

Article

Influence of Home Literacy Environment on the Early Reading Proficiency of Grade Three Learners

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Abstract: This study delves into the intricate dynamics of the home literacy environment and its impact on the oral reading proficiency of learners. The research scrutinizes multiple dimensions of literacy development, including the availability of educational resources at home, parent-child literacy interactions, parental beliefs about literacy education, and the consequent levels of oral reading proficiency among children. The findings reveal a significant correlation between a nurturing home literacy environment and improved reading skills, highlighting the importance of parental engagement, diverse literacy activities, and positive attitudes towards reading. Despite the presence of satisfactory to excellent ratings in certain areas of the home literacy environment and parental beliefs, the study identifies critical gaps in reading material variety and direct literacy engagement activities. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of learners exhibit low oral reading proficiency, underscoring the need for enhanced educational interventions. Moreover, the results reinforce the pivotal role of the home environment in shaping literacy outcomes, advocating for a collective effort from families, educators, and policymakers to cultivate literacy-rich environments that support children's holistic development and foster a lifelong passion for reading.

Keywords: Home literacy environment, oral reading proficiency, parental beliefs

Introduction

The Home Literacy Environment (HLE) encompasses the various physical and psychological components within a child's home that facilitate the development of reading and writing skills (Korucu et al., 2020). Curdt-Christiansen (2021) emphasized that this environment includes, but is not limited to, the presence of books, educational materials, opportunities for literacy activities, and the attitudes and



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behaviors of family members towards literacy. The HLE serves as the foundational stage for children's literacy development, setting the groundwork for their future educational achievements by providing them with early exposure to language and print (Nuswantara et al., 2022; Romero et al., 2021)

Snow (2021) suggested that interaction between the Home Literacy Environment and education is intricate and profoundly influential. An enriched HLE, characterized by a variety of reading materials and supportive literacy practices, often correlates with higher academic performance in school (Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa, 2021). Santamaria (2020) noted that children who grow up in literacy-rich environments are more likely to develop a strong foundation in language and cognitive skills that are crucial for academic success. Moreover, the support and modeling behaviors exhibited by family members, particularly parents, play a significant role in cultivating a positive attitude toward learning and education (Gao & Ou, 2021).

According to Dong et al. (2020) the impact of the Home Literacy Environment on the early reading proficiency of Grade Three learners is significant. Studies have shown that children who are exposed to a rich literacy environment at home tend to develop reading skills more quickly and effectively than their peers with less supportive environments (Mendive et al., 2020; Paradis et al., 2020; Moussa & Koester, 2022). This early proficiency in reading is critical as it lays the foundation for all future learning and academic achievement (Kilag et al., 2023). Children who are adept readers by Grade Three are more likely to excel in other subjects, as they can easily access and process information across the curriculum (Wyse & Bradburry, 2022). Furthermore, early reading success is linked to higher self-esteem and motivation, which are vital components of lifelong learning (Datu et al., 2021).

Moreover, the importance of the Home Literacy Environment to learners cannot be overstated (Grolig, 2020). It not only influences early reading skills but also impacts long-term academic and personal development (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). A supportive HLE fosters a love for reading, encourages curiosity, and supports the development of critical thinking skills (Anggapati, 2024). Additionally, it provides children with the confidence to explore new concepts and engage in more complex literacy activities and these benefits underscore the need for parents and caregivers to actively create and maintain an enriching Home Literacy Environment (Kim & Yim, 2023).

However, the study of the Home Literacy Environment and its impact on early reading proficiency often overlooks several critical dimensions, including the physical environment, parent literacy habits, child literacy habits, parent-child interaction, and parent beliefs. These factors collectively contribute to the richness of the HLE but are not always fully explored. For instance, the physical arrangement of the home, accessibility of reading materials, the literacy practices of

parents, the reading habits of the child, the quality of parent-child literacy interactions, and the educational beliefs held by parents can all significantly influence a child's early reading experiences and outcomes.

