
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Home Literacy Environment in Strengthening the Literacy Competencies of Grade Two Learners

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| ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of the home literacy environment on the literacy skills of learners. Specifically, it assessed the status of the home literacy environment in terms of physical environment, parent literacy habits, child literacy habits, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs, and determined learners' literacy skills in word recognition, sentence reading, reading fluency, and comprehension. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design and was conducted at Liburon Elementary School, Department of Education-Carcar City Division, during School Year 2024-2025. Using total sampling technique, the respondents consisted of ninety-six (96) Grade Two learners and their corresponding parents. Data were gathered through a Survey Questionnaire for Parents adapted from Buvanewari and Padakannaya and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) for learners. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation were utilized for data analysis. The findings indicated that the home literacy environment was generally supportive of literacy development, and learners demonstrated strong literacy skills appropriate for their grade level. However, the test of relationship showed that variations in the home literacy environment were not significantly associated with learners' literacy skills. It was concluded that learners' reading competencies were likely reinforced by effective school-based instruction alongside home support. Based on the results, the study strongly recommends the implementation of the proposed Literacy Skills Enhancement Plan to strengthen home-school collaboration and sustain early literacy development.

| KEYWORDS

Home Literacy Environment, Early Literacy, Reading Skills, Parental Involvement, Word Recognition, Reading Fluency, Comprehension,

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 02 January 2026

PUBLISHED: 16 January 2026

DOI: 10.32996/Ijahs.2026.6.1.2

Introduction

The home literacy environment (HLE) is widely recognized as a foundational factor influencing children's early literacy development, particularly during the formative years of early childhood and primary education. The HLE encompasses multiple dimensions, including access to reading materials, parental engagement in literacy-related activities, and family attitudes toward reading (Niklas & Schneider, 2020). Research consistently shows that children raised in homes rich in literacy experiences typically demonstrate stronger language and reading abilities compared to peers from less stimulating environments (Silinskas et al., 2020; Lehl et al., 2021). Parents play a central role in shaping this environment, with their own literacy behaviors and interactions significantly contributing to children's emergent literacy skills.

The HLE is multidimensional, including physical resources such as the availability of books and dedicated reading spaces; behavioral aspects, such as how frequently parents and children engage in shared reading; and psychological dimensions, including parental

beliefs and expectations regarding literacy (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2021). For example, homes with a designated reading area and developmentally appropriate books have been found to enhance children's motivation and engagement with reading. Furthermore, when parents model positive reading behaviors and express strong value for literacy, children are more likely to develop vocabulary, comprehension, and a lifelong interest in reading (Tsimpli et al., 2023).

Literacy development typically follows a hierarchical progression, beginning with word recognition, advancing to sentence-level reading, and eventually developing into reading fluency and comprehension (Fuchs et al., 2021). Word recognition the ability to identify written words quickly and accurately is foundational to fluency. Fluent readers not only decode text efficiently but also read with appropriate expression and pace, enabling deeper comprehension. Children with enriched home literacy experiences often master these skills more rapidly and with greater proficiency (Zhou et al., 2022). Conversely, inequities in HLE such as limited access to print materials or minimal literacy interactions can result in skill gaps that persist across schooling.

In the Philippine context, particularly in rural and public-school settings such as Can-asujan Elementary School, disparities in home literacy environments are pronounced. Although many Filipino parents place high value on education, systemic barriers such as low household income, limited book access, and parents' own literacy challenges can limit their ability to support children's literacy development effectively (Morales & Espina, 2022). Cultural and economic factors often shape literacy behaviors. In some households, for example, time for shared reading may be constrained by work demands or lack of familiarity with reading strategies. These realities highlight the importance of understanding HLE within specific local contexts.

Despite growing interest in early literacy development, several gaps remain in the literature. Many studies prioritize urban or middle-income populations, leaving rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities underrepresented (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Additionally, few investigations in the Philippines utilize comprehensive frameworks that consider the interrelated aspects of the HLE such as physical access, parental behaviors, interaction patterns, and attitudes. Research tends to emphasize overall reading achievement, often overlooking specific domains such as word recognition, sentence reading, fluency, and comprehension. Moreover, parental perspectives on home literacy practices are seldom foregrounded, despite being essential to understanding children's day-to-day learning environments (Perez & Domingo, 2024). Finally, there is a lack of studies directly linking parental perceptions of HLE to objectively measured literacy outcomes, particularly among learners in Grades 1 to 3, when foundational reading skills are being established.

This study aims to assess the influence of the home literacy environment on the literacy development of learners in Liburon Elementary School, a public school located in a rural setting in the Philippines. Specifically, it explores parental perceptions across five key dimensions of HLE and examines learners' performance in word recognition, sentence reading, fluency, and reading comprehension. By focusing on a specific local context, the study addresses the need for contextualized, community-based research that can inform educational policy and classroom practices. Furthermore, the findings are expected to support initiatives that strengthen home-school partnerships and guide interventions for learners at risk of reading difficulties. Ultimately, this research aligns with the Philippine Department of Education's goals to improve early reading proficiency by integrating family engagement strategies into broader literacy programs.

