

Challenges Facing Supervised Library Reading and their Effect on Academic Achievement in Creative Writing among Secondary School Students, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges facing Supervised Library Reading and their effect on academic achievement in creative writing among secondary school students in Kenya. The study was guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Chomsky's Nativist Theory, which emphasize guided learning and innate language acquisition. Anchored in the pragmatic research paradigm, the study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design incorporating a true experimental pre-test–treatment–post-test approach conducted over one academic term. From a target population of 5,350 Form Two students across 211 secondary schools, a sample of 360 students was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's formula. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used, and learners were randomly assigned to three groups: Supervised Library Reading (SLR), Non-Supervised Library Reading (NSLR), and No Reading (NR). Data were collected using standardized creative writing achievement tests aligned with the KNEC marking scheme, structured questionnaires (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.873$), and semi-structured interviews with teachers, librarians, and education officers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings revealed statistically significant differences in creative writing achievement across the groups. The SLR group improved significantly from a mean score of 6.38 in the pre-test to 10.14 in the post-test ($F(1,238) = 58.23, p < .001$), while NSLR showed no significant improvement and the NR group recorded the lowest outcomes. However, challenges such as inadequate storybooks, limited reading time, underutilization of newspapers, restricted digital access, and limited innovative supervision constrained the effectiveness of SLR. The study concludes that structured supervised reading significantly enhances creative writing achievement and recommends strengthening SLR programs, expanding library resources, and integrating digital reading opportunities in secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Reading remains a cornerstone of academic achievement and intellectual development among secondary school students. The school library, when effectively utilized through supervised reading programs, provides an essential platform for improving students' literacy skills, comprehension, and creative thinking abilities (Ogunbekun *et al.*, 2023). However, in many developing regions, including Kenya, supervised library reading faces numerous challenges that hinder its potential to enhance academic achievement particularly in creative writing. Effective supervision in library reading is intended to cultivate consistent reading habits, guide students toward appropriate materials, and develop the linguistic and imaginative capacities necessary for creative expression (Haco-obasi, 2020). Despite these intentions, the success of such initiatives depends on the availability of resources, the commitment of teachers and librarians, and the engagement of students.

Empirical evidence suggests that the availability and management of school library services significantly influence students' literacy development and academic performance (Ogunbekun *et al.*, 2023). Libraries that incorporate structured intellectual development programs such as guided reading, writing workshops, and literary discussions contribute positively to learners' creativity and academic outcomes (Haco-obasi, 2020). Conversely, a lack of trained supervisors, inadequate reading materials, and limited student motivation have been identified as critical barriers to effective library use, thereby impeding the development of creative writing skills. Ibegbulem (2021) further emphasizes that factors such as gender differences and the duration of supervised library sessions affect students' reading engagement and performance outcomes, indicating that personalized supervision strategies may be necessary to achieve optimal results.

Moreover, students' learning outcomes in creative writing are influenced by both instructional factors and individual learner characteristics. Ajagbe (2023) notes that prescribed texts, language proficiency, and students' personal interest in literature significantly shape their performance in prose and other creative writing tasks. Similarly, Agbofa (2023) reports that reading difficulties including poor comprehension, limited vocabulary, and lack of motivation negatively affect students' academic performance, underscoring the importance of structured library interventions. In the context of modern education, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) offer innovative opportunities for enhancing supervised library reading through adaptive learning and personalized guidance (Wang *et al.*, 2023). However, in many rural Kenyan schools, such technologies remain underutilized due to infrastructural and training limitations.

Therefore, the challenges facing supervised library reading in secondary schools ranging from inadequate facilities and supervision to motivational and contextual barriers pose a significant threat to the development of students' creative writing abilities. In West Pokot County, these challenges may be further exacerbated by resource constraints, large class sizes, and limited reading culture among learners. Understanding these challenges and their effects on academic achievement in creative writing is essential for designing effective interventions to promote literacy and creativity in the region's educational system.

