

Teaching and Learning in Fragile Contexts (TLFC) Research Paper



Assessing Quality Education for IDPs in Northern Nigeria: Phonological Awareness as Foundational Literacy Umbrella

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Abstract

Nigeria hosts approximately 3.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the largest displaced population in Africa, with prolonged insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts severely disrupting access to education. This study examined literacy outcomes at an IDP Camp in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. A mixed-method approach was adopted, employing the Phonological Awareness and Early Grade Reading Instruction Survey (PAEGRIS), Phonological Awareness Test (PAT), and structured classroom observations to assess instructional practices and pupil performance.

Findings revealed limited teacher knowledge of foundational literacy, resulting in weak early reading skills. To address these gaps, a five-day intensive teacher training was conducted, focusing on phonological awareness instruction and psychosocial support. Teachers were equipped with practical strategies, instructional materials, and ongoing mentoring via a digital platform.

Post-intervention assessments demonstrated significant improvements in pupils' phonological awareness across primary grade levels 1-4, particularly in phoneme identification, blending, segmentation, and decoding. Gains were consistent across gender, underscoring the intervention's equity and effectiveness. Beyond academic progress, focus group discussions highlighted psychosocial challenges—food insecurity, inadequate resources, and unmet competence needs—that directly hinder learning. To promote sustainability, a Mobile Literacy Tent was established, providing flexible learning spaces and essential materials for pupils, teachers, and community members.

The study concludes that structured literacy interventions, combined with teacher capacity building and psychosocial support, can substantially improve foundational reading skills in fragile contexts. Policy recommendations include scaling early literacy programs, institutionalizing continuous literacy assessment, and developing a national education-in-emergencies framework aligned with international standards.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons, Foundational Literacy, Phonological Awareness, Teacher Training, Education-in-Emergencies

Introduction

Learning poverty is a pressing issue in Nigeria's formal education sector, with far-reaching implications for the country's socio-economic development. The sector faces numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, poor teacher training, and limited access to quality educational resources (World Bank, 2020). These factors contribute to low learning outcomes, particularly in foundational literacy and numeracy skills. According to the World Bank (2020), learning poverty in Nigeria is alarmingly high, with a significant percentage of children unable to read and understand simple texts by age 10. This situation is further exacerbated by socio-economic disparities, with disadvantaged students often bearing the brunt of poor learning outcomes (Adeyemi, 2014).

The Nigerian government's efforts to improve education quality and access have been ongoing, with initiatives like the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), and the Safe School Initiative (2014) aimed at providing safe learning environments for children in conflict-affected areas. However, despite these efforts, learning outcomes remain poor exacerbated by insurgency and mass displacement of populations.

The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on learning poverty is multifaceted and complex. Many children have experienced trauma, and some have been forced to take on adult responsibilities, further limiting their access to education (Adeyinka, 2018). The conflict has also led to a shortage of qualified teachers, as many have fled the affected areas or been killed, resulting in a significant gap in the education system (Odufowokan, 2018). Furthermore, the destruction of schools and educational infrastructure has resulted in a significant loss of learning days, with many children struggling to catch up on their studies (World Bank, 2020).

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009 in the North East of Nigeria, has had a profound and far-reaching impact on Nigeria's formal education sector, significantly exacerbating the existing problem of learning poverty. Since the onset of the conflict in 2009, the northeastern region of Nigeria has been plagued by violence, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure, including schools (UNICEF, 2020).

The Boko Haram insurgency is the main driver of internal displacement in Nigeria, responsible for over 90% of the country's 3.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The conflict has forced millions to flee their homes due to violence and attacks, primarily in the North East region, with Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states severely affected. The crisis has led to significant humanitarian challenges, including thousands killed, over 143,000 IDP camps and camp-like settings in countries, and a massive response from the government and humanitarian organizations.

The insurgency has led to the displacement of over three million people, including school-aged children, and the destruction of over 1,000 schools, with many more

damaged or occupied by internally displaced persons (IDPs) or military personnel, resulting in a significant increase in IDPs and refugees, as millions are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in IDP camps or neighbouring countries (OCHA, 2020). The sheer scale of displacement has overwhelmed existing infrastructure, including schools, which have been repurposed as shelters, further reducing the availability of learning spaces and worsening the existing shortage of educational facilities (UNICEF, 2020).

In these IDP camps and refugee settings, access to education is severely limited, with many children unable to attend school due to inadequate facilities, lack of qualified teachers, and the psychological trauma caused by the conflict (Adeyinka, 2018). The long-term consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria's education sector are dire, with potential implications for the country's socio-economic development. The loss of human capital and the perpetuation of learning poverty threaten to undermine Nigeria's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Addressing the impact of the insurgency on education requires a concerted effort from government, international organizations, and local stakeholders to provide safe and inclusive learning environments, support teachers, and promote community engagement in education. The Boko Haram insurgency has exacerbated these issues, leading to significant educational disruptions, with over 2.8 million children needing education-in-emergencies support in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states (UNICEF, 2022).

