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# Reviving the Reading culture: School Library Programmes in Promoting Voluntary Reading amongst Students: the Case of Imo State, Nigeria.

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# **Reviving the Reading culture: School Library Programmes in Promoting Voluntary Reading amongst Students: the case of Imo State, Nigeria.**

## **Introduction**

Reading is an activity which helps to develop the mind and personality of human beings and ultimately enriches their intellectual lives. As students learn to enjoy reading, learning becomes relevant and in that way improves their reading ability and self concept. Free reading helps readers have mastery of their lives, and situations in life. Examples of how people in the books managed their situations give them knowledge of how to cope with similar situations. According to Elaturoti (2001), young people can only achieve their potentials in life if they have developed interest in reading. This is because reading helps an individual to achieve greater control, increased independence and a greater sense of self worth and belonging ((Meribe, 2004).

Apart from provision of reading materials, school libraries provide reading programmes that motivate students to read for pleasure. Reading programmes are reading activities school libraries provide to create awareness of the collection and motivate students to read for pleasure. They are reading experiences provided in the school library to encourage students' use of the collection and inculcate free voluntary reading habits in students. These programmes include display, exhibition, access to reading materials, lending of books, storytelling, debate, book talks (Carbo and Cole 1995) Engaging students in variety of reading experiences through book talks, readers theatre, storytelling will help students develop habit of listening, comprehension and recall. Students' participation in debate and book club will challenge them to read widely and seek information in the library.

The issue of poor reading culture in the Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized. Because reading makes great people and great nations, the researchers were moved to carry out this study to see how far the use of school library programs can go in promoting the dilapidating reading culture which is getting worse.

Providing equity of access to reading resources, engaging authors' visits, and supporting books fairs, exhibition and displays are means to building lifelong readers. Specifically reading promotion is one of the cardinal roles of school library (Dike, 1998). Four out of the nine contributions expected of the school libraries in Nigeria are on reading development. According to the Minimum Standard, school libraries:

- Promote the development of reading skills and encourage long term learning habits through reading, listening to and viewing a variety of learning materials. Reading habits form the key to continuous success in school as well as personal enrichment of the student/pupils.
- Provide opportunities for further reading and use of materials other than prescribed classroom textbooks.
- Stimulate research and independent study by providing a wide variety of materials so that it does not only supply information in printed form, but also in pictures, films, tapes etc. This makes learning more exciting.
- Provide materials for recreation and encourage students/pupils to read for pleasure.

Free voluntary reading also helps student in the acquisition of other language skills, success in their academic, improved reading ability, vocabulary knowledge, emotional stability, enjoyment of leisure hours, and increased knowledge of political, economical and social issues in his environment.

## **Objectives of the study**

The study generally intends to look into the different programmes provided by the school libraries to promote free voluntary reading and how such programmes help students. Specifically, the study intends to

1. Find out the school library reading programmes employed in promoting free voluntary reading of secondary school students.
2. Establish the influence of school library reading programmes on free voluntary reading of secondary school students.

## **Research Questions**

1. What school library reading programmes are employed to promote free voluntary reading of secondary school students in Imo State?
2. What is the influence of school library reading programmes on free voluntary reading of secondary school students?

## **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis formulated to guide this study was tested at 0.05 level significance.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the reading programmes and students free voluntary reading.

## **Literature Review**

National Library of Nigeria in Al-Bishak (2004) says that “reading simply refers to the skill of getting information mainly from books. To read means to understand or interpret written information. It is also a means of obtaining meaning or information, especially by looking at

printed words or symbols. Therefore to read is to learn by developing conscious efforts and skills in order to be informed". Reading is a complex skill requiring the co-ordination of a number of inter-related sources of information (Definition of Reading and Word Identification, 2001).