Statement of the Problem

Supervised library reading is expected to play a central role in improving literacy and creative writing among secondary school students. Ideally, through guided reading activities, students develop deeper comprehension, imagination, and expressive abilities that contribute to improved performance in creative writing. However, this ideal scenario is rarely achieved in many secondary schools in Kenya. Despite the presence of school libraries, many learners continue to record low achievement in creative writing, suggesting that supervised library reading is not yielding the intended academic benefits.

Studies have shown that the effectiveness of library programs in promoting literacy depends on the availability of reading materials, qualified personnel, and well-organized supervision structures (Ogunbekun *et al.*, 2023). Unfortunately, in many rural schools, libraries are poorly equipped, supervision is irregular, and students have limited access to stimulating reading materials (Haco-obasi, 2020). Furthermore, variations in students' reading habits and gender-related differences in library use have been found to affect learning outcomes (Ibegbulem, 2021). Such disparities point to the absence of equitable and structured approaches to supervised reading in school settings.

In addition, students' performance in creative writing is often influenced by several interacting factors, including their exposure to prescribed texts, motivation, and prior reading skills (Ajagbe, 2023). Where learners experience reading difficulties—such as poor comprehension and limited vocabulary—their ability to engage in imaginative and coherent creative writing becomes severely restricted (Agbofa, 2023). The integration of technology, including artificial intelligence tools, has been proposed as a way to improve reading engagement and personalized learning support (Wang *et al.*, 2023). However, in Kenya, limited technological infrastructure, inadequate training, and scarce educational resources hinder the adoption of such innovations.

Consequently, while supervised library reading has the potential to enhance creative writing achievement, numerous contextual and institutional challenges undermine its effectiveness. These include insufficient library resources, inadequate supervision, poor reading culture, and lack of innovative strategies to engage learners. This situation has resulted in persistently low levels of creativity and poor academic outcomes in writing-related subjects among secondary school students in Kenya. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the specific challenges facing supervised library reading and how they affect students' academic achievement in creative writing within this area of study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supervised Library Reading (SLR)

Supervised Library Reading (SLR) is quickly becoming a recognized educational method. It focuses on providing time, space, and subtle support for students to engage in reading. The goal of SLR is to cultivate consistent reading habits through access to quality materials and instructor guidance. This method enhances engagement and comprehension.

Research often explores the term "supervision" from a technological perspective. Suhaimi and Abas (2020) describe "supervised learning" as a process where an algorithm learns from labeled data under guidance. This is similar to how students learn from a teacher's feedback during structured reading sessions. Dridi (2021) suggests that supervision, both in technology and education, improves learning efficiency by offering direction and corrective feedback.

In libraries, supervised reading ensures active interaction with literature. It encourages students to reflect, question, and connect ideas to their own work. Historically, libraries have played a crucial role in promoting literacy. Recent studies show that structured programs can significantly enhance this role. Shahzad, Khan, and Iqbal (2024, 2025) highlight the use of emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and robotics in libraries. These technologies improve interactivity, accessibility, and the data-driven aspects of reading environments. Although these are not directly related to SLR, they show that libraries are evolving to support learning in more structured and adaptable ways.

Supervised reading focuses on mentorship and reflection rather than automation. Pothigasalam, Kattari, and Arasakumar (2023) found that structured initiatives in public libraries significantly influence reading behaviors. Their research into enhancing women's reading engagement showed that continuous support and organized reading schedules increase motivation and retention. This aligns with SLR, where structured, guided reading sessions boost student accountability and foster a natural drive for reading. Supervision transforms reading into a routine activity, rather than a sporadic academic endeavor.

Paul *et al.* (2021) state that systematic approaches are crucial in both research and education for achieving consistent and lasting outcomes. SLR embodies this by being systematic, intentional, and student-centered. It creates a framework where reading is systematically integrated into the educational process.

These studies collectively demonstrate that supervision, whether through human oversight or structured mechanisms, boosts engagement, comprehension, and performance. In Kenyan secondary schools, supervised library reading is an effective and affordable strategy to enhance creative writing and overall literacy performance. It's not just about increasing the quantity of reading; it's about enhancing the quality of reading with purpose and support.