Figure 1 below shows a visual representation of the epicentre of insurgency in Nigeria from where the IDPs in the research project site come from. Sharing Prosperity IDP School, New Kuchingoro situated in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), serves as a temporary haven for approximately 2,700 displaced persons, predominantly from Adamawa and Borno states in North East Nigeria. The camp's demographic profile reveals a significant proportion of children and young people, with half of the residents falling within this age bracket of below 30 years. This demographic characteristic underscores the imperative of providing access to quality education, a fundamental right that has been disrupted by the Boko Haram insurgency.

Sharing Prosperity IDP School, New Kuchingoro, exemplifies the resourcefulness and resilience of the IDPs in the face of adversity. Initiated by the IDPs themselves in 2017, the school operates in a low-cost facility, with ten volunteer teachers providing educational services to about 250 pupils in primary 1 to 5. Notably, the school's operational framework is characterised by a lack of formal government support, rendering it reliant on the goodwill and charity of individuals and organisations. Despite being 'affiliated' to a nearby government-owned primary school, the institution's lack of formal recognition and resources poses significant challenges to providing quality education to its pupils, thereby exacerbating the existing educational deficits in the region.

Generally, the education sector in Nigeria's IDP camps, faces numerous challenges that hinder the delivery of quality education. Poor remuneration for teachers, inappropriate teacher recruitment, and little or no teacher professionalism are some of the key issues affecting the sector (UNESCO, 2023). These challenges are further compounded by the lack of essential educational resources, including textbooks, tables, chairs, and ICT gadgets, which are critical for effective and accelerated teaching and learning. The absence of these resources not only hampers academic performance but also discourages students from attending school. The situation is further complicated by school fees problems, which create a significant barrier to education for many displaced children. The United Nations' 2019-2021 Humanitarian Response Strategy highlights the need for urgent attention to these issues, emphasizing the importance of investing in education to support the recovery and development of affected communities (United Nations, 2021). Save the Children (2021) also underscores the need for increased support to ensure that IDP children have access to quality education, which is critical for their future prospects and Nigeria's overall development.

Quality education for IDP children should include explicit instruction in phonological awareness, a foundational skill for reading acquisition which enables children to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language, decoding words and developing literacy skills (Gillon, 2017). For IDP children, developing phonological awareness can be a crucial step in catching up on missed educational opportunities and building a strong foundation for future learning. Phonological awareness is a foundational skill for reading acquisition, involving the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language (Gillon, 2017). It is a crucial predictor of reading success, enabling children to understand the sound structure of language and decode words. Research shows that phonological awareness interventions significantly improve reading and spelling outcomes, especially in early childhood education (Melby-Lervåg, Lyster, & Hulme, 2012).

Studies in Nigeria highlight the importance of phonological awareness in early reading development, emphasizing the need for systematic instruction in phonological awareness to improve reading outcomes (Humble et al., 2024). Phonological awareness training programmes have been shown to improve reading skills in children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, focusing on phoneme identification, phoneme matching, and word segmentation (Neumann et al., 2015). Furthermore, phonological awareness contributes to vocabulary acquisition, which in turn enhances reading comprehension. Students with higher phonological awareness demonstrate better vocabulary and comprehension skills (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). This underscores the importance of phonological awareness as a foundational literacy umbrella, critical for decoding, fluent reading, and overall literacy development.

On the other hand, the education of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps remains a pressing concern, with significant barriers hindering access to quality learning opportunities. Research highlights challenges such as distance, poverty, documentation

issues, language differences, and cultural norms, particularly affecting girls and vulnerable groups (Suleiman et al., 2020).

Studies reveal a gap between policy and practice in providing quality basic education to IDP children, with issues like insufficient, unqualified, and transient teachers, and inadequate facilities (Rwang, 2023). Despite these challenges, IDPs demonstrate resilience by establishing internal camp management structures, advocating with external organizations, and seeking alternative income sources, highlighting the importance of community support and social cohesion (Ekezie, 2022).

To address these educational deficits, innovative solutions such as distance learning systems and mobile technologies have been proposed, offering flexibility and accessibility, but require infrastructure and technical support (Bawa & Bayaro, 2017). These findings underscore the need for context-specific, sustainable, and inclusive education interventions that prioritize the needs of IDP children and communities.

Beyond investigation into learning poverty in Nigeria's formal education sector, there is need to examine the interplay between factors such as teacher capacity, resource availability, and socio-economic conditions within the IDP camp which manifests teaching and learning in fragile context. Given the above, the following research questions guided the present study:

1. What foundational literacy skills do pupils of New Kuchingoro IDP School need to facilitate quality learning?
2. To what extent will pupils of New Kuchingoro IDP School benefit from phonological awareness instruction?
3. What psycho-social needs do pupils of New Kuchingoro IDP School need to support quality education?
4. How can the New Kuchingoro IDP School be supported to enhance and sustain the literacy experience of IDPs?

