

Article

Effects of the Home Literacy Environment on The Reading Abilities of Grade Two Learners

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of the home literacy environment (HLE), with a focus on parent-child interaction, on the early reading proficiency of learners. The findings demonstrate a significant relationship between active parental involvement and the development of essential literacy skills, such as syllable identification and familiar word reading. This aligns with existing research, emphasizing the critical role of shared reading practices in fostering children's literacy success. While factors such as the physical environment and parental beliefs showed no significant impact, the study highlights the importance of encouraging parents to actively engage in literacy activities with their children. These findings suggest that fostering a supportive home literacy environment can significantly improve children's reading abilities and lay a strong foundation for their long-term academic success.

Keywords: Home Literacy Environment (HLE), Parent-child interaction, Early literacy development, Early childhood education

Introduction

Literacy is a fundamental building block of early childhood education and lays the foundation for academic success (Vasoya & Vansdadiya, 2023). Early literacy skills, such as reading and writing, form the backbone of learning in all subjects (Shavkatovna, 2023). Children who develop strong literacy skills early on have a distinct advantage in future academic success (Williamson et al., 2023). Without a strong literacy foundation, children are at a greater risk of academic failure later in their education (Piasta et al., 2020). Early literacy development is strongly tied to brain development, making the early years critical for literacy acquisition (Choiriyah et al., 2021). Moreover, literacy plays a vital role in developing communication and cognitive skills, which are essential for learning in any subject area (Derby et al.,

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2020). Literacy promotes social, emotional, and cognitive development in children, which further contributes to their holistic success in education (Obeywa et al., 2023). Importantly, literacy development has lifelong implications beyond the classroom, affecting employability and social outcomes (Lestari & Yulindrasari, 2020).

Children are expected to transition from learning to read to reading to learn, making this stage crucial for consolidating foundational literacy skills (Williamson et al., 2023). Research shows that children who develop strong reading abilities by grade two are more likely to succeed academically in later grades (Mudrak et al., 2020). Grade two is often a point where literacy skills are solidified, and reading proficiency is used as a measure of future academic outcomes (Koller et al., 2022). Poor reading skills at this stage can lead to challenges in other areas of learning, as children begin to engage with more complex texts (Azizah & Eliza, 2021). Research also highlights that children who struggle with reading by grade two often face continued academic challenges, leading to lower overall academic performance (Shavkatovna, 2023). Moreover, children at this stage who have developed reading proficiency tend to have greater self-confidence and motivation to engage in learning activities (Joshi & Shukla, 2019).

Despite the recognized importance of literacy, many children face challenges in acquiring reading proficiency by grade two (Apriliana et al., 2022). Poor literacy skills can stem from various factors, including insufficient access to reading materials and inadequate support from educators and families (Vasoya & Vansdadiya, 2023). Furthermore, socioeconomic factors can exacerbate these challenges, limiting a child's exposure to early literacy activities (Obeywa et al., 2023). The home literacy environment (HLE) plays a vital role in a child's literacy development (Derby et al., 2020). Various aspects of the HLE, including the availability of books, parental reading habits, and parent-child literacy interactions, significantly impact children's reading development (Fatonah, 2020). Parental involvement in reading activities has been consistently shown to foster early literacy development and enhance a child's reading proficiency (Mudrak et al., 2020). Families that prioritize literacy create environments that are conducive to developing reading skills, helping children to build vocabulary and comprehension skills (Lestari & Yulindrasari, 2020).