Challenges Facing Supervised Library Reading

Supervised library reading is a structured approach aimed at guiding learners to develop effective reading habits, improve comprehension, and foster academic achievement. However, its successful implementation faces numerous challenges related to supervision quality, technological integration, institutional support, and external disruptions such as pandemics. Across diverse educational and library contexts, studies have shown that inadequate supervision practices, limited professional capacity, and infrastructural constraints continue to hinder the full realization of supervised reading programs (Gusvita & Alon, 2021; Sulisty-Basuki, 2021).

Effective supervision plays a vital role in ensuring that library reading activities are well-organized and educationally meaningful. Gusvita and Alon (2021) observed that leadership supervision significantly influences the performance and efficiency of library services. Their study in Batanghari Regency revealed that inconsistent monitoring, lack of clear supervision frameworks, and insufficient managerial support limited the impact of library programs on user engagement. Similarly, Sulisty-Basuki (2021) highlighted that school libraries often suffer from weak clinical supervision mechanisms, where supervisors lack the professional training and evaluative tools necessary to improve reading programs. In Indonesia's provincial libraries, the absence of consistent feedback systems and collaboration among educators and librarians resulted in stagnation of reading initiatives.

Technological innovation presents both opportunities and challenges for supervised library reading. The study by Darminta and Sumitra (2023) demonstrated that implementing a supervised learning recommender system could enhance reading interest by personalizing book recommendations and monitoring readers' preferences. However, they also noted that technological interventions require adequate infrastructure, skilled personnel, and institutional commitment to maintenance and training. In many schools, particularly in developing regions, the lack of digital systems and limited access to smart technologies pose significant obstacles to using such innovations effectively.

External factors such as global crises have also exposed the fragility of supervised reading programs. Dai and Chiu (2023) found that the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered students' reading behaviors and preferences, as physical library access was restricted. Their research, based on the 5E instructional model, showed that both students and parents shifted toward digital reading materials, yet supervision of these activities became inconsistent, affecting the continuity of guided reading. This demonstrates how unforeseen global events can disrupt library operations, especially where digital transformation remains incomplete.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into library supervision presents new prospects and challenges. Echedom and Okuonghae (2021) noted that AI offers opportunities for transforming academic library operations in Africa by automating supervision, improving cataloging, and tracking reading patterns. However, the authors cautioned that adoption is limited by ethical concerns, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate funding. Similarly, Asif *et al.* (2023) argued that although AI technologies hold potential to optimize learning and information management processes, institutions often struggle with implementation barriers related to data privacy, system reliability, and user adaptation. These challenges mirror those experienced in library settings where AI could support supervised reading but remains underutilized.

The challenges facing supervised library reading are multidimensional, encompassing human, technological, and environmental factors. Weak supervision systems, insufficient training for library staff, poor infrastructure, and limited technological readiness undermine the effectiveness of library reading programs. Moreover, the transition to digital and AI-supported environments, while promising, is hindered by inadequate policy frameworks and low institutional investment. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that strengthens leadership supervision, builds librarian capacity, and leverages emerging technologies to enhance reading supervision and engagement.

Socio-cultural Theory of Language Development

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, developed the Sociocultural Theory of Language in Russia between 1924 and 1934. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cultural context in shaping children's cognitive growth. He believed that development is initiated by social and cultural influences, and that learning relies on both external socio-cultural forces and internal stimuli. Three themes are often identified with Vygotsky's ideas of sociocultural learning: (1) human development and learning originate in social, historical, and cultural interactions, (2) use of psychological tools, particularly language, mediate development of higher mental functions, and (3) learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development. While we discuss these ideas separately, they are closely interrelated, non-hierarchical, and connected. Rogoff (1990) refers to this process as guided participation, where a learner actively acquires new culturally valuable skills and capabilities through a meaningful, collaborative activity with an assisting, more experienced other. The researcher conceptualizes that to achieve in creative writing, teachers need to take a step further than issuing storybooks and other reading materials to students. They ought to supervise the reading in a structured way to ensure that students grasp the content needed to improve their writing skills. This can be done by supervised library reading (SLR). The study also presupposes that student's exposure to a social interaction with libraries or books even without supervision (NSLR) may impact on creative writing achievement. It is critical to notice that these culturally mediated functions are viewed as being embedded in sociocultural activities rather than being self-contained. Development is a "transformation of participation in a sociocultural activity" not a transmission of discrete cultural knowledge or skills (Matusov, 2015, p. 315). The processes of guided participation reveal the Vygotskian view of cognitive development "as the transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes," or an act of enculturation. Within the sociocultural theory of writing, texts are seen to result from cultural and social practices that affect the structure, content, and production of them in different knowledge communities

