

Article

Exploring The Influence of The Learners' Home Literacy Environment on Their Literacy Skills

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between the home literacy environment and the literacy skills of Grade 1 students at Pusok Elementary School in Lapu-Lapu City for the academic year 2023-2024. Employing a descriptive correlational design inspired by Seeram (2019) and Creswell and Guetterman (2018), the research aims to clarify the connections between various home variables, such as physical environment, parent and child literacy habits, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs, and the literacy outcomes of young learners. Data were collected through a modified questionnaire originally designed for Tamil-speaking kindergarten students, adapted to suit the context of Filipino Grade 1 learners. The results indicated that while the overall home literacy environment was rated as "Very Satisfactory" or "Excellent," there was no significant statistical relationship between the home literacy factors and the students' literacy levels. These findings suggest that while a supportive home literacy environment is important, other factors may play a more crucial role in determining literacy success, indicating the need for targeted interventions and a more comprehensive approach to literacy education.

Keywords: Home literacy environment, Grade 1 literacy skills, parental beliefs, parent-child interaction

Introduction

In the multifaceted and rapidly evolving world we inhabit, literacy transcends its traditional confines to become a fundamental pillar of both personal achievement and collective progress. This transformation reflects our transition into an era where information accessibility and the ability to interpret, analyze, and apply this information critically are paramount (Flores, 2019). Literacy, in this context, emerges not merely as a basic ability to read and write but as a critical infrastructure



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supporting the edifice of modern human capabilities (Niklas et al., 2020). It is the scaffold upon which the ability for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and effective access to the vast seas of information is constructed. These competencies are indispensable in navigating the complexities of today's globalized society (Carney, 2023).

From this perspective, literacy is seen as the bedrock of a well-functioning society, enabling individuals to engage in meaningful dialogue, participate fully in democratic processes, and access educational and economic opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach (Dong et al., 2020). The importance of literacy extends beyond individual success; it is a catalyst for societal advancement, driving innovation, social cohesion, and economic development (Friedlander, 2020). As such, literacy is increasingly recognized as a universal human right, integral to achieving personal dignity and agency (Inoue et al., 2020).

Given its foundational role, the early acquisition of literacy skills is of paramount importance. The formative years of a child's life represent a critical window of opportunity for literacy development, a time when the cognitive and neurological pathways that facilitate reading and writing are most receptive to learning (Lehrl et al., 2020). Initiatives that focus on cultivating these skills from an early age are therefore crucial (Setyowati & Wuryandari, 2019). They lay the groundwork for educational achievement by ensuring that children can effectively engage with the curriculum, thereby reducing the risk of academic failure and dropout (Loye et al., 2022). Moreover, literacy is a key driver of personal growth, enabling individuals to explore a broader range of interests, engage in continuous self-education, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them (Flores, 2019). It empowers people to improve their living conditions, make informed health choices, and participate actively in their communities (Mendive et al., 2020). From an equity perspective, ensuring that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have the opportunity to develop strong literacy skills is fundamental (Primayana & Dewi, 2022). This is not only a matter of fairness but a necessity for the creation of inclusive societies where everyone has the chance to succeed and contribute to the common good (Arya et al., 2021).

Recognizing the critical role of literacy, there is an urgent need for targeted initiatives that aim to enhance foundational literacy skills among young learners. These initiatives should be multi-faceted, addressing not only the acquisition of reading and writing abilities but also the development of critical thinking and information literacy skills (Niklas et al., 2020). They should encompass a broad spectrum of interventions, from improving access to quality early childhood education and fostering a culture of reading within families and

communities to leveraging technology and digital resources to enhance learning (Forte & Salamah, 2022).

Central to the development of these foundational skills is the environment in which a child's literacy journey begins: the home. The home literacy environment is the bedrock of a child's initial engagement with language, reading, and writing (Bigozzi et al., 2023). It is in this primary context that children develop their first attitudes towards reading, form their self-concept as learners, and acquire the basic reading skills that are essential for their future academic journey (Adams et al., 2021). This early phase of literacy development is critical, shaping a child's ability to succeed in formal education settings and fostering habits that promote lifelong learning (Skarchuk et al., 2022). Recognizing the profound impact of the home environment, this study focuses on assessing the home literacy conditions of Grade One learners at Pusok Elementary School in Lapu-Lapu City Division for the academic year 2023-2024. The investigation seeks to understand how various elements within the home, from access to books and digital platforms to participation in literacy activities and the modeling of reading behaviors by family members, contribute to or hinder the development of literacy skills (Inoue et al., 2020).

