

Utilization of School Library-Based Instructional Games to Improve Practical Reading Skills among Primary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the utilization of school library-based instructional games to improve practical reading skills among primary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria. Data were gathered from 522 participants, 12 librarians, 390 teachers and 120 students, using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and checklists, employing a mixed-methods descriptive survey methodology. The analysis of the data revealed that there is an apparent discrepancy between teachers' knowledge of the possibilities of educational games and their actual use. Although educators appreciated these games, they mainly employed traditional, teacher-centered approaches, relegating games to recreational purposes rather than academic ones. The report emphasizes the urgent need to remove systematic impediments through awareness campaigns, teacher training, curriculum reform, and improved resource allocation. Among the recommendations are: updating school libraries with digital and game-based tools, incorporating instructional games into courses, and encouraging students to have early exposure to technology. The study highlights the importance of aligning Nigeria, particularly Enugu State, with global trends in game-based pedagogy to enhance literacy rates.

Keywords: *Game-Based Pedagogy, School Library-Based Instructional Games, Practical Reading Skills, Primary School Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Practical reading skills are fundamental for primary school students to succeed academically; however, conventional teaching strategies, such as rote memorization and teacher-centered instruction, remain the most important in Nigerian classrooms. Despite their dual functions as pedagogical tools and sources of engagement, educational games in school libraries are underutilized, even though they offer creative, learner-centered techniques to promote reading competency (e.g., vocabulary development and comprehension).

This study compares traditional pedagogy with game-based approaches in primary schools in Enugu State to assess their alignment with modern literacy goals and Nigeria's National Policy on Education. Drawing on constructivist theories, which emphasize the value of active learning and student involvement, and mixed-methods data, the study combines qualitative and quantitative research methods and highlights the tension between entrenched practices and emerging educational technologies.

Conventional teaching strategies, including rote memorization and teacher-centered instruction, are often employed in reading skills but can fail to engage students or meet the diverse learning needs of all students. (Jose et al., 2020).

Despite being deeply rooted in Nigerian classrooms, these techniques have been criticised for stifling creativity and critical thinking, diminishing literacy rates, and causing pupil disengagement. (Ofor-Douglas, 2024). Despite being widely used, most data indicate that these methods are incompatible with the dynamic, interactive learning environments that support 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and group projects. (Silva et al., 2023).

By combining play with instruction, educational games in school libraries offer a valuable alternative. Early learners' vocabulary recall, understanding, and fluency have been enhanced through these games, which include both non-digital options like Scrabble and digital tools such as Zingo Word Builder. Utilising children's natural propensity for play and game-based learning fosters intrinsic motivation and active engagement, thereby improving reading skills. (Sikora et al., 2024).

Still, their promise largely remains unrealized in Nigeria due to systemic obstacles, including inadequate training, limited resources, and sociopolitical mistrust. Among these obstacles are a cultural inclination toward conventional teaching approaches, restricted access to digital technologies in many institutions, and insufficient teacher preparation in game-based education. (Etesike et al., 2025).

This study aims to bridge the gap between conventional and game-based strategies by evaluating their effectiveness in primary schools in Enugu State. A mixed-methods approach investigates the degree of educational game usage, the challenges in acceptance, and its applicability as a substitute for literacy development. Contextualizing results within Nigeria's National Policy on Education and global best practices, the study advocates for a hybrid model that combines the strengths of both approaches, ensuring that students benefit from creative, learner-centered strategies while respecting the cultural and institutional realities of Nigerian education.

Nigerian elementary schools are in crisis, with poor literacy rates, despite reading skills showing clear advantages for both academic and lifelong success. Although school libraries carry instructional games that promote involvement and skill development, preliminary observations and UNESCO reports show that reliance on antiquated, teacher-centered approaches, e.g., memorization and passive learning, persists.

This gap raises important questions: Why are curricula not incorporating interactive, game-based approaches? Can conventional approaches address literacy challenges in the twenty-first century? The study highlights the critical need for swift action by examining the prevalence of traditional pedagogy and the unrealized potential of library-based educational games in Enugu State. The study therefore compares traditional teaching methods with game-based strategies for enhancing reading skills in Nigerian primary schools, focusing on the following aspects:

- 1) What teaching methods are primary school teachers using for reading instruction in Enugu State?
- 2) How relevant are educational games based in school libraries for improving reading skills?

