

# Impact of Responsive Pedagogy and Functional Literacy on Learning Outcomes of Internally Displaced Children

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**Abstract:** *The study addressed how the use of responsive pedagogy and functional literacy enhanced learning outcomes (reading and writing) of internally displaced children in Benue and Plateau States, Nigeria employing quasi experimental designs. The target population for the study consisted of approximately 749 (pupils = 713 as well as teachers and headmasters for FGD = 36) internally displaced children and teachers residing in selected IDP camps in Benue and Plateau States, Nigeria. The available sample for the study was 488 pupils (male = 274 and female = 209) and 18 teachers (male = 12 and female = 6). To ensure a representative sample, the researchers employed both purposive and stratified random sampling, accounting for variations in gender, and level in primary school (grades 4 and 5). However, all pupils in the 3 schools and 6 schools from Plateau and Benue States were respectively used as intact classes. A data collection instrument “Literacy Ability Test” (LAT) comprising reading and writing components with reliability index of 0.90 using Kuder Richardson 21 formula was deployed. The intervention lasted eight weeks and resulted in the following findings: Responsive pedagogy and functional literacy leads to a significantly higher improvement in reading and writing outcomes compared to the conventional strategy. There is however no significant difference in the mean reading outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught reading using responsive pedagogy and functional literacy and there is however no significant difference in the mean writing outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught reading using responsive pedagogy. Further, responsive pedagogy and functional literacy has a clear advantage in improving the writing skills of internally displaced children. It was recommended among others that teachers, school administrators, curriculum designers should integrate responsive pedagogy and functional literacy that focus on the functional application of literacy skills in real-world contexts in the curriculum for the displaced children.*

**Key words:** responsive pedagogy, functional literacy, reading outcomes, writing outcomes, internally displaced children

## INTRODUCTION

Decades of ethno-religious conflict, farmer-herder disputes, and armed banditry in Plateau and Benue States have led to a serious humanitarian crisis characterized by the displacement of many people from their ancestral lands. This situation has serious consequences for children, who are often the most vulnerable in such crises. Consequently, the educational landscape in these two states has remained severely disrupted with many schools destroyed, repurposed as shelters for internally displaced families, or rendered inaccessible due to violence and other forms of insecurity, leading to substantial educational gaps for children. Internally displaced children are especially vulnerable, struggling with legacies of violence such as psychological trauma, loss of family support, and inadequate access to education. These challenges contribute significantly to a cycle of poverty, as many children lack the necessary skills for stable employment and community development. By way of addressing these challenges therefore, this study explored responsive pedagogy and functional literacy instruction specifically tailored to respond to the unique needs of internally displaced children.

This research is anchored in Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through their experiences and interactions within their environment. Key theorists such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky emphasize the importance of social context and collaborative learning in the knowledge construction process. Constructivist theory aligns closely with the principles of responsive pedagogy, which advocates for adapting teaching strategies to meet the unique backgrounds and experiences of students, particularly those from marginalized communities. This alignment is crucial for effectively addressing the challenges faced by internally displaced children in Benue and Plateau States, who often come from traumatic backgrounds and require educational practices that recognize and validate their experiences.

Responsive pedagogy emphasizes the necessity of educators being attuned to the emotional and psychological states of their students. In contexts where trauma is prevalent, such as among internally displaced populations, understanding students' backgrounds is vital for creating safe and supportive learning environments. By employing strategies that acknowledge the lived experiences of these children, educators can help mitigate the effects of trauma, thereby enhancing both emotional well-being and academic performance. Additionally, the integration of functional literacy—which focuses on equipping learners with practical skills applicable to everyday life—further enhances this approach. Functional literacy encompasses not just basic reading and writing skills, but also critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to navigate complex social and economic environments. By grounding the research in Constructivist Learning Theory, the study aims to enhance the educational experiences of internally displaced children, promoting their ability to engage meaningfully with the curriculum and their communities.

The literature on responsive pedagogy highlights its significance in contexts where learners face substantial barriers to education, such as trauma from violence or displacement. Research has demonstrated that responsive pedagogy can lead to improved engagement and learning outcomes. For instance, Tomlinson (2014) discusses how differentiated instruction—a core component of responsive pedagogy—enables educators to address the varying readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles of students, fostering an inclusive classroom environment. In the context of internally displaced populations in Benue and Plateau States, responsive pedagogy is essential for addressing the emotional

and psychological needs of children affected by trauma. Miller (2019) emphasizes that understanding students' backgrounds allows educators to create supportive learning environments that cater to their specific needs.

On the other hand, functional literacy extends beyond basic reading and writing skills, emphasizing the ability to use these skills effectively in real-world situations. According to UNESCO (2025), functional literacy is a crucial driver of socioeconomic development, significantly impacting employment opportunities and overall quality of life. Research indicates that functional literacy is particularly vital for marginalized populations, including internally displaced children in Nigeria. Studies have shown that children who acquire functional literacy skills are better equipped to reintegrate into their communities and contribute positively to society (World Bank, 2018). Furthermore, functional literacy has been linked to improved health outcomes, civic engagement, and social cohesion, making it an essential component of educational programs in crisis-affected areas.

The intersection of responsive pedagogy and functional literacy emerges as a critical area for addressing the unique challenges faced by internally displaced children in Benue and Plateau States. Winthrop and McGivney (2013) argue that integrating responsive teaching practices into functional literacy programs can lead to more effective learning experiences. This integration allows educators to create curricula that not only build literacy skills but also resonate with students' lived experiences, making learning more relevant and meaningful. Programs incorporating culturally relevant materials and community-based learning can help students connect their education to their real-life contexts, thus enhancing motivation and learning outcomes (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2005).

Despite the recognition of both responsive pedagogy and functional literacy as essential components of effective education, many educational policies in Nigeria remain rigid and standardized. Recent initiatives, such as the Nigerian National Policy on Education, have begun to acknowledge the importance of inclusive and responsive educational practices. However, significant gaps still exist between policy and practice, particularly in regions affected by conflict and displacement (Osokoya, 2019). This research aims to bridge this gap by providing evidence-based recommendations for integrating responsive pedagogy and functional literacy into educational programs for internally displaced children, ultimately contributing to their resilience and socioeconomic empowerment in the face of adversity.