A student who devotes time to free voluntary reading scores higher in language development. Free voluntary reading leads to mastery in reading comprehension, writing, word recognition, vocabulary knowledge and grammar. (Elley, 1991; Day, Omara and Hiramatsu, 1991). Krashen (2004) posited that the single factor most strongly associated with reading achievement, more than socio-economic status or any instructional approach, is free voluntary reading. Anderson, Fielding and Wilson (1988) in their study demonstrated that the amount of leisure reading and reading achievement are correlated. The findings showed that children who score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a reading test spent five times as many minutes per day reading books as children at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Many studies have shown effect of free reading on writing skills. Students who are proficient in reading are good writers. Studies of Hafix and Tudor (1990) and Robb and Susser (1989) showed that free voluntary reading leads to greater writing proficiency. Extensive reading makes significant improvement in writing skills. Students who read more develop good writing skills.

In addition to its cognitive benefits, free voluntary reading helps to develop a positive attitude among students towards reading in the second language. It increases their motivation to read in the second language (Hedge, 1985; Hayashi, 1999). Perhaps this is because the more one reads, the easier reading becomes.

### **Specific Programmes for Developing Free Voluntary Reading**

A number of programmes have been identified for developing free voluntary reading. Bassey (2006) explained that business of any library is to provide services to its user community. These services must meet the needs of its users. Akinbode (2002) contributes that it is the responsibility of the library to render adequate services to users so as to make maximum use of the library materials. Such services to be rendered to users include among others instruction on the use of library, assistance in location of documents and literature search. One important programme is providing access to books. Several research studies had shown that students develop love for reading when they have access to reading materials ( Digiovenna, 1994; Halliwell, 1995; Amuchazi (2004). Dike (2004) emphasized that one of the cardinal ways school libraries engaged in promoting free voluntary reading is making reading materials accessible to students.

The school library selects, provides and makes accessible books that will stimulate and sustain students' interest. Carbo and Cole (1995) emphasized that school library encourage free voluntary reading through motivational reading programmes like authors visits, reading guidance, display, exhibition, pleasure experiences, loaning of books and access to books. Ghadames and Omotayo (1995) regarded the library as an essential tool for the provision of reading material to people. Abareh (1988) and Izaii (2004) asserted that school libraries provide access to variety of information resources that are fun so that every reluctant student will be able to learn and develop the habit and enjoyment of reading. Eyitayo (2004) affirmed that libraries provide free low cost access to information resources and services. Ihezue (1990) and Aje (1996) reiterated that one of the cardinal functions of the school library is providing and making accessible relevant, rich and up-to-date reading materials to student's for their independent reading.

Reading guidance is a second important programme in development of free reading in students. Reluctant readers are motivated to read through reading guidance. When readers are helped to choose interesting reading materials, they will like to read more. Hicks and Willaume (2002) revealed in their study of literacy development that guided reading is very important. Martin (1996) proved that students reading scores increased when reading guidance also increased. Hsius (2000) suggested that this is good for students who can read with varying degrees of proficiency, but who generally will not read for various reasons, such as failure to develop a love for reading, unavailability of appropriate reading materials, insufficient time to read extensively. According to Dike (2004) reading guidance can take the forms of conversation, book list and displays, book talks and reading experiences. Gill (2000) in her research study of the reading acquisition of students, confirmed the importance of reading conference with her subjects in the promotion of voluntary reading. She observed that through reading conferences her subjects developed confidence and strategies in reading. Gerick (1998) emphasized the importance of providing reading guidance to new literates in order to develop their reading ability as far as possible. She further explained that advice in the choice of reading matter is of great importance to develop a love for books which will satisfy their personal need and interest.

Displays and exhibition are other programmes used in the promotion of free voluntary reading. School libraries use these medium to advertise to students what the library has in stock. Anunobi (2004) remarks that ways of motivating users to utilize school materials are print public displays such as signs/guide, posters, bulletin board, exhibits. Oniyide (2004) stated that exhibitions are mounted to bring attention of library users the existence of the library, creates awareness of the library resources and usefulness of the resources displayed. Lippe and Weber

(1996) asserted that increased book awareness and exposure to reading materials is very important in developing student reading.