Literature Review

The home literacy environment (HLE) is a key determinant of children's early reading development, encompassing access to print materials, parent-child literacy interactions, parental modeling of reading, and beliefs about the value of literacy (Niklas & Schneider, 2020). Homes that provide age-appropriate books and engage children in shared reading and storytelling activities support the development of vocabulary and comprehension skills (Lehrl et al., 2021). Socioeconomic conditions further shape these experiences, as families in low-income or rural communities often face constraints such as limited resources and lower parental literacy, which can reduce opportunities for rich literacy exposure (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Nevertheless, even simple and low-cost practices, including singing rhymes and regular story discussions, have been shown to foster emergent literacy when consistently implemented (Perez & Domingo, 2024).

Beyond general literacy outcomes, research indicates that specific dimensions of the HLE are associated with distinct reading skills, such as word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Early and frequent exposure to shared reading supports the development of automatic word recognition and syntactic processing, which are essential for fluent reading (Fuchs et al., 2021). Parental engagement in literacy activities also contributes to children's decoding efficiency and inferential comprehension, reinforcing both code-related and meaning-related skills (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2021). The use of digital literacy tools at home, such as interactive storybooks and phonics applications, has likewise been found to enhance early reading skills when guided by adults (Chai & Ng, 2020). In Southeast Asian contexts, particularly in rural Philippine settings, limited parental knowledge of effective comprehension-support strategies highlights the need for family-oriented literacy programs that strengthen interactive reading practices at home (Morales & Espina, 2022).

Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design to investigate the relationship between the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and the literacy skills of Grade Two learners at Liburon Elementary School. The descriptive aspect focused on illustrating the current status of the HLE based on the perceptions of parent-respondents, examining five key dimensions: physical environment, parental literacy habits, children’s literacy behaviors, parent–child literacy interactions, and parental beliefs about literacy. Meanwhile, the correlational component aimed to determine the extent to which these dimensions are associated with learners’ performance in specific reading skills, namely word recognition, sentence reading, fluency, and comprehension. Two primary instruments were employed: a Parent Survey Questionnaire, adapted and localized from Buvanewari and Padakannaya (2017), and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) developed by Tancioco and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2021). The parent survey was translated into Cebuano to ensure linguistic and cultural relevance. The CRLA evaluated learners’ literacy proficiency across two major domains: decoding skills (word recognition and sentence reading) and comprehension skills (fluency and understanding). The research process was conducted in three main phases: (1) preliminary activities, including obtaining permissions and informed consent; (2) data collection, involving the distribution of surveys and administration of the CRLA; and (3) data processing and analysis, which involved statistical treatment. Ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were strictly upheld. For analysis, frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations were used to describe the data, while Pearson’s Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was applied to determine the relationship between HLE components and learners’ reading performance.

Results

Table 1. Status of literacy environment at their home in terms of Physical Environment

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	My child has toys that teach colors, shapes, sizes, etc.	4.21	0.89	Excellent
2	My child has three or more puzzles	3.59	1.28	Very Satisfactory
3	My child has toys or games requiring refined movements	3.77	1.17	Very Satisfactory
4	My child has at least 10 children’s books	3.49	1.28	Very Satisfactory
5	My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.	4.25	0.85	Excellent
6	We have alphabet books/blocks/magnetic letters/flashcards/workbooks at home	4.06	1.08	Very Satisfactory
7	There is a designated place for books and toys at home	4.01	1.02	Very Satisfactory
8	The toys and books are accessible to the child	4.13	0.92	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.94		Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		1.06	

Table 1 presents the status of the home literacy environment in terms of the physical environment. The aggregate weighted mean is 3.94, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 1.06. The highest-rated item is “My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.” with a weighted mean of 4.25. This is followed by “My child has toys that teach colors, shapes, sizes, etc.” with 4.21. Other indicators such as the presence of alphabet materials, designated storage, and accessible toys received means of 4.06, 4.01, and 4.13, respectively. The lowest-rated item is “My child has at least 10 children’s books,” which scored 3.49, suggesting the need to improve book availability in some households.

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Our family buys and reads daily newspaper	3.35	1.13	Satisfactory
2	My child sees me writing/typing	4.08	0.95	Very Satisfactory
3	My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure	3.89	1.03	Very Satisfactory
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc.	3.97	0.95	Very Satisfactory
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family	3.92	1.04	Very Satisfactory
6	I go to bookstores/library along with my child	3.86	1.02	Very Satisfactory
7	I personally enjoy reading as a habit	4.00	0.88	Very Satisfactory
8	My child sees me reading books/magazines/newspapers	3.86	0.97	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.78		Very Satisfactory

S/N Indicators	WM SD	Verbal Description
Aggregate Standard Deviation	1.02	

Table 2. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in Terms of Parents' Literacy Habits

Table 2 shows the status of the home literacy environment in terms of parents' literacy habits. The aggregate weighted mean is 3.78, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 1.02. The highest-rated item is "My child sees me writing/typing," which received a mean of 4.08. This is followed by "I personally enjoy reading as a habit" with 4.00, and "My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc." with 3.97. Other items such as reading for pleasure, visiting bookstores, and discussing books also received means ranging from 3.86 to 3.92, all described as Very Satisfactory. The lowest-rated indicator is "Our family buys and reads daily newspaper," with a mean of 3.35, falling under the Satisfactory category.

