

Agenda for Proper use of Library Hour in Primary Schools to Enhance Reading Habit of Pupils in Plateau State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In a learning environment, a child's academic development is strongly rooted to reading. This underscores the importance of the school library in strengthening and nurturing reading skills as the child progresses through the educational system. As the saying goes, "readers are leaders," making reading an essential skill that pupils must acquire early in life. Based on this premise, the present study investigated the proper utilization of library hours in primary schools to enhance the reading habits of pupils in the Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was guided by seven (7) objectives and addressed six (6) research questions. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, with a target population of 1,254 primary four school pupils across 627 public primary schools in the study area. A sample of 120 pupils was selected using simple random sampling within a multi-stage sampling framework. Two structured questionnaires were used for data collection, one for school heads and other one for primary four class teachers were employed for data collection. Both instruments were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instruments were validated for content and tested for reliability, yielding coefficients of 0.71 and 0.73 respectively, using the Cronbach Alpha method. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with mean and standard deviation used to answer the research questions. The findings revealed, among other things, that while many schools do not have functional libraries, they do observe reading hours within classrooms. The study concluded that, there is inadequate provision of library facilities and designated reading hours in primary schools within the study area. It recommended, among other measures, that the Plateau State Government and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) should implement a dedicated library policy, mandate the recruitment and training of library staff and ensure the construction of well-equipped library facilities across all primary schools in the state.

KEYWORDS: Library, library hour, reading habit, pupils and primary schools

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She is interested in Knowledge management, Indigenous knowledge, and Library User productivity. She is married with children.

INTRODUCTION

"Any man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant, and interesting.

The illiterate is a prisoner of Ignorance and prey to many fears in the world that he does not understand. This shows that the most powerful enemy of man is Ignorance; and it does not die by fire but by Knowledge which can only be acquired through education". Oyetunde (2019).

Plateau state is located in Nigeria's middle belt with estimated population of about three million people. Plateau state consists of 17 Local Government Areas with over forty ethno-linguistic groups. It is known as the home of peace and tourism due to its natural

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endowments. The climate is good for agriculture. There are a lot of mineral resources that are not properly harnessed. Good number of the people are not well read. They are mainly small scale farmers. The state could have done better in the area of agriculture if they had acquired more education. They also could have made some tremendous impact in the Nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by applying mechanized agriculture. This is possible through education. Education is conceived as a powerful tool which is instrumental in bringing about the desired changes on the social and cultural life of a person. Education can only be attained through formal or informal teaching which is anchored on Library and Information Services available to all learners.

Library is neither the wall of the building nor the shelves. It is not even the books that stand in the rows; but the knowledge of the universe, captured and systematically organized for use, free of charge. Library is of various types; national, university, public, research, school and private libraries. But this research work is interested in school library. School library is a type of library that supports primary and secondary schools' programs as well as the teaching and learning process. Research shows that the reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are, on average of eight to twenty-one percent, higher than similar schools with no such development (Moustapha, 2023).

Library services for schools are very important. This importance is realized by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the Fourth National Development Plan of 1981–1985, when it recognized library development as an important component of educational services designed to enhance the learning process in the society. According to Xu, Wang, Sturm and Wu (2022) there exist a tangible relationship between the quality of school library and the amounts of books children read as well as a relationship with competence in reading. This underscores the relevance of reading as a key function of library users. Suwato, Setiawan and Machmiah (2022) defines school library as the learning laboratory of the school equipped with books, and book materials. This creates an environment of literature and cultivates the habit of using information resources as teaching tools which will lead to academic achievement. The school library is integral part of the learning process. It facilitates the work of the class room teacher and ensures each student have equitable access to resources irrespective of home opportunities or constraints. It helps students to develop independent study and learning.

Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. It is a cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at meaning. Reading is the only form of entertainment that is also an essential life skill. It is a fundamental skill builder, because every course of study on the planet has matching books and materials to grow with. It helps one to improve vocabulary and expands one's horizons. Every child is supposed to be fully competent in reading to succeed in school. It is a skill that must be nurtured from a child's earliest years or else the child will not read well in subsequent stages of education. Reading Habit refers to habitual and regular reading of books and information materials among individuals. It is one of the attributes of a developed nation. Reading habit can be enhanced through provision of suitable reading materials at home, schools and public places. In measurable terms reading habits is often considered in terms of the number of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading and this habit can be cultivated (Okolo & Iwighrehweta, 2020). Reading time spent in the library relates user's library hour which is a nexus between library and reading. Library Hour is a time allotted mainly in primary and secondary school time table to expose library contents to them, teach them how to use it as well as how to read.

Library hour in primary schools is a kind of advocacy, which is a planned, deliberate effort to raise awareness of the library contents to the users. The major aim of library hour in schools is to attract the school children to like reading. If the school pupils at early age are exposed to reading and instill in them reading habit by ensuring routine library hour for reading, it will become a habit and it will enable the pupils develop and grow with good reading habit which is requisite to good intellectual development and national growth. The focus of this research is to develop a reading plan for primary school pupils through the use of library hour, using Library Committee as agent of training and monitoring. The plan developed in this study if implemented and considered across primary schools where pupils will be exposed to reading hour. This will improve reading skill and overall intellectual development which will benefit the individual pupil and the society at large, hence readers are often referred to as leaders. Nigeria has been under the list of developing countries for many years with low reading habit. It is disheartening that all the efforts of governments at federal, states and local government to be a developed nation proved abortive. All the sectors of Nigerian economy currently, are not doing well including education sector which is the focus of this current study. The country is in recession. Success is not within reach of the people, and we know that success goes with wisdom, wisdom with knowledge; knowledge with education; and education with schools and libraries. It is very pertinent that we start this seemingly giant problem of underdevelopment from scratch (primary school).

Primary school is a school for children between the ages of about five and eleven years. It is the bedrock of education. This stage of development is crucial for the development of future adult citizens and workers. Just as a child cannot stand up and walk from birth, an individual cannot develop without primary education. Primary education is therefore, the foundation upon which the rest of our educational system is built (Joshi & Shukla, 2019). Furthermore, they pointed out that, in underscoring the value of basic education, the Federal Government of Nigeria on September 30, 1999 launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which is aimed at promoting literacy in Nigeria. More so, The National Policy on Education which was first published in 1977 and

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revised in 1981, 1998, 2004, 2007, and now 2014 on its page 31, emphasized that every state ministry of education needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all educational institutions and train librarians and library assistants for this service of promoting literacy in Nigeria. Subsequently, library studies units and departments were opened in the universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, to meet up with the important policy. Massive turnout was made of librarians. They were posted to different schools and organizations to man the libraries. The schools in turn created what is called library hour in their curriculum for those in primary schools to teach them how to read. And the secondary school students on to use the library. The question now is; Are these schools still observe library hours?

There is need for readership campaign starting from primary schools. Children will be encouraged from early stage to develop reading habit. It was emphasized that every state ministry of education needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all educational institutions and train librarians and library assistants for the service. There is therefore a need for an agenda to spur the school authorities to action that could yield the expected positive result.

AGENDA

Implementation of the proper use of library hour requires the cooperative efforts of the school, the pupils, staff and school management. Good use of library hour is instrumental to achieving Federal Government Policy on library establishment in all schools. A school committee on the proper use of library hour might include: the principal and his vice, the school librarian, the school guidance counsellor, and dean of academics. Such a committee should perform the following functions: Overseeing library use records in the school, guiding both stale and new teachers on the techniques of use of the library, developing a timetable for library hour, ensuring availability of appropriate reading material to facilitate proper use of library hour, and liaising with similar committees of other schools to ensure adequate compliance.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reading is man's way of fortifying himself against failure in life. It provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify his interest and gains deeper understanding of himself, of other human beings and of the world. Reading has come to hold the most significant place in education as a means of communication in a highly literate society. Book is still very much part of people's lives in our modern society and in spite of the invention of the latest audio-visual materials, the book in its ordinary conventional form is still the most important means of communication ever invented; thus the achievement of quality basic education calls for the development of good reading habits of both young and adult learners. Reading is a key to a wealth of experience that links people in a way far beyond distance or time. Reading is important for students in general in order to cope with new knowledge in a changing world that of the technological age and even pandemic era. The ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning. Reading is a very important issue which is not only about enjoyment but a necessity; the basic tool of education. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. It 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 (Paul & Elder, 2019).