Sociocultural theory has several strengths including emphasizing the social context of human activity rather than viewing individuals in isolation. It also acknowledges both individual and cultural diversity in development. Finally, it integrates learning and development, seeing learning as driving development. However, there are also limitations, such as Vygotsky's work being incomplete due to his early death and issues with translation. There is also vagueness around the zone of proximal development and how it applies across domains, individuals, and cultures over time. Not all aspects of sociocultural theory may be equally relevant in all cultures. This study will include learners who are not exposed to reading culture at (NR) all but

who will be expected to achieve in creative writing. This means that there may be a possibility that they will have acquired the skills inherently without exposure to books and or libraries. The study therefore proposes another theory.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study adopted the pragmatic research paradigm, which emphasizes practical methods to address real-world educational problems. Pragmatism recognizes that knowledge is both constructed and experienced. It prioritizes effective solutions over adherence to a single epistemological approach. This philosophy was ideal for our study as it allowed the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods. These methods were used to investigate the impact of Supervised Library Reading (SLR) on learners' creative writing performance. The dual approach enabled the quantification of statistical effects and provided insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions within their educational settings.

The research employed an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design. This design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data. This approach is useful for enriching quantitative results with in-depth qualitative insights. Initially, the study collected quantitative data to evaluate the effects of SLR, Non-Supervised Library Reading (NSLR), and No Reading (NR) on creative writing performance. The subsequent qualitative phase offered contextual explanations for observed trends, such as factors influencing reading engagement, teacher supervision, and learners' motivation. This methodological sequence ensured a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of how structured library reading affects creative writing performance.

An experimental design was implemented, comprising pre-test, treatment, and post-test phases. Learners were randomly assigned to three groups: one with supervised library reading, one with non-supervised reading, and a control group without library reading. This setup enhanced internal validity by controlling external variables and ensuring comparability among the groups. To improve reliability, data collection extended over an entire academic term, with consistent reading activities across the groups.

The study was conducted in West Pokot County, Kenya, a region known for its low performance in English language and creative writing as per the Kenya National Examinations Council. Its predominantly rural environment, limited library access, and socio-economic challenges such as poverty and inadequate educational infrastructure made it a fitting location for this research. These conditions underscored the need for literacy and creative expression interventions in marginalized areas.

The target population included 5,350 secondary school learners, English teachers, librarians, and education officers from six sub-counties in West Pokot. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sample determination table, a representative sample of 360 learners was selected through simple random sampling. This method minimized bias and ensured generalizability. English teachers and librarians were purposively sampled due to their roles in reading and writing instruction. All county education officers were included because of their supervisory and policy responsibilities.

Data collection tools consisted of questionnaires, creative writing performance tests, and interview guides. Questionnaires collected data on learners' reading habits, library engagement, and supervision perceptions. Creative writing performance tests, administered before and after the intervention, assessed improvements in writing quality using standardized marking schemes. Interview guides gathered qualitative data from teachers and librarians about library usage, supervision, and challenges in literacy development. The research instruments were rigorously tested for validity and reliability. Content validity was confirmed through expert reviews, and reliability was verified by a pilot study and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, indicating high internal consistency.

A pilot study in Bungoma County refined the research instruments and procedures before the main data collection. This pilot identified unclear items, tested the suitability of tools, and estimated the required time for each session. The validity and reliability of the instruments were further ensured through triangulation, representation of multiple respondent groups, and established scoring rubrics.