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative designs. Three instruments were developed for data collection, namely (i) Phonological Awareness and Early Grade Reading Instruction Survey (PAEGRIS) to assess teachers' baseline knowledge and skills in phonological awareness and early grade reading instruction (ii) Phonological Awareness Test (PAT) used for both pre- and post-tests and (iii) Classroom observation template to monitor phonological awareness instruction by teachers in addition to a community of practice WhatsApp platform for continuous engagement. Two FGDs were held to collect data on the psychosocial needs and potential support strategies. In all, ten teachers and 334 pupils were involved. See the distribution of the pupils in Table 1 below. To enhance sustainability, a Mobile Literacy Tent was established, providing access to reading and instructional materials such as

decodable texts, charts, games, and writing supplies, as well as movable chairs and tables for use by pupils, teachers, and the wider IDP community.

Findings

Among the ten teachers who took part in the Phonological Awareness and Early Grade Reading Instruction Survey (PAEGRIS), the demographic distribution (gender, age bracket and highest educational qualification) of the respondents indicate that seven are females with three male teachers. Among the seven female teachers, six fall within the age bracket of 30-36 while one is above 36 years. Out of this number, four have the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) which is the minimum teacher qualification to teach in the basic education system in Nigeria while three have the senior secondary school certificate meaning that they do not possess the minimum teacher qualification certificate in Nigeria nor any higher education experience. For the three male teachers, one is below 30 years while two are below 36 years of age. In terms of educational qualification, all three have NCE.

The findings of the Phonological Awareness and Early Grade Reading Instruction Survey (PAEGRIS) are summarized below.

1. On knowledge of instructional practices to teach foundational literacy (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and concept of print), 50% of the respondents provided no response to the item indicative of lack of familiarity with evidence-based early grade reading instruction strategies.
2. On knowledge of early grade reading instruction (teach all the alphabets and sing songs about the alphabets), 70% of the respondents admitted teaching alphabets and singing songs about the alphabets. This should not be confused with demonstrable knowledge of instruction in alphabetic principles.
3. On rank themselves in terms of ability to provide EGR instruction on the following phonemic awareness activities (word recognition, rhyming, blending, segmentation, deletion, isolation substitution), generally, the teachers acknowledged that they were either confident and not so confident in teaching any of the phonemic awareness activities outlined above. However, 30% of the respondents claimed they have not heard of 'Rhyming' while 40% claimed they were not confident in teaching 'blending'. 30% of the respondents claimed their confidence level hovered between confident and not so confident with regard to word recognition through substitution.
4. On challenges in teaching in an IDP camp, concerns about the behaviour of the pupils which makes it difficult to control the pupils in the class which in turn negatively affects their learning; the poor environment where teaching and learning take place; parents not being supportive; lack of quality instructional teaching and learning materials; and the challenge of having to speak two languages in order to communicate with the pupils were identified.

Nine phonological awareness subskills namely: word identification and counting, rhyming, segmentation, blending, phoneme isolation, phoneme manipulation, syllable counting, alliteration, and reading nonsense words were measured in the pre- and post-tests.

Table 1: Distribution of participants for pre-and posttests across levels and gender

Pretest				
Level	Gender		Participants	
	Male	Female	No. present	No. absent
P1	18	26	44	-
P2	18	26	44	
P3	13	27	40	-
P4	17	20	39	-
P5	16	13	29	-
Sub-total	82	112	194	-
Posttest				
P1	17 (3)	22 (9)	39	12
P2	17 (4)	19 (7)	36	11
P3	14(4)	21 (6)	35	10
P4	11 (5)	19 (4)	30	9
Subtotal	59 (16)	81 (26)	140	42
Grand total	141	193	334	42

Note: The number in brackets () shows participants who are absent during the posttest. It shows that out of the 42 pupils who were absent across the four levels, 26 were females and 16 were male pupils. Also note that P5 did not participate in the posttest because they had left the school when the posttest was administered. The school does not have facility for P6.

Analysis of Phonological Awareness of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Primary 1 Learners (P1)

From the findings presented in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, it is evident that overall gains are large from pre to post for total scores in P1. The earlier paired test and effect size pointed to a strong, educationally meaningful improvement which can be attributed to the intervention. However, change by gender is statistically similar. Thus, the Welch t-test indicates no significant difference in improvement between girls and boys; both groups progressed evenly. The central tendencies and spread are broadly comparable, with normal variation expected in small cohorts as used in this study.

Fig 2: The bar chart shows within-student effect sizes by subtest split by gender. Bigger bars to the right indicate larger gains from pre to post.