It is observed that many pupils still struggle with acquisition of reading skill, even after secondary and tertiary education. This is so terrible that it seems to have affected all the sectors of the national economy and even the security of individuals and properties, because knowledge is wealth as well as power. As the country is already in recession, there is still hope of survival if all hands can be on deck to end the recession. There is therefore a need for agenda to help enforce the proper use of library hour in primary schools so as to enhance reading habit for the interest of national economic transformation.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to introduce an agenda for proper use of library hour to enhance reading habit in primary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria; and specifically to:

1. find out the primary schools that have library or reading room
2. ascertain the primary schools that have trained librarian or library assistants manning the library
3. investigate how primary schools use library hour properly.
4. examine the available materials in the existing library in schools
5. investigate the extent of library-support from the government
6. train one management staff from each Local Government Area of Plateau North Senatorial Zone on the Library Agenda to train others.
7. recommend to SUBEB that; use of library hour be made compulsory for all class levels in primary schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study answered the following research questions

1. Do primary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone have a library?

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2. Do the primary schools in the zone have trained librarians?
3. How is the library hour utilized in primary schools across Plateau North Senatorial Zone?
4. What are the types of reading materials available in the existing libraries of primary schools in the zone?
5. To what extent does the government support the provision and use of libraries in primary schools within the zone?
6. How effective will the training of one management staff per Local Government Area on the Library Agenda in ensuring broader implementation across schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The school library is the gateway to knowledge and it plays an important role in building up love for reading. It is also an integral part of an educational process. Since it encourages reading at the right age the children are sure to develop love for books. Catch them young is therefore, acclaimed motto of the school libraries. Wu and Yu (2024) reports that various researchers have shown that a strong library program can make a student perform better. The library equips students with long life learning skills and also develops their imagination making them responsible citizens. The school library does this by selecting, acquiring and providing access to appropriate sources of information. The school library offers books and other resources ranging from print to electronic media for completion of various school projects and assignments, for acquisition of knowledge about a topic taught in class, also for finding information about a hobby or current events and news etcetera.

The school libraries act as laboratories for students and the librarians function as guides to the students in learning and using the books to improve their knowledge. The school library is essential for literacy, education and information provision as well as for economic, social and cultural development of a nation. Hence, government must have adequate and sustained funding for school libraries. A child seems to enjoy teaching and learning in a relaxed atmosphere with high level of interaction where questions could be asked for clarifications especially during leisure time. A good way of using leisure time can be permanently missed throughout life if people do not develop the habit of reading for pleasure when they are young. Librarians in school libraries involves in book selection, reference services, readers advisory work, current awareness service, cataloguing and classification of library materials. Teacher librarian is an experienced practitioner with personal interest, not in books in general, but also in the sort of books children enjoys; this renders a library, a laboratory for its users to practice the skills of using materials acquired therein.

A school librarian knows what subject users are interested in. Then find out what students like reading. The United Nations and UNESCO over the years gave high priority to reading promotion through education and cultural organizations. Towards this end, easy to read books or materials, newspapers, and other information sources have been published and are still being published. The school librarian being at the forefront in the school reading revolution can mobilize students to actively participate in promoting reading (Oyetola & Adio, 2020).

Diyaolu and Ologunde (2019) also noted that amongst the different types of libraries in Nigeria, the school library is the one faced with more challenges in the nation and it is also the most crucial, as it forms the basis on which other knowledge are built upon. School library and information services should support dynamic learning programmes in the information age. Collins (2020) however noted that the culture and habits of accessing and using information is formed at the early stages of a child's life. The school library must therefore be introduced to the child at a very young age. Fiske (2023) stated that the policy on school library services must be formulated to define goals, priorities and services in relation to the school's curriculum; they also suggested that the school library must be organized and maintained according to professional standards.