By combining responsive pedagogy, which transforms teaching methods to accommodate diverse backgrounds, with functional literacy that provides essential skills, this research aims to improve educational outcomes and empower these children to escape or break the vicious cycle of poverty. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights on effective educational strategies that promote resilience and social cohesion among internally displaced children in Nigeria.

To provide solution to the problem, the following objectives were addressed:

1. assess impact of responsive pedagogies and functional literacy on learning outcomes (reading) of the Internally Displaced Children
2. assess impact of responsive pedagogies and functional literacy on learning outcomes (writing) of the Internally Displaced Children

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Responsive Pedagogy in Crisis-Affected Educational Settings***

Responsive pedagogy refers to instructional strategies that actively account for learners' social, emotional, and cultural contexts, especially in diverse and challenging learning environments. In conflict-affected settings such as Benue and Plateau States in Nigeria—where displacement due to violent conflicts is widespread—traditional pedagogical approaches may fail to meet learners' needs. Research shows that responsive teaching, which includes trauma-informed practices, learner-centred approaches, and culturally relevant content, is essential for supporting children affected by displacement (Burde et al., 2019; INEE, 2022).

In emergencies, effective pedagogy must focus on psychological safety, community integration, and differentiated instruction to respond to the varied academic levels and socio-emotional needs of internally displaced children (IDCs). According to the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2022), responsive teaching in emergency contexts improves learning outcomes and resilience, particularly when educators are trained to adapt instruction to trauma-sensitive realities and disrupted schooling histories.

Furthermore, Winthrop and Barton (2018) note that education in displacement settings must be flexible, inclusive, and grounded in local contexts to ensure that it serves not only academic needs but also psychosocial recovery. This approach enables students to re-engage with learning despite adversity, and it positions schools as stabilizing institutions during displacement.

### ***Functional Literacy as a Pathway to Socioeconomic Empowerment***

Functional literacy extends beyond the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills to include the ability to apply those skills effectively in daily life for problem-solving, economic participation, and informed decision-making. UNESCO (2020) defines functional literacy as the use of literacy skills in ways that contribute to social and economic development, such as accessing healthcare, understanding legal rights, and engaging in income-generating activities.

In contexts of displacement, functional literacy becomes a critical survival skill. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly children and youth, face challenges in navigating healthcare systems, emergency relief services, and informal labour markets. Studies show that literacy programmes incorporating real-life content—such as health literacy, disaster preparedness, and financial literacy—can enhance the well-being and autonomy of displaced populations (Sabates *et al*, 2021).

In Nigeria, where educational access is unequal and displacement disrupts formal learning, functional literacy initiatives embedded in non-formal and emergency education frameworks can help IDCs rebuild lost opportunities. The Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2022) asserts that functional literacy is central to reducing vulnerability and increasing participation in civic and economic life.]

The synergy between responsive pedagogy and functional literacy is vital for improving the life chances of internally displaced children. While responsive pedagogy addresses the how of teaching by adapting methods to learners' realities, functional literacy addresses the what by ensuring content is

directly applicable to real-world challenges. Together, they provide a framework for literacy instruction that is both emotionally affirming and practically empowering.

A study by Burde et al. (2019) emphasises that pedagogical approaches in emergency contexts must be designed not only to foster academic achievement but also to build learners' capacity to navigate crisis-affected societies. Moreover, Sabates et al. (2021) found that when literacy programmes integrate socio-economic applications, learners show increased motivation and long-term retention of skills.

Winthrop and McGivney (2016) argue that education in crisis must prioritise both foundational skills and the capabilities needed for societal reintegration. This includes equipping IDCs with the literacy skills required to pursue livelihoods, access information, and participate meaningfully in their communities. When pedagogy is responsive and literacy functional, education becomes a pathway to resilience and recovery.

### ***Empirical Review***

The implementation of responsive pedagogy and functional literacy has gained empirical support as an effective strategy for improving the educational experiences of internally displaced children (IDCs), especially within conflict-affected regions such as Benue and Plateau States in Nigeria. A growing body of literature highlights the importance of tailoring literacy instruction to reflect learners' contexts, cognitive levels, and socio-emotional needs. Yusuf, Mohammed, and Adamu (2020), in their evaluation of functional literacy programmes for internally displaced adults in Bauchi State, found that adapting curriculum content to everyday experiences enhanced learner engagement and outcomes. However, they also observed that the lack of baseline diagnostic assessments hindered the effectiveness of instruction. These findings emphasise the necessity of embedding learner assessments in literacy interventions to identify specific academic and psychosocial needs—especially in fragile settings where displacement disrupts learning continuity.

One of the most prominent contemporary examples of responsive pedagogy in practice is the *FastTrack Accelerated Learning Programme*, developed by the Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAi). This programme integrates teaching-at-the-right-level (TaRL) methods, bilingual (mother-tongue) instruction, and low-tech digital tools such as the Mavis Talking Pen. In six IDP camps, literacy and numeracy scores improved significantly within just 24 days—from 7.4% to 31.6% and 4.8% to 17.7%, respectively (AREAi, 2022). The scalability of this model is demonstrated by its expansion to over 25,000 children across ten IDP and refugee camps by 2024 (AREAi, 2023; WISE, 2024). According to AREAi, the combined use of TaRL, mother-tongue instruction, and low-tech learning tools produced results that were three times more effective than interventions employing isolated methods.

Beyond foundational learning gains, functional literacy interventions have also been linked to improved socio-economic outcomes among displaced populations. Yusuf et al. (2020) reported that adult IDPs involved in literacy and livelihood programmes in Bauchi State experienced enhanced entrepreneurial skills and greater self-reliance. Similarly, Njoku and Nnadi (2021) observed that functional literacy improves economic agency by enhancing productivity, boosting income potential, and facilitating access to health care and other essential services. In Kano State, Isa (2018) found that while adult learners benefited from economic empowerment through literacy programmes,

infrastructural challenges—such as inadequate learning spaces and a shortage of materials—remained significant barriers. These findings are instructive for child-focused interventions, which aim not only to develop literacy skills but also to foster resilience, well-being, and future socio-economic integration.