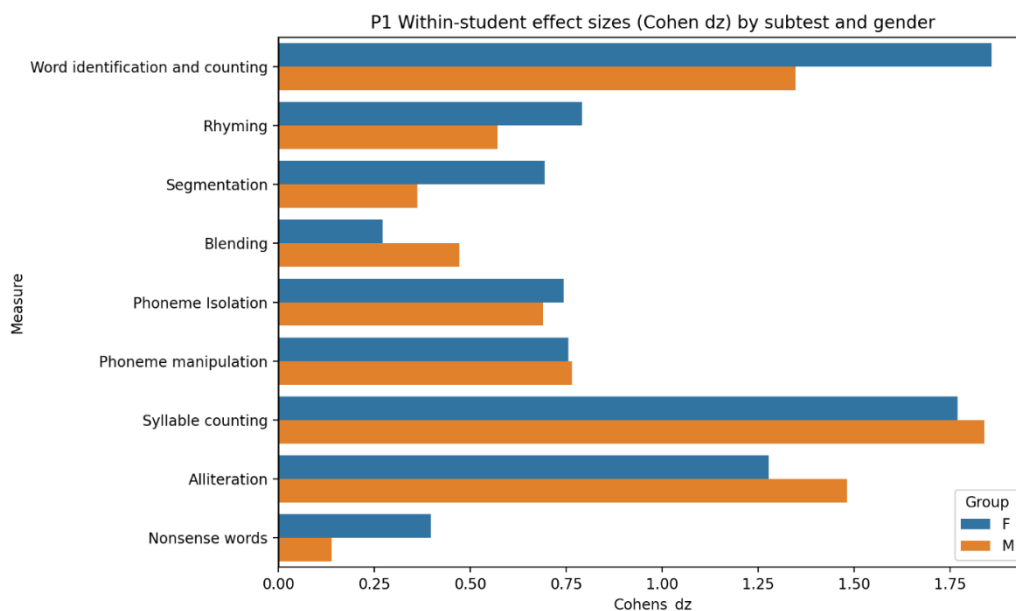
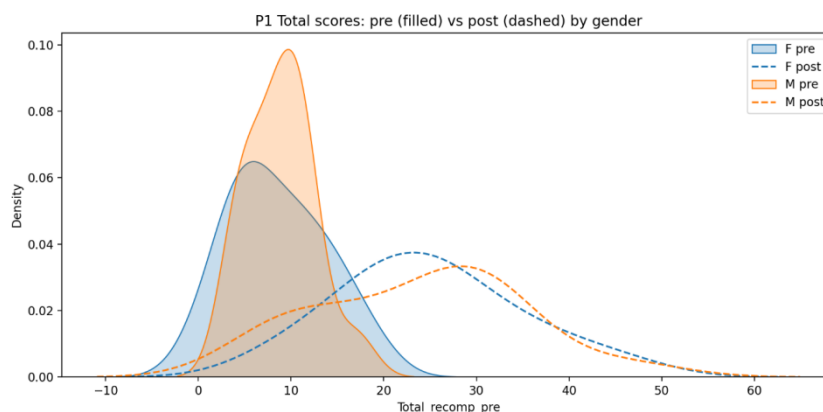


Fig 3: The density plot shows how total scores shifted from pre (filled) to post (dashed) for each gender.



Analysis of Phonological Awareness of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Primary 2 Learners (P2)

From the data presented in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, the findings show that most subtests improved with small-to-large within-student effects; total scores shifted upward post-intervention for both genders. The total score distribution shift indicates a broad improvement across the cohort rather than only at the margins. The post curve moves rightward and often tightens, consistent with both improved central tendency and reduced variance in some cases. Where effect sizes are moderate-to-large, the individual teacher likely provided explicit, systematic practice with cumulative review as observed during classroom observation. During classroom observation visits, it was evident that some teachers used some of the strategies demonstrated during the phonological awareness training than some teachers who were still struggling with using the strategies. Where effect sizes are small, there may be an instructional sequencing issue (e.g., moving to advanced phonemic manipulation before consolidation of segmentation/isolation), insufficient distributed practice, or assessment ceiling/floor effects.

