

Annual KLISC Conference

INFUSING PROFESSIONALISM IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES TO IMPROVE READING CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY:

A Case of Remnant Vision School Kitengela, Kajiado County Kenya.

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Introduction

- ▶ A school library is a school's physical and digital learning space where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity skills are developed - IFLA.
- ▶ Kenyan school libraries struggle to fit this description of an ideal school Library - At best they are storehouses of distributing textbooks run by storekeepers.
- ▶ Inadequacy in legal provisions:
 - A Library is not considered, by the Basic Education Act, as a requirement in schools or a key influencer of the quality of basic education in Kenya.
 - Lack of a National policy to entrench and support school libraries in the education system.

Background and the Concept of Individualized Reading

- ▶ Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a block of time set aside in the course of a school day for students to read in an informal and unstructured way, began in 1970. It was an individualized reading dubbed with interesting taglines to create interest in children to read;
 - Read a book Because it's There (RABBIT), Reading is Our Thing (RIOT),
 - Our School Cares About Reading (OSCAR),
 - Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading (SQUIRT)
 - We All Like the Extra Reading (WALTER).
- ▶ Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) - a pupil's ability to read is assessed and gradually built with books for self-reading and teaching at a paced level -Pandprieri Primary School in Kisumu.

Statement of the Problem

“Inadequacy of School Libraries & Low Reading Habits in the School Community”

- ▶ Most middle-income homes, around Remnant Vision School (RVS), have internet connectivity and access to smartphones, computers and /or laptops. All these are enabling technologies which if not supervised can be harmful.
- ▶ Any child who is glued to mobile phones or video/film watching has little or no time for reading and cannot develop reading habits because the two activities are mutually exclusive.
- ▶ Kenya National Library Service is yet to reach this vicinity, there are no libraries available for public access, especially for children who are the target of the study.

Statement of the Problem cont'd

- ▶ Some parents in a bid to develop a reading culture for their children bought storybooks and textbooks and started a semblance of a book club but it was not sustained as it required many books and supervision.
- ▶ RVS school stepped and started a 3-hour reading Programme during holidays - children from the school and neighbouring community came to read and interact under the guidance of teachers.
- ▶ Due to government stringent measures to curb extra teaching/ tuition, in 2016 and subsequent years to implement the ban in the Basic Education Act (2013), the school wrapped up the holiday reading for fear of reprisal and a hefty penalty - Kshs. 100,000.00

Research Methodology

- ▶ **Methodology:** Mixed-Methods Approach
 - **Qualitative:** Descriptive Design for in-depth insights from participants. Data was collected using interview and observation schedules.
 - **Quantitative:** Questionnaires were used for data collection
- ▶ **Target population:** The study's target population was 369 students and 20 teachers and administration staff.
- ▶ **Sampling Procedure:** Stratified & purposively sampled 3 teachers and school administrators (15% sample size) and 51 Junior High School students (sampled at 14% of the total student population).