School library media centres do not only provide guidance to reading but also associate reading with pleasurable experiences. This is done through story hours which introduce students to the joys of picture books, wealth of oral literature and simulation of variety of resources (Dike, 1993). Emphasizing this, Knuth (1998) comments that in home libraries in Zimbabwe, all ages participate in storytelling, reading simple stories for pleasure, playing games, singing and dramatizing. This increased their literacy acquisition and lead to development and publishing of local stories. Gorchall (1995) affirmed that early, usually informal adult child interactions are a powerful determinant of the degree to which the young child's reading behaviours will become elaborated and approach adult expectations of what it means to read. Shared reading is another important programme libraries use to motivate students to read. The librarian encourages them to share among books they have read. In this type, no score is assigned to anybody. It can be immensely enjoyable to share all kinds of books with students, including factual books as well as stories and poems. Harolds (2001) was of the opinion that students will be motivated to read if they see their teacher reading. The teacher serves as a role model to students. MCinch (1997) revealed that rewards increase reading attitudes. After using two strong motivational factors – cash rewards and adult attention/approval on second and third graders at a school in Georgia, the researcher found overall success in frequent book reading, increased attitudes and increased positive school behaviour. However, Krashen (2004) cautioned that rewards do not always work. Rewards might serve, in some cases, as a jumpstart; once that child starts reading, the intrinsic pleasure of reading takes over.



Dramatizing stories motivates students to read. Students read more when they participate in acting drama. McMaster (1998) commented that drama is a direct motivator of reading. She observed that the use of drama is based on the simple premise that an involved child is an interested child, an interested child will learn, and drama directly involves the child. When dramatizing books children naturally desire to act more stories which encourage them to seek out more experiences. They are inspired to find the “perfect” story to dramatize and may read several selections to find the test. Consistent findings have shown that students who engaged in free reading programmes like this are motivated to read more (Hedge, 1985; Hayashi, 1999).

These programmes cannot act by themselves. Their relevance will be felt with the services of a qualified librarian. Aaron (1990) reiterated that the realization of the purposes of the library programme depends on the quality of the personnel who is employed to implement the library programmes. Bishop and Blazek (1994) proved this in their empirical study. In their case study of the librarian roles in a literate based programme at an elementary school in Monte County revealed that librarians have a key role in the development of reading in children, through well developed principles of access and collection development, bibliographic advice, guidance of teachers’, students and administrators in the selection of resources. They also foster the love of reading through posters, displays, informal conversation with students, planned lessons and special activities such as reading contests and school role projects.

In the review of literature, access to books, reading guidance, displays and exhibition, pleasurable experiences, shared reading and dramatizing stories are reading programmes that motivates and sustain free voluntary reading. In review of related literature, it has been revealed that generally, school library influences free voluntary reading of students through access and exposure to print, and other reading programmes.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Constructionist Theories**

Theories of reading that were reviewed in this study are constructionist theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Although there are many constructionist theories, there is an agreement among them. All these theories agreed that learning is a process of constructing meaning. Children learn by connecting new knowledge to previously learned knowledge. Readers actively build a mental representation by combining new information from the text with previously acquired knowledge. Piaget (1928) proposed the classical constructivist theories of cognitive development. He maintains that cognitive development is a continuous progression of assimilation and accommodation and that these complementary processes lead to adaptation. Knowledge is constructed progressively through a sequence of behaviours or mental operations. Piaget term these schemas. The theories proposed that children developmental representations of the world based on physical or mental actions, which they execute on the environment. This means learning is an intrinsically personal process whereby the meaning is made by the individual and is dependent upon the individual previous and current knowledge structure and as a result can be considered an internal cognitive activity. Piaget theory is based on exploratory approach to learning which focuses on the individual learner and their comprehension in relation to states of cognitive development.

Vygotsky (1978) in his view claimed that cognitive development and learning occur within a social context. Rather than construct methods of cognition as an individual, the learner appropriates ways of thinking through social interaction. What we learned and how we make sense of knowledge depends on where and when we are learning. Vygotsky (1978) perceived the

child as a social being who is able to appropriate new patterns of thinking when learning alongside a more competent individual. He called this concept, the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This is the expanse between the child's level of development and their potential level, in collaboration with more competent individuals through scaffolding. In this view learning takes place through language. However, the learner makes sense of what is said (or written) through internal or intra mental dialogue. Learning is both interactive in the sense that learner must interact with a source of ideas/knowledge as well as in the sense that they must take active part in reconstructing ideas/knowledge within their own minds.