Fig 4: Shows effect sizes by subtest and gender for P2

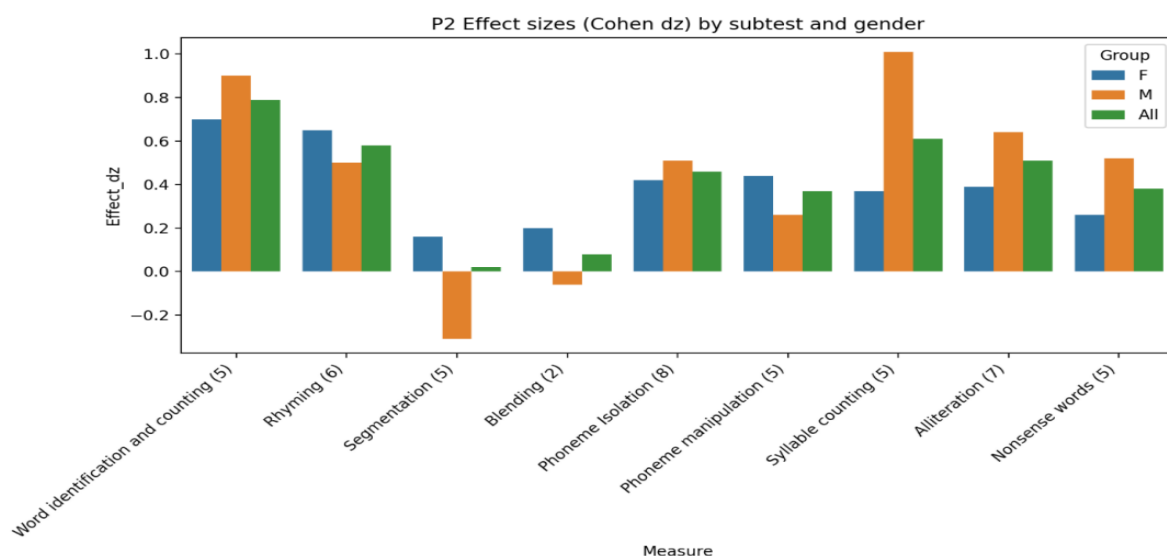
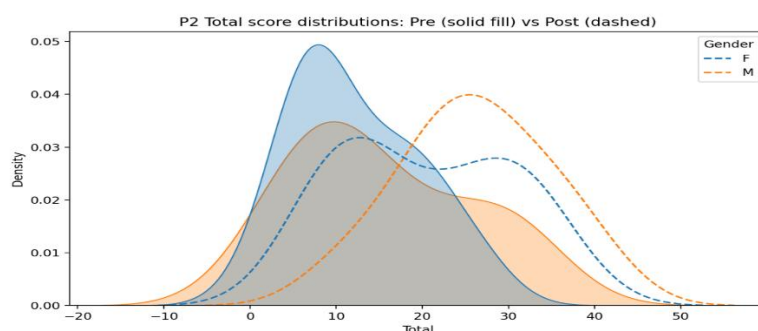


Fig 5: Total score distributions pre (filled) vs post (dashed), split by gender for P2



Analysis of Phonological Awareness of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Primary 3 Learners (P3)

The assessment of phonological awareness among P3 pupils revealed substantial pre-post improvements across most measured subskills. The largest gains were observed in phoneme isolation and phoneme manipulation, indicating strengthened capacity to recognize and modify individual sound units a foundational component of early decoding skills. Moderate progress was also recorded in word identification and counting, rhyming, and nonsense-word decoding, reflecting enhanced phonological sensitivity and emerging decoding transfer.

Fig. 6: Pre and posttest total scores by gender for P3

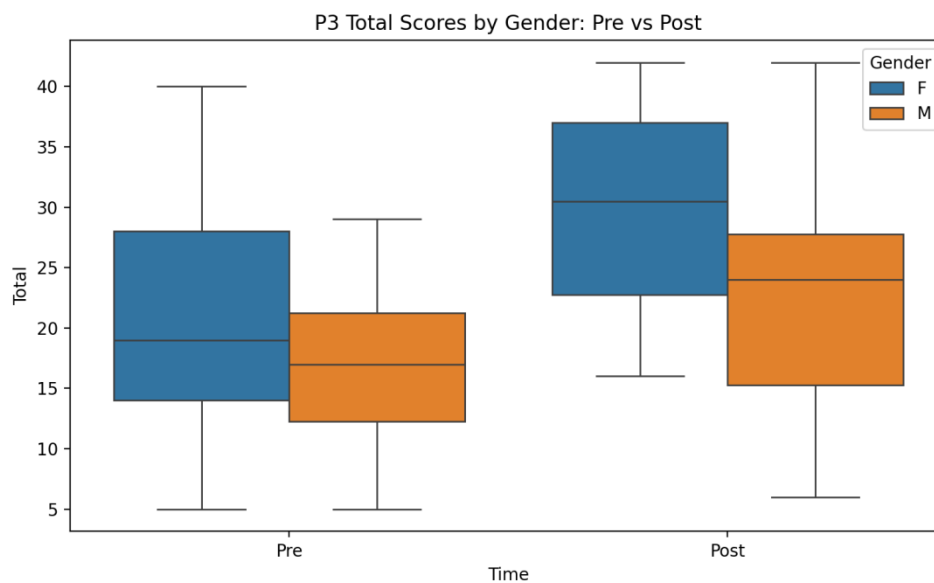
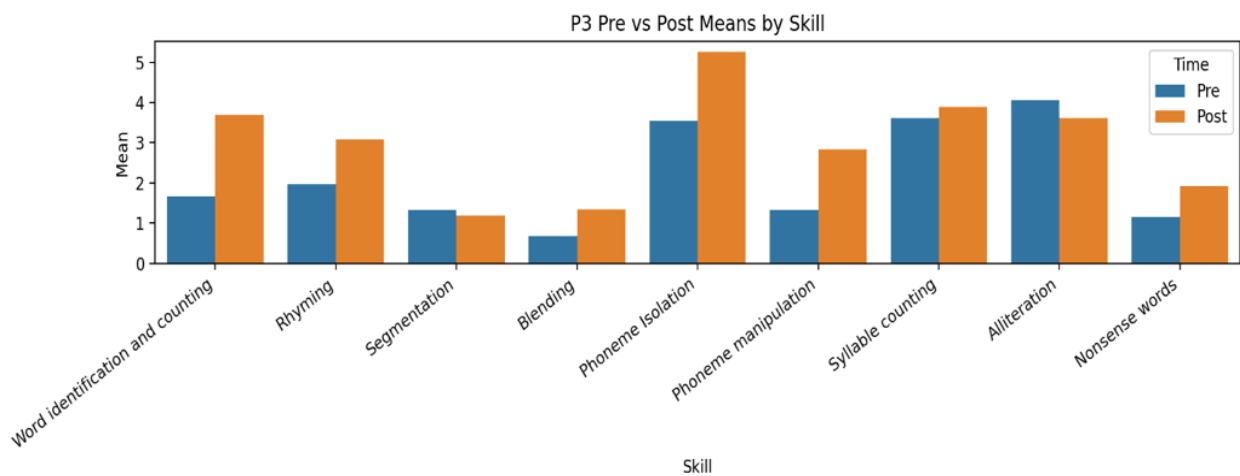