Nuku (2019) opined that, to ensure that library use becomes a lifelong habit, it is necessary that the national curricula for primary and secondary schools include library use education modules. Lindfors (2019) however stated the need for story hours, noting that storytelling, like reading aloud introduces children to the possibilities of language, thereby laying the foundation for reading. The information resources acquired for the library will go a long way to incite the pupils to use the library and develop a good reading habit. Children usually enjoy colorful, pictorial information resources, which are in both print and non-print formats. Also, younger children need to have bold text with clearly written and simple to read language, which they can easily understand, while the text font size for older children can be smaller but easy to understand language for different categories of age group.

Therefore, the information provider must take into consideration, pupil and students age when choosing information resources for them. ICT have brought to bear many colorful and attractive interfaces that will make both children and adult user want to use information. Akhmedov (2023) noted that, first users clearly prefer familiar and easy-to-learn discovery interfaces. The typical searcher relies on the internet to find many types of content, not just scholarly information but text to accomplish many everyday tasks; hence, such users expect scholarly interfaces to provide an experience similar to the interfaces with which they are most familiar. Gone are the days when students, pupils and teachers use black or chalk board, textbooks, notebooks, pen and pencil to teach and learn. In today's world, teachers have access to use white board with different colors of pen for emphasis while teaching; they have also upgraded to use computers, while students also use computers, tablets, iPad and many other accessories as earlier mentioned to learn and get more information. Librarians have both the training and experience to select information resources that best suit the age and type of users of information resources. With the proliferation of ICT, children and adult are being exposed to variety of information sources, but they need to be properly guided in their choice of information seeking and usage.

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Many researchers have worked on the topic school library from different perspectives but no work has been published on the agenda for proper use of library hour in primary schools to enhance reading habit in Plateau state. This research work will therefore, identify the primary schools that have libraries and those that does not have in Plateau state. It will also give the ones that does not have libraries and those that are not making good use of it opportunity to have an agenda on how to establish one or rather improve on the usage through this research.

METHODOLOGY

This research work covered six local government areas of Northern senatorial zone of Plateau State. A survey research design was used specifically cross-sectional survey research design. Purposive sampling technique will be used to select the primary schools. The scope includes all selected public primary schools in the six senatorial zone. Any school outside this scope will not be accounted for. The study population consisted of 627 public primary schools located within the Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, distributed as follows: Barkin Ladi (156), Bassa (125), Jos East (77), Jos North (51), Jos South (139), and Riyom (79). The population included 1,254 respondents comprising 627 Primary Four class teachers and 627 head teachers across these schools. Using a multistage sampling technique, a total sample of 120 respondents was drawn, including 60 Primary Four class teachers and 60 head teachers from 30 randomly selected schools (five schools per LGA).

For data collection, two structured questionnaires were developed one for class teachers and the other for school heads focusing on the implementation and utilization of library hours in primary schools. Each questionnaire was organized into two sections: Section A contained demographic information, while Section B contained 24 and 30 items respectively for class teachers and school heads. All items in Section B were measured on a four-points scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instruments were validated for content by educational measurement experts, and their internal consistency reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.71 and 0.73 for the teachers' and heads' questionnaires respectively. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency counts and percentages were used for demographic data, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A cut-off mean of 2.50 was adopted to interpret the four-point scale responses.

RESULTS

Research question one: Do primary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone have a library?

Table 1: Mean Response to Research Question One

S/N	Group	ITEM	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	My school has a functional library	60	2.30	0.58	Disagree
2	Teachers	The library is used during library hour	60	2.76	0.58	Agree
3	Teachers	Pupils access the library regularly	60	2.59	0.53	Agree
4	Teachers	The library is appropriately designated for learning	60	2.48	0.93	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.53	0.66	Agree
1	School Heads	Our school has a library for pupils	60	2.48	0.61	Disagree
2	School Heads	The library space is conducive	60	2.57	0.59	Agree
3	School Heads	Library hour is allocated in the school timetable	60	2.02	0.59	Disagree
4	School Heads	The library is accessible to all pupils during school hours	60	2.78	0.65	Agree
5	School Heads	We regularly assess the condition of the library	60	2.67	0.76	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.50	0.64	Agree