Despite the importance of the home literacy environment, there are significant gaps in the research, particularly concerning the physical environment, parent-child interactions, and parental beliefs (Shavkatovna, 2023). Researchers have yet to comprehensively explore how physical aspects of the home, such as access to books and literacy materials, influence reading development (Piasta et al., 2020). This study on the effects of the home literacy environment (HLE) on the reading abilities of grade two learners provides several key benefits. First, it can significantly contribute to improving educational outcomes

by offering insights into how different aspects of the HLE—such as access to reading materials, parental engagement, and parent-child reading activities—impact literacy development. Understanding these relationships can help educators and policymakers develop more targeted interventions to support children struggling with reading proficiency. Moreover, the study promotes greater parental involvement in children's literacy activities, as research shows that parental engagement plays a crucial role in enhancing reading skills and fostering overall academic success. Additionally, the study addresses important research gaps regarding the influence of physical environments, parental habits, and beliefs on children's early literacy, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how HLE factors contribute to early reading proficiency. Ultimately, this research can guide both educators and parents in fostering environments that support children's literacy development and long-term academic success.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design to explore the reading skills and home literacy environment (HLE) of Grade Two learners at Punta Princesa Elementary School, Cebu City. Descriptive correlational design, as outlined by Creswell (2014), was chosen to describe the population's characteristics and investigate relationships between variables without experimental manipulation. A total of 165 parents participated in the study, providing essential data on their child's home literacy environment through a structured questionnaire adapted from Buvaneswari and Padakannaya (2017). This questionnaire had two key sections: Learner's Profile and Home Literacy Environment. The latter assessed the availability of literacy resources and the nature of literacy practices in the home, categorizing responses into ratings such as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Poor, based on specific criteria like the presence of books, educational materials, and dedicated reading spaces. To measure the learners' reading proficiency, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit was used. This assessment focused on foundational literacy skills, including letter recognition, phonemic awareness, word reading, and oral reading fluency. The oral reading fluency component evaluated the learners' ability to read passages aloud, measuring their reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension. By correlating the data from the HLE questionnaire with the results from the EGRA Toolkit, the study provided a comprehensive analysis of how the home literacy environment influenced reading proficiency. This method allowed the researchers to gather robust and targeted data, enabling a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to early reading development.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learners' Home in terms of Physical Environment

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
	My child has toys that teach colors, shapes sizes, etc.	4.34	0.98	Excellent
2	My child has three or more puzzles	3.40	0.92	Good
3	My child has toys or games requiring refined movements	3.85	0.86	Very Good
4	My child has at least 10 children's books	2.98	0.54	Good
5	My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.	4.67	0.77	Excellent
6	We have alphabet books/blocks/magnetic letters/flashcards/workbooks at home	3.29	0.86	Good
7	There is a designated place for books and toys at home	3.17	0.78	Good
8	The toys and books are accessible to the child	4.11	0.84	Very Good
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.73		
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.82	Very Good

The data presented in Table 1 provides insights into the status of the physical home literacy environment of the learners, based on specific indicators. The overall assessment yields an aggregate weighted mean of 3.73, with a standard deviation of 0.82, which corresponds to a "Very Good" verbal description. This suggests that, on average, the learners' homes are moderately well-equipped with physical literacy resources. Notably, the indicator "My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc." received the highest weighted mean of 4.67, indicating an "Excellent" rating, while "My child has toys that teach colors, shapes, sizes, etc." also ranked highly with a mean of 4.34, classified as "Excellent." These results suggest that many parents prioritize educational toys that promote cognitive development. Conversely, the availability of children's books and alphabet-related educational materials scored lower, with weighted means of 2.98 and 3.29, respectively, both classified as "Good." Additionally, the indicator "There is a designated place for books and toys at home" also received a "Good" rating with a mean of 3.17. These findings highlight areas for improvement, particularly in the provision of books and organized, accessible reading spaces, which are essential for fostering a stronger literacy environment at home. Overall, while the physical environment is supportive of literacy, there is potential to enhance access to books and dedicated learning spaces.

The data in Table 2 illustrates the status of the home literacy environment in terms of parent literacy habits, with an overall

aggregate weighted mean of 2.43 and a standard deviation of 0.73, corresponding to a "Fair" verbal description.