Hypothesis

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers at public and private schools regarding the relevance of educational games for enhancing reading skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional vs. Game-Based Pedagogy for Reading Skills in Nigerian Primary Schools

Although understudied in sub-Saharan African settings like Nigeria, the debate between conventional and game-based educational techniques for literacy development has gained traction globally. This review synthesizes current research on approaches, theoretical frameworks, and contextual issues to place the research within the broader educational discourse.

Traditional Pedagogy: Prevalence and Limitations

Traditional teaching approaches dominate Nigeria's primary education system, including rote memorization, teacher-centered instruction, and passive learning (Wakil et al., 2024). Studies indicate that their ingrained use results from structural elements such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teacher preparation, and rigid curricula (Mamaile & Omodan, 2023). Critics of these approaches contend that they hinder creativity, critical thinking, and student involvement, even if they prioritise consistency and discipline (Eze et al., 2022). Conventional methods for improving reading abilities often rely on repetitive drills and textbook-based activities, which fail to meet the diverse learning needs of students or inspire reluctant readers (Potot et al., 2023). Preliminary results of this study confirm these constraints in Enugu State, indicating a continued reliance on teacher-centred approaches despite their mismatch with 21st-century literacy targets.

Game-Based Pedagogy: Global Evidence and Theoretical Foundations

Utilising play as an educational tool, game-based learning (GBL) enhances engagement, teamwork, and skill acquisition. Grounded in constructivist principles (Dewey, 1938); and the Use and Gratification framework (Sikora et al., 2024). GBL stresses active engagement, experiential learning, and natural motivation (Balaskas et al., 2023). Empirical research shows how well it improves reading skills including vocabulary memory (Balaskas et al., 2023), comprehension (Smith et al., 2021), and fluency (Cadime et al., 2024). According to Tobar et al (2017) game – based learning promotes pupils problem solving, exploration and interaction abilities through the rules component of games which engage fully the cognitive part of the pupils and automatically, unconsciously and gradually turn them to critical thinkers mostly in the classroom setting For example, early learners' phonological awareness and decoding skills have improved with digital games like Zingo Word Builder and non-digital tools like Scrabble (Naeem & Khan, 2024). Globally, GBL is praised for closing the disparity between children's natural inclination for play and official education (Rad et al., 2022). Nevertheless, its acceptance in low-resource environments is still restricted, primarily due to infrastructure problems and sociopolitical mistrust (Naeem & Khan, 2024).

Nigerian Context: Knowledge vs. Use

Although awareness of educational games exists in Nigeria, structural obstacles hinder their widespread use. Ideally placed to curate and promote games, school libraries sometimes lack the budget, skilled staff, and policy support (Shonhe, 2019). Studies find that, when accessible, games are assigned to "warm-up activities" instead of being included in courses (Afonso et al., 2024). Though they see games' promise, teachers point out difficulties like poor training, parental opposition, and inconsistent electricity (Hirpa, 2021). These results complement those of this study, which shows that although 68% of Enugu State instructors agree that games are relevant, just 23% utilize them (see abstract).

Constructivism and Learner-Centered Reform: theoretical frameworks

Underlying GBL's learner-centered philosophy, constructivism posits that knowledge is constructed through interaction and introspection (Dewey, 1938). This contrasts with the behaviorist roots of conventional approaches, which prioritize knowledge transfer. The Use and Gratification Theory further explains GBL's attraction, which posits that students derive gratification from interactive, self-paced learning, thereby encouraging deeper involvement (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023). However, top-down curricular policies and limited resources can hinder the adoption of such innovations in Nigeria (Buckler et al., 2025).

Research Gap and the value of this Study

Although world literature praises GBL's advantages, there is a lack of research examining its viability in Nigerian elementary schools. Neglecting pedagogical parallels, regional research concentrates solely on digital inequalities (Hustad et al., 2019) or infrastructure shortcomings (Ihebom & Uko, 2020). This study contrasts the contrasting approaches in Enugu State's conventional and game-based methods and gives emphasizes on institutional and sociopolitical limitations particular to Nigeria. The study also suggested context-sensitive approaches to include GBL in the national curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODS

Regarding reading capabilities, this study focuses on conventional versus game-based teaching strategies, highlighting the availability of games and teacher practices. The geographic focus is on Enugu State, Nigeria, while the population scope covers primary school instructors, students, and librarians in both public and private schools. This study, conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria, used a mixed-methods descriptive survey design to compare traditional and game-based pedagogical approaches for reading skills. While qualitative data, such as interviews and focus groups, provide context and insights into the relevance of educational games as alternative pedagogical tools, quantitative data offers statistical insights into teacher practices and methods. The area of study is Enugu State, a Southeastern Nigerian state with a high density of elementary schools. This location was chosen due to its mix of urban and rural educational environments and the recorded problems with literacy rates, despite significant resources investments.