The overall mean score for teachers (2.53) and school heads (2.50) shows borderline agreement on the presence and use of libraries in schools. However, specific items show divergence some indicating strong agreement with practices like reading hour and library space while others reflect systemic challenges such as the lack of functional libraries and allocation in timetables. These data reinforce observed realities in the field, particularly the noted abandonment of library infrastructure, as seen in PPSUBEB Model School Gero Jos South LGA of Plateau State and the lack of proper library in many of other schools sampled who claimed to have a library as it was seen that classes were converted to library. Below are pictorial evidence of the situation from field.



IMAGE 1: Classroom Used as Library with books locked inside boxes



IMAGE 2: Abandoned library



Research questions two: Do primary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone have a library staff?

Table 2: Mean Response to Research Question Two

S/N	Group	ITEM	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	My school has a trained library staff	60	1.90	0.64	Disagree
2	Teachers	The library staff helps during library hour	60	2.10	0.59	Disagree
3	Teachers	The library staff guides pupils during reading	60	2.20	0.60	Disagree
4	Teachers	Teachers assist pupils in the absence of a library staff	60	2.60	0.65	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.20	0.62	Disagree
1	School Heads	The school has a designated library staff	60	2.10	0.61	Disagree
2	School Heads	We have trained library personnel in school	60	2.30	0.60	Disagree
3	School Heads	Library staff ensure pupils read during library hour	60	2.40	0.58	Disagree
4	School Heads	We organize periodic training for library staff	60	2.00	0.62	Disagree
5	School Heads	The library staff keeps records of pupils' reading progress	60	2.50	0.65	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.26	0.61	Disagree

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While the quantitative data reflect an overall disagreement with the statement that schools in the Plateau North Senatorial Zone have trained library personnel, qualitative field context introduces important complexity. In a few schools, library staff are present even though the libraries are either inactive, poorly furnished, or completely unstructured. Conversely, there are also schools that retain a semblance of a library structure but lack qualified personnel to manage it. This inconsistency explains the mixed responses where items assessing direct library management by staff scored higher than those addressing the actual presence or training of such staff. The aggregate means 2.20 for teachers and 2.26 for school heads fall below the critical threshold of 2.50, confirming widespread insufficiency in trained library staffing.

Yet the relative agreement with items like "Teachers assist pupils in the absence of a library staff" (mean = 2.60) and "The library staff keeps records of pupils' reading progress" (mean = 2.50) shows that in those few functioning contexts, staff presence has positive impact. This highlights a systemic fragmentation in library staffing policy, where deployment does not always align with infrastructure availability. It further emphasizes the need for integrated strategies that pair staffing with proper library development, funding, and accountability mechanisms.

Research questions three: How is the library hour utilized in primary schools across Plateau North Senatorial Zone?

Table 3: Mean Response to Research Question Three

S/N	Group	ITEM	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	Pupils read storybooks during library hour	60	2.60	0.64	Agree
2	Teachers	Library staff monitor reading activities during library hour	60	2.30	0.59	Disagree
3	Teachers	Pupils maintain silence during reading periods	60	2.50	0.61	Agree
4	Teachers	Reading hour is included in the weekly class timetable	60	2.40	0.66	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.45	0.63	Disagree
1	School Heads	It is compulsory for pupils to participate in library hour activities	60	2.55	0.58	Agree
2	School Heads	Library hour is strictly monitored by library staff	60	2.20	0.60	Disagree
3	School Heads	Storytelling sessions are conducted during library hour	60	2.45	0.61	Disagree
4	School Heads	Teachers document pupils' library attendance	60	2.60	0.65	Agree
5	School Heads	We hold school-wide reading competitions	60	2.30	0.62	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.42	0.61	Disagree