Table 2. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learners' Home in terms of Parent Literacy Habits

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Our family buys and reads daily newspaper	3.14	0.92	Good
2	My child sees me writing/typing	2.71	1.02	Good
3	My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure	3.02	0.76	Good
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc.	2.14	0.76	Fair
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family members	2.12	0.75	Fair
6	I go to bookstores/library along with my child	2.12	0.59	Fair
7	I personally enjoy reading a habit	2.10	0.48	Fair
8	My child sees me reading books/magazines/newspapers	2.08	0.57	Fair
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.43		
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.73	Fair

This indicates that parental literacy habits in these households are generally modest, with room for improvement. The highest-rated indicator, "Our family buys and reads daily newspapers," achieved a weighted mean of 3.14, categorized as "Good," suggesting that some families maintain a habit of engaging with printed media. Similarly, "My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure" also received a "Good" rating, with a mean of 3.02, reflecting some exposure to recreational reading. However, several other literacy habits scored lower, receiving a "Fair" rating. Notably, "My child sees me playing word games or crossword puzzles" and "I enjoy talking about books with friends and family" both scored low, with weighted means of 2.14 and 2.12, respectively. Additionally, indicators such as "I personally enjoy reading as a habit" and "I go to bookstores or libraries with my child" also reflected low engagement, with weighted means around 2.10. These results suggest that while some families engage in basic literacy activities, more effort could be made to foster a stronger culture of reading and literary engagement within the home. This may affect how children perceive the importance of reading, influencing their own literacy development.

The data in Table 3 presents the status of the home literacy environment in terms of child literacy habits, with an overall aggregate weighted mean of 2.51 and a standard deviation of 0.91, falling under the "Fair"

category. This suggests that, on average, the literacy habits of the children in these households are not strongly developed, and there is room for enhancement.

Table 3. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learners' Home in terms of Child Literacy Habits

S/ N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet	2.58	1.18	Fair
2	My child asks for help while writing	2.90	1.16	Good
3	My child asks for books to be read to him/her	2.33	0.86	Fair
4	My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself	2.80	0.73	Good
5	My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out	2.20	0.77	Fair
6	My child shows interest in identifying the product by looking at an advertisement or the wrapper of the product	2.24	0.78	Fair
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	2.51		
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.91	Fair

Among the indicators, "My child asks for help while writing" received the highest weighted mean of 2.90, categorized as "Good," indicating that some children actively seek support in developing writing skills. Similarly, "My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself" also scored well with a mean of 2.80, reflecting positive engagement with reading activities. However, other literacy habits scored lower, with indicators such as "My child asks for books to be read to him/her" and "My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out" receiving "Fair" ratings, with means of 2.33 and 2.20, respectively. These findings indicate that although some children demonstrate a moderate level of interest in literacy activities, many still lack strong engagement, particularly in activities that promote active reading or interaction with print materials in their environment. Overall, these results suggest a need for greater encouragement of reading habits and literacy-related activities within the home to foster a more robust literacy environment for the children.

The table presents the status of the literacy environment at the learners' home, particularly focusing on parent-child interaction. The aggregate weighted mean is 3.28 with a standard deviation of 0.91, which falls under the "Good" verbal description. The highest-rated indicators are "I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen" (WM=4.88, SD=0.33) and "I teach simple verbal manners (please, sorry, thank you, etc.)" (WM=4.67, SD=0.47), both described as "Excellent." This suggests that parents place high importance on verbal communication and basic manners. Other indicators with a "Very Good" rating include teaching nursery rhymes, naming pictures in books, reading stories, and making

the story relatable, indicating that many parents engage in supportive early literacy activities.