The need for such localized research is echoed by the global academic community, which has long acknowledged the significance of early literacy activities in shaping a child's reading and writing capabilities. However, despite extensive studies on the subject, there remains a gap in our understanding of how these dynamics play out across diverse settings, especially in contexts characterized by significant variation in home languages and educational backgrounds

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational design inspired by Seeram (2019) and Creswell and Guetterman (2018) to explore the relationship between the home literacy environment and the literacy abilities of Grade 1 students. The goal was to clarify the connection between home variables and children's literacy outcomes, using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of these relationships. The methodology also followed Creswell and Guetterman's emphasis on understanding domestic interactions like shared reading and literacy activities. Data were collected through a questionnaire originally designed for Tamil-speaking kindergarten students, modified to suit Grade 1 students and their parents at Pusok Elementary School in the Philippines. The instrument aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current home literacy environments, which are vital for literacy development.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Status of 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.	4.24	Excellent
2	My child has three or more puzzles	3.47	Very Satisfactory
3	My child has toys or games requiring refined movements	3.92	Very Satisfactory
4	My child has at least 10 children's books	3.34	Satisfactory
5	My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.	3.98	Very Satisfactory
6	We have alphabet books/blocks/magnetic letters/flashcards/workbooks at home	3.69	Very Satisfactory
7	There is a designated place for books and toys at home	3.60	Very Satisfactory
8	The toys and books are accessible to the child	3.95	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.77	Very Satisfactory

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the literacy environment in the homes of the learners, specifically in terms of the physical environment, is generally favorable. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.77, which corresponds to a "Very Satisfactory" verbal description, suggests that most homes provide an environment conducive to early literacy development. The highest-rated indicator, with a weighted mean of 4.24 ("Excellent"), is the availability of toys that teach colors, shapes, and sizes, indicating strong support for basic cognitive skills. Other indicators, such as the presence of toys or games requiring refined movements (3.92) and toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, and fruits (3.98), also scored highly, reflecting a well-rounded provision of educational toys. However, the availability of children's books scored lower, with a mean of 3.34 ("Satisfactory"), suggesting that while there is a general effort to provide educational resources, there may be a need to increase the number of children's books available at home to further enhance the literacy environment. Overall, the results indicate a solid foundation, though some areas could benefit from improvement to elevate the literacy environment from "Very Satisfactory" to "Excellent."

The data in Table 2 provides insights into the literacy environment at the learners' homes, specifically focusing on the literacy habits of parents. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.58, which is classified as "Very Satisfactory," suggests that parents generally engage in literacy activities that positively influence their children's literacy development.

Table 2. Status of 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	2.99	Satisfactory
2	My child sees me writing/typing	4.18	Very Satisfactory
3	My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure	3.45	Very Satisfactory
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc.	3.63	Very Satisfactory
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family members	3.56	Very Satisfactory
6	I go to bookstores/library along with my child	3.30	Satisfactory
7	I personally enjoy reading a habit	3.76	Very Satisfactory
8	My child sees me reading books/magazines/newspapers	3.81	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.58	Very Satisfactory

The highest-rated indicator is "My child sees me writing/typing," with a weighted mean of 4.18, indicating that parents frequently model writing behaviors, which could inspire similar habits in their children. Other indicators, such as reading non-work-related material for pleasure (3.45) and playing word games (3.63), also reflect strong literacy habits among parents. However, some areas, such as buying and reading daily newspapers (2.99) and visiting bookstores or libraries with children (3.30), scored lower, suggesting these activities are less common. These findings imply that while parents demonstrate good literacy habits overall, increasing engagement in activities like reading newspapers and visiting literary spaces could further enhance the home literacy environment. Overall, the "Very Satisfactory" rating reflects a supportive environment for fostering literacy skills, though there is room for improvement in certain areas to maximize the literacy experiences available to children at home.