The FastTrack programme, along with its partnership with TheirWorld, also demonstrates how functional literacy can be adapted to child-centred humanitarian contexts. This collaboration provided over 10,000 IDCs with access to education through a combination of bilingual learning, digital pens, and community-based facilitation (AREAi & TheirWorld, 2024). The initiative has been internationally recognised, receiving the 2024 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for its innovation and inclusivity (UNESCO, 2024). Similarly, the USAID-funded *Addressing Education in Northeast Nigeria (AENN)* project, implemented by FHI 360, employed non-formal education centres and bilingual literacy delivery in Hausa and Kanuri to support displaced learners in Borno and Yobe States. The programme achieved a 17% average improvement in literacy and 27% in numeracy and re-integrated more than 60% of learners into formal schooling (Education.org, 2022).

The psychosocial and educational vulnerabilities of IDCs also warrant consideration in responsive pedagogy. Empirical observations from AREAi and UNICEF highlight the importance of trauma-informed instruction and emotional safety. For example, Adebayo (2025) documented the story of Yakaka, an 11-year-old girl in Borno State, who regained confidence and interest in school through structured, mother-tongue-based accelerated learning programmes under UNICEF's Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP). Similarly, AREAi's evaluative reports highlighted that the use of diagnostic testing and mother-tongue instruction resulted in a 97% comprehension success rate among learners, especially in pilot camps (Guardian Nigeria, 2022; BusinessDay NG, 2022). These findings affirm that flexible and context-sensitive instructional strategies are vital to meeting the educational needs of displaced children.

Policy implications emerging from these empirical studies are substantial. Yusuf et al. (2020) advocate for participatory needs assessments, contextualised curriculum design, and the integration of literacy with health, civic, and livelihood education. Additionally, sustained investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and multi-sectoral partnerships is essential to improving the reach and quality of literacy interventions. These recommendations are in line with the *Transforming Literacy for Future Citizens (TLFC)* framework, which emphasises learner-centred, inclusive, and adaptable literacy practices designed to equip learners with the skills to thrive in uncertain environments.

In conclusion, empirical studies from Nigeria provide robust evidence that responsive pedagogy and functional literacy are effective in enhancing both academic performance and socio-economic resilience among internally displaced learners. The combined insights from adult literacy initiatives and child-centred programmes such as FastTrack, AENN, and ABEP demonstrate that scalable, evidence-based approaches can address the complex educational needs of IDCs in Benue and Plateau States. Embedding such approaches in educational policy and practice is essential for building inclusive, resilient, and equitable education systems in displacement-affected contexts.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### ***Design***

Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study utilized quantitative surveys. Explanatory Sequential Design was adopted. This design involves collecting quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data. The qualitative data is then used to explain or interpret the quantitative findings. The quantitative aspects comprised descriptive survey and quasi experimental designs. Assessing the impact of responsive pedagogies and functional literacy on learning outcomes (reading and writing) of learners fall into the quasi experimental design of pretest, posttest non randomised groups type.

### ***Population, Sample and Sampling***

The target population for this study consisted of approximately 749 (pupils = 713 and teachers and headmasters for FGD = 36) internally displaced children and teachers residing in selected IDP camps in Benue and Plateau States, Nigeria. Of this number, there were 379 males representing 50.6% and 334 female representing 49.4% of pupils while the teachers were 24 males and 12 females. Also, 110 were from Plateau State (representing 14.7% while 639 were from Benue State representing 85.3% of the population. It was a selection as some areas or location were not secured for visits. So we had a total of 3 schools from Plateau and 8 schools from Benue that were available for use.

The available sample for the study was 488 children (male = 274 and female = 209) and 18 teachers (male = 12 and female = 6). To ensure a representative sample, the researchers employed both purposive and stratified random sampling, accounting for variations in gender, and level in primary school (grades 4 and 5). However, all pupils in the 3 schools and 6 schools from Plateau and Benue States were respectively used as intact classes being a characteristic of quasi experimental study where full randomisation was not possible. This diverse population is critical for understanding the unique educational needs and experiences of internally displaced children, allowing for comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of responsive pedagogy and functional literacy approaches in improving their socioeconomic outcomes. First all the three schools in Plateau were purposively sampled since they are few in number and population. Also 6 out of 8 schools in Benue were sampled (minding the risk locations) since all are coeducational and 100% IDP camp children.

### ***Research Instrument and Validation***

The study employed quantitative instrument to gather a nuanced understanding of the educational experiences of internally displaced children. For the quantitative instrument, Literacy Ability Test (LAT) has 37 items comprising reading and writing components. It is a multiple choice items of options A to D. The items were drawn from primary four and five curriculum using common entrance examinations items as guide.

The instrument LAT was given to three experts-one in English Language, one in measurement and evaluation and one in educational psychology for face validation and content validation. The comments of the experts helped to re-shape the final instrument. The validators were requested to check whether or not the items conform to the subject-matter, if the items were clear, readable, free from ambiguity and can assess the basic area of the study. Also to check if the instrument is capable of achieving the purpose for which it is designed. Table of specifications, topics, objectives, research questions and hypotheses were given to the validators to guide them in validating the instrument. Based

on the comments of the validators, some items in the instrument were restructured in terms of structure and grammatical accuracy.

The instrument was produced for use in trial testing. The trial testing of instrument was conducted using a sample of 100 pupils outside those sampled for main study. The trial testing data collected were subjected to analysis to obtain psychometric properties. Psychometric Analysis was carried out for LAT. The psychometric Analysis was an attempt to determine the quality of the test items in terms of difficulty and discrimination and how the options function in distracting indices (Nworgu, 2015) recommends the following ranges for four options MCQs:

1. 0.30-0.70 Difficulty for easiness indices.
2. 0.30-1.0 for discriminating indices.
3. The distracter indices are usually dependent on the number of options.