Before beginning data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance and authorization from Moi University and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. Additional permissions were acquired from the West Pokot County Director of Education and individual school principals. Ethical standards such as informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly upheld. Data collection was systematically coordinated across all selected schools to ensure consistency, credibility, and comprehensiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges facing Supervised Library Reading have no effect on academic achievement in creative writing

The researcher set out to establish whether Non-Supervised Library Reading had an effect on academic achievement in creative writing among secondary school students in Kenya. The researcher posed the following hypothesis:

Findings from hypothesis Ho5: Challenges facing Supervised Library Reading have no effect on academic achievement in creative writing among secondary school students Kenya

To test the hypothesis and achieve these findings, the researcher presented questionnaires to students, teachers and librarians in sampled schools. The researcher also interviewed QASO in the county.

Challenges in Supervised Library Study and Achievement in Creative Writing

The study sought to establish the availability of the library facility for the students /Respondents. This was prudent in establishing if at all there were facilities like books and reading area that the student, teacher /librarian had an opportunity to supervise the students. The Responses are as indicated in figure 1.

Does your school have a library?

Yes responses =120 No responses =0

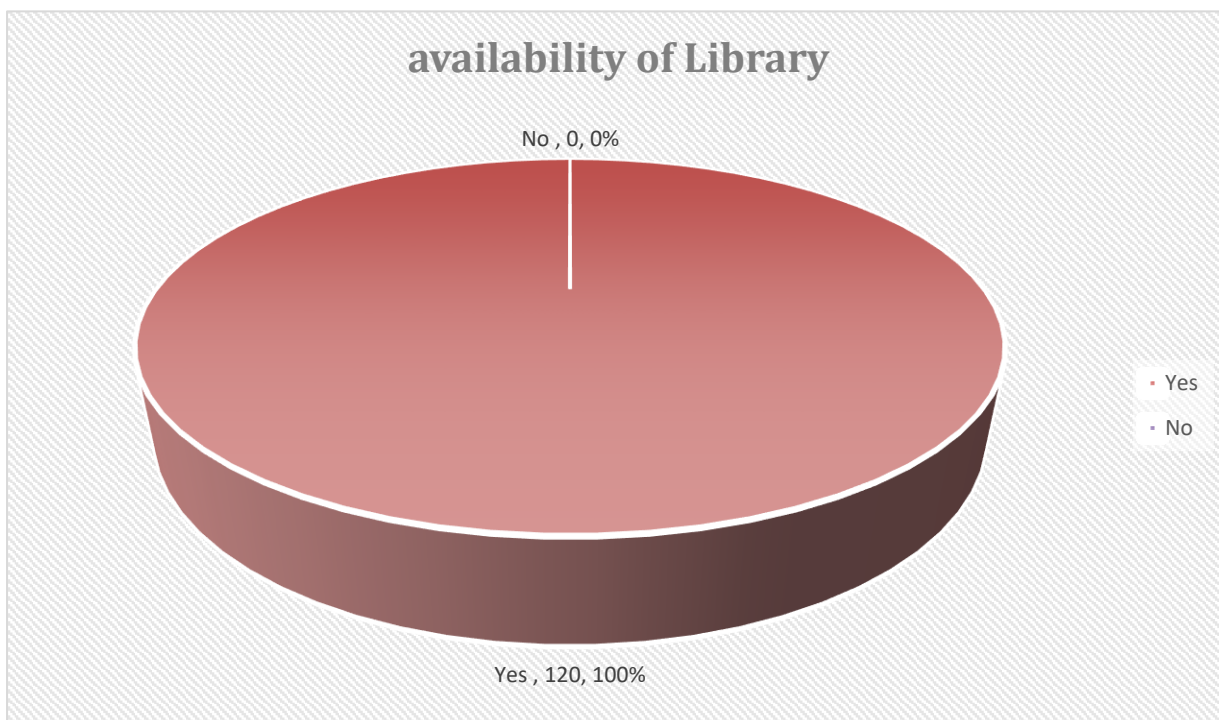


Figure 1: Availability of library facility

The study further sought to ascertain if the respondents said YES, what were the Respondents views on the Resources in the Library. This was prudent in determining if at all there was enough resource for the students

to aid them in creative writing. The study used 5 scale values as shown below. The outcomes of the analysis are presented in table 1.

