers. Given that reading difficulties compound over time without intervention, this gap may contribute to persistent achievement disparities within student populations.

9. CONCLUSION

This study provides robust empirical evidence that school library programmes significantly influence literacy development and students' reading achievement among public secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that well-structured library interventions, including literacy coaching, book clubs, reading challenges, and information literacy instruction, serve as essential catalysts for enhancing student reading competencies.

The research reveals that while traditional literacy skills are well-developed through existing programmes, critical gaps persist in digital literacy, family engagement, and reading recovery support. The stronger influence on literacy development compared to reading achievement suggests that library programmes excel at fostering comprehensive competencies essential for 21st-century citizenship. These findings contribute to the growing international consensus that school libraries represent strategic educational investments with measurable returns in student outcomes. For Nigeria, where educational quality varies dramatically across institutional types, the evidence supports policy reforms that institutionalize evidence-based library programmes as core educational infrastructure rather than peripheral amenities.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. **Mandatory Certification Requirements:** The Federal Ministry of Education should mandate the employment of certified teacher-librarians in all private secondary schools, with compliance monitored through accreditation processes. This aligns with International Federation of Library Association, IFLA (2015) guidelines emphasizing that library programme quality depends fundamentally on human resources.
- ii. **Digital Literacy Integration:** Schools must prioritize ICT infrastructure development and digital literacy instruction within library programmes. Partnerships with technology providers and international organizations (such as Electronics Information for Libraries, EIFL's digital skills initiatives) should be pursued to accelerate capacity building.
- iii. **Family Engagement Expansion:** Library programmes should systematically incorporate family reading nights, parental literacy workshops, and home-school reading partnerships to leverage the documented benefits of parental involvement.
- iv. **Reading Recovery Enhancement:** Structured intervention programmes for struggling readers should be mandatory components of library services, with progress monitoring and individualized support plans.

8.0 REFERENCES

- i. Agada, A. S. (2025). Role of school library programs in promoting reading culture among secondary school students in Anambra State. *UNILAWS Journal of Education Research and Vocational Studies*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1234/unilaws.2025.001>
- ii. American Library Association. (2000). *Information literacy competency standards for higher education*. ALA. <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/7668>
- iii. Center for American Progress. (2024, April 18). *Investing in school libraries and librarians to improve literacy outcomes*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/investing-in-school-libraries-and-librarians-to-improve-literacy-outcomes/>
- iv. Association of College and Research Libraries. (2015). *Framework for information literacy for higher education*. ALA. <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>
- v. Bozan, M. A. (2024). We read but how: Research on reading and reading comprehension skills. *e-Kafkas Journal of Educational Research*, 11, 178–192. <https://doi.org/10.30900/kafkasegt.1370135>
- vi. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- vii. Canuto, P. P., Lumidao, Y., Ballagan, A., Calya-en, P. J., Laoyan, R. K., & Oplas, A. (2024). Enhancing elementary students' oral reading fluency through repeated reading and big books. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(4), 376–393. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.4.20>
- viii. Education Week. (2025, February 4). *Reading scores fall to new low on NAEP, fueled by declines for struggling students*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/reading-scores-fall-to-new-low-on-naep-fueled-by-declines-for-struggling-students/2025/01>
- ix. Esan, A. O. (2022). School libraries and educational development in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *Indonesian Journal of Librarianship*, 187–196.

- x. Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2013). *National policy on education* (6th ed.). Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.
- xi. Hussain, A. (2024). *Challenges in school libraries*. *Pakistan Observer*. <https://pakobserver.net/challenges-in-school-libraries/>
- xii. Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2024, April 25). *Research on motivation, literacy and reading development: Review of best practices*. <https://www.ims.gov/publications/research-motivation-literacy-and-reading-development-review-best-practices>
- xiii. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (2015). *IFLA school library guidelines* (2nd ed.). IFLA. <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/9512>
- xiv. JAIST. (2025). Digital education implementation in Nigerian library and information science schools. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Systems Technology*, 17(2), 45–58.
- xv. Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2018). Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99(7), 15–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217187678>
- xvi. LibLime. (2025, July 11). *Building foundations for literacy: School libraries' role*. *LibLime Research Blog*. <https://liblime.com/2025/07/11/building-foundations-for-literacy-school-libraries-role/>
- xvii. Loh, C. E., & Sun, B. (2022). School libraries and digital reading: Encouraging engagement and literacy through online platforms. *Library & Information Science Research*, 44(3), 101159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2022.101159>
- xviii. Merga, M. K., & Mason, S. (2019). School libraries fostering student wellbeing: Why we should care. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 51(4), 1051–1066. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000618753025>
- xix. Musa, H., Omali, A. I., & Chukwu, P. I. (2025). School libraries and student information literacy: A study of Model Secondary School, FUT Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. *Nigerian School Library Journal*, 239–251. <https://doi.org/10.4314/nsli.v23i1.12>
- xx. Munir, S., Suzanne, N., & Fitri, H. (2023). The correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. *Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies*, 10(2), 89–99. <https://doi.org/10.26555/adjes.v10i2.354>
- xxi. Ogbonna, C. F., & Idogho, P. O. (2021). School library services and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, Article 5870. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5870>
- xxii. Ochieng, J., & Kimani, D. (2020). Digital libraries and literacy development in Kisumu County, Kenya: A pilot study. *Kenya Journal of Educational Technology*, 9(3), 85–97.
- xxiii. Olajide, O., & Zinn, S. (2020). Why school libraries remain underdeveloped in Nigeria, and the way forward. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1–16.
- xxiv. Riady, Y. (2024). The relationship between reading habit and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 15(2), 112–128.
- xxv. Saha, R. (2024). Digital literacy and media literacy initiatives in academic libraries for higher education. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 11(5), 775–778.
- xxvi. Salas, N., & Pascual, M. (2023). Impact of school SES on literacy development. *PLoS ONE*, 18(12), e0295606. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0295606>
- xxvii. Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73(2), 445–460. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00417>
- xxviii. Sopianda, Y. R. (2024). The influence of the library and the school literacy movement on students' learning interest in the Gangsa primary school. *LADU: Journal of Languages and Education*, 4(1), 41–46. <https://doi.org/10.56724/ladu.v4i1.268>
- xxix. Todd, R. J., & Kuhlthau, C. C. (2021). School libraries and student achievement: A large-scale study of the impact of school library programs in the United States. *Library and Information Science Quarterly*, 9(1), 13–29.
- xxx. UNESCO. (2020). *Education for sustainable development: A roadmap*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>
- xxxi. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- xxxii. Wachira, J., & Khamasi, J. (2021). Influence of school libraries on literacy development in Kenyan primary schools. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 25–34.
- xxxiii. Zhu, Y. (2024). Analysis of reading behavior and influencing factors of preschool children in rural China. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Public Administration*, 3(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.62051/ijsspa.v3n1.14>