Although the two theories above depict independent learning (reading) and interaction with texts, the social constructionist theory of Vygotsky relates more to the present study. In that the reading environment where the reader reads affects his reading level or capacity. This is what this theory depicts. It also shows that provision of various forms of scaffolding (reading activities or programmes) by a more competent individual (teacher/or librarian) will help to extend learners (students) reading capacity or levels. It shows that the reading materials (source of ideas/knowledge) provided in different forms and that interest the reader will help him to develop and increase the love for independent reading.

## **Methodology**

Descriptive survey was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 36 secondary schools that have libraries in state and Federal Unity Schools in Imo State in the South East geographical zone of Nigeria. Imo State is divided into three educational zones namely: Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu respectively. Purposive sampling was used to get the schools that

have functional school libraries. There are twenty seven (27) state secondary schools and two (2) federal unity secondary schools that qualified for selection.

Each of the state school had one teacher- librarian making it 27 teacher-librarians and the federal school had one librarian each, making a total number of 29 teacher- librarians all used for the study. Also, students totaling up to 1000 were randomly sampled for the study. Both questionnaires and interview guide were used to elicit data from the respondents. Data was analyzed descriptively and quantitatively as well using frequencies, percentages, averages, and presented in tables and bar chart. Multiple regression models were used to find the extent of relationship between the library programmes which is the independent variable and enhanced/ free voluntary reading which is the dependent variable.

## Analysis

### Research Question 1

What reading programmes are employed by school libraries to promote free voluntary reading of secondary school student in Imo State?

**Table 1: Frequencies, Percentages and Average Number of Reading Programmes  
Employed by School Libraries**

School	No. of reading programmes employed	Percentage of reading programmes employed	Average No. of reading programmes	Ranking
1	7	53.85	2.43	5 <sup>th</sup>
2	2	15.39	2.10	18 <sup>th</sup>
3	3	23.08	2.13	15 <sup>th</sup>
4	5	38.46	1.97	21 <sup>st</sup>
5	4	30.77	2.39	6 <sup>th</sup>
6	6	46.15	2.12	16 <sup>th</sup>
7	5	38.46	2.16	14 <sup>th</sup>

8	8	61.54	2.24	11 <sup>th</sup>
9	1	7.69	1.65	27 <sup>th</sup>
10	5	38.46	2.38	7 <sup>th</sup>
11	4	30.77	2.03	20 <sup>th</sup>
12	6	46.15	2.06	19 <sup>th</sup>
13	5	38.46	1.85	24 <sup>th</sup>
14	7	53.85	2.25	10 <sup>th</sup>
15	6	46.15	2.23	12 <sup>th</sup>
16	4	30.77	1.93	22 <sup>nd</sup>
17	8	61.54	2.72	2 <sup>nd</sup>
18	0	0	1.50	29 <sup>th</sup>
19	1	7.67	1.82	26 <sup>th</sup>
20	4	30.77	2.12	16 <sup>th</sup>
21	5	38.46	2.28	9 <sup>th</sup>
22	4	30.77	2.17	13 <sup>th</sup>
23	6	46.15	2.35	8 <sup>th</sup>
24	1	7.67	1.91	23 <sup>rd</sup>
25	1	7.67	1.83	25 <sup>th</sup>
26	8	61.54	2.46	4 <sup>th</sup>
27	0	0	1.62	28 <sup>th</sup>
28	11	84.62	2.79	1 <sup>st</sup>
29	7	53.85	2.59	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 1 shows frequencies, percentages and average number of programmes employed by schools to promote free voluntary reading of secondary school students in Imo state. As evident from table 1 above, secondary school libraries in Imo state employed reading programmes in varying degrees. Findings from table 1 shows that school 28 employed the highest number of programmes (11) followed by schools 26, 17, and 8 which all employed eight (8) programmes. Schools 1, 14, and 29 had seven (7) programmes respectively while schools 6, 12, 15 and 23 employed six (6) programmes each. Equally, schools 5, 7, 10, 13, 21 employed five programmes each. Schools 18 and 27 did not employ any programme.