Identifying research gaps, particularly in the context of specific schools such as Sangi Elementary School, Minolos Elementary School, Talavera Elementary School, and Matab-ang Elementary School, is crucial for advancing our understanding of how the Home Literacy Environment affects early reading proficiency. These schools, representing diverse communities and contexts, offer unique opportunities to examine how various factors within the HLE contribute to literacy development. By exploring these gaps, researchers can provide targeted recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to support early literacy in diverse home and educational settings.

The direction of future research should therefore focus on a comprehensive examination of the Home Literacy Environment, incorporating the overlooked aspects such as physical settings, literacy practices, and interactions within the home. Moreover, comparative studies across different schools and communities could shed light on the variability of HLE impacts on reading proficiency. Such research would offer invaluable insights into developing effective strategies for enhancing the Home Literacy Environment, ultimately leading to improved literacy outcomes for children across various educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

Methodology

The research was conducted utilizing a descriptive-correlational method. In this descriptive correlational study, the early reading proficiency of Grade Three learners, who were beneficiaries of a conditional cash transfer program in Toledo City Division, was examined in relation to their home literacy environment. Utilizing a methodical approach, the research was conducted across four selected public schools within Toledo City Division, chosen for their distinctive characteristics and relevance to the study's objectives. The sample comprised 150 parents of Grade Three learners, ensuring a diverse representation from the different school environments involved. The primary instrument for data collection was an adapted questionnaire, originally developed by Buvaneswari, B., & Padakannaya, P. (2017) for Tamil-speaking kindergarten children, as reported in their article in *Language Testing in Asia*. This questionnaire was meticulously modified to suit the context of the study, aiming to gather detailed information on the home literacy environment and its impact on the early reading proficiency of the learners. The survey encompassed various dimensions of the home literacy environment, including the Physical Environment (evaluating the availability of educational resources and spaces for learning), Parent Literacy Habits (assessing

parents' engagement with literacy practices), Child Literacy Habits (exploring the children's interest and involvement in reading and writing), Parent-Child Interaction (assessing the quality and frequency of literacy-related interactions), and Parental Beliefs (understanding parents' perceptions of their role in fostering their child's literacy development). Parents rated their agreement with specific statements related to these categories on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This comprehensive methodology enabled the researchers to describe the home literacy environment and identify correlations with the early reading proficiency of learners without manipulating any variables, providing valuable insights into the influence of various home literacy aspects on children's academic achievements.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in terms of Physical Environment

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	My child has toys that teach colors, shapes sizes, etc.	2.97	Satisfactory
2	My child has three or more puzzles	2.37	Poor
3	My child has toys or games requiring refined movements	3.03	Satisfactory
4	My child has at least 10 children's books	2.58	Poor
5	My child has toyed that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.	3.14	Satisfactory
6	We have alphabet books/blocks/magnetic letters/flashcards/workbooks at home	2.82	Satisfactory
7	There is a designated place for books and toys at home	2.71	Satisfactory
8	The toys and books are accessible to the child	3.24	Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.86	Satisfactory

The results from Table 1 regarding the literacy environment at the learner's home in terms of the physical environment suggest a generally satisfactory condition, with an aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 2.86. This assessment is based on various indicators related to the availability and accessibility of educational toys and materials. Notably, items that facilitate learning through play, such as toys that teach colors, shapes, and sizes, as well as toys or games requiring refined movements and those that help teach names of animals, vehicles, and fruits, received satisfactory verbal descriptions with weighted means above 2.9. The presence of alphabet-related learning tools (books, blocks, magnetic letters, flashcards, workbooks) and a designated place for books and toys at home, alongside the accessibility of these toys and books to the child, further contribute to the overall satisfactory rating. However, the table also highlights areas needing improvement, such as the number of puzzles and children's books available, which are described as poor

with weighted means of 2.37 and 2.58, respectively. These findings underscore the importance of not only having educational materials at home but also ensuring a variety in these resources to support different aspects of a child's literacy development.