The data show that both teachers and school heads perceive the utilization of library hour as inconsistent and partially implemented across schools. The aggregate mean for teachers (2.45) and school heads (2.42) falls just below the threshold of 2.50, reflecting general disagreement that library hour is well-utilized. This aligns with field observations indicating that in many schools, either the absence of structured libraries or a lack of trained staff limits meaningful library hour engagement. While there is modest agreement that pupils engage with storybooks and that some form of monitoring and documentation occurs, other practices such as storytelling sessions, regular timetable inclusion, or school-wide reading activities are either absent or irregularly applied. Importantly, some schools still report functional library hour activities even when they lack formal libraries, by converting classrooms or vacant rooms for reading periods. This explains why some items received moderate agreement despite systemic challenges. It suggests that teacher initiative and school-level commitment can somewhat compensate for structural deficiencies, though not sustainably or equitably across the zone. The findings call attention to the need for standardized implementation guidelines, provision of reading space infrastructure, and designated time blocks enforced by school heads to ensure that library hour becomes a systemic norm rather than a school-by-school exception.

Research questions four: What types of reading materials are available in the existing libraries of primary schools in the zone?

Table 4: Mean Response to Research Question Four

S/N	Group	Items	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	Storybooks are available in the library	60	2.55	0.63	Agree
2	Teachers	Pupils use textbooks for reading	60	2.60	0.64	Agree
3	Teachers	Pupils have access to newspapers or magazines	60	2.30	0.58	Disagree
4	Teachers	Audio-visual materials are used to promote reading	60	2.15	0.62	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.40	0.62	Disagree

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1	School Heads	We have age-appropriate reading materials	60	2.60	0.59	Agree
2	School Heads	The school purchases new reading books annually	60	2.35	0.61	Disagree
3	School Heads	We receive donated books from NGOs or government	60	2.25	0.64	Disagree
4	School Heads	There are audio-visual resources in the library	60	2.10	0.58	Disagree
5	School Heads	The school maintains an inventory of library materials	60	2.50	0.65	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.36	0.61	Disagree

The findings indicate that while some foundational reading materials such as storybooks and textbooks are available in the few functioning or improvised school libraries, the overall supply and diversity of materials remain inadequate. The aggregate means of 2.40 for teachers and 2.36 for school heads fall below the 2.50 threshold, suggesting a general lack of sufficient reading resources. Field observations confirm this reality: many schools in the Plateau North Senatorial Zone either lack libraries entirely or have spaces with limited, outdated, or abandoned resources. For instance, in PPSUBEB Model School Gero, once equipped with a functioning library, materials are now locked away and unused due to the absence of staff and maintenance. Additionally, while some schools report donations from government or NGOs, these are infrequent and typically not comprehensive in scope.

There is also minimal access to diverse media such as newspapers, magazines, or audio-visual content. This deficit hinders the promotion of critical reading habits, especially in early literacy development. The limited use of multimedia materials further reflects the broader absence of ICT integration in many public primary schools. These findings call for a targeted materials development policy that ensures regular procurement, equitable distribution, and systematic tracking of reading resources. Partnerships with publishing houses, NGOs, and digital content creators could also enhance the range and appeal of available materials.

Research questions five: What extent does the government support the provision and use of libraries in primary schools within the zone?

Table 5: Mean Response to Research Question Five

S/N	Group	Items	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	Government supplies reading materials to the library	60	2.10	0.59	Disagree
2	Teachers	Government funds are used to maintain the library	60	2.05	0.63	Disagree
3	Teachers	There are periodic library inspections by education authorities	60	2.00	0.58	Disagree
4	Teachers	Government provides incentives for reading activities	60	1.95	0.61	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.03	0.60	Disagree
1	School Heads	Government provides support for library development	60	2.25	0.62	Disagree
2	School Heads	We receive periodic monitoring from education inspectors	60	2.10	0.64	Disagree
3	School Heads	Library projects are funded through UBEC or SUBEB	60	2.30	0.60	Disagree
4	School Heads	Government trains school heads on library management	60	2.20	0.61	Disagree
5	School Heads	The school submits reports to authorities on library use	60	2.35	0.65	Disagree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.24	0.62	Disagree

The responses from both teachers and school heads clearly indicate a perception of low government involvement in the development and oversight of library services in primary schools across the zone. The aggregate mean of 2.03 from teachers and 2.24 from school heads both fall significantly below the decision benchmark of 2.50, reflecting systemic gaps in state or federal educational support. This aligns with on-ground realities such as the situation at ECWA Transferred, where a classroom is converted to serve as a library and also at LEA Bukuru. Furthermore, responses show little evidence of routine inspection, maintenance funding, or incentive structures from government agencies.