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

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I teach simple verbal manners (please, sorry, thank you, etc.	4.67	0.47	Excellent
2	I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen	4.88	0.33	Excellent
3	I teach nursery rhymes and songs to my child	4.01	0.66	Very Good
4	I name pictures in books and talk about the pictures	3.85	0.60	Very Good
5	I read stories to my child	4.05	0.40	Very Good
6	I point out to words in magazines/newspapers	3.08	0.64	Good
7	I help my child solve jigsaw puzzles	3.02	0.66	Good
8	I encourage my child to act out a story	2.92	0.52	Good
9	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs, and signboards	3.01	0.77	Good
10	When we read, I try to sound excited so my child stays interested	3.02	0.56	Good
11	I ask my child a lot of questions when we read	3.75	1.37	Very Good
12	I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his/her life	3.71	1.23	Very Good
13	When we read, we talk about the pictures as much as we read the story	3.89	1.00	Very Good
14	When we read, I encourage my child to tell the story	3.41	1.14	Very Good
15	When we read, I ask my child to point out to different letters/numbers printed in the book	2.87	1.28	Good
16	I play reading-related games with my child	3.12	1.25	Good
17	I tell stories to my child	2.49	1.16	Fair
18	I point my child's finger to words when I read to him/her	3.70	1.09	Good
19	I speak to my child about what happened during the day	2.36	1.02	Fair
20	My child and I make new rhymes by playing with words/sounds	2.24	1.14	Fair
21	I change my voice to suit the characters when I read to my child	1.85	0.93	Fair
22	I talk to my child about what he/she watches on TV	2.88	1.51	Good
23	I translate the stories into our home language when my child does not understand English words	2.59	1.10	Fair
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.28		
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.91	Good

However, activities like solving jigsaw puzzles, encouraging children to read product labels or street signs, and playing reading-related games are rated "Good," with weighted means around 3.0, indicating

moderate engagement. Notably, several indicators related to storytelling, translating stories, and engaging with what the child watches on TV received "Fair" ratings, reflecting less frequent practice of these activities. The overall data implies that while most parents are actively fostering literacy through communication and reading, there are areas where more engagement could further enhance the literacy environment at home.

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

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Parents can teach alphabets to their child in addition to what is taught in school	2.06	0.53	Fair
2	Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school	2.21	0.80	Fair
3	Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home	4.92	0.28	Excellent
4	Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child	2.14	0.73	Fair
5	Most parents should supplement the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home	2.33	0.86	Fair
6	Parents should select books based on their colorful illustrations high-interest content and natural language	3.01	0.61	Good
7	Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing writing etc.)	3.16	0.61	Good
8	Parents should help in developing child's ability to divide a word into parts or syllables to read new words	2.25	0.88	Fair
9	I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child	3.03	0.74	Good
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"	2.98	1.25	Good
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	2.81		
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.73	Good

The table illustrates the status of the literacy environment at the learners' home in terms of parental beliefs, with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 0.73, described as "Good." The indicator with the highest weighted mean is "Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home" (WM=4.92, SD=0.28), which is rated as "Excellent." This indicates that parents strongly believe in the significant impact of their role in reinforcing reading skills at home. Several other indicators received a "Fair" rating, such as parents teaching alphabets (WM=2.06, SD=0.53) and taking responsibility for teaching reading and writing skills (WM=2.14, SD=0.73). This suggests that many parents feel unsure or perhaps less confident about their direct role in supplementing

literacy instruction at home. On the other hand, beliefs related to selecting books with colorful illustrations and fostering a child's confidence in putting ideas on paper received "Good" ratings (WM=3.01 and WM=3.16, respectively). Parents also value developing a broad interest in reading (WM=3.03, SD=0.74). These findings suggest that while parents recognize the importance of fostering literacy, there is some uncertainty regarding how to actively engage in developing specific literacy skills, such as reading and writing. Overall, the data reflects a positive outlook on literacy development, although further support and guidance for parents could enhance their involvement in teaching literacy at home.

Table 6. Early Reading Proficiency of the Learners

Early Reading Proficiency	f	%
Oral Reading Fluency	8	4.85
Familiar Word Reading	22	13.33
Segmentation	20	12.12
Syllable Identification	75	45.45
Initial Sound Identification	24	14.55
Letter Sound Identification	16	9.70
Total	165	100.00