**Table 2: Analysis of Reading Programmes Employed by School Libraries to Promote Reading**

S/No	Programmes	No of schools employing the programme	Percentage of schools employing the programme	Average	Ranking
1	Access to reading materials	26	89.66	2.73	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Lending of books	19	65.51	2.53	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	Mounting of Displays	4	13.79	1.92	10 <sup>th</sup>
4	Assistance to book selection	20	68.97	2.50	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Mounting of posters	8	27.59	2.04	7 <sup>th</sup>
6	Storytelling	8	27.59	2.05	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Book talks	6	20.69	1.98	8 <sup>th</sup>
8	Book quiz	7	24.14	2.06	5 <sup>th</sup>
9	Debate	22	75.86	2.70	2 <sup>nd</sup>
10	Reading competition	3	10.35	1.91	11 <sup>th</sup>
11	Visits by author	3	10.35	1.83	12 <sup>th</sup>
12	Exhibition	2	6.90	1.63	13 <sup>th</sup>
13	Period for personal reading	5	17.24	1.94	9 <sup>th</sup>

**Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Averages of Reading Programmes Employed**

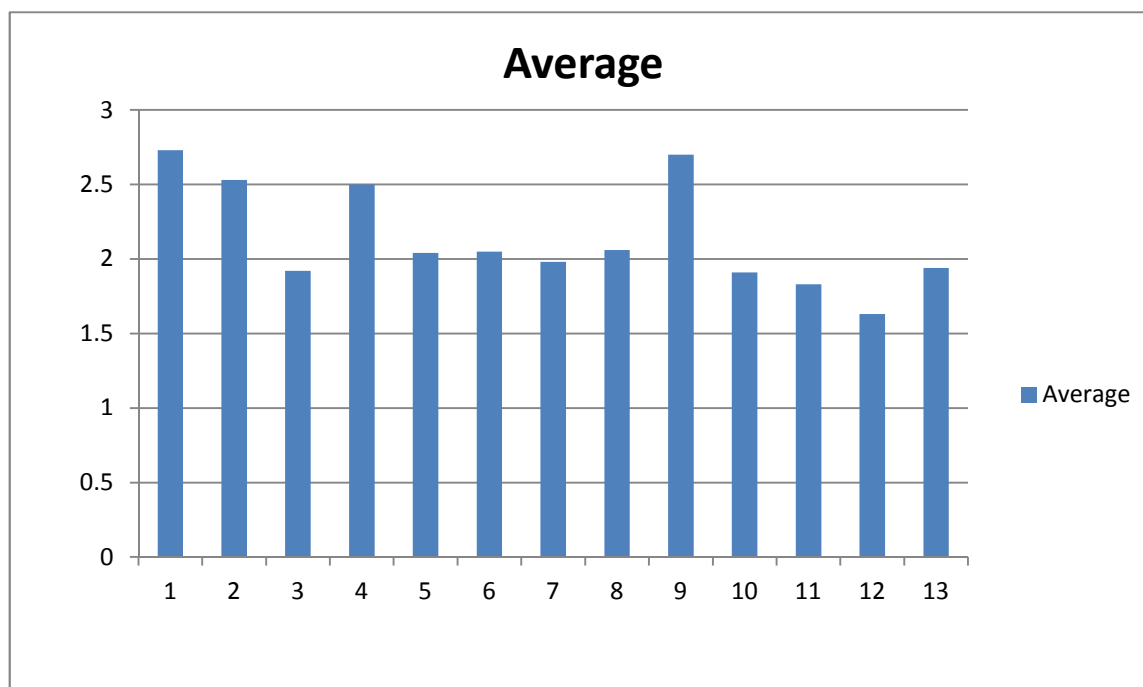


Table 2 and Figure 1 show analysis of reading programmes employed by school libraries to promote free voluntary reading of secondary school students in Imo state. It revealed that four programmes were employed in great extent by school libraries in Imo state. Those found to be employed include access to reading materials which was the highest employed programme with an average of (2.73), debate with an average of (2.70), lending of books for personal reading (2.53) and assistance in selection of books for personal reading, which had an average of (2.50). The least employed programme was book exhibition with an average of 1.63. Other programmes not employed include book quiz 2.06, storytelling 2.05, mounting of posters 2.04, book talks 1.98, period for personal reading 1.94, display 1.92, reading competition 1.91 and visits by authors (1.83).