Fig 7: The bar chart showing within-student effect sizes by subtest split by gender.



Bigger bars to the right indicate larger gains from pre to post.

Analysis of Phonological Awareness of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Primary 4 Learners (P4)

P4 pupils also demonstrated significant phonological awareness growth between pre- and post-assessments, with the strongest improvements in phoneme isolation and phoneme manipulation, confirming continued development of fine-grained sound discrimination critical to decoding and spelling fluency. Blending and segmentation skills showed clear, secondary gains, indicating enhanced ability to synthesize and analyze sounds in words — essential for literacy progression at this grade level.

The P4 findings affirm that consistent, explicit phoneme instruction leads to measurable literacy gains even beyond the early grades. The significant progress in phoneme manipulation and blending aligns with instructional strategies emphasizing sound analysis and synthesis, while moderate improvements in nonsense-word decoding suggest successful transfer to real-word reading contexts. Nonetheless, residual lower performance among some learners underscores the need for differentiated instruction and stronger Tier 2/Tier 3 frameworks.

Fig. 8: Pre and posttest mean for P4

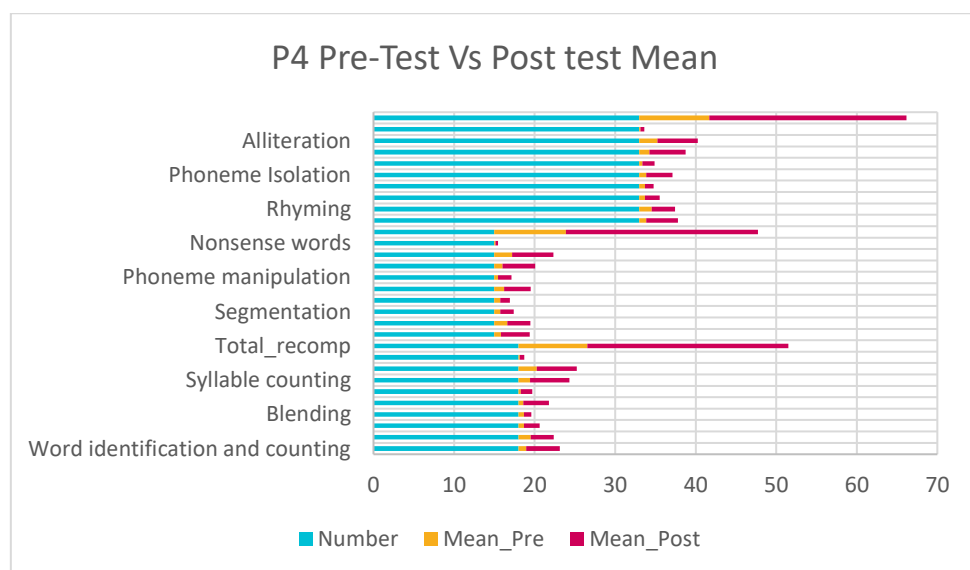
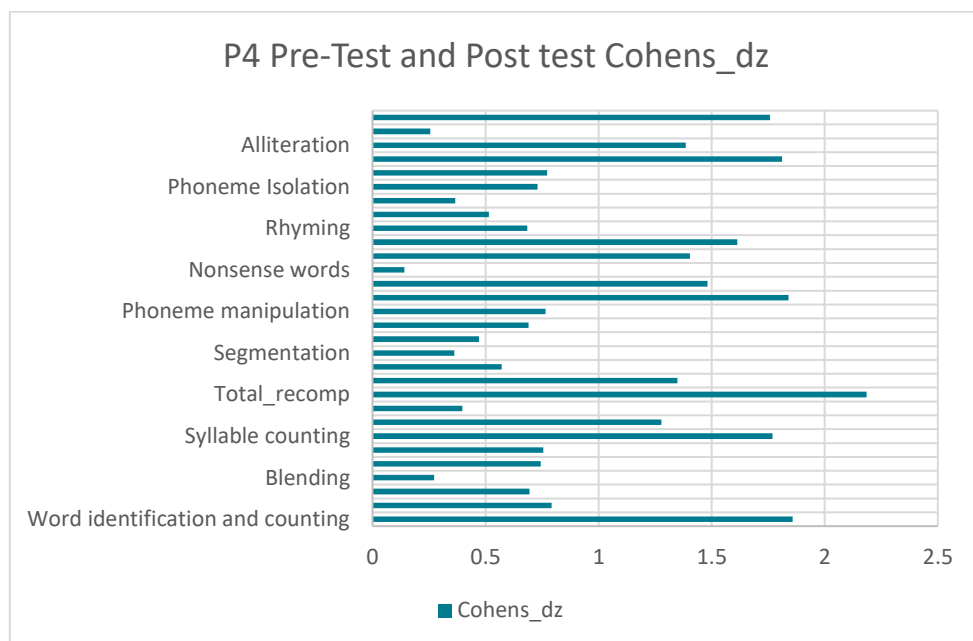