The population of the study consists of 10,440 respondents, including 8,131 pupils, 2,297 teachers, and 12 librarians spread across 78 registered primary schools in the urban centre of Enugu State. The sample size, obtained through a multi-stage sampling technique, is 522 respondents, comprising 390 teachers, 120 pupils, and 12 librarians. At the first stage, the researchers employed a purposive sampling technique to select twelve schools with functional libraries containing game materials. The second stage involved the use of stratified sampling technique to ensure representation from public (six schools) and private (six schools) institutions. In the third stage, stratified sampling technique was also used to select the composition of student participants according to gender, picking 60 boys and 60 girls. Three instruments (questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion [FGD]) were designed and used for data collection. The questionnaire (AUSLEGQ) was used to elicit data from the teachers, the interview was used for the librarians, and the focus group discussion was used to gather responses from pupils. The interview sessions were conducted one-on-one by the researchers with each librarian; in conducting the focus group discussion, there were twelve groups, with each school having one group comprising ten pupils (five males and five females).

Three experts validated the instruments for relevance and clarity. One from the Measurement and Evaluation unit and two research professionals from the Library and Information Science Department, all at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Research assistants distributed 390 questionnaires, of which 378 were returned, yielding a 96.9% response rate. The data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed from librarians' interviews and focus groups (FGDs) with students.

Public and private school responses were compared using quantitative SPSS analysis, which included independent samples t-tests. ($\alpha = 0.05$) and descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and percentages). Theme analysis revealed recurrent patterns (e.g., curricular exclusion, infrastructure deficits). Participants had informed permission, and anonymity was guaranteed. Data were kept safely; transcripts were anonymized to protect respondent identities. This approach provides a rigorous, context-sensitive framework for evaluating instructional strategies in Nigerian elementary schools. It aligns with the study's comparative focus on conventional and game-based approaches.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates the methods primary school teachers adopted for teaching practical reading skills. It was noted that the adopted methods include memorization/rote learning, lecture by the teacher, vocabulary drills, debates, recitations, textbook assignments, quizzes, drama and role-playing, chalkboards, use of posters, picture drawing, cartoons, tutorials, reading aloud, supervised studies, and oral reports. Those that were not adopted include class discussions, small group discussions, the use of slides, the use of filmstrips, brainstorming, gamification, and other methods that are not conventional.

Information from the oral interview with school librarians regarding the teaching techniques adopted by teachers to help pupils improve their reading skills “showed that the use of conventional teaching methods is predominant among primary school teachers.”

The responses from the librarians pointed out that teachers in public primary schools, particularly, tend to employ teacher-centered methods, such as chalkboards, memorization and rote learning, class discussions, oral teaching, and, at most, modelling for the pupils.

In the words of one of the librarians, referred to as L1 for the purpose of this study, “it is a common fact that teachers uses chalkboard in teaching, and you know, repetition of words is good in teaching primary school pupils. ” Another librarian, L3, said, “teaching young children requires repetition of words; however, it is good to add demonstration and pictures, because I’ve found out that it helps them to remember. ” The interview also revealed that teachers in some private primary schools are trying to adopt more modern teaching methods. Some engage in brainstorming activities, modelling, demonstrations, debates, and the use of posters and television, among others.

Therefore, it can still be concluded that a larger percentage of primary school pupils are taught mainly in conventional ways. From the librarians' perspective, their responsibilities included providing resources for pupils and, most importantly, reading to them.

During the focus group discussion, pupils emphasized that they primarily learn to read by following their teachers, reading aloud, repeating, and memorizing what they are expected to learn in most instances.