The items with distracter indices of zero were modified and selected. Items that scale through the analysis were featured in LAT while the ones that failed were discarded. In all, 36 items survived. In all 23 items survived out of 40 for LAT. The final instrument was subjected to reliability analysis. The following results were obtained. LAT = 0.90 using Kuder Richardson 21 formula. These values fall within acceptance reliability coefficient standard of 0.50-0.99. (Agogo & Achor, 2020). The instrument was therefore said to be reliable.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

The LAT was administered as pretests in first week, then taught the pupils for six weeks and then administered as post tests in the eight week. A total of eight weeks was used for the study. The trained research assistants who were their regular teacher did the teaching for six weeks. The junior researchers did the monitoring by visiting each school on routine (one per week) for the six weeks of teaching.

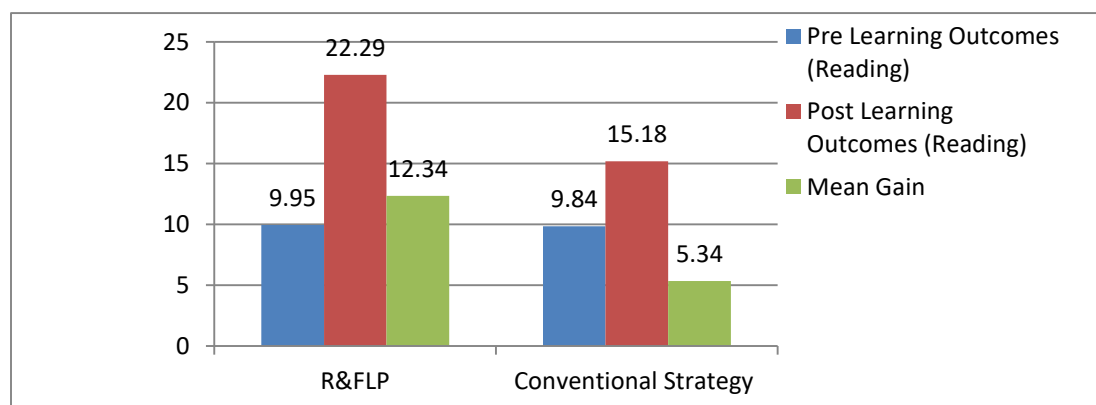
The statistics used for data analysis were mean, standard deviation and bar graphs for the descriptive data and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for the inferential data. Since full randomisation was not possible because of the way the pupils were selected, the use of ANCOVA helped to correct the initial differences in cognitive ability of the pupils involved in the study.

### ***Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and Conventional Strategy***

**Table 1:** Mean Impact of Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy on Learning Outcomes (Reading) of the Internally Displaced Children

| Strategies                                  |                | Pre Learning Outcomes (Reading) | Post Learning Outcomes (Reading) | Mean gain |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy | Mean           | 9.95                            | 22.29                            | 12.34     |
|   | N              | 215                             | 215                              |           |
|   | Std. Deviation | 6.09                            | 5.39                             |           |
| Conventional Strategy                       | Mean           | 9.84                            | 15.18                            | 5.34      |
|   | N              | 273                             | 273                              |           |
|   | Std. Deviation | 6.01                            | 5.17                             |           |
| Mean difference                             |                |                                 |                                  | 7.00      |

Table 1 shows the mean impact of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy on learning outcomes (reading) of the Internally Displaced Children. The table shows that 215 Internally Displaced Children were taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and 273 Internally Displaced Children were taught reading using conventional strategy. The table shows mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 9.95 with a standard deviation of 6.09 in pretest and 22.29 with a standard deviation of 5.39 in posttest. The table further shows that the mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught reading using conventional strategy is 9.84 with a standard deviation of 6.01 in pretest and 15.18 with a standard deviation of 5.17 in posttest. The mean gain in learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 12.34 and that of conventional strategy is 5.34. The difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy is 7.00 in favour of children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The summary of the pretest, posttest and mean gain in learning outcomes of the Internally Displaced Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and conventional strategy is as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Pretest, Posttest and Mean Gain in Learning Outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and Conventional Strategy

**Table 2:** ANCOVA of Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and those taught using Conventional Strategy

Dependent Variable: PostReading

| Source            | Type III Sum of Squares | df       | Mean Square     | F              | Sig.        | Partial Squared | Eta |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----|
| Corrected Model   | 6180.870 <sup>a</sup>   | 2        | 3090.435        | 111.821        | .000        | .316            |     |
| Intercept         | 42495.120               | 1        | 42495.120       | 1537.592       | .000        | .760            |     |
| Pre Reading       | 108.802                 | 1        | 108.802         | 3.937          | .048        | .008            |     |
| <b>Strategies</b> | <b>6058.431</b>         | <b>1</b> | <b>6058.431</b> | <b>219.211</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.311</b>     |     |
| Error             | 13404.161               | 485      | 27.637          |                |             |                 |     |
| Total             | 183253.000              | 488      |                 |                |             |                 |     |
| Corrected Total   | 19585.031               | 487      |                 |                |             |                 |     |

a. R Squared = .316 (Adjusted R Squared = .313)