The table presents the early reading proficiency of the learners, with a total of 165 respondents assessed across various reading skills. The largest proportion of learners demonstrated proficiency in "Syllable Identification," with 45.45% of the learners excelling in this area, indicating that recognizing and understanding syllables is a strength for many of them. This is followed by "Initial Sound Identification," where 14.55% of learners showed proficiency, and "Familiar Word Reading" at 13.33%, suggesting that a good number of learners are capable of recognizing familiar words and initial sounds. "Segmentation," the ability to break down words into smaller units, had 12.12% of learners proficient in this skill, while 9.70% of learners demonstrated proficiency in "Letter Sound Identification," showing a moderate ability to connect letters with their corresponding sounds. "Oral Reading Fluency," which measures the ability to read aloud smoothly and accurately, had the smallest percentage of proficient learners at 4.85%, suggesting that this is the most challenging area for many of the learners. Overall, the data indicates that learners have varying levels of early reading proficiency, with the strongest skills observed in syllable identification and weaker skills in oral reading fluency.

The table presents the test of the relationship between the home literacy environment and the early reading proficiency of the learners using a chi-square test. The results reveal that most of the variables under study show no significant relationship with early reading proficiency, as the p-values exceed the 0.05 significance threshold. For instance, the

relationship between "Physical Environment" ($\chi^2 = 1.809$, $p = 0.875$), "Parent Literacy Habits" ($\chi^2 = 9.071$, $p = 0.106$), "Child Literacy Habits" ($\chi^2 = 10.879$, $p = 0.367$), and "Parental Beliefs" ($\chi^2 = 3.787$, $p = 0.580$) with early reading proficiency are not statistically significant, leading to the decision of not rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) in these cases.

Table 7. Test of Relationship between the home literacy environment and the early reading proficiency of the learners

Variables	χ^2 -value	df	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Physical Environment and Early Reading Proficiency	1.809	5	0.875	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
Parent Literacy Habits and Early Reading Proficiency	9.071	5	0.106	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
Child Literacy Habits and Early Reading Proficiency	10.879	10	0.367	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
Parent-child Interaction and Early Reading Proficiency	12.889*	5	0.024	Reject H_0	Significant
Parental Beliefs and Early Reading Proficiency	3.787	5	0.580	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$

However, a significant relationship was found between "Parent-child Interaction" and early reading proficiency ($\chi^2 = 12.889$, $p = 0.024$), where the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the level of interaction between parents and their children and the early reading proficiency of the learners. This result highlights the importance of active parental involvement in supporting their child's literacy development. Overall, the findings suggest that while most aspects of the home literacy environment do not show a direct significant impact, parent-child interaction plays a crucial role in enhancing early reading skills.

Discussion

The results of your study highlight the significant role of parent-child interaction in early reading proficiency. The data revealed a statistically significant relationship between parent-child interaction and learners' early reading skills, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in activities such as reading together, asking questions, and engaging children in discussions about the stories they read. Research supports this, showing that shared reading between parents and children not only improves language development but also fosters early literacy skills, setting the foundation for future academic success (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001). Additionally, activities like dialogic

reading, where parents encourage interaction and question-asking during reading, have been shown to enhance children's vocabulary and reading comprehension (Bus et al., 1995).

While your study found no significant relationship between other aspects of the home literacy environment, such as physical environment or parental beliefs, it's important to note that parent-child interaction remains a powerful predictor of literacy outcomes. Studies indicate that early and consistent engagement in reading-related activities by parents has a long-lasting positive impact on children's reading abilities and overall academic performance (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Therefore, fostering a strong parent-child literacy relationship at home could be a crucial intervention to improve early reading skills among young learners.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the home literacy environment, particularly parent-child interaction, plays a critical role in enhancing early reading proficiency among learners. The findings reveal a significant relationship between the level of parent-child engagement and the development of essential literacy skills, such as syllable identification and familiar word reading. This aligns with previous research, which highlights that parental involvement in literacy practices, such as shared reading, is a key factor in promoting children's reading success. Although other factors like the physical literacy environment and parental beliefs showed no significant impact, the results underscore the importance of fostering interactive literacy activities at home to support children's reading development. Therefore, encouraging parents to actively participate in their children's literacy practices can lead to improved academic outcomes and set a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

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