Table 2. Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in terms of Child's Literacy Habits

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet	4.14	Very Satisfactory
2	My child asks for help while writing	4.10	Very Satisfactory
3	My child asks for books to be read to him/her	3.77	Very Satisfactory
4	My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself	3.51	Very Satisfactory
5	My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out	3.66	Very Satisfactory
6	My child shows interest in identifying the product by looking at an advertisement or the wrapper of the product	3.66	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.81	Very Satisfactory

Table 2, which examines the literacy environment at the learner's home from the perspective of the child's literacy habits, reveals an overall very satisfactory situation, with an aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 3.81. This positive assessment is reflected across all indicators, suggesting that children are actively engaging with literacy activities and showing a keen interest in learning. Notably, children are proactively asking for help with learning the letters of the alphabet and while writing, both receiving weighted means above 4.1, indicating a strong desire to learn and improve their literacy skills. Furthermore, the enthusiasm for being read to, as evidenced by a WM of 3.77, and the act of pretending to read or telling stories to themselves, with a WM of 3.51, demonstrate the children's engagement and imaginative interaction with books. The interest extends beyond the home, with children showing curiosity about reading signboards and identifying products by their advertisements or wrappers while out, each with a WM of 3.66. These behaviors highlight the children's growing literacy and cognitive skills, indicating a supportive and stimulating literacy environment at home that encourages learning and exploration through everyday activities and interactions.

Table 3, focusing on the literacy environment at the learner's home in terms of parents' literacy habits, presents a mixed picture with an overall satisfactory aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 2.78. Despite the satisfactory aggregate rating, there's a noticeable variance in the

engagement levels across different activities. The most concerning indicator is the family's interaction with daily newspapers, scoring a very poor WM of 1.77, suggesting a significant decline in or absence of this traditional form of literacy engagement within the household.

Table 3. Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in terms of Parents Literacy Habits

S/ N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Our family buys and reads daily newspaper	1.77	Very Poor
2	My child sees me writing/typing	3.28	Satisfactory
3	My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure	3.06	Satisfactory
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc.	2.89	Satisfactory
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family members	2.95	Satisfactory
6	I go to bookstores/library along with my child	2.09	Poor
7	I personally enjoy reading a habit	3.09	Satisfactory
8	My child sees me reading books/magazines/newspapers	3.09	Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	2.78	Satisfactory

However, more positive habits are noted elsewhere. For instance, the child observing a parent writing or typing and seeing them read for pleasure (not related to work) received satisfactory scores of 3.28 and 3.06, respectively. These activities demonstrate to children the value and enjoyment of literacy in everyday life., engagement in word games and discussions about books on various topics with friends and family are also rated satisfactorily, with WMs of 2.89 and 2.95, indicating a healthy level of intellectual curiosity and social interaction around literacy. However, activities that directly involve the child, such as visiting bookstores or libraries together, scored poorly at 2.09, highlighting an area that could significantly enhance the child's literacy environment by fostering a greater sense of involvement and enthusiasm for reading outside the home. The parents' personal enjoyment of reading and the visibility of their reading habits to the child, both scoring 3.09, are crucial aspects that contribute to the overall satisfactory evaluation. These behaviors model positive literacy habits, suggesting that despite certain areas needing improvement, there's a foundational level of literacy engagement in the home that supports the child's development.

Table 4, which explores the literacy environment at the learner's home through the lens of parent-child interaction, shows an overall satisfactory aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 3.34, with many activities rated as very satisfactory or excellent. This suggests a rich and engaging literacy environment, where parents play a crucial role in fostering their child's literacy development through diverse and meaningful interactions. At the high end of the scale, teaching simple verbal manners like "please," "sorry," and "thank you" scored an

excellent 4.37, indicating a strong emphasis on polite communication. Similarly, encouraging the child to talk and actively listening to them scored a very satisfactory 4.17, showcasing the importance of verbal interaction in the child's literacy and social development.

