

# Enhancing Reading Skills Among Primary School Learners: Leveraging On E-Learning Tools And Counseling Psychology For Remediation In Niger State

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## **Abstract**

*This research investigated the effective utilization of e-learning tools and counselling psychology as integrated strategies for remediating reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State. The study examined the current state of reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State and assessed the utilization of e-learning tools in primary schools in Niger State for addressing reading disabilities. Two research questions guided the study. This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Population of the study comprised of primary school pupils in Niger state across all classes and age grades. Through proportionate stratified sampling, 130 pupils were sampled for this study comprising of 58 female pupils and 72 male pupils across the three senatorial zones of the state. Additionally, teachers and counseling psychologists involved in primary education in the state were interviewed and surveyed. Data was collected using Pupils' Reading Behaviour Analysis Checklist (PRBAC) and a Standardized Reading Comprehension Tool (SRCT) adopted from National Examinations Council (NECO) 2022 sessional English Studies. Both tools were validated and a reliability index of 0.73 and 0.83 was established respectively. Data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Weighted mea of 2.5 was used as decision rule. Findings of the study revealed that, majority of primary six (6) pupils have reading disabilities through the pretest carried out, none of the e-learning tools were available for utilization in the schools as an intervention to stimulate learners' reading abilities. Recommendations made were that, e-learning tools and implementation of counselling units should be provided in public primary schools in Niger state by Niger State Universal Basic Education Board and professional counsellors should be employed in public primary schools and trained -\*on utilization of e-learning tools in primary schools in Niger State for addressing reading disabilities.*

**Keywords:** *E-Learning, Counselling psychology, Reading skills, e-learning tools, Remediation*

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## **I. Introduction**

Reading skills are foundational for academic success, especially among primary school learners. The ability to read proficiently not only enhances comprehension but also fosters critical thinking and lifelong learning. Unfortunately, many Nigerian primary school learners struggle with reading proficiency, a challenge that has been linked to inadequate instructional techniques, lack of resources, and socio-economic factors (Adeyemi & Ogundele, 2018). As such, there is a growing need to explore innovative methods to enhance reading skills, especially leveraging modern tools like e-learning and counseling psychology as remedial approaches.

E-learning tools have gained significant traction globally and have shown promise in addressing various educational challenges. These tools provide interactive and personalized learning experiences that can cater to the unique needs of learners (Adewale & Ajayi, 2020). For primary school learners, e-learning tools offer a dynamic way to engage with reading materials, using multimedia elements such as audio, visuals, and interactive texts to improve comprehension and retention. E-learning platforms like educational apps, interactive e-books, and games can make reading more appealing and accessible to young learners, potentially boosting their reading abilities (Ogunleye & Akinola, 2019).

In addition to e-learning, counseling psychology can play a vital role in addressing reading challenges among primary school learners. Counseling psychology provides a framework for understanding the psychological and emotional barriers that may hinder a child's ability to read. Factors such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and learning disabilities often impact a child's reading performance (Akintunde & Babalola, 2021). By

integrating counseling techniques into the learning environment, educators can provide targeted interventions that address these psychological barriers, creating a more supportive and effective learning environment. Counseling psychologists can work with teachers to identify struggling readers and develop strategies to help them overcome the emotional challenges associated with reading difficulties.

The combination of e-learning tools and counseling psychology offers a holistic approach to enhancing reading skills in Nigerian primary schools. While e-learning provides the technological means to engage learners, counseling psychology addresses the emotional and psychological factors that often hinder reading success. This dual approach recognizes that reading difficulties are not solely cognitive but are also influenced by emotional and social factors (Eze, 2017). Implementing these strategies requires a shift from traditional rote learning methods to a more interactive, learner-centered approach that encourages participation and self-directed learning.

Despite the potential benefits, the integration of e-learning tools and counseling psychology in Nigerian primary schools has been limited by several challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to digital devices, lack of trained personnel, and cultural resistance to non-traditional teaching methods (Olowokere & Ayodele, 2022). However, with the increasing availability of mobile technology and the growing recognition of the importance of mental health in education, there is an opportunity to overcome these barriers and enhance reading skills through these innovative approaches.