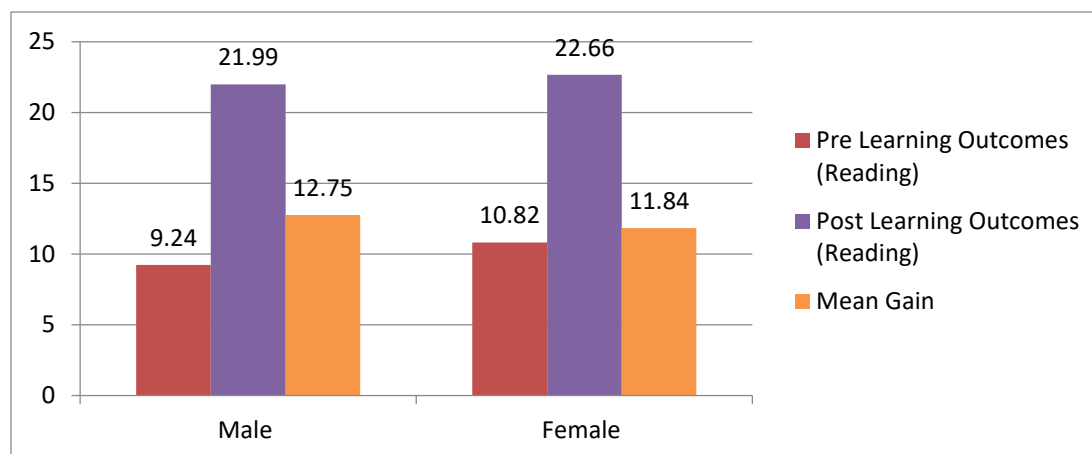
Table 2 shows that  $F(1,485) = 219.211$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy. The partial eta square of 0.311 obtains for strategies means that 31.1 percent of Internally Displaced Children learning outcomes (reading) can be attributed to the strategies employed.

**Table 3:** Mean Impact of Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy on Learning Outcomes (Reading) of the Internally Displaced Male and Female Children

| Gender          |                | Pre Learning Outcomes (Reading) | Post Learning Outcomes (Reading) | Mean gain |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Male            | Mean           | 9.24                            | 21.99                            | 12.75     |
|                 | N              | 119                             | 119                              |           |
|                 | Std. Deviation | 4.93                            | 4.90                             |           |
| Female          | Mean           | 10.82                           | 22.66                            | 11.84     |
|                 | N              | 96                              | 96                               |           |
|                 | Std. Deviation | 7.20                            | 5.96                             |           |
| Mean difference |                |                                 |                                  | 0.91      |

Table 3 shows the mean impact of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy on learning outcomes (reading) of the Internally Displaced male and female Children. The table shows that 119 male and 96 female Internally Displaced Children were taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The table shows mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced male Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 9.24 with a standard deviation of 4.93 in pretest and 21.99 with a standard deviation of 4.90 in posttest. The table further shows that the mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced female Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 10.82 with a standard deviation of 7.20 in pretest and 22.66 with a standard deviation of 5.96 in posttest. The mean gain in learning outcomes of Internally Displaced male Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 12.75 and that of female is 11.84. The difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 0.91 in favour of male

children taught using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The summary of the pretest, posttest and mean gain in learning outcomes of the Internally Displaced male and female Children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Pretest, Posttest and Mean Gain in Learning Outcomes of Internally Displaced Male and Female Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy

**Table 4:** ANCOVA of Reading Outcome of Internally Displaced Male and Female Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy

Dependent Variable: PostReading

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | df       | Mean Square   | F           | Sig.        | Partial Squared | Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Corrected Model | 127.333 <sup>a</sup>    | 2        | 63.666        | 2.208       | .112        | .020            |             |
| Intercept       | 25454.118               | 1        | 25454.118     | 882.784     | .000        | .806            |             |
| Pre Reading     | 103.860                 | 1        | 103.860       | 3.602       | .059        | .017            |             |
| <b>Gender</b>   | <b>12.163</b>           | <b>1</b> | <b>12.163</b> | <b>.422</b> | <b>.517</b> | <b>.002</b>     |             |
| Error           | 6112.788                | 212      | 28.834        |             |             |                 |             |
| Total           | 113046.000              | 215      |               |             |             |                 |             |
| Corrected Total | 6240.121                | 214      |               |             |             |                 |             |

a. R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = .011)

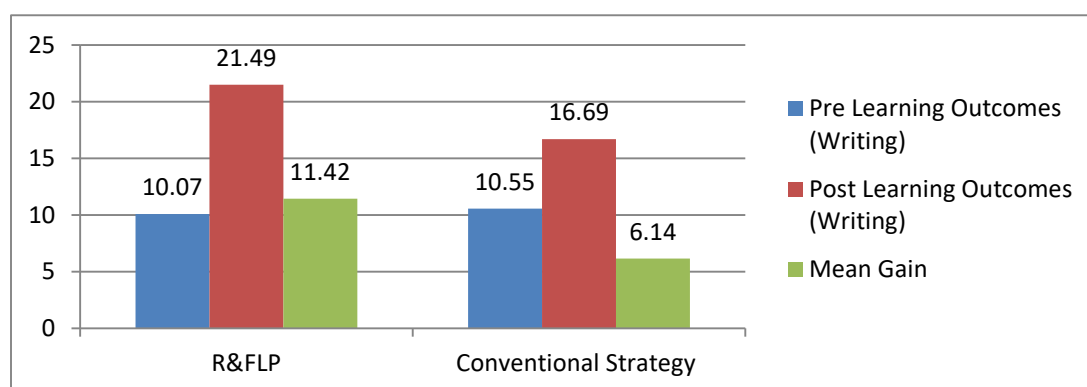
Table 4 shows that  $F(1,212) = 0.422$ ;  $p = 0.517 > 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean reading outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy. The partial eta square of 0.002 obtains for gender means that only 0.2 percent of Internally Displaced Children learning outcomes (reading) can be attributed to gender in responsive and functional literacy pedagogy class.