Table 4. Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in terms of Parent- child Interaction

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I teach simple verbal manners (please, sorry, thank you, etc.	4.37	Excellent
2	I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen	4.17	Very Satisfactory
3	I teach nursery rhymes and songs to my child	3.64	Very Satisfactory
4	I name pictures in books and talk about the pictures	3.39	Satisfactory
5	I read stories to my child	2.95	Satisfactory
6	I point out to words in magazines/newspapers	2.63	Satisfactory
7	I help my child solve jigsaw puzzles	2.53	Poor
8	I encourage my child to act out a story	2.87	Satisfactory
9	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs, and signboards	3.60	Very Satisfactory
10	When we read, I try to sound excited so my child stays interested	3.62	Very Satisfactory
11	I ask my child a lot of questions when we read	3.55	Very Satisfactory
12	I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his/her life	3.50	Very Satisfactory
13	When we read, we talk about the pictures as much as we read the story	3.19	Satisfactory
14	When we read, I encourage my child to tell the story	3.42	Very Satisfactory
15	When we read, I ask my child to point out to different letters/numbers printed in the book	3.71	Very Satisfactory
16	I play reading-related games with my child	2.57	Poor
17	I tell stories to my child	3.42	Very Satisfactory
18	I point my child's finger to words when I read to him/her	3.52	Very Satisfactory
19	I speak to my child about what happened during the day	3.82	Very Satisfactory
20	My child and I make new rhymes by playing with words/sounds	2.67	Satisfactory
21	I change my voice to suit the characters when I read to my child	2.63	Satisfactory
22	I talk to my child about what he/she watches on TV	3.31	Satisfactory
23	I translate the stories into our home language when my child does not understand English words	3.72	Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.34	Satisfactory

Nursery rhymes, songs, and encouraging children to read labels and signs are other areas where parents seem to excel, further contributing to the child's engagement with language in various contexts.

However, the table also reveals areas where improvements could be beneficial. For instance, helping the child solve jigsaw puzzles and

playing reading-related games scored lower, with a poor rating of 2.53 and 2.57 respectively, suggesting that these interactive and potentially literacy-enhancing activities are not utilized as effectively as they could be. Overall, the results from Table 4 highlight a home environment where literacy is valued and promoted through a variety of interactions, with certain areas identified for potential enhancement to further support the child's literacy journey.

Table 5. Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in terms of Parental Beliefs

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Parents can teach alphabets to their child in addition to what is taught in school	4.41	Excellent
Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school	4.37	Excellent
Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home	4.32	Excellent
Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child	4.59	Excellent
Most parents should supplement the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home	4.50	Excellent
Parents should select books based on their colorful illustrations high-interest content and natural language	4.27	Excellent
Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing writing etc.)	4.44	Excellent
Parents should help in developing child's ability to divide a word into parts or syllables to read new words	4.49	Excellent
I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child	4.57	Excellent
I think that it is important to develop my child's ability to hear the separate sounds in spoken words such as "f" in "fish"	4.51	Excellent
Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.45	Excellent

Table 5 reflects an overwhelmingly positive perspective on the literacy environment at the learner's home, as seen through the lens of parental beliefs, with an exceptional aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 4.45. This excellent overall rating underscores a strong consensus among parents regarding their vital role in their child's literacy development, beyond what is taught in school. Key findings reveal that parents believe emphatically in their capability and responsibility to teach their children foundational literacy skills, such as alphabets, reading, and writing, with individual indicators scoring above 4.3. The belief that children perform well in reading at school primarily because of the learning support they receive at home is another indicator of the significant value parents place on their involvement in their child's literacy education.

Parents also recognize their duty not just in teaching basic skills but in complementing and enriching the literacy skills taught in schools, with

a WM of 4.50 for the belief that parents should supplement their child's school-based literacy learning. Furthermore, selecting books with colorful illustrations, high-interest content, and natural language is seen as essential, illustrating parents' understanding of the importance of engaging and appropriate reading material. The results also highlight the belief in the importance of developing a child's confidence and interest in expressing ideas through drawing or writing, as well as the technical skill of breaking down words into syllables to aid reading new words. These beliefs, scoring 4.44 and 4.49 respectively, point to a comprehensive view of literacy that includes both the enjoyment and mechanical aspects of reading and writing.