Enhancing reading skills among primary school learners in Nigeria requires the adoption of both e-learning tools and counseling psychology. While e-learning provides the technological framework for improving reading engagement, counseling psychology addresses the emotional and psychological aspects of learning. By combining these approaches, educators can create a more effective and inclusive learning environment that supports all learners, particularly those struggling with reading challenges.

### **Problem Statement/Justification**

Reading skills among primary school learners in Nigeria have been persistently low, with many pupils failing to meet expected literacy standards (Adewale & Ajayi, 2020). This problem has been linked to several factors, including ineffective teaching methods, lack of appropriate learning resources, and socio-economic barriers. Traditional instructional techniques, which often rely on rote learning, fail to engage pupils and address the unique learning needs of struggling readers (Eze, 2017). Moreover, psychological factors such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and learning disabilities further compound the problem, leaving many learners unable to reach their full potential (Akintunde & Babalola, 2021).

Leveraging e-learning tools and counseling psychology presents a dual approach to addressing this issue. E-learning platforms provide interactive, personalized learning experiences that can engage learners and improve their reading skills (Ogunleye & Akinola, 2019). Meanwhile, counseling psychology offers strategies to address the emotional and psychological barriers that hinder reading development. Integrating these approaches can create a more supportive, inclusive environment that not only improves literacy outcomes but also addresses the holistic needs of the learner. This approach is crucial for ensuring that Nigerian primary school learners develop strong reading skills, which are foundational for academic success and lifelong learning.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research investigated the following objectives:

1. Examined the current state of reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State.
2. Assessed the utilization of e-learning tools in primary schools in Niger State for addressing reading disabilities.

### **Research Questions**

The research answered the following questions:

1. What is the current prevalence and nature of reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State?
2. How are e-learning tools currently being utilised in primary schools in Niger State to support reading instruction?

## **II. Literature Appraisal**

### **Reading Disabilities**

Reading disabilities refer to a variety of cognitive issues that impair the ability to read fluently or comprehend text effectively. These disabilities are often linked to dyslexia, where individuals experience difficulty in processing written language, resulting in struggles with word recognition, decoding, and spelling (Ademola, 2020). In Nigeria, reading disabilities are a growing concern in both primary and secondary education, affecting academic performance and overall learning outcomes. Studies by Oladipo and Akande (2019) reveal that pupils with reading disabilities often exhibit poor comprehension skills, leading to challenges in other academic subjects. According to Omisore (2021), the lack of early identification and intervention in Nigerian schools exacerbates the problem, as many teachers lack the training to recognize and support pupils with reading

disabilities. Consequently, pupils with these challenges face long-term academic difficulties, which can also affect their self-esteem and social interactions. Towards addressing these issues, stakeholders must focus on early diagnosis, teacher training, and inclusive educational practices. Ogunleye (2018) emphasizes the importance of incorporating specialized reading programs and using assistive technology to help pupils overcome reading challenges and succeed academically.

### **E-learning Education**

E-learning has become an integral part of the educational landscape, particularly in Nigeria, as it offers flexibility and access to educational resources beyond traditional classroom settings. The adoption of e-learning in Nigerian education has grown, especially with the increasing use of technology. According to Olatunji (2019), e-learning platforms provide pupils with the opportunity to learn at their own pace, improving engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, Ojo and Afolabi (2020) note that e-learning tools, such as mobile applications and online learning management systems, allow for the easy dissemination of educational content to pupils in remote areas.

Despite its benefits, e-learning in Nigeria faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to the internet, and low technological literacy among both teachers and pupils. As Aina and Ogunlade (2021) observed, many Nigerian schools, particularly in rural areas, lack the resources needed to fully integrate e-learning into their curricula. To improve the effectiveness of e-learning in Nigeria, Adeyemi and Salawu (2022) suggest that there must be concerted efforts from the government and educational institutions to provide the necessary infrastructure, training, and resources to support this mode of learning.

### **Counseling Psychology in Education**

Counseling psychology plays a vital role in the educational system by addressing pupils' emotional, social, and academic challenges. In Nigeria, counseling psychologists provide interventions aimed at helping pupils manage stress, improve decision-making, and enhance personal development (Adeoye, 2018). These professionals use a variety of therapeutic techniques to support pupils in achieving their academic goals while promoting mental health and well-being. According to Salami and Adeniyi (2019), counseling in education fosters self-awareness, emotional regulation, and positive interpersonal relationships, which are essential for pupils' overall development.