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Though some school heads slightly agreed that UBEC or SUBEB funding is occasionally directed at libraries, the support appears neither regular nor comprehensive. The absence of library-specific training for school heads or consistent reporting mechanisms further reflects institutional neglect. These findings highlight an urgent need for stronger government commitment to the Library Agenda, including targeted funding for facilities and materials, the recruitment of staff, ongoing professional development, and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation framework. Without these interventions, efforts to enhance reading habits in primary schools will remain fragmented and unsustainable.

Research questions six: How effective will the training of one management staff per Local Government Area (LGA) on the Library Agenda be in ensuring broader implementation across schools?

Table 6: Mean Response to Research Question Six

S/N	Group	Items	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers	Teachers receive orientation on the library hour	60	2.50	0.61	Agree
2	Teachers	I have been trained on promoting reading habits	60	2.40	0.59	Disagree
3	Teachers	I can conduct reading sessions effectively	60	2.70	0.60	Agree
4	Teachers	I can train others on library agenda implementation	60	2.55	0.64	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.54	0.61	Agree
1	School Heads	Management staff are trained on promoting reading habit	60	2.60	0.62	Agree
2	School Heads	I have attended a workshop on library use	60	2.55	0.63	Agree
3	School Heads	I have attended seminars on library hours for pupils	60	2.50	0.61	Agree
4	School Heads	Teachers in my school are aware of the Library Hour Agenda	60	2.45	0.60	Disagree
5	School Heads	I am confident in implementing library hour guidelines	60	2.70	0.59	Agree
	Aggregate	Aggregate of all items under group	60	2.56	0.61	Agree

The data suggest a positive perception among both class teachers and school heads regarding their capacity to implement the Library Hour Agenda if adequately trained. Aggregate means for teachers (2.54) and school heads (2.56) surpass the threshold of 2.50, indicating agreement that the training of one management staff per LGA would be an effective strategy to support broader implementation in schools. Teachers expressed confidence in their ability to conduct reading sessions and even train others, though fewer reported having previously received formal training. This reflects both potential and a gap. Meanwhile, school heads generally agreed that they have participated in workshops or seminars, and feel confident in implementing the agenda, but some noted that their teaching staff remain unaware of the policy's goals or content.

This partial awareness signals that top-down training, while promising, must be complemented by horizontal dissemination strategies ensuring that trained school leaders transmit knowledge effectively to their teams. The context of Plateau North, where few schools even operationalize library hour due to staffing or infrastructural limitations, further justifies the importance of targeted training to build institutional capacity. This finding supports the viability of a scalable, localized training model where one empowered and well-supported management staff member per LGA can catalyze systemic change provided they are equipped not only with technical knowledge, but also with tools for intra-school training and program monitoring.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings revealed a mixed response pattern regarding the availability and use of library hour across primary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone. On the question of whether primary schools have libraries, both teachers and school heads suggested marginal agreement. However, item-specific responses uncovered discrepancies between nominal presence and actual functionality. For instance, while some respondents noted that libraries are used during reading hours, they simultaneously indicated that these libraries are not fully functional or properly designated. As most schools that observe reading hours use their classes due to lack of functional library structure. This reflects the field reality in which classrooms are often converted into makeshift libraries, as seen in various schools. These observations are consistent with the views of Okolo and Iwighrehweta (2020) who emphasized that the physical presence of a library does not guarantee its educational utility.

Regarding the availability of library staff, both teachers and school heads reported a widespread lack of trained personnel. Though some schools had staff, they were often not professionally trained or assigned solely to the library. This aligns with Diyaolu and Ologunde (2019) who found that library staffing in Nigerian public primary schools is typically fragmented and underfunded. Interestingly, teachers noted that they often assist pupils in the absence of a librarian, underscoring both the dedication of staff and

the institutional failure to formalize these roles. Similarly, some school heads indicated that existing library staff did attempt to document reading activities, suggesting isolated efforts amidst systemic neglect.