Table 6. Level of Oral Reading Proficiency of the Learners

Oral Reading Proficiency	f	%
Independent	6	4.00
Instructional	30	20.00
Frustration	62	41.33
Non-reader	52	34.67
Total	150	100.00

Table 6 presents the levels of oral reading proficiency among learners, revealing a concerning landscape with a distribution skewed towards lower proficiency levels. Out of 150 learners assessed, only a small fraction, 4% (6 learners), were categorized as independent readers, indicating they can read fluently with minimal to no assistance. This is a critical benchmark for literacy development, suggesting that very few learners have reached a level of reading proficiency that allows for confident, self-guided reading. A slightly larger group, 20% (30 learners), falls into the instructional category. These learners likely demonstrate some basic reading skills but still require guidance and support to improve their fluency and comprehension. This level is significant as it represents a transitional phase where targeted instruction can significantly impact a learner's progression toward becoming an independent reader. The majority of learners, however, are classified under frustration (41.33%, 62 learners) and non-reader (34.67%, 52 learners) categories, cumulatively accounting for over three-quarters of the assessed group. Learners in the frustration category are likely to encounter substantial difficulties with reading, which can impede their understanding and lead to negative experiences with literacy. This level of proficiency suggests that these learners are not yet equipped with the necessary skills to decode and comprehend text effectively, requiring intensive intervention to bridge their knowledge gaps. The non-reader category, encompassing over a third of the learners, highlights individuals who are unable to read at all. This significant proportion of the cohort faces the most fundamental challenges in literacy, lacking the basic phonetic awareness or recognition skills required to begin reading. Addressing the needs of

this group is critical, as it lays the groundwork for all future literacy development.

Table 7. Test of Relationship between the Home Literacy Environment and Oral Reading Proficiency of the Learners

Variables	χ^2 -value	df	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Home Literacy Environment and Oral Reading Proficiency	56.515*	6	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 7 presents the results of a statistical analysis examining the relationship between the home literacy environment and the oral reading proficiency of learners. The chi-square (χ^2) value of 56.515, significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, indicates a statistically significant relationship between these two variables. This result suggests that the nature and quality of the literacy environment at home a composite of various factors such as the availability of reading materials, parental literacy practices, and parent-child literacy interactions have a measurable impact on the learners' ability to read orally. The significance of this relationship underscores the critical role that the home environment plays in shaping children's literacy development. A supportive and rich literacy environment can foster essential skills needed for reading proficiency, such as vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency. Conversely, a lack of such an environment may contribute to lower levels of reading proficiency, as indicated by the earlier data showing a substantial proportion of learners classified under frustration and non-reader categories.

This finding aligns with educational research that emphasizes the importance of early exposure to literacy activities, including reading and being read to, discussion around books, and encouragement of literacy-related play. The statistical evidence from this analysis supports the notion that interventions aimed at enhancing the home literacy environment could be beneficial in improving oral reading proficiency among learners.

Conclusion

The study highlight the intricate relationship between the home literacy environment, parental beliefs and practices, and the oral reading proficiency of learners. The data underscore the significance of a rich and supportive home literacy environment, marked by a variety of reading materials, engaging literacy activities, and positive parental attitudes towards literacy development. While certain aspects of the home environment and parent-child interactions are rated highly and contribute to a satisfactory or even excellent literacy foundation, there

are notable areas that require attention, such as increasing the diversity of reading materials and enhancing direct literacy engagement activities. Moreover, the concerning levels of oral reading proficiency among learners, with a significant portion struggling with basic literacy skills, emphasize the need for targeted educational interventions. The statistical analysis further substantiates the critical impact of the home literacy environment on children's reading abilities, signaling a call for concerted efforts among parents, educators, and policymakers to foster environments that not only promote the acquisition of literacy skills but also instill a lifelong love for reading. This collaborative approach is essential for addressing the literacy challenges highlighted and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential as readers and learners.

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