Table1 : Resources in the library

Views on the Resources in the Library	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-Slightly Agree	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree	Total Reponses
	f (%)	f (%)	f(%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Our library has many storybooks	8(6.7%)	0(0%)	7(5.8%)	27(22.5%)	78(65%)	120(100%)
The books in the library are interesting to read	0(0%)	5(4.2%)	13(10.8%)	43(35.8%)	58(48.3%)	119(99.2%)
There are more textbooks than story books in the library	11(9.2%)	21(17.5%)	29(24.2%)	14(11.7%)	43(35.8%)	118(98.3%)
The story books are too big to read in one seating	53(44.2%)	23(19.2%)	13(10.8%)	14(11.7%)	14(11.7%)	117(97.5%)
The story books can be read in the library	5(4.2%)	10(8.3%)	15(12.5%)	31(25.8%)	59(49.2%)	120(100%)
The library has more set books than storybooks	15(12.5%)	26(21.7%)	31(25.8%)	21(17.5%)	26(21.7%)	119(99.2%)
There are other fictional books apart from textbooks and novels	4(3.3%)	8(6.7%)	10(8.3%)	38(31.7%)	57(47.5%)	117(97.5%)
The library has daily newspapers	9(7.5%)	6(5%)	12(10%)	29(24.2%)	64(53.3%)	120(100%)
There are more Kiswahili than English books in the library	50(41.7%)	33(27.5%)	24(20%)	4(3.3%)	7(5.8%)	118(98.3%)
There are more English books than Kiswahili in the Library	44(36.7%)	26(21.7%)	26(21.7%)	9(7.5%)	11(9.2%)	116(96.7%)
I can read books online or on the computer	77(64.2%)	13(10.8%)	6(5%)	9(7.5%)	11(9.2%)	116(96.7%)
There are no digital devices/ICT in the library	50(41.2%)	12(10%)	2(1.7%)	11(9.2%)	42(35%)	117(97.5%)
There is no space in the library for reading	84(70%)	21(17.5%)	5(4.2%)	4(3.3%)	3(2.5%)	117(97.5%)
I can only borrow books from the library	30(25%)	21(17.5%)	17(14.2%)	20(16.2%)	26(21.2%)	114(95%)
I prefer reading story books to any other reading material in the library for English	25(20.8%)	26(21.7%)	28(23.3%)	15(21.7%)	25(20.8%)	119(99.2%)
I like reading Novel compared to storybooks	21(17.5%)	21(17.5%)	39(32.5%)	21(17.5%)	17(14.2%)	119(99.2%)
Poems are my most preferred in English	22(18.3%)	25(20.8%)	27(22.5%)	21(17.5%)	23(19.2%)	118(98.3%)
The library can help improve my creative writing	10(8.3%)	3(2.5%)	9(7.5%)	17(14.2%)	73(60.8%)	112(93.3%)
There are many other ways of improving my creative writing skills other than reading	18(15%)	21(17.5%)	20(16.7%)	37(30.8%)	22(18.3%)	118(98.3%)
I have read more books in secondary compared to primary	11(9.2%)	6(5%)	17(14.2%)	20(16.2%)	65(54.2%)	119(99.2%)
I Need more time in the library to read story books effectively	11(9.2%)	12(10%)	26(21.7%)	30(25%)	40(33.3%)	119(99.2%)
I spend more time reading storybooks in the library	29(24.2%)	17(14.2%)	28(23.3%)	24(20%)	19(15.8%)	117(97.5%)
The teacher does not give us adequate time to read books	54(45%)	33(27.5%)	7(5.8%)	8(6.7%)	14(11.7%)	116(96.7%)