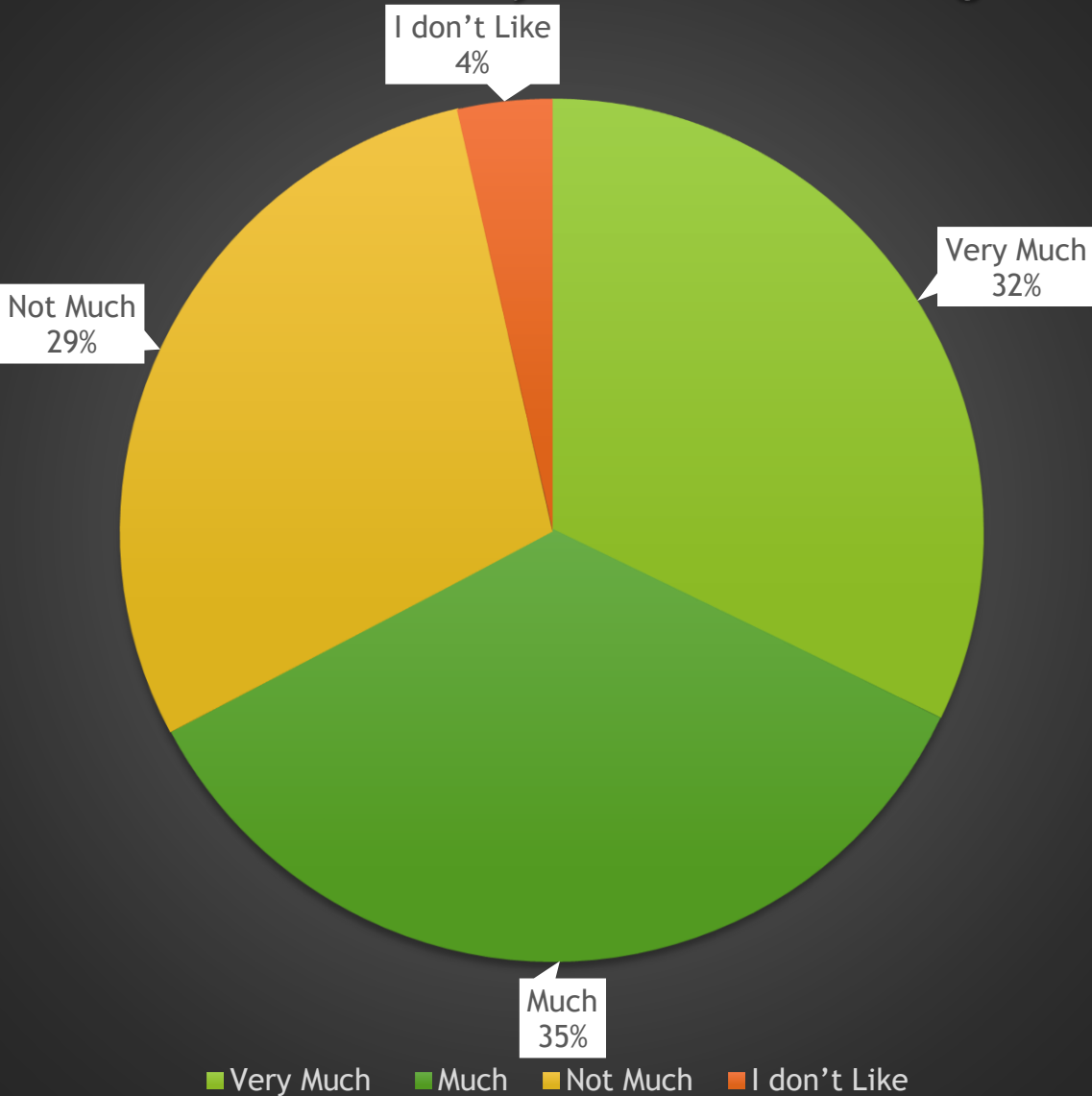
Findings & Discussion: Assessing preparedness / Readiness

Criteria Investigated	Ideal Standards	Findings	Gaps
Provision of Library space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Space fitted with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shelves. - Circulation desk - Ample Reading Space. - Sufficient Lighting & Ventilation. 2. Accessibility & inclusivity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The space is somewhat adequate with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shelves set so high & unreachable for the young pupils. - Circulation area provided - Lighting and ventilation is sufficient. 2. Located on Ground floor, accessible by all. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building fitted with wheelchair access ramp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unreachable shelves. - Reading space is inadequate
Staffing & Human Resource	Credentialed/trained Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None - Library prefect elected to assist in maintaining records of books allocated to classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a trained librarian.
Availability of Library books	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide current books – Textbooks. 2. Provide age appropriate story books & Novels. 3. Provide alternative textbooks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Text books available – core texts availed in current edition. 2. Alternative textbooks i.e. Multiple authors/publishers 3. Novels and story books are torn, old and outdated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None in core textbooks provided.

Criteria Investigated	Ideal Standards	Findings	Gaps
Library Standards and Policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adhere to cataloguing standards RDA/AACR2. 2. Adopt international classification scheme Library of Congress(LC), Dewey Decimal (DDC) etc. 3. Library policies - Circulation, Collection development, Procedure Manuals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No cataloguing standards. 2. Some books were classified using DDC, others not classified. 3. No library policies inforce. 	<p>- No Library Standards and Policies implemented.</p>
Library Processes & services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cataloguing & Classification 2. User services 3. Accessioning & accounting of collection. 4. Stocktaking & Weeding. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Cataloguing & Classification processes. 2. No lending and return services. 3. No accessions register found & no record accounting for books found. 4. Stocktaking & Weeding has not been done to deselect worn out and outdated books and create space for relevant collection. 	<p>Library not operational as none of the Library Processes & services were taking place.</p>