Interview further revealed that only two programmes were employed in majority of the schools. According to the teacher/ librarians, all schools provided access to reading materials, while many (19) of the 29 schools loaned books to students. This confirmed students' responses.

However debate and assistance in choice of books were not mentioned by teacher/librarians as programmes offered in the schools. As in students' responses, the interview showed that school 28 employed the highest number of programmes followed by schools 17 and 29 that employed 7 programmes each. When the teacher/librarians were probed more on why they were not offering more programmes, they opined that they were saddled with too heavy teaching load and this prevented them from giving attention to other activities in the library. They only have time to open the library lend books to students most time when they are less busy in the class. Some said they were not librarians and as such did not know the library activities they should employ to help the students.

It can therefore be inferred from the above findings that access to reading materials, lending of books for personal reading, debate and assistance in selection of books for personal reading were programmes employed by school libraries. It was found that sixteen (16) schools employed between 5 and 11 programmes.

## **Research Question 2**

What is the influence of school library reading programmes on free voluntary readings of secondary school students?

**Table 3: Summary of Analysis of Influence of Reading Programmes on Free Voluntary Reading**

<b>School</b>	<b>Total No. of programmes</b>	<b>Average No. of programmes</b>	<b>Average No. of books read</b>	<b>Overall average</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
1	7	2.43	2.81	2.62	5 <sup>th</sup>
2	2	2.10	1.14	1.62	23 <sup>rd</sup>
3	3	2.13	1.43	1.78	20 <sup>th</sup>



4	5	1.97	1.92	1.95	17 <sup>th</sup>
5	4	2.39	2.61	2.50	7 <sup>th</sup>
6	6	2.12	2.91	2.52	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	5	2.16	1.51	1.84	19 <sup>th</sup>
8	8	2.24	2.32	2.28	13 <sup>th</sup>
9	1	1.65	1.25	1.45	28 <sup>th</sup>
10	5	2.38	2.33	2.36	12 <sup>th</sup>
11	4	2.03	1.31	1.67	22 <sup>nd</sup>
12	6	2.06	1.39	1.73	21 <sup>st</sup>
13	5	1.85	1.26	1.56	24 <sup>th</sup>
14	7	2.25	1.69	1.96	16 <sup>th</sup>
15	6	2.23	2.77	2.50	7 <sup>th</sup>
16	4	1.93	2.09	2.01	15 <sup>th</sup>
17	8	2.72	3.43	3.08	2 <sup>nd</sup>
18	0	1.50	1.19	1.35	29 <sup>th</sup>
19	1	1.82	1.26	1.54	25 <sup>th</sup>
20	4	2.12	2.14	2.13	14 <sup>th</sup>
21	5	2.28	2.55	2.42	9 <sup>th</sup>
22	4	2.17	2.58	2.38	11 <sup>th</sup>
23	6	2.35	2.47	2.41	10 <sup>th</sup>
24	1	1.91	1.83	1.87	18 <sup>th</sup>
25	1	1.83	1.21	1.52	27 <sup>th</sup>
26	8	2.46	2.91	2.69	4 <sup>th</sup>
27	0	1.62	1.43	1.53	26 <sup>th</sup>
28	11	2.79	3.39	3.09	1 <sup>st</sup>
29	7	2.59	3.37	2.98	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 3 shows summary of analysis of influence of reading programmes on free voluntary reading. Evident from table 3 revealed that the amount of reading programmes employed has influence on the amount of free voluntary reading done by students. The table revealed that students in schools that employed more programmes read more books than students in schools with fewer programmes. School 28 which ranked first on the list employed a total of eleven (11) programmes and had the highest amount of reading (3.39). Equally the same result was shown in other schools that employed substantial number of programmes. It can therefore be concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between school library programmes and free voluntary reading of secondary school students in Imo state.

