

Fostering the Role of Library Activities to Boost Reading Motivation: Enhancing Engagement in School Libraries

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Abstract: *This research examines the role of school libraries in promoting interest and developing reading skills in elementary school students. In Sri Lanka and globally, declining reading motivation among school children has renewed focus on school libraries as catalysts for literacy development. This literature review study examines how school libraries foster reading interest and skill development in elementary students. Creative programs such as book clubs, storytelling, and diverse reading materials create environments that stimulate reading motivation and support early literacy. The integration of library activities with curriculum and parental involvement further promotes literacy development. This study highlights the value of diversified and participatory library sessions in enhancing reading engagement and educational outcomes for young learners. Using a literature review method, the study identifies that the school library is not merely a repository of books but a pivotal learning center crucial in shaping children's literacy. Findings indicate that creative programs such as book clubs, storytelling performances, and other literacy activities create an environment that stimulates students' reading interest, while access to diverse reading materials supports the development of initial reading skills. Integrated strategies of the school library with the curriculum and parental involvement also have a positive impact on shaping the literacy of elementary school students. The conclusion of this research underscores the need for increased investment and attention to the role of the school library as an educational agent supporting literacy development. The findings highlight the importance of diversifying library period activities to cater to different learning styles and promote active involvement. This study contributes to educational practice by providing insights into designing effective library sessions that support student motivation, information literacy, and learning outcomes.*

Keywords: *Literacy Development; Innovative Library Activities; Reading Engagement; Reading Motivation; School Library*

Introduction

Reading is a lifelong activity that never ends. The main objective of this research was to examine the role of school libraries in developing and interest reading skills in school students. Referring to a literature review approach, the research recognizes that the school library is not only a repository of books. Findings show that creative school library activities such as storytelling performances, book clubs, and numerous other literacy activities produce an atmosphere that inspires students' reading awareness, although access to various information sources provides the expansion of preliminary reading skills. The conclusion of this research points out the necessity for encouraged financing and attention to the role of the school library as an educational mediator sustaining literacy development. The findings emphasize the importance of differentiating library time activities. While global studies recognize libraries as literacy enablers, limited research examines how activity-based engagement can transform reading motivation in developing contexts such as Sri Lanka.

I. Research Problem

Reading is a lifelong activity essential for personal and educational growth. This study aims to examine the significant role of school libraries in fostering reading interest and literacy skills among elementary students through innovative and participatory activities. Despite global recognition of libraries as literacy enablers, limited research focuses on how activity-based engagement can transform reading motivation within developing contexts such as Sri Lanka. Moreover, despite the adoption of innovative literacy programs, school libraries face implementation challenges due to infrastructural limitations, unequal digital access, and gaps in librarian training. Addressing these barriers is crucial to scaling and sustaining equitable literacy outcomes. 5Despite the developing implementation of innovative programs in school libraries to develop reading literacy and motivation, critical arguments limit the full realization of their benefits. There is a demanding requirement to examine active approaches to implement, scale, and sustain advanced innovative library activities while tackling infrastructural and skill gaps to confirm wide-ranging educational consequences (Hapsari, 2025; UNESCO, 2022; Softlink, 2023; Venkatesh & Bala, 2022).

II. Literature Review

There are many ways to refer to the tools used by schools and school libraries to promote reading. These terms include but are not limited to reading incentive programs (Fawson, Reutzell, Read, Smith, & Moore, 2009; Small et al., 2009).

Table 1: Summary of the few schools' library activities

Activity	Description	Reference
Virtual Book Clubs	Digital book clubs using platforms like Flipgrid, Padlet, or Jamboard to create reading communities.	Holzweiss, 2023
Makerspaces with 3D Printing	Hands-on creative learning spaces equipped with 3D printers to promote interdisciplinary projects.	Marcotte, 2023; Miami Univ Library, 2023
Interactive Read-Aloud Sessions	Librarians conduct read-alouds with interactive discussions to engage and motivate readers.	Holzweiss, 2023

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Activity	Description	Reference
Minecraft or Gaming Tournaments	Using Minecraft and other games for teamwork, digital storytelling, and coding in library settings.	Subramaniam et al., 2025
Digital Storytelling Workshops	Multimedia story creation with video and podcasting tools available in the library.	Mardis & Dickinson, 2020
Bookmark Making & Book Jackets	Creative art activities to personalize reading materials and foster student engagement.	Jaypee Schools, 2025
Cross-Curricular Projects	Collaboration with teachers for projects integrating library resources across subjects.	Valenza, 2019
Augmented Reality (AR) Experiences	Use of AR/VR for immersive virtual field trips and experiential learning in libraries.	Alison Marcotte, 2023
Student-Led Library Innovation	Students lead workshops, curate exhibits, and organize events to foster leadership and innovation.	Pearl City High School, 2025
Family & Community Literacy	Engaging families and communities in literacy programs to extend support beyond the school.	Ness, 2010; Agricultural Univ Library, 2018

III. Methodology

The initial stage of this research began with the recognition of the main theme. The researcher conducted a literature review utilizing academic databases, digital libraries, and relevant sources to collect articles, books, and scholarly papers related to the research theme. This analysis improved the understanding of differences, relationships, and modifications in prior research conclusions. Following literature analysis, the researcher classified literature findings into specific categories, such as school library activities, description of those activities when conducted in the school library, of reading interest on reading abilities in the school library environment. As part of this research, the accomplishment of innovative school library activities worldwide, incorporating specified illustrations from Sri Lanka, was conducted.

Discussion

Innovative activities always deeply engage school students. Technology incorporation, involving e-books, digital catalogs, and multimedia resources, significantly enhances students' access to varied and reorganized learning materials. Student-led advantages and community literacy programs range library influence beyond the school walls. Nevertheless, these advantages are not similarly allocated. Rural and under-resourced schools often battle to apply these improvements due to limited funding and infrastructure. Thus, digital equity becomes a fundamental consequence in scaling productive school library activities. Training and continuous professional development (CPD) for library staff are fundamental; accordingly, librarians can implement modern responsibilities as catalysts of present learning settings. Current research proves the needed role of school libraries in enhancing reading incentives and promoting literacy through innovative, technology-enhanced activities and community commitment. Libraries that adopt digital instruments and creative school library activities become essential educational representatives promoting inclusive, interactive, and student-centered learning. Partnerships among educational stakeholders, including families and communities, develop the influence of school libraries on

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literacy development. This literature-based study proposes that diversified and participatory library activities can significantly enhance reading engagement and literacy outcomes in early learners.

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