Findings & Discussion: Assessing Students Reading Habits

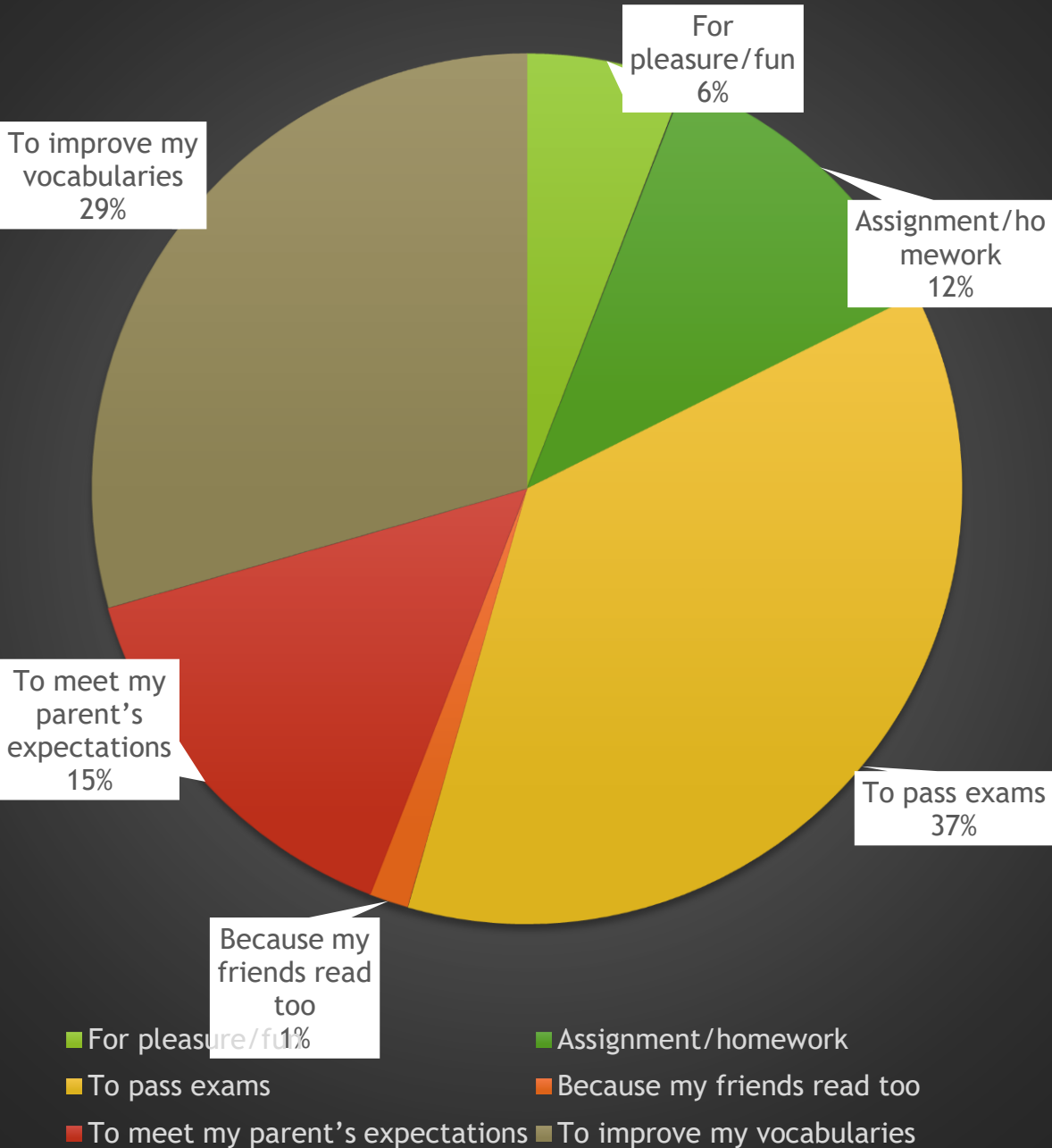
How much do you Like Reading



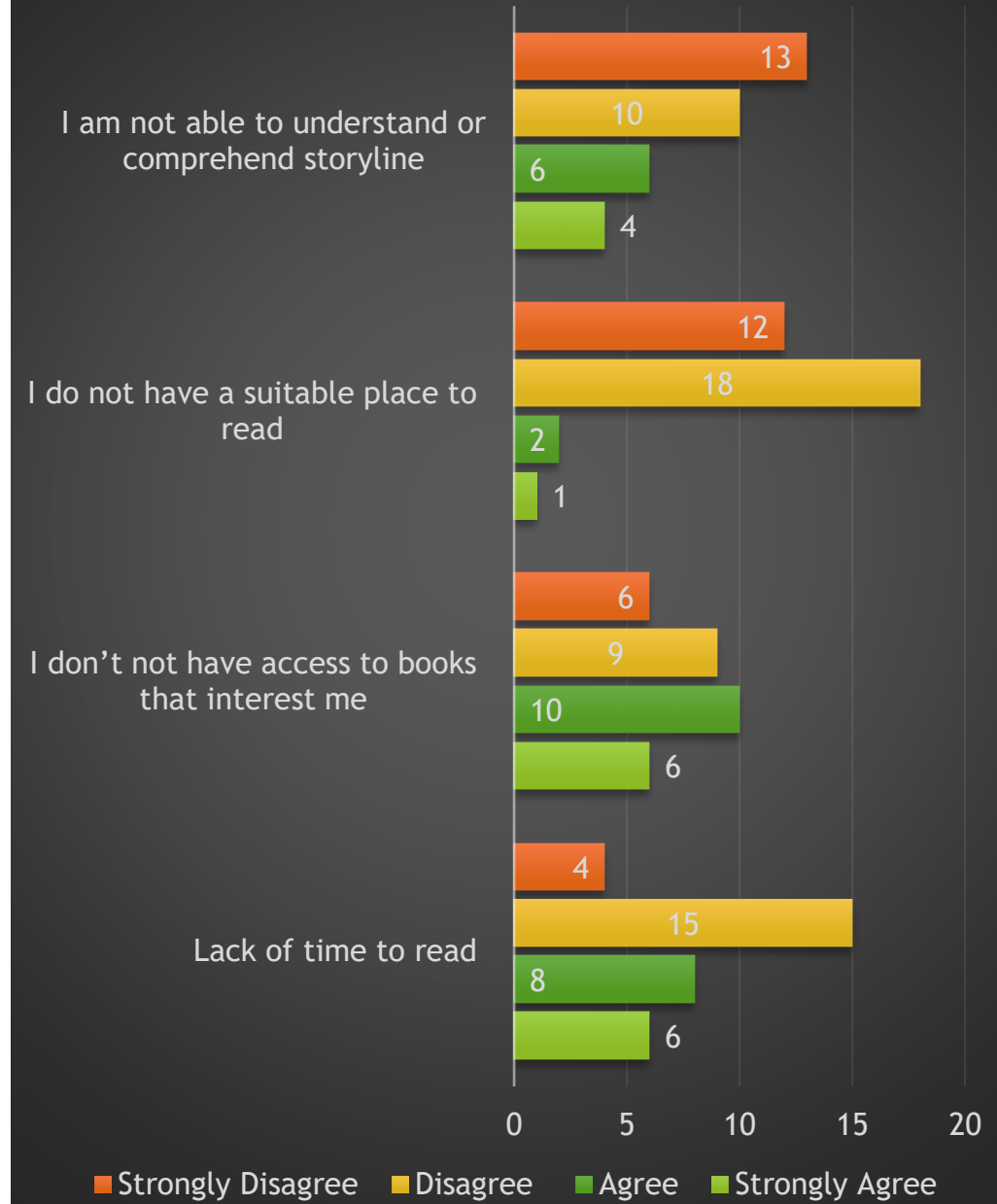
HOURS SPENT IN PERSONAL READING



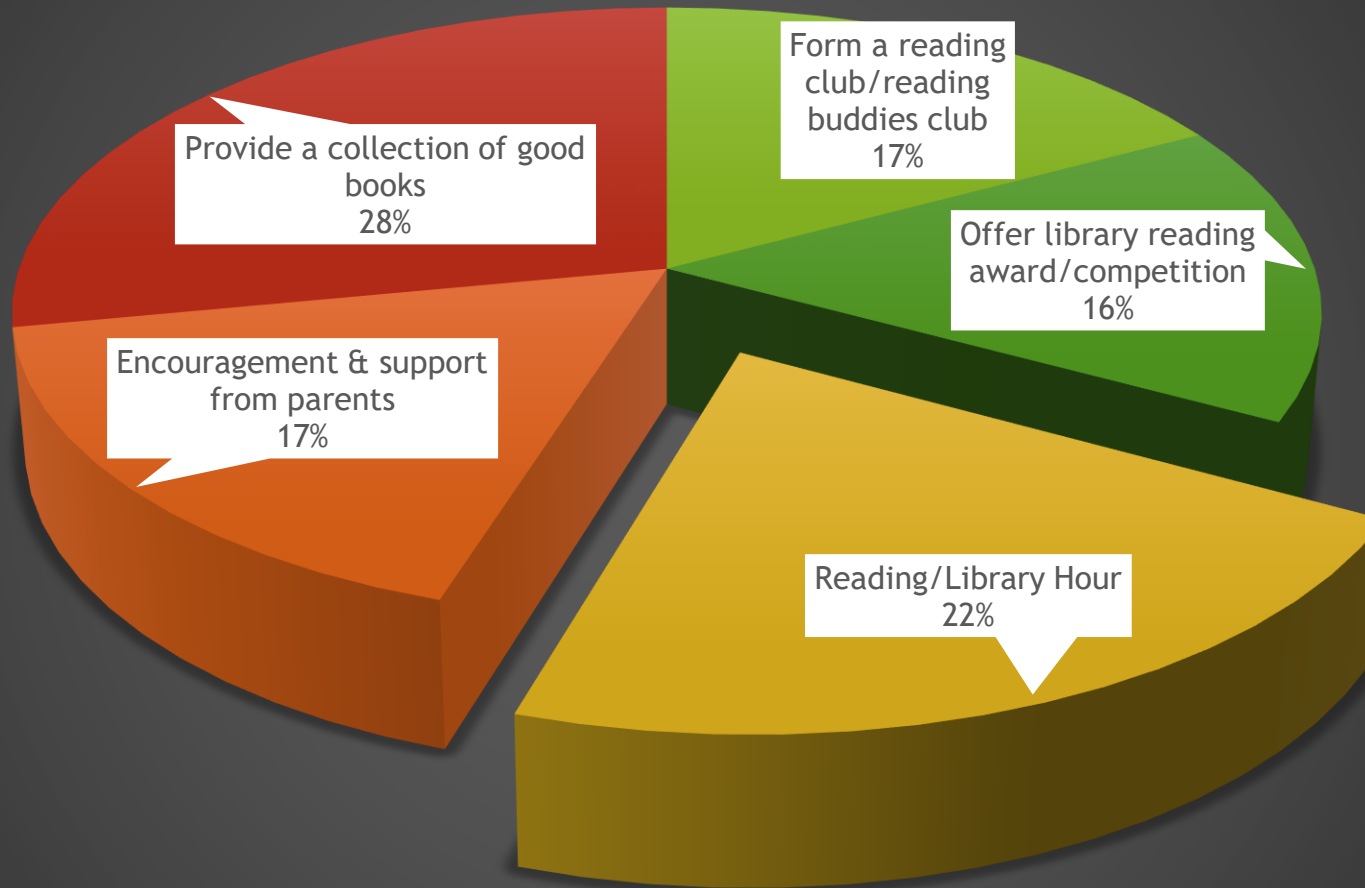
What Motivates You to Read?



Challenges Faced in Self-Reading



Suggestion to Improve Reading Culture



■ Form a reading club/reading buddies club ■ Offer library reading award/competition ■ Reading/Library Hour
■ Encouragement & support from parents ■ Provide a collection of good books

Conclusions

- ▶ This paper identifies evident blind spots that hinder RVS from providing an environment that improves the reading culture:
 - Lack of a professional librarian.
 - failure to implement ideal library services.
 - lack of recognition of the role the library plays in learning.
- ▶ Librarians level the playing field, from the young to the aged, through the provision of information and knowledge.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study the RVS Should:

1. Provide a budget and critical resource requirements (trained librarian, relevant books, integrated library management system, furniture etc).
2. Develop an implementation work plan with a matrix to map timelines and key performance areas for the school Library (Sample proposed in the full paper).
3. Consider best practices already implemented in successful school libraries by benchmarking with model school libraries such as Nairobi Primary and Aga Khan Mombasa school libraries.
4. Introduce a library/book club/ board games, embrace technologies such as smartboards for interactive learning and organize award-driven competitions.
5. Commence an SSR program or daily library hour to the daily school routine and run a school magazine that publishes articles by the best readers.
6. Join professional associations such as the Kenya Library Association.
7. Participate in holiday outreach programs such as the holiday reading hour and libraries' competitions locally and internationally.

Areas of Further Research

Conducting additional research in the following areas would influence the reading culture in the wider Kajiado county.

- ▶ Feasibility study on the establishment of Public Library through the devolved functions of the Kenya National Library Service.
- ▶ Investigate how public schools are meeting the reading needs of the school-going children in Kajiado County.



QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

CONCERNS?

Thank You