### **Hypothesis**

Ho: There is no significant relationship between school library reading programmes and free voluntary reading of students.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of School Library Reading Programmes and Free Voluntary Reading**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Non-standardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficient</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1 (constant)	-1.081	0.043		24.937	0.000
Access	-0.479	0.100	-0.371	-4.808	0.000
Lending	-0.376	0.093	-0.282	-4.059	0.000
Mounting of Display	-0.342	0.112	-0.295	-4.264	0.002
Assistance in Book selection	-0.175	0.073	-0.117	-2.409	0.016

Mounting of Poster	-0.540	0.155	-0.371	-3.484	0.001
Story telling	-0.393	0.110	-0.264	-3.579	0.000
Books Talks	0.825	0.094	-0.578	-8.790	0.000
Book Quiz	-0.377	0.068	-0.268	-5.553	0.000
Debate	0.130	0.063	0.089	2.055	0.040
Reading Competition	0.129	0.056	0.074	2.054	0.040
Visits by Authors	0.119	0.097	-0.083	-1.224	0.221
Exhibition	-0.167	0.085	-0.115	-1.982	0.048
Period for Personal Reading	0.249	0.081	0.195	3.062	0.002

Dependent variable = free voluntary reading.

**NB: The p-value for each term tests the null hypothesis that the coefficient is equal to zero (no effect). A low p-value (< 0.05) indicates that you can reject the null hypothesis. In other words, a predictor that has a low p-value is likely to be a meaningful addition to your model because changes in the predictor's value are related to changes in the response variable.**

**The *t* statistic is the coefficient divided by its standard error. The standard error is an estimate of the standard deviation of the coefficient, the amount it varies across cases.**

Table 4 shows regression analysis on the school library reading programmes on students' free voluntary reading. Findings from table 4 showed that five items have significant relationship with free voluntary reading because they are lower than 0.05. These include access ( $\beta = -0.37$ ,  $t = -4.8$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) lending of books ( $\beta = -0.28$ ,  $t = -4.1$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ), storytelling ( $\beta = -0.26$ ,  $t = -3.6$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), book talks ( $\beta = -0.58$ ,  $t = -8.8$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) and book quiz ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $t = -5.6$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

Evident from table 4 revealed that seven items were at significant level with free voluntary reading. These include mounting of display ( $\beta = -0.30$ ,  $t = -4.3$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), assistance

in selection of books ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $t = -2.4$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), mounting of poster ( $\beta = -0.37$ ,  $t = -3.5$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), debate ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $t = 2.1$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), reading competition ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $t = 2.1$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), exhibition ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $t = -2.0$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) and period for personal reading ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $t = 3.1$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Visits by authors was insignificant to reading ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $t = 1.2$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ).

It can be concluded that all the programmes except one have significant relationship with free voluntary reading. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school library reading programmes and free voluntary reading was rejected. This shows there is a relationship between school library reading programmes and free voluntary reading.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Finding with respect to research question 1 indicate that only only four programmes, access to reading materials, debate, assistance in the choice of books, lending of books and was highly employed by the schools. One can attribute poor employment of these programmes to absence of librarians in the schools. The result of the interview showed that out of the twenty-nine teacher - librarians, only two from federal Girls College, Owerri and Aharia Secondary Technical College were librarians and among the two, one of them was saddled with teaching load. This same report was made by other teacher - librarians. They reported that they were saddled with heavy teaching load which did not allow them from giving attention to other activities in the library. The teaching loads according to them, do not allow them to take up any other activities in the library apart from allowing students access to the library, lending of books, debate and assistance in the selection of books. Added to this problem of time, was that all except two of the teacher librarians had no basic professional training in librarianship. This was

a problem as they opined because they did not know the library programme to offer to promote reading. This result conforms to the study of Achebe (2001) who reported lack of consistence reading programmes in the schools.

### **Influence of school library reading programmes on free voluntary reading**

Findings from research question two showed positive relationship between school library programmes and free voluntary reading of secondary school students. This shows that reading programmes influence level of reading. As reading programmes are provided, there will be increase in reading levels of students. This confirms with Krashen (2005) who reported positive relationship between reading programmes and free voluntary reading.