Table 1: Methods Adopted by Teachers in Primary Schools for Teaching Effective Reading Skills

		School Ownership				Overall		D
		Public		Private		not adopted	Adopted	
		not adopted	Adopted	not adopted	Adopted			
1	Memorization / Rotes method	84(31.6%)	182(68.4%)	89(31.2%)	152(68.8%)	153(31.4%)	334(68.6%)	A
2	Lecture by teacher	100(37.6%)	166(62.4%)	68(30.8%)	153(69.2%)	168(34.5%)	319(65.5%)	A
3	Class discussion	162(60.9%)	104(39.1%)	111(50.2%)	110(49.8%)	273(56.1%)	214(43.9%)	NA
4	Demonstration	(93.2%)	18(6.8%)	199(90%)	22(10%)	447(91.8%)	40(8.2%)	NA
5	Choral speaking/ music	248(93.2%)	18(6.8%)	202(91.4%)	19(8.6%)	450(92.4%)	37(7.6%)	NA
6	Reading assignment / vocabulary drill	16(6.0%)	250(94%)	18(8.1%)	203(91.9%)	34(7%)	453(93%)	A
7	Small group discussion	150(56.4%)	116(43.6%)	137(62%)	(38%)	287(58.9%)	200(41.1%)	NA
8	Debates	23(8.6%)	243(91.4%)	37(16.7%)	184(83.3%)	60(12.3%)	427(87.7%)	A
9	Presentations	246(92.5%)	20(7.5%)	196(88.7%)	25(11.3%)	442(90.8%)	45(9.2%)	NA
10	Recitations	7(2.6%)	259(97.4%)	13(5.9%)	208(94.1%)	20(4.1%)	467(95.9%)	A
11	Text book assignment	20(7.5%)	246(92.5%)	20(9%)	201(91%)	40(8.2%)	447(91.8%)	A
12	Games and stimulation	209(78.6%)	57(21.4%)	160(72.4%)	61(27.6%)	369(75.8%)	118(24.2%)	NA
13	Dressing drills	183(68.8%)	83(31.2%)	161(72.9%)	60(27.1%)	344(70.6%)	143(29.4%)	NA
14	Photographs	193(72.8%)	72(27.2%)	149(67.7%)	71(32.3%)	342(70.5%)	143(29.5%)	NA
15	Modelling	201(75.6%)	65(24.4%)	166(75.1%)	55(24.9%)	367(75.4%)	120(24.6%)	NA
16	Quiz	29(10.9%)	236(89.1%)	37(16.8%)	183(83.2%)	66(13.6%)	419(86.4%)	A
17	Class projects	244(91.7%)	22(8.3%)	195(88.2%)	26(11.8%)	439(90.1%)	48(9.9%)	NA
18	Drama and role playing	51(19.2%)	215(80.8%)	48(21.7%)	173(78.3%)	99(20.3%)	388(79.7%)	A
19	Interview	156(58.6%)	110(41.4%)	121(54.8%)	100(45.2%)	277(56.9%)	210(43.1%)	NA
20	Use of recordings	138(51.9%)	128(48.1%)	125(56.6%)	96(43.4%)	263(54%)	224(46%)	NA
21	Verbal illustrations	219(82.3%)	47(17.7%)	170(76.9%)	51(23.1%)	389(79.9%)	98(20.1%)	NA
22	Use of television	154(57.9%)	112(42.1%)	121(54.8%)	100(45.2%)	275(56.5%)	212(43.5%)	NA
23	Use of slides	154(57.9%)	112(42.1%)	132(59.7%)	89(40.3%)	286(58.7%)	201(41.3%)	NA
24	Use of filmstrips	165(62%)	101(38%)	135(61.1%)	86(38.9%)	300(61.6%)	187(38.4%)	NA
25	Exhibition and display	169(63.5%)	97(36.5%)	134(60.6%)	87(39.4%)	303(62.2%)	184(37.8%)	NA
26	Puppet use	151(56.8%)	115(43.2%)	124(56.1%)	97(43.9%)	275(56.5%)	212(43.5%)	NA
27	Chalk boards	59(22.2%)	207(77.8%)	48(21.7%)	173(78.3%)	107(22%)	380(78%)	A
28	Problem solving and case studies	213(80.1%)	53(19.9%)	179(81%)	42(19%)	392(80.5%)	95(19.5%)	NA
29	Use of posters	50(18.8%)	215(81.2%)	49(22.2%)	172(77.8%)	99(20.3%)	388(79.7%)	A
30	Picture drawing, cartons etc	8(3%)	258(97%)	17(7.7%)	204(92.3%)	25(5.1%)	462(94.9%)	A
31	Construction	205(77.1%)	61(22.9%)	160(72.4%)	61(27.6%)	365(74.9%)	122(25.1%)	NA
32	Library reading hours	217(81.6%)	49(18.4%)	179(81%)	42(19%)	396(81.3%)	91(18.7%)	NA
33	Puzzles maps	169(63.5%)	97(36.5%)	127(57.5%)	94(42.5%)	296(60.8%)	191(39.2%)	NA
34	Flannels boards	133(50.2%)	132(49.8%)	107(48.9%)	112(51.1%)	240(49.6%)	224(50.4%)	NA
35	Use of local resources	207(77.8%)	59(22.2%)	162(73.3%)	59(26.7%)	118(24.2%)	369(75.8%)	NA
36	Tutorials	80(30.1%)	186(69.9%)	65(29.4%)	157(70.6%)	145(29.8%)	342(70.2%)	A
37	Word association	224(84.2%)	42(15.8%)	177(80.1%)	44(19.9%)	401(82.3%)	86(17.7%)	NA
38	Putting ideas into pictures	227(85.3%)	39(14.7%)	169(76.5%)	52(23.5%)	396(81.3%)	91(18.7%)	NA
39	Brainstorming	215(80.8%)	51(19.2%)	166(75.1%)	55(24.9%)	381(78.2%)	106(21.8%)	NA
40	Reading aloud	227(85.3%)	39(14.7%)	184(83.3%)	37(16.7%)	411(84.4%)	76(15.6%)	A
41	Supervised studies	45(16.9%)	221(83.1%)	57(25.8%)	164(74.2%)	102(20.9%)	385(79.1%)	A
42	Oral reports	66(24.8%)	200(75.2%)	66(29.9%)	155(70.1%)	132(27.1%)	355(72.9%)	A