Counseling psychology also addresses critical issues like career guidance, drug abuse, and examination anxiety, all of which can affect academic performance. As highlighted by Okon and Omisore (2021), school counselors are essential in identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses, offering personalized support to overcome barriers to learning. However, despite the importance of counseling in education, Adebayo (2020) notes that there is still a shortage of trained counselors in Nigerian schools, particularly in rural areas. To improve this, stakeholders must prioritize the training and employment of qualified counselors in educational institutions.

### **Integration of E-Learning and Counseling Psychology**

The integration of e-learning and counseling psychology in education is increasingly gaining attention in Nigeria, providing a platform for addressing pupils' academic, emotional, and psychological needs. E-learning platforms offer opportunities for virtual counseling sessions, enabling pupils to access psychological support irrespective of their geographical location (Olatunde & Osakwe, 2020). With the growth of digital technologies, counseling psychologists can now offer interventions through online tools, which helps in reducing the stigma associated with seeking help and enhances accessibility (Adeyemi & Salawu, 2022).

This integration not only promotes flexibility but also aids in addressing specific psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression, which may hinder academic success. Adebisi and Afolabi (2021) highlight that virtual counseling can provide pupils with immediate help during stressful periods, such as examination seasons, improving their academic outcomes. However, the lack of reliable internet access and technological resources in some Nigerian schools poses challenges to fully implementing this approach. As Oluwasegun and Adeola (2019) suggest, for successful integration, schools must provide adequate technological infrastructure and training for both pupils and counselors, ensuring seamless delivery of e-counseling services.

## **III. Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design gathers information about the occurrence, distribution, and interrelations of variables within a population where data are usually gathered through self-reporting (Polit & Beck, 2014) which is well-positioned by way of the purpose of the study. In this study, the population of the research study comprised of primary school pupils in Niger state across all classes and age grades. Through proportionate stratified sampling, 130 pupils were sampled for this study comprising of 58 female pupils and 72 male pupils. The main principle of the proportionate stratified sampling is that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected

to be in the sample and that the sample replicates the population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The instrument for data collection was a check list titled Pupils’ Reading Behaviour Analysis Checklist (PRBAC) and a Standardized Reading Comprehension Tool (SRCT) adopted from National Examinations Council (NECO) 2022 sessional English Studies. Five (5) variables were utilized which included Pupils’ Reading Pronunciation, Pupils’ Reading Fluency, Pupils’ Reading Speed, Pupils’ Reading Interest and E-learning Tools Accessibility. Both tools were validated and a reliability index of 0.73 and 0.83 was established respectively. Pre-test post-test was used to administer the SRCT within interval of two weeks. Data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Weighted mea of 2.5 was used as decision rule.

#### IV. Data Analysis And Discussion Of Result

##### Research Question One

What is the current prevalence and nature of reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State?

**Table 1: Current prevalence and nature of reading disabilities among primary school learners in Niger State**

Variables	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
Reading Pronunciation	2.75	0.95
Reading Fluency	3.03	0.80
Reading Speed	2.25	0.79
Reading Interest	2.13	0.90

Source; Field survey, 2024

Finding from table 1 shows a mean of 2.75 suggests that the participants or individuals scored moderately on reading pronunciation. The relatively high standard deviation (0.95) indicates a broad range of ability levels in reading pronunciation, meaning there are some individuals who may struggle significantly, while others are likely performing much better. This could imply that difficulties in reading pronunciation are present but vary widely across the population. Also, result (Mean score 3.03) on reading fluency indicates a generally moderate to good level of fluency. The lower standard deviation (0.80) suggests that there is less variability in fluency compared to pronunciation. However, this still shows that some individuals have difficulties, although not as much as with pronunciation. Fluency problems are often linked to reading disabilities like dyslexia, so some individuals may experience challenges in reading fluidly.