Fig 9: Pretest and posttest Cohens dz for P4



Psychosocial needs

Beyond literacy, the study examined the psychosocial needs of pupils through two focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and pupils. Thematic analysis was employed and three themes were identified as highlighted below.

Physiological Needs: Pupils expressed a strong desire for food as a means of survival. This need extended to welfare concerns, particularly the provision of school resources such as books, writing materials, and classroom facilities. Hunger and lack of basic supplies were seen as barriers to effective learning.

Competence Needs: These were expressed in dual form. Teachers expected pupils to be attentive and articulate, while pupils expected teachers to be competent in lesson delivery. This highlights the reciprocal nature of competence expectations in the classroom, where both groups rely on each other for effective teaching and learning.

Welfare Needs: Pupils emphasized the importance of resources that facilitate teaching and learning processes. Teachers similarly noted the lack of adequate materials and support, underscoring the broader structural challenges faced by IDP schools.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study in respect of the four research questions. The discussion is essentially on the extent to which pupils of Kuchingoro Primary School—an internally displaced persons (IDP) school in North Central Nigeria benefited from phonological awareness instruction, analysis of psychosocial needs and the establishment of a mobile literacy tent in the IDP school. On phonological awareness, the analyses were conducted across four grade levels (Primary 1–4), comparing pre- and post-test performance on various subtests of phonological awareness such as phoneme isolation, rhyming, blending, segmentation, syllable counting, word identification, and manipulation. The discussion draws on established literacy development frameworks and evidence from international research to situate the results within the context of early literacy acquisition among disadvantaged learners.

Primary 1. The findings for Primary 1 revealed large overall gains from pre- to post-intervention, with effect sizes suggesting substantial educationally meaningful improvement. Both boys and girls demonstrated similar magnitudes of progress, confirming gender equity in learning outcomes. The similarity in gain scores across genders suggests that the intervention's instructional design was both inclusive and universally effective (Ehri, 2005).

The strong improvement in foundational subskills, particularly in phoneme isolation and word identification, aligns with the assertion that early phonological instruction enhances decoding readiness and reading fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgesen et al., 2006). The observed gains also reflect the benefits of systematic and explicit phoneme-level teaching, which is known to yield higher literacy outcomes compared to implicit exposure models (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018).

From an equity standpoint, the absence of significant gender gaps aligns with findings by UNESCO (2022) and Uwezo (2018), which report that gender is not a consistent determinant of early literacy performance when instructional quality is equitable. The policy implication for IDP contexts is that gender-neutral, universally applied phonological instruction can produce balanced outcomes, provided that classroom variability is monitored.

Primary 2. Results for Primary 2 indicated broad improvements across all subtests, with medium-to-large within-student effect sizes. Stronger gains were recorded in word identification and counting, suggesting that these pupils benefited from explicit, repetitive practice in tasks tied closely to print awareness. However, smaller gains in rhyming and phoneme manipulation suggest potential gaps in instructional sequencing or task difficulty alignment. This pattern is consistent with research showing that rhyming develops earlier than phoneme-level manipulation and requires sustained reinforcement for mastery (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Adams, 1990).

The mixed results across subskills may also reflect differential instructional time allocation, as teachers often emphasize decoding-related subskills over more abstract phonological tasks (Lonigan et al., 2013). The narrowing of post-test score variance indicates that instruction was effective in raising the lower tail of the distribution, thereby improving cohort-wide literacy equity (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Gender effects remained small and statistically insignificant, confirming that boys and girls benefited similarly. This reinforces the validity of universal early literacy interventions in IDP settings (UNICEF, 2020). For sustained growth, the findings suggest that teachers should balance instructional dosage across subskills ensuring that rhyming and manipulation tasks receive sufficient focus after mastery of segmentation and isolation skills.

Primary 3. For Primary 3, the results revealed substantial pre-post improvement across multiple subskills, with the largest gains in phoneme isolation and phoneme manipulation. This progression reflects advanced phonological awareness development, a critical precursor to fluent decoding and spelling (Ehri, 2005). Moderate gains in word identification, rhyming, and nonsense-word decoding indicate that the learners are transitioning from sound awareness to applying those skills in reading unfamiliar words—a shift supported by the self-teaching hypothesis of reading acquisition (Share, 1995).