Table 3. Status of 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	4.42	Excellent
2	My child asks for help while writing	4.18	Very Satisfactory
3	My child asks for books to be read to him/her	4.06	Very Satisfactory
4	My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself	3.12	Satisfactory
5	My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out	4.19	Very Satisfactory
6	My child shows interest in identifying the product by looking at an advertisement or the wrapper of the product	4.04	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.00	Very Satisfactory

The data in Table 3 highlights the status of the literacy environment at learners' homes, focusing on the literacy habits of the children. The aggregate weighted mean of 4.00, which is rated as "Very Satisfactory,"

indicates that children are generally engaged in activities that support their literacy development. The highest-rated indicator, "My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet," with a weighted mean of 4.42 ("Excellent"), suggests that children are actively seeking support in foundational literacy skills, which is a positive sign of their interest in learning. Other indicators, such as children asking for help while writing (4.18), showing interest in reading signboards (4.19), and requesting books to be read to them (4.06), also received high scores, reflecting a strong inclination towards literacy-related activities. However, the indicator "My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself" scored lower, with a mean of 3.12 ("Satisfactory"), indicating that while children are engaged in literacy activities, there might be less independent or imaginative engagement with books. Overall, the "Very Satisfactory" rating demonstrates that children in these homes are generally well-supported in their literacy development.

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

S/N	Indicators	W M	Verbal Description
1	I teach simple verbal manners (please, sorry, thank you, etc.	4.63	Excellent
2	I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen	4.56	Excellent
3	I teach nursery rhymes and songs to my child	4.35	Excellent
4	I name pictures in books and talk about the pictures	4.11	Very Satisfactory
5	I read stories to my child	3.91	Very Satisfactory
6	I point out to words in magazines/newspapers	3.49	Very Satisfactory
7	I help my child solve jigsaw puzzles	3.77	Very Satisfactory
8	I encourage my child to act out a story	3.87	Very Satisfactory
9	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs, and signboards	4.13	Very Satisfactory
10	When we read, I try to sound excited so my child stays interested	4.20	Very Satisfactory
11	I ask my child a lot of questions when we read	4.16	Very Satisfactory
12	I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his/her life	4.10	Very Satisfactory
13	When we read, we talk about the pictures as much as we read the story	4.11	Very Satisfactory
14	When we read, I encourage my child to tell the story	4.05	Very Satisfactory
15	When we read, I ask my child to point out to different letters/numbers printed in the book	4.14	Very Satisfactory
16	I play reading-related games with my child	3.88	Very Satisfactory
17	I tell stories to my child	4.13	Very Satisfactory
18	I point my child's finger to words when I read to him/her	4.09	Very Satisfactory
19	I speak to my child about what happened during the day	4.14	Very Satisfactory
20	My child and I make new rhymes by playing with words/sounds	3.61	Very Satisfactory
21	I change my voice to suit the characters when I read to my child	3.77	Very Satisfactory
22	I talk to my child about what he/she watches on TV	4.06	Very Satisfactory
23	I translate the stories into our home language when my child does not understand English words	4.25	Excellent
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.07	Very Satisfactory

The data in Table 4 provides an overview of the status of the literacy environment in terms of parent-child interaction within the learners' homes. The aggregate weighted mean of 4.07, which is described as "Very Satisfactory," indicates that parents are actively engaging with their children in ways that support literacy development. Several indicators received "Excellent" ratings, particularly those related to teaching simple verbal manners (4.63), encouraging children to talk and listening to them (4.56), teaching nursery rhymes and songs (4.35), and translating stories into the home language when needed (4.25). These activities suggest strong parent-child interactions that are crucial for language development and literacy skills. Other indicators, such as naming pictures in books, reading stories, and pointing out words in various media, received "Very Satisfactory" ratings, indicating consistent but slightly less intensive engagement in literacy-promoting activities. The slightly lower scores on activities like playing reading-related games (3.88) and encouraging children to act out stories (3.87) suggest potential areas where more interaction could further enhance the literacy environment. Overall, the data reflects a robust level of parent-child interaction in literacy activities, with many parents effectively supporting their children's literacy development through varied and engaging practices. The "Very Satisfactory" rating suggests that while the overall environment is positive, there is still room for increasing the frequency and diversity of these interactions to further bolster literacy outcomes.

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

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Parents can teach alphabets to their child in addition to what is taught in school	4.40	Excellent
2	Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school	4.49	Excellent
3	Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home	4.31	Excellent
4	Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child	4.46	Excellent
5	Most parents should supplement the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home	4.40	Excellent
6	Parents should select books based on their colorful illustrations high-interest content and natural language	4.27	Excellent
7	Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing writing etc.)	4.39	Excellent
8	Parents should help in developing child's ability to divide a word into parts or syllables to read new words	4.40	Excellent
9	I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child	4.49	Excellent
10	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"	4.39	Excellent
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.40	Excellent