Results further shows a mean of 2.25 indicates that the participants have relatively lower scores in reading speed, meaning they are slower readers. The moderate standard deviation (0.79) suggests that there is some variability, but overall, this might indicate that reading speed is a significant issue for many in the population. Slow reading speed can be a key symptom of reading disabilities like dyslexia, where processing text takes longer than average while result on interest in reading (mean score 2.13) implies a low level of interest in reading among the participants. The standard deviation of 0.90 indicates a wide spread in interest levels. A low reading interest can be both a consequence and a cause of reading disabilities. Children who struggle with reading due to disabilities may develop less interest in reading, while a lack of interest can further hinder improvement in reading skills.

##### Research Question Two

How are e-learning tools currently being utilised in primary schools in Niger State to support reading instruction?

**Table 2: Current utilisation of e-learning tools used in primary schools in Niger State to support reading instruction**

Variables	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
E-learning Tools Accessibility Pretest	3.08	0.66
E-learning Tools Accessibility Posttest	3.15	0.71
<b>Improvement</b>	<b>+0.07</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Pre-test result from research question two in table 2 shows that the accessibility of e-learning tools scored a mean of 3.08, indicating a moderate to high level of access to these tools in primary schools for reading instruction. However, the standard deviation of 0.66 suggests that there was some variability in accessibility across schools or pupils, but overall, accessibility was relatively consistent. This may reflect that while some schools or pupils had good access to e-learning tools, others faced barriers or limited access. The posttest result increased slightly (3.15) suggesting a small improvement in the accessibility of e-learning tools. The standard deviation of 0.71, slightly higher than in the pretest, shows that there was a slight increase in variability in access across schools or pupils. This may imply that while accessibility improved for some, there may still be disparities in access to e-learning tools for reading instruction.

The improvement in the mean score from pretest to posttest is +0.07, indicating a small but positive change in the accessibility of e-learning tools for reading instruction. Although this increase is not large, it suggests that the intervention or continued use of e-learning tools led to a slight enhancement in accessibility. However, the small improvement may also indicate that more substantial efforts are needed to make e-learning tools widely and equally accessible to all pupils in primary schools.

## V. Discussion Of Findings

These findings highlight the presence of varied reading difficulties in pronunciation, fluency, and speed, with some individuals potentially facing more severe challenges. Low interest may hinder efforts to address these difficulties, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that not only address technical reading skills but also foster a more positive attitude toward reading. Reading difficulties manifest in various forms, including challenges in pronunciation, fluency, and speed. Some individuals may face more severe struggles, such as dyslexia, which hampers word recognition and decoding (Oladipo & Akande, 2019). These challenges, if not addressed, can impact academic performance and emotional well-being (Ogunleye, 2021).

It was also revealed that e-learning tools were already moderately accessible and utilised (Mean = 3.1) in primary schools even before the intervention, which is a positive starting point. However, the moderate mean suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of making these tools available and effective for all pupils. The small improvement (+0.07) indicates that while some progress was made, the increase in accessibility is minimal. This could reflect challenges in scaling up the use of e-learning tools or addressing the barriers faced by certain schools or pupils (e.g., infrastructure, funding, or training). The standard deviation increased slightly from pretest (0.66) to posttest (0.71), which means that there is still some inconsistency in how accessible these tools are across different settings. Some schools may have significantly improved accessibility, while others may still be lagging behind.

## VI. Conclusion

Enhancing reading skills among primary school learners in Niger State requires a multifaceted approach, blending the use of e-learning tools and counseling psychology for effective remediation. E-learning offers flexibility and accessibility, allowing pupils to engage with interactive materials that improve their reading fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. With the growing access to mobile technology and internet resources, teachers and pupils can utilize educational apps and digital platforms to practice reading skills, making learning more engaging and adaptive to individual needs. To successfully implement utilization of these approaches in Niger State, it is essential to ensure adequate technological infrastructure, training for teachers in e-learning tools, and the availability of professional counselors. By doing so, schools can create a supportive environment where learners can overcome reading challenges and reach their full academic potential. This combined effort will significantly contribute to improving literacy levels and overall educational outcomes.

## Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Niger state Universal Basic Education Board should provide professional development on using e-learning tools and understanding psychological factors related to reading disabilities for teachers.
2. Niger state Universal Basic Education Board should improve infrastructure to ensure all schools can implement e-learning solutions.

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