However, smaller gains in segmentation, blending, and syllable counting suggest a need for cumulative reinforcement. These results support Stanovich's (1986) "Matthew effect" theory, which posits that children who do not consolidate early subskills fall progressively behind. In IDP contexts where instructional time and resources are often inconsistent, structured spiral review routines are therefore critical to prevent learning decay.

The equitable progress across gender groups in P3 indicates that the intervention remained inclusive. Nonetheless, observed within-class variability calls for targeted coaching for teachers and individualized support for learners lagging behind. There was evidence that some teachers needed additional coaching from the classroom observation reports. Such differentiated strategies align with Response to Intervention (RTI) models that emphasize tiered support systems for literacy development (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Primary 4. Primary 4 students also showed significant phonological awareness growth, with the strongest gains again observed in phoneme isolation, manipulation, blending, and segmentation. The persistence of these effects into later grades demonstrates the sustainability of phonological instruction beyond early primary levels, confirming that explicit sound-based teaching continues to contribute to decoding and spelling fluency (Torgesen et al., 2001). The moderate improvements in word identification and nonsense-word decoding suggest that the learners are increasingly able to generalize phoneme-grapheme correspondences to unfamiliar lexical items, reinforcing findings

by Ehri (2014) that phonological awareness underlies orthographic mapping and word recognition.

Primary 4 students exhibited robust phonological awareness gains, particularly in phoneme isolation, manipulation, blending, and segmentation—skills essential for decoding fluency. The consistency of growth across gender subgroups suggests that instruction was both effective and equitable. However, the persistence of lower-tail performance calls for sustained targeted intervention. Policy should therefore emphasize structured, data-driven literacy routines, intensified support for lagging students, and regular evaluation of instructional fidelity to strengthen literacy outcomes system-wide.

However, smaller or plateauing gains in rhyming and alliteration may indicate ceiling effects skills that were likely mastered earlier and no longer discriminated strongly in assessment. The remaining performance gaps among lower-tail students highlight the continued need for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, especially in IDP schools where exposure to literacy outside the classroom is minimal due to their living conditions.

The gender analysis again revealed equitable learning outcomes, suggesting that instructional quality and access not gender are the dominant drivers of literacy progress in this setting (UNESCO, 2023). These findings reinforce the value of system-wide, data-driven literacy policies and teacher professional development that prioritize phoneme-level practice and progress monitoring.

Across all grade levels, pupils exhibited statistically significant and educationally meaningful improvements in phonological awareness after targeted instruction. The consistent pattern of growth from Primary 1 through Primary 4 supports the conclusion that explicit phonological awareness instruction is both effective and scalable in IDP educational contexts. The findings also underscore the role of instructional fidelity and teacher capacity in sustaining literacy gains (Piper et al., 2018). The steady upward shifts in total score distributions indicate that teachers were able to translate professional development and structured lesson routines into measurable student outcomes. Moreover, the lack of gender disparities across all grades highlights the inclusivity and fairness of the instructional model, aligning with global education equity goals (UNICEF, 2021). Nonetheless, the variability observed within some subskills, particularly rhyming and segmentation suggests that instructional sequencing and assessment design could be refined to ensure balanced development. The results confirm that foundational literacy interventions can thrive in resource-constrained IDP schools if they are data-driven, teacher-supported, and continuously monitored for equity and impact.

The findings from Kuchingoro Primary School demonstrate that phonological awareness instruction substantially enhances early literacy development among internally displaced pupils. Gains were observed across all grade levels and subskills, with no significant gender disparities, indicating that the intervention was both effective and equitable. The study provides empirical evidence that foundational literacy programmes

emphasizing explicit phonological instruction, consistent progress monitoring, and teacher capacity building can significantly improve reading readiness in marginalized learning environments. These outcomes align with the UNESCO (2015) “Education 2030” framework, which prioritizes quality foundational learning for all, including displaced children. They also support Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), which calls for literacy interventions that promote inclusivity and sustainability in basic education.

Recommendations

1. **National Framework for Education in Emergencies:** Develop and institutionalize a national framework for education in emergencies, which aligns with the Kampala Convention, endorsed by Nigeria.
2. **Curriculum and Instruction:** Sustain and scale early literacy interventions, building on demonstrated learning gains and institutionalize structured daily routines through dedicated 5–10 minute literacy instruction/phoneme drills.
3. **Assessment and Monitoring:** Implement regular phonological awareness assessments to track key subskills as well as monitor growth, with a focus on ensuring lower-performing pupils catch up.
4. **Equity and Targeted Support:** Provide targeted interventions for struggling learners based on assessment data and ensure equitable access to resources and instruction across all learner groups in marginalized populations.
5. **Professional Learning Support:** Establish ongoing instructional coaching systems for teachers through sustainable teacher learning communities to encourage peer collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement.
6. Provision of **emotional support** that ought to take care of the pupils’ disposition towards how they perceive deprivations such as hunger, and lack of facility that confront their everyday existence even in school.

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