Key: A- Adopted; NU- Not Adopted

The findings presented in Table 2 reveal that both public and private school teachers perceive educational games in school libraries as highly relevant to the development of practical reading skills among pre-primary and primary school pupils. With an overall cluster mean of 3.49, teachers generally agreed that educational games enhance key literacy skills. The highest-rated benefits include cultivating Phonic skills (mean = 3.64), developing vocabulary mastery (mean = 3.62), and sustaining pupils' reading interest (mean = 3.60), indicating strong support for their use in foundational literacy development.

Although all items received favourable ratings, reading comprehension (mean = 3.07) ranked the lowest, suggesting that teachers may view games as more effective for basic skill-building than for promoting deeper textual understanding. Overall, the results underscore the positive role of educational games in fostering reading engagement, accuracy, pronunciation, and critical reasoning among young learners.

Discussions with the school librarians indicated that most of the school librarians are aware of the relevance of educational games to reading skills both to help develop reading skills or to help improve reading skills. Librarians mentioned that educational games could help pupils improve their spelling skills, sharpen their vocabulary and grammar capabilities, that educational games could help their communication, writing, pronunciation skills and also help to build the spirit of team work in the pupils as well as develop their critical thinking skills.

also In the focus group discussion held with the pupils, they categorically stated that they love to play games especially video games because games helps them to know more spellings, pronunciations, learn new words, match letters together to form words and that they love to learn reading through games as compare to learning reading through books and memorization because the latter make them bored. In the words of a pupil in group 7, "I love video games because it makes me think fast". Also, another pupil in group 11, said, I love counting games like abacus, it is colourful and helps me to count".

Table 2: Relevance of Using School Library-Based Educational Games for Practical Reading Skills in Pre-Primary and Primary School Pupils, as Perceived by Teachers

		School Ownership				Overall		R	D
		Public		Private		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Improves reading comprehension	3.14	1.00	2.99	1.03	3.07	1.02	21 st	A
2	Promotes reading attention	3.44	.83	3.32	.86	3.39	.85	18 th	A
3	Enhances reading speed	3.57	.82	3.57	.78	3.57	.80	6 th	A
4	It helps sustain reading interest	3.64	.66	3.56	.67	3.60	.66	4 th	A
5	Help upgrade spelling skills	3.56	.63	3.48	.72	3.52	.67	10 th	A
6	Nourishes versatility of reading	3.58	.70	3.65	.58	3.61	.65	3 rd	A
7	It increases reading accuracy	3.59	.62	3.54	.58	3.56	.60	8 th	A
8	It helps develop mastery of vocabulary	3.66	.56	3.58	.59	3.62	.58	2 nd	A
9	It encourages multi-fasting	3.39	.69	3.31	.71	3.36	.70	20 th	A
10	Boosts efficiency	3.44	.69	3.41	.67	3.43	.68	16 th	A
11	Louds imagination power	3.44	.68	3.33	.71	3.39	.69	19 th	A
12	It helps advocate improved writing skills	3.56	.64	3.41	.74	3.49	.69	14 th	A
13	It infuses confidence in pupils	3.53	.65	3.45	.66	3.50	.66	12 th	A
14	It helps in cultivating phonics skills	3.72	.47	3.54	.56	3.64	.52	1 st	A
15	It helps develop in pupils' good listening skills	3.55	.64	3.54	.57	3.55	.61	9 th	A
16	It heightens good pronunciation skill	3.64	.55	3.52	.58	3.58	.57	5 th	A
17	It helps develop critical ability and	3.56	.61	3.58	.59	3.57	.60	7 th	A