Evident from the hypothesis tested, all the programmes are at significant level of relationship with free voluntary of students. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school library reading programmes and free voluntary reading of secondary school students in Imo State was rejected at 0.5 level of significant. This means that there is significant relationship between school library reading programme and free voluntary reading.

### **Conclusion**

Overall mean showed that access to books, debate, lending of books for personal reading and assistance in selection of books were the major programmes employed at great extent by school libraries in Imo State. Sixteen schools employed between five and eleven programmes. School library reading programmes have positive influence on free voluntary reading. Obviously, there is a relationship between school library reading programmes and free voluntary reading. The results of the study revealed that secondary school students in Imo state are not

reading in great quantity as they should. If this ugly trend is allowed to continue, the secondary schools in the state will continue to graduate students with low educational, social, physical, recreational and mental growth. The skills of these students will be greatly affected in their reading comprehension fluency, grammar, writing and spelling and self confidence.

The School management Boards should support and supply what it takes to the teachers and teacher- librarians to work together to develop school programmes and encourage students to participate in them. For instance, it was found that debate was the most employed programme in the school. Other programmes should be fully developed. These programmes include access to reading materials, lending of books, mounting of display, assistance in selection of books, mounting of posters, story setting, book tasks, book quiz, reading competition, author visit, exhibition and period for personal reading. The students should be made to take these programmes seriously and also see them as vital not only to their personal development but also to their overall educational development.

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## Appendix 1

### DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION TO THEIR SCHOOLS

S/N0	SCHOOLS	Total School Population	SSF each school	SSF JSS 2	SSF Boys	SSF Girls	SSF SS1	SSF Boys	SSF Girls	SSF SS2	SSF Boys	SSF Girls	SSF Teacher Librarian
1.	Govt. College, Owerri	2034	203	73			71			59			1
2.	Okpofe Secondary School	216	22	11	6	5	5	2	3	6	3	3	1
3.	Community Sec. Sch. Owerri Ebiri	290	29	11	4	7	9	5	4	9	5	4	1
4.	Holy Rosery Sec. Sch, Ihioma	1227	123	44			35			44			1

5.	St. Augustine's Grammar School Nkwere	236	24	9			9			6			1
6.	Bishop Lasbrey Girls Sec. School Irete	364	38	19			12			7			1
7.	Oguta Girls Sec. School, Oguta	354	35	11			13			11			1
8.	Pricillia Memorial Sec. School, Oguta	312	31	12			9			10			1
9.	Agwa Sec. School, Agwa	418	42	27	15	12	9	5	4	6	3	3	1
10.	Girls Sec. School, Ezeoke	92	9	4			3			2			1
11.	Fatima Sec. Technical School, Nsu	392	39	15	7	8	12	8	4	12	6	6	1
12.	Madonna Senior Science Sec. School, Ekiti	380	38				20	9	11	18	8	10	1
13.	Okporo Technical College, Okporo	792	77	28	27	1	31	29	2	18	16	2	1
14.	Boys Sec. Sechool, New Owerri	524	52	21			14			18			1
15.	St. Catherine's Sec. School, Nkwerre	346	35	14			11			10			1
16.	Girls Sec. School Ogbor Nguru	216	22	11			6			5			1
17.	Mbaise Sec. School, Mbaise	284	28	13			8			7			1
18.	Ahiara Secondary Technical	530	53	12	11	1	21	21	0	20	19	1	1
19.	Uzoagba Girls Sec. Ikeduru	186	19	8			6			5			1
20.	Akabo High School. Ikeduru	275	28	13	4	9	8	3	5	7	2	5	1
21.	Atta Girls Sec. School	301	30	13			9			8			1
22.	National High Sch, Ndizogu	279	28	13	8	5	8	4	4	7	4	3	1
23.	Urualla Girls Sec. School, Uralla	152	15	7			4			4			1
24.	Aquinas Sec. Sch. Osu Mbano	243	24	7	3	4	9	5	4	8	4	4	1
25.	Community Sec. Sch. Ikenazizi	185	19	11			4			4			1

[illegible]