### ***Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and Conventional Strategy***

**Table 5:** Mean Impact of Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy on Learning Outcomes (Writing) of the Internally Displaced Children

| Strategies                                  |                | Pre Learning Outcomes (Writing) | Post Learning Outcomes (Writing) | Mean gain |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy | Mean           | 10.07                           | 21.49                            | 11.42     |
|   | N              | 215                             | 215                              |           |
|   | Std. Deviation | 6.14                            | 5.71                             |           |
| Conventional Strategy                       | Mean           | 10.55                           | 16.69                            | 6.14      |
|   | N              | 273                             | 273                              |           |
|   | Std. Deviation | 6.28                            | 5.36                             |           |
| Mean difference                             |                |                                 |                                  | 5.28      |

Table 5 shows the mean impact of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy on learning outcomes (writing) of the Internally Displaced Children. The table shows that 215 Internally Displaced Children were taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and 273 Internally Displaced Children were taught writing using conventional strategy. The table shows mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 10.07 with a standard deviation of 6.14 in pretest and 21.49 with a standard deviation of 5.71 in posttest. The table further shows that the mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught writing using conventional strategy is 10.55 with a standard deviation of 6.28 in pretest and 16.69 with a standard deviation of 5.36 in posttest. The mean gain in learning outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 11.42 and that of conventional strategy is 6.14. The difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy is 5.28 in favour of children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The summary of the pretest, posttest and mean gain in learning outcomes of the Internally Displaced Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and conventional strategy is as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Pretest, Posttest and Mean Gain in Learning Outcomes of Internally Displaced Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy(R&FLP) and Conventional Strategy

**Table 6:** ANCOVA of Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and those taught using Conventional Strategy

Dependent Variable: PostWriting

| Source            | Type III Sum of Squares | df       | Mean Square     | F             | Sig.        | Partial Squared | Eta |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-----|
| Corrected Model   | 2799.528 <sup>a</sup>   | 2        | 1399.764        | 45.963        | .000        | .159            |     |
| Intercept         | 45344.688               | 1        | 45344.688       | 1488.957      | .000        | .754            |     |
| Pre Writing       | 24.438                  | 1        | 24.438          | .802          | .371        | .002            |     |
| <b>Strategies</b> | <b>2790.875</b>         | <b>1</b> | <b>2790.875</b> | <b>91.642</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.159</b>     |     |
| Error             | 14770.191               | 485      | 30.454          |               |             |                 |     |
| Total             | 190071.000              | 488      |                 |               |             |                 |     |
| Corrected Total   | 17569.719               | 487      |                 |               |             |                 |     |

a. R Squared = .159 (Adjusted R Squared = .156)

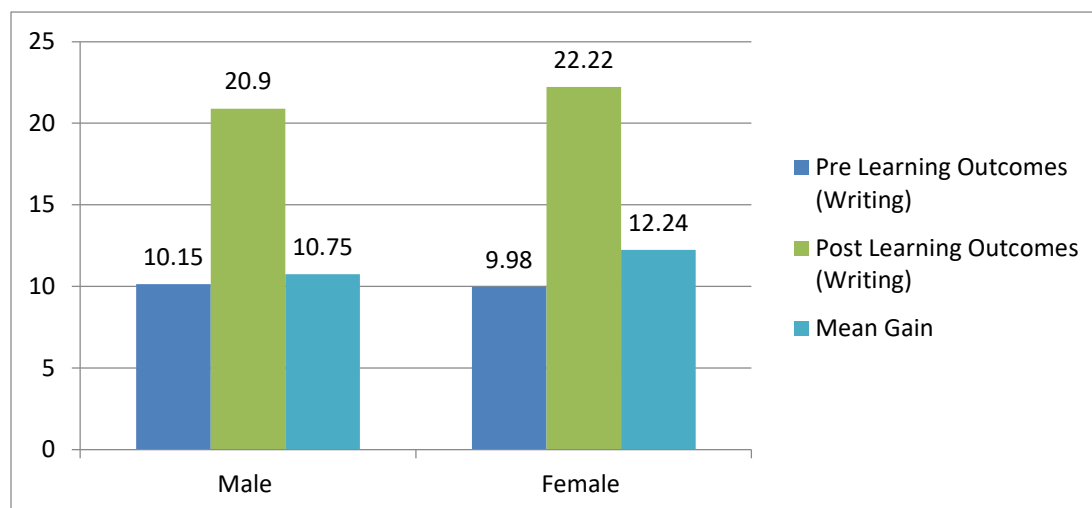
Table 6 shows that  $F(1,485) = 91.642$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy. The partial eta square of 0.159 obtains for strategies means that 15.9 percent of Internally Displaced Children learning outcomes (writing) can be attributed to the strategies employed.

**Table 7:** Mean Impact of Responsive and functional Literacy Pedagogy on Learning Outcomes (Writing) of the Internally Displaced Male and Female Children

| Gender          |                | Pre Learning Outcomes (Writing) | Post Learning Outcomes (Writing) | Mean gain |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Male            | Mean           | 10.15                           | 20.90                            | 10.75     |
|                 | N              | 119                             | 119                              |           |
|                 | Std. Deviation | 5.73                            | 5.24                             |           |
| Female          | Mean           | 9.98                            | 22.22                            | 12.24     |
|                 | N              | 96                              | 96                               |           |
|                 | Std. Deviation | 6.65                            | 6.20                             |           |
| Mean difference |                |                                 |                                  | 1.49      |

Table 7 shows the mean impact of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy on learning outcomes (writing) of the Internally Displaced male and female Children. The table shows that 119 male and 96 female Internally Displaced Children were taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The table shows mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced male Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 10.15 with a standard deviation of 5.73 in pretest and 20.90 with a standard deviation of 5.24 in posttest. The table further shows that the mean learning outcomes of Internally Displaced female Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 9.98 with a standard deviation of 6.65 in pretest and 22.22 with a standard deviation of 6.20 in posttest. The mean gain in learning outcomes of Internally Displaced male Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 10.75 while that of female is 12.24. The difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is 1.49 in favour of female

children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy. The summary of the pretest, posttest and mean gain in learning outcomes of the Internally Displaced male and female Children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Pretest, Posttest and Mean Gain in Learning Outcomes of the Internally Displaced Male and Female Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy

**Table 8:** ANCOVA of Writing Outcome of Internally Displaced Male and Female Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy

Dependent Variable: PostWriting

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | df       | Mean Square   | F            | Sig.        | Partial Squared | Eta |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-----|
| Corrected Model | 271.164 <sup>a</sup>    | 2        | 135.582       | 4.274        | .015        | .039            |     |
| Intercept       | 23368.452               | 1        | 23368.452     | 736.719      | .000        | .777            |     |
| Pre Writing     | 178.639                 | 1        | 178.639       | 5.632        | .019        | .026            |     |
| <b>Gender</b>   | <b>96.127</b>           | <b>1</b> | <b>96.127</b> | <b>3.031</b> | <b>.083</b> | <b>.014</b>     |     |
| Error           | 6724.557                | 212      | 31.720        |              |             |                 |     |
| Total           | 106272.000              | 215      |               |              |             |                 |     |
| Corrected Total | 6995.721                | 214      |               |              |             |                 |     |

a. R Squared = .039 (Adjusted R Squared = .030)

Table 8 shows that  $F(1,212) = 3.031$ ;  $p = 0.083 > 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy. The partial eta square of 0.014 obtains for gender means that 1.4 percent of Internally Displaced Children learning outcomes (writing) can be accounted for by gender in responsive and functional literacy pedagogy class.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### **Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Reading using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and Conventional Strategy**

Findings on the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and reading outcomes revealed that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy leads to a significantly higher improvement in reading outcomes compared to the conventional strategy. The mean gain of 12.34 compared to 5.34 for the conventional group highlights a 7-point difference in favor of the responsive pedagogy approach. This suggests that the teaching method is highly effective in improving the reading abilities of internally displaced children. This teaching approach is clearly more effective in helping internally displaced children improve their reading skills. The larger mean gain (12.34) compared to the conventional strategy (5.34) suggests that this pedagogy is better suited to the needs of children in challenging circumstances like displacement, possibly due to its focus on practical, real-world literacy skills and its responsiveness to individual learning needs. The partial eta square of 0.311 indicates that 31.1 percent of the differences in learning outcomes can be explained by the teaching strategy. This is a fairly substantial effect size, meaning the choice of pedagogy plays a significant role in improving the learning outcomes. Other factors (e.g., individual differences, external support, or socio-environmental factors) would account for the remaining variance, but the teaching strategy is clearly a key factor in these outcomes. Given that over 30 percent of the variability in reading outcomes can be explained by the pedagogical approach. The finding suggests that integrating responsive and functional literacy strategies into the education of internally displaced children could have a meaningful impact on their educational progress. The finding agrees with Abildina *et al* (2024) significant improvements in reading literacy among students exposed to these techniques, highlighting the potential of modern pedagogy to bridge literacy gaps and promote educational equity. The finding concurs with Quimsing and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2024) that the implementation of READTECH 1.0 leads to an improvement in the reading literacy level of the Struggling Readers. The finding is consistent with Isiaka and Efeturi (2024) that there was substantial improvements in reading comprehension and overall academic engagement when educators implement culturally sustaining pedagogical frameworks. The finding align with Humphrey and Macnaught (2015) that the methods of explicit instruction with a functional metalanguage implemented by Sarah and her colleagues at Metro did not dumb down the curriculum for struggling English language learners, but rather enabled active participation in text analysis and critique.

Beyond foundational learning gains, functional literacy interventions have also been linked to improved socio-economic outcomes among displaced populations. Yusuf *et al.* (2020) reported that adult IDPs involved in literacy and livelihood programmes in Bauchi State experienced enhanced entrepreneurial skills and greater self-reliance. Similarly, Njoku and Nnadi (2021) observed that functional literacy improves economic agency by enhancing productivity, boosting income potential, and facilitating access to health care and other essential services. In Kano State, Isa (2018) found that while adult learners benefited from economic empowerment through literacy programmes, infrastructural challenges—such as inadequate learning spaces and a shortage of materials—remained significant barriers. These findings are instructive for child-focused interventions, which aim not only to develop literacy skills but also to foster resilience, well-being, and future socio-economic integration.

The responsive and functional literacy approach recognizes language as the hidden curriculum of schooling and advocates explicit teaching of grammar as a way to promote advanced literacy development and provide students access to disciplinary genres, knowledge, habits of mind, and world views. The pedagogy promotes a different way of talking about language and text that helps students make sense of what they are reading and at the same time develop insights into how a text means what it means. Moreover, responsive and functional literacy pedagogy provides teachers with a set of tools and a metalanguage for engaging students in analyzing how lexical and grammatical choices simultaneously present content, organize text, and infuse points of view in discipline- and genre-specific ways.

Findings on the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and reading outcomes with reference to gender show that the mean gain in reading outcomes for male children (12.75) and female children (11.84) is very close, with a difference of just 0.91 in favor of males. There is no significant difference in the mean reading outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught reading using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy. Given the partial eta square of 0.002, it is clear that gender has almost no effect on the reading outcomes in this case, as the amount of variance explained by gender is only 0.2 percent. This suggests that both male and female children benefit similarly from the responsive and functional literacy pedagogy in terms of reading outcomes. The very small difference indicates that gender does not significantly influence the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach for reading. The results suggest that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is equally effective for both male and female children in improving their reading skills. This is a positive finding, as it implies that the pedagogy is not gender-biased and can help displaced children regardless of gender.

Gender stereotyping exists among internally displaced children in responsive and functional literacy pedagogy class. The presents study found that the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is gender sensitive with reference to socioeconomic outcomes as there was significant difference in the socioeconomic outcomes of male and female internally displaced children. The finding contradicts that of Achor, Igyu and Ogah (2020) who found that there were no significant differences between the activities of male and female students at home ( $0.45 > 0.05$ ) and at school ( $0.36 > 0.05$ ), as well as the ICT tools used at school ( $0.62 > 0.05$ ). This is because the need to adopt a culturally responsive approach applies at the whole-school level in terms of decision-making, relationships and partnerships with families and so on, as much as it does at classroom level and at the level of interactions with individual pupils.