	improves reasoning								
18	It improves eloquence	3.52	.65	3.49	.66	3.50	.66	13 th	A
19	Advances speaking skill	3.53	.65	3.52	.55	3.52	.61	11 th	A
20	Fosters better grammar	3.48	.64	3.37	.73	3.43	.68	17 th	A
21	Help cultivate word identification skills	3.47	.76	3.47	.66	3.47	.72	15 th	A
	Cluster mean	3.52	.67	3.46	.68	3.49	.68		A

Key: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; SD- Strongly Disagree; D- Disagree

Table 3 presents the t-test mean score (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) for the awareness level of teachers regarding library-based educational games for improving reading skills. The results for public schools are ($\bar{x} = 3.30$, $SD = .74$), and those for private schools are ($\bar{x} = 3.25$, $SD = .79$). The observed difference between public and private school teachers is not significant at the .082 level. The significant value for this hypothesis is 0.05, which is less than .082. Therefore, the results are insignificant. It then shows that the null hypothesis, which states there is no significant difference in the mean rating of school teachers on the awareness level of library educational games for improving the reading skills of pupils in private primary and public primary schools in Enugu State, is accepted.

Table 3: t-test analysis of awareness level of library-based educational games for improving reading skills

School Ownership	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sign	Decision
Public	196	3.30	.74	376	1.749	.082	NS
Private	182	3.25	.79				

Keys: *N= Numbers; SD=Standard Deviation; t=t-test; sign =level of significant; NS= not significance*

DISCUSSION

Teachers predominantly employ traditional methods, including memorization, lectures, recitations, and textbook assignments. While some modern techniques, such as games and small group discussions, are occasionally adopted, the teaching approach remains teacher-centered and less effective for average or struggling learners. The finding is buttressed by Wakil et al., (2024)'s view that traditional teaching approaches dominate Nigeria's primary education system, including rote memorization, teacher-centered instruction, and passive learning. Many studies suggest the need for learner-centered approaches, with educational games particularly beneficial in improving reading skills, as games foster better comprehension and engagement.

Teachers are generally aware of the potential benefits of games for enhancing reading skills, including vocabulary, spelling, and critical thinking. However, this awareness does not always translate into effective use, partly due to a lack of practical integration into the curriculum. The findings of this study is corroborated by Abubakar (2021) who points out that teachers are aware of the potentials of educational games. However, Naeem and Khan, (2024) state that the acceptance of educational games in low-resource environments is still restricted, primarily due to infrastructure problems and sociopolitical mistrust

Teachers recognize that educational games can enhance reading-related skills, including comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Games are seen as a way to make reading more engaging and enjoyable for pupils. Empirical research by Balaskas et al., (2023) shows how well educational games improves reading skills including vocabulary memory,

comprehension (Smith et al., 2021), and fluency (Cadime et al., 2024). According to Tobar et al (2017) game – based learning promotes pupils problem solving, exploration and interaction abilities through the rules component of games which engage fully the cognitive part of the pupils and automatically, unconsciously and gradually turn them to critical thinkers mostly in the classroom setting

CONCLUSION

Most Nigerian studies on game-based learning done overseas, so educational games are underused in Enugu's primary schools. The study emphasises the need to use games as teaching tools, thereby overcoming systematic and perceptual obstacles to enhance their capacity to improve reading abilities. Although many are aware of the advantages of educational games, their adoption is constrained by issues such as a lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient curricular integration. Schools must provide additional resources, support teacher training, and incorporate games more effectively into the curriculum to effectively utilize games in enhancing reading abilities

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