I cannot complete a story book in a week	55(45.8%)	23(19.2%)	14(11.7%)	15(12.5%)	12(10%)	119(99.2%)
I started reading story books in primary	13(10.8%)	5(4.2%)	9(7.5%)	34(28.3%)	56(46.7%)	117(97.5%)
I have read more story books in Secondary than Primary	25(20.8%)	11(9.2%)	13(10.8%)	18(15%)	50(41.7%)	117(97.5%)
I can read two books in a week	22(18.3%)	23(19.2%)	19(15.8%)	26(21.7%)	27(22.5%)	117(97.5%)
I cannot read one storybook in a week	46(38.3%)	24(20%)	14(11.7%)	16(13.3%)	16(13.3%)	116(96.7%)
I need one term of story book reading to improve in Creative writing	34(28.3%)	19(15.8%)	22(18.3%)	14(11.7%)	28(23.3%)	117(97.5%)
I need two terms of story book reading to improve in Creative writing	45(37.5%)	21(17.5%)	12(10%)	16(13.3%)	21(17.5%)	115(95.5%)
We are spending too much time on reading storybooks in the library	61(50.8%)	24(20%)	21(17.5%)	7(5.8%)	7(5.8%)	120(100%)

The study established that Students respondents generally agreed that the library had numerous storybooks which were interesting for them to read. The rating was that there was Sturdy agreement on availability of storybooks rated at 87.5% agreement. Books in the library are interesting to read at 84.1%, Library helps improve creative writing 75% agree. Nevertheless, there was a divided view on whether there were more textbooks or rather set books as compared to storybooks. There being more textbooks as compared to storybooks was rated at 47.5%. whereas the library having more set books than storybooks was rated at 39.2%. Most respondents agree that the library includes a variety of fictional books There are other fictional books apart from textbooks and novels rated at 79.2%. Regarding the readability and accessibility of the reading resources, a substantial number of respondents felt that Storybooks could be read in the library at 75% rating perceiving a higher accessibility rate. On the flipside a great percentage of 63.4% disagreed that storybooks are manageable indicating that Storybooks were too big to be read in one sitting. The findings indicated a varied confidence in reading volume, whereby 44.2% agreed to the statement I can read two books in a week and 37.5% disagreed to the statement.

The researcher therefore established that the following were the challenges facing SLR and subsequently affecting achievement in creative writing among secondary students in Kenya.

1. There are few storybooks in the libraries hence limited exposure of the students to fictional writing.
2. There is less time to read in the library compared to reading of set books in class. The schools focus so much on reading and analyzing set books.
3. Students rarely read newspapers in the libraries that were found to have purchased newspapers. Some newspapers were steal sealed closed from the publishers
4. The students prefer small story books compared to the ones available in the libraries. They want something they can read quickly.
5. There were only 3 schools that had online library services for the students but access was limited.

The challenges faced by the students in accessing library services can greatly impact on creative writing outcomes. These findings resonate with Habib *et al.*, (2015) who noted that exposure to storybooks was a significant factor in improving creative writing achievements. Creating writing achievement was low as evident in the results from the creative writing scores analyzed above. There are challenges facing SLR that have an effect on creative writing outcomes.

The study established that while most students acknowledged the availability and appeal of storybooks in the school libraries, significant challenges hindered the effectiveness of Supervised Library Reading (SLR) in improving creative writing outcomes. The majority of respondents (87.5%) strongly agreed that storybooks were available, and 84.1% found them interesting to read. Furthermore, 75% agreed that the library played a role in improving creative writing skills. However, several barriers undermined this potential.

The limited quantity and diversity of storybooks reduced students' exposure to creative literary works. Only 79.2% confirmed the presence of varied fictional texts, while perceptions about the dominance of textbooks or set books reflected divided views (47.5% and 39.2%, respectively). This limited access narrows students' imaginative horizons, curbing opportunities for creativity in writing. Habib *et al.* (2015) similarly noted that limited exposure to storybooks diminishes learners' ability to develop critical and creative writing skills.