The data in Table 5 provides a comprehensive view of parental beliefs regarding their role in the literacy environment at home. The overall aggregate weighted mean of 4.40, rated as "Excellent," underscores the strong conviction among parents that they play a crucial role in their children's literacy development. Each indicator reflects a high level of belief in the importance of parental involvement in various aspects of literacy education. Parents believe strongly that they can and should teach their children the alphabet (4.40) and assist in reading and writing words beyond what is taught at school (4.49). There is also a clear understanding that parental involvement contributes significantly to children's success in reading at school (4.31). Parents feel a strong responsibility to teach reading and writing skills (4.46) and to supplement school-taught literacy at home (4.40). Additionally, parents recognize the importance of selecting books with appealing illustrations and content (4.27) and fostering their child's confidence in expressing ideas through drawing and writing (4.39). The belief in developing a broad interest in reading (4.49) and helping children understand the phonetic aspects of language (4.39) is also highly rated. In summary, the "Excellent" rating across all indicators highlights a robust and positive belief system among parents regarding their essential role in enhancing their children's literacy skills, indicating that they are committed to actively supporting their child's learning at home. This strong belief system is likely to contribute positively to the overall literacy environment, fostering better literacy outcomes for the children.

Table 6. Level of Literacy Skills of the Learners

Literacy Level	f	%
Fluent	71	67.62
Halter	23	21.90
Syllabic	3	2.86
Word for Word	8	7.62
Total	105	100.00

The data in Table 6 presents the distribution of literacy skill levels among the learners. The majority of learners, 67.62%, are classified as "Fluent," indicating that they have achieved a high level of literacy proficiency and are likely able to read with ease and comprehension. A smaller, but still significant portion of learners, 21.90%, fall into the "Halter" category, suggesting that while they have a fair grasp of reading, they may struggle with fluency or complex texts. A minority of learners are at the "Syllabic" level (2.86%), which likely indicates that these students are still in the early stages of literacy development, focusing on reading by recognizing syllables rather than whole words. Additionally, 7.62% of learners are at the "Word for Word" level, indicating that they read slowly, processing one word at a time, which suggests challenges in reading fluency and comprehension. Overall,

while a significant majority of learners are proficient or nearing proficiency in reading, there is a notable portion that could benefit from additional support to improve their literacy skills, particularly those in the "Syllabic" and "Word for Word" categories. These findings suggest that while literacy education efforts are effective for most learners, targeted interventions may be necessary to assist those who are struggling.

Table 7. Test of Relationship between the Home Literacy Environment and Literacy Level of the Learners

Variables	χ^2 - value	df	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Physical Environment and Literacy Level	3.025	6	0.806	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Parent Literacy Habits and Literacy Level	2.396	6	0.880	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Child Literacy Habits and Literacy Level	3.581	6	0.733	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Parent-Child Interaction and Literacy Level	1.855	3	0.603	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Parental Beliefs and Literacy Level	4.590	6	0.597	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$

The data in Table 7 presents the results of the statistical test of the relationship between various aspects of the home literacy environment and the literacy levels of the learners. The results indicate that for all tested variables including Physical Environment, Parent Literacy Habits, Child Literacy Habits, Parent-Child Interaction, and Parental Beliefs there is no statistically significant relationship with the learners' literacy levels. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the p-values for all variables are well above the threshold of 0.05, leading to the decision to "Do not reject Ho" (the null hypothesis) for each variable. In summary, the findings suggest that within this study, none of the measured aspects of the home literacy environment had a significant impact on the literacy levels of the learners. This indicate that other factors, possibly outside the home literacy environment, could be playing a more substantial role in determining the literacy outcomes of the learners in this context. Further research might be needed to explore what those factors could be or to examine whether a larger sample size or different methodology might yield different results.

Conclusion

The analysis of the home literacy environment and its impact on learners' literacy levels reveals several key insights. The overall home literacy environment is strong, with parents actively supporting their children's literacy through a variety of activities and positive attitudes, as evidenced by "Very Satisfactory" and "Excellent" ratings across multiple dimensions. Most learners have achieved a "Fluent" level of literacy, indicating effective development of reading skills. However, despite the supportive home environments, statistical analysis shows no significant relationship between these home literacy factors and the literacy levels of the learners. This suggests that while the home environment is crucial, it is not the sole determinant of literacy success. Other factors, such as the quality of instruction, individual learner differences, and broader socio-economic influences, may also play significant roles in literacy outcomes. Therefore, targeted interventions and a more comprehensive approach may be necessary to support those learners who are not yet fluent, ensuring that they receive the appropriate resources and guidance to achieve literacy proficiency.

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