### **Learning Outcome of Internally Displaced Children taught Writing using Responsive and Functional Literacy Pedagogy and Conventional Strategy**

Findings on the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and writing outcomes revealed that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy has a clear advantage in improving the writing skills of internally displaced children. The mean gain of 11.42 is significantly higher than the mean gain of 6.14 for the conventional strategy, indicating that children taught using the responsive pedagogy made greater progress in their writing abilities. The difference of 5.28 suggests that the responsive pedagogy is more effective in facilitating writing development, which may be attributed to the pedagogy's focus on practical, engaging, and adaptive learning experiences that cater to the individual needs of displaced children. The responsiveness of the teaching strategy to children's needs and the functional nature of the literacy activities seem to make a significant difference in developing writing skills. This could be

due to the approach's emphasis on connecting learning to real-life contexts and providing more individualized attention. The partial eta square of 0.159 indicates that 15.9 percent of the variability in the children's writing outcomes can be explained by the choice of teaching strategy. This is a moderate effect size, meaning that teaching strategies account for a substantial portion of the variance in writing outcomes, although other factors (e.g., individual student characteristics, external influences like family support, and resources) would also contribute to the remaining variance. Finding agrees with Merino (2025) that play-based approaches are not merely recreational but foundational to quality early learning. Integrating structured play with intentional literacy experiences ensures children are both engaged and academically prepared. This balance supports a holistic curriculum model that addresses the developmental needs of young learners while laying a strong groundwork for future academic success. Finding agrees with Naddumba and Athiemoolam (2022) that the role of children's previous language experiences and teachers' constructive classroom engagements as a basis for functional literacy development. Finding agrees with Matruglio (2019) that positive outcomes were achieved just by slowing down and taking the time to talk about text in functional ways. Finding agrees with Isa (2018) that while adult learners benefited from economic empowerment through literacy programmes, infrastructural challenges such as inadequate learning spaces and a shortage of materials remained significant barriers. Finding agrees with Wearmouth (2017) that the experience of participation in the social practices in literacy learning in schools is potentially crucial to expectations and future life experiences in society as a whole. Students need to see themselves as able to contribute to, and engage in, literacy practices in schools in order to learn.

Responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is culturally responsive and takes account the social-situatedness of literacy learning in schools by definition avoids such disjunction. The approach sees cultural differences as assets and creating caring communities of learners where individual differences in culture and heritages are valued, using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families and communities to guide curriculum development and relationships with pupils, mediating imbalances of power in classrooms and accepting cultural responsiveness as endemic to educational effectiveness in all areas of learning for pupils from all ethnic groups. This may be responsible for a clear advantage responsive and functional literacy pedagogy has in improving the writing skills of internally displaced children.

Findings on the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and writing outcomes with reference to gender show that although female children have a higher mean gain (12.24) compared to male children (10.75), the difference of 1.49 is not large. The small difference in mean gains suggests that both male and female children benefited from the responsive and functional literacy pedagogy, but the slightly higher gain for female children may be due to other individual or contextual factors rather than any inherent advantage based on gender. There is no significant difference in the mean learning outcome of internally displaced male and female children taught writing using responsive and functional literacy pedagogy and those taught using conventional strategy.

Gender accounts for only 1.4 percent of the variance in the writing outcomes. The small gender-based difference in writing outcomes indicates that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy has a generally equitable effect on both male and female children. It highlights the flexibility and inclusive nature of this teaching approach, suggesting that it works well for both genders in improving writing skills. The partial eta square of 0.014 indicates that the effect of gender on the writing outcomes is very small, meaning that gender does not play a significant role in determining writing success in this

context. Since gender explains only 1.4% of the variance in writing outcomes, it is likely that other factors are contributing more significantly to the learning progress of these children. These might include individual learning needs, prior literacy skills, socioeconomic background, or psychosocial factors. Understanding these other variables could provide more insight into why some children (in this case, females) may have slightly higher writing gains.

Gender stereotyping exists among internally displaced children in responsive and functional literacy pedagogy class. The presents study found that the use of responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is gender friendly with respect to writing outcomes as there was no significant difference in the writing outcomes of male and female internally displaced children. This finding is in agreement with that of Anaga (2021) in Ghana who found that there was significant improvement in the use of gender responsive pedagogy by the core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) from the tutors sampled but places no gender over the other in achievement. Increases were observed in both male and female tutors' demonstration of gender responsive pedagogy in their teaching. This is because the pupils' active roles are fundamental to appropriation. Concepts of ideal personal and societal futures are promoted implicitly or explicitly through the ways in which school activity is structured irrespective of gender.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The research results hold significant implications for enhancing educational practices for internally displaced children in conflict-affected regions. By identifying effective responsive teaching strategies, the study provides educators and policymakers with a clear framework to tailor their approaches to meet the unique needs of these vulnerable learners. The insights gained from focusing on trauma-informed pedagogy and culturally relevant materials will empower teachers to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments. This is particularly crucial as it addresses not only literacy skills but also the emotional and psychological challenges faced by these children, fostering resilience and improving their overall educational experiences. Furthermore, the findings are poised to inform and shape educational policies that prioritize functional literacy in crisis contexts. By demonstrating the positive correlation between improved functional literacy skills and enhanced socioeconomic outcomes, the research advocates for targeted literacy programmes as vital tools for empowerment and self-sufficiency among displaced populations. Such advancements can lead to long-term benefits, including increased access to economic opportunities and improved quality of life for these children and their families. Ultimately, the significance of this research lies in its potential to catalyze systemic changes that promote educational equity and support the rehabilitation and integration of communities affected by conflict.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is effective in improving reading and writing outcomes for internally displaced children, with a significant mean gain and a moderate effect size. This approach seems to offer substantial benefits over conventional methods, and its integration into educational strategies for displaced populations could have meaningful, long-lasting impacts. The study further concluded that responsive and functional literacy pedagogy is gender friendly with reference to the reading and writing outcomes of internally displaced children.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. Teacher training institutions should scale this approach to help educators understand how to implement responsive and functional literacy pedagogy that are more responsive to the unique challenges of internally displaced children aimed at improving the literacy of displaced populations.
2. School administrators should integrate responsive and functional literacy pedagogy into the education in improving writing outcomes of internally displaced children to have a meaningful impact on their educational progress
3. Curriculum designers should integrate responsive teaching methods that focus on the functional application of numeracy skills in real-world contexts in the curriculum for the displaced children. This could help provide a more holistic understanding of what drives numeracy achievement in displaced children.

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