Time constraints emerged as a significant barrier. Students reported that schools placed greater emphasis on reading and analyzing set books for examinations, leaving insufficient time for free or creative reading. This echoes Choo, Highfield, and Yeung (2025), who emphasized that structured supervision must balance academic obligations with creative exploration. Inadequate time for creative reading reduces students' opportunities to practice imaginative expression, directly impacting creative writing outcomes.

Limited use of newspapers and restricted online access constrained students' exposure to diverse reading materials. Respondents noted that newspapers remained unopened or underutilized, while only three schools had online library services, and even these were difficult to access. This aligns with Odularu and Akande (2024), who highlighted how access and power dynamics in academic supervision environments often restrict learners' autonomy and exploration. In the current study, restricted access to diverse resources undermined students' ability to broaden their perspectives in creative writing.

Preferences for shorter, manageable storybooks posed another challenge. While 75% agreed that storybooks could be read in the library, 63.4% felt that the available texts were too lengthy to be completed in one sitting. Only 44.2% reported confidence in reading two books in a week, while 37.5% disagreed with the same. These findings highlight the importance of tailoring library collections to students' reading stamina and preferences. Batty, Ellison, Owens, and Brien (2020) observed that learners' engagement in creative fields is shaped by emotional and cognitive challenges, which, if unaddressed, can hinder growth and performance. The frustration of facing lengthy, unmanageable texts mirrors this struggle in the context of SLR.

The lack of innovative supervision models further constrained library use. While teachers and librarians provided general support, there was little evidence of creative or individualized supervision to encourage deeper engagement with texts. Handayani, Hartinah, and Nafiati (2025) emphasize the role of innovative coaching models in building competence and motivation, suggesting that similar approaches could enhance library-based supervision by making it more adaptive to students' creative needs.

The evaluation of creative writing outcomes posed a challenge. While students recognized some benefit of SLR, the improvement in creative writing was not as strong as expected due to the aforementioned barriers. This challenge mirrors Kim and Oh's (2025) concern about the complexities of evaluating creativity. Creative writing requires nuanced, flexible assessment approaches that go beyond standard test scores, a factor that may explain why the perceived gains did not fully align with actual achievement.

While students valued storybooks and recognized their contribution to creative writing, the challenges of limited resources, time constraints, underutilized materials, inaccessible digital resources, text manageability, and inadequate supervision models collectively hindered the full potential of SLR. These findings resonate with broader research emphasizing the importance of supportive, accessible, and innovative supervision environments in nurturing creativity (Batty *et al.*, 2020; Choo *et al.*, 2025; Handayani *et al.*, 2025; Odularu & Akande, 2024; Kim & Oh, 2025). Addressing these challenges is therefore essential to optimize the role of libraries in enhancing creative writing achievement among secondary school students in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that although most secondary schools in Kenya had functional libraries and students generally found storybooks available and interesting, several persistent challenges limited the effectiveness of Supervised Library Reading (SLR) in enhancing creative writing achievement. These challenges included inadequate variety and number of storybooks, limited time allocated for reading due to emphasis on set books, underutilization of newspapers and online materials, and lack of digital access in most schools. Additionally, the storybooks available were often too lengthy for students to complete comfortably, while supervision during library sessions was not always innovative or supportive enough to stimulate creativity. Consequently, the

study established that these challenges had a negative effect on students' creative writing outcomes, as inadequate exposure to diverse and engaging reading materials restricted imagination and creative expression.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that schools should diversify their library collections with more age-appropriate and engaging storybooks, poems, and short stories to match students' interests and abilities. More time should be allocated for supervised library sessions beyond examination-oriented reading, while teachers and librarians should be trained to apply creative and interactive supervision methods that encourage independent thinking and imaginative writing. The integration of digital and online reading resources is also recommended to expand students' access to a wider range of literary materials. Furthermore, schools should promote the use of newspapers and informal reading materials to nurture analytical and creative writing skills. Strengthening supervision, expanding access to diverse reading materials, and improving the structure of library programs are essential steps toward enhancing creative writing achievement among secondary school students in Kenya.

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