Utilization of library hour emerged as another challenge. Though pupils were reported to engage in reading during designated hours and some documentation exists, responses from both teachers and heads reflected inconsistent implementation. Field reports showed that many schools lacked structured timetables or supervisory staff to monitor these sessions effectively. This echoes the findings of Wu and Yu, (2022) who argued that, for reading programmes to be effective, institutional support and standardized monitoring practices are indispensable. Moreover, Xu, Wang, Sturm, and Wu (2022) emphasized that sustained reading habits among pupils depend significantly on the institutionalisation of such practices within the formal school schedule. On the availability of reading materials, results indicated limited access. Although some basic materials like storybooks and textbooks are present, more dynamic resources such as newspapers and audio-visuals are lacking while some schools have flash cards used sometimes during study hour. Teachers and school heads highlighted this insufficiency. The lack of diversity in reading materials hinders holistic literacy development, consistent with Suwanto, Setiawan and Machmiyah (2022) who highlighted the need for multi-modal reading materials in fostering cognitive engagement and retention in early learners.

A major gap identified in the study was in the area of government support. Both groups expressed a perception of low government involvement. This reflects a broader institutional neglect, where policies like those from UBEC or SUBEB rarely translate into tangible support at the school level. Joshi and Shukla (2019) similarly found that top-down educational policies in many developing regions often fail at the point of implementation due to poor follow-up and accountability mechanisms. On the question of training one management staff per LGA to champion the Library Agenda, both teachers and school heads expressed strong confidence in the strategy.

These findings suggest that, while the infrastructure and systemic conditions remain weak, there exists a pool of motivated personnel who can drive change if properly trained and supported. Paul and Elder (2019) emphasized that institutional transformation often starts with the empowerment of individual actors equipped with clear mandates and professional development tools. While primary schools in Plateau North show pockets of effort and resourcefulness in promoting reading through library hour, the lack of trained staff, materials, and government support continues to undermine these efforts. Strategic interventions focusing on personnel training, material procurement, and institutional monitoring are needed to turn these efforts into sustainable practice.

CONCLUSION

The findings underscore an unstructured library system across primary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone, where only a few schools maintain semblances of a library either functional or improvised while the majority operate without any dedicated library space or resources. In several instances, classrooms are repurposed as reading areas, reflecting both the ingenuity of teachers and the infrastructural deficits pervasive in the zone. The widespread absence of trained library staff and minimal government involvement further compounds the problem, with evidence of neglected facilities, limited reading materials, and lack of structured monitoring or funding mechanisms. Although there is some willingness among school personnel to promote the Library Hour Agenda, these efforts remain unsustainable without institutional support. The study affirms that any meaningful advancement in pupils' reading culture will require a deliberate, well-funded policy intervention focused on infrastructure, staffing, resource provision, and capacity building at both the school and system levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study findings the following recommendations were proposed

1. Government at all levels should prioritize the construction and rehabilitation of standard libraries in primary schools, particularly in underserved areas, and ensure that improvised library spaces are replaced with purpose-built facilities equipped for modern literacy needs.
2. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should institute a dedicated library staffing policy, mandating the recruitment and deployment of professionally trained librarians to every primary school to support structured reading programmes and resource management.
3. The Plateau State Ministry of Education should enforce the inclusion of Library Hour in all school timetables, and provide school heads with detailed implementation guidelines and supervisory tools to monitor pupils' participation and reading progress effectively.
4. There should be a targeted and continuous provision of diverse reading materials, including storybooks, age-appropriate textbooks, newspapers, and multimedia resources, with a standardized inventory system for tracking distribution and usage across schools.
5. A cascade training model should be adopted wherein at least one trained management staff per Local Government Area is empowered to drive the Library Agenda, ensuring that knowledge and implementation skills are systematically disseminated to teachers and education officers through zonal workshops and peer-led capacity-building sessions.

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