Table 3. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in Terms of Child's Literacy Habits

S/N Indicators	WM SD	Verbal Description
1 My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet	4.11 1.10	Very Satisfactory
2 My child asks for help while writing	4.04 1.17	Very Satisfactory
3 My child asks for books to be read to him/her	3.97 1.10	Very Satisfactory
4 My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself	3.23 1.26	Satisfactory
5 My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out	3.89 1.18	Very Satisfactory
6 My child shows interest in identifying the product by looking at an advertisement or the product label	3.97 1.05	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.87	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation	1.14	

Table 3 outlines the status of the home literacy environment based on the child's literacy habits. The aggregate weighted mean is 3.87, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 1.14. The highest-rated indicator is "My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet," which received a mean of 4.11, followed by "My child asks for help while writing" with 4.04. Other Very Satisfactory ratings include "My child asks for books to be read" and "Shows interest in advertisements," both with means of 3.97, and "Shows interest in signboards" with 3.89. The lowest-rated item is "My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself," which received a mean of 3.23, rated as Satisfactory.

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

S/N	Indicators	WM SD	Verbal Description
1	I teach my child how to name letters (name, story, A, B, C, etc.)	4.34 1.00	Excellent
2	I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen	4.24 1.09	Excellent
3	I teach nursery rhymes and songs to my child	4.09 1.09	Very Satisfactory
4	I name pictures in books and talk about the pictures	4.11 0.95	Very Satisfactory
5	I read stories to my child	3.83 1.16	Very Satisfactory
6	I point out words in magazines/newspapers	3.81 1.08	Very Satisfactory
7	I help my child solve jigsaw puzzles	3.71 0.96	Very Satisfactory
8	I encourage my child to act out a story	3.89 1.12	Very Satisfactory
9	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs, and signboards	4.01 0.96	Very Satisfactory
10	When I read, I try to sound excited so my child gets interested	4.15 0.94	Very Satisfactory
11	I ask my child a lot of questions when we read	3.94 0.97	Very Satisfactory
12	I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his/her life	4.18 0.88	Very Satisfactory
13	When we read, I talk about the pictures as much as the words	4.03 1.01	Very Satisfactory
14	When we read, I encourage my child to tell the story	4.09 0.87	Very Satisfactory
15	When we read, I ask my child to point out different letters/numbers printed in the book	4.03 0.98	Very Satisfactory

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
16	I play reading-related games with my child	3.89	1.01	Very Satisfactory
17	I tell stories to my child	4.01	1.03	Very Satisfactory
18	I point my child's finger to words when I read to him/her	4.02	1.03	Very Satisfactory
19	I speak to my child about what happened during the day	3.98	0.87	Very Satisfactory
20	My child and I make up new rhymes by playing with words/sounds	3.91	0.87	Very Satisfactory
21	I ask my child to guess what the characters will do next	3.92	0.85	Very Satisfactory
22	I talk to my child about what he/she watches on TV	4.03	0.88	Very Satisfactory
23	I translate stories into our home language when my child does not understand English words	4.10	0.93	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.01		Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.98	

Table 4 describes the literacy environment at home in terms of parent-child interaction. The aggregate weighted mean is 4.01, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 0.98. The highest-rated indicators were "I teach my child how to name letters" and "I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen," with means of 4.34 and 4.24, respectively both rated Excellent. Most indicators, such as "I read stories to my child," "We talk about pictures while reading," and "I encourage my child to read product labels," received means ranging from 3.71 to 4.18, all classified as Very Satisfactory. These results reflect active and consistent literacy engagement between parents and children, supporting the development of language and reading comprehension skills at home.

Table 5. Status of Literacy Environment at the Learner's 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	4.55	0.68	Excellent
2	Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school	4.53	0.75	Excellent
3	Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home	4.54	0.71	Excellent
4	Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child	4.55	0.77	Excellent
5	Most parents should supplement the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home	4.31	1.07	Excellent
6	Parents should select books based on their colorful illustrations, high-interest content, and natural language	4.36	0.91	Excellent
7	Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing, writing, etc.)	4.48	0.97	Excellent
8	Parents should help in developing the child's ability to divide a word into parts or syllables to read new words	4.49	0.95	Excellent
9	I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child	4.60	0.67	Excellent
10	I think that it is important to develop my child's ability to hear separate sounds in spoken words such as "f" in "fish"	4.58	0.72	Excellent
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.50		Excellent
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.82	

Table 5 presents the status of the home literacy environment in terms of parental beliefs. The aggregate weighted mean is 4.50, described as Excellent, with a standard deviation of 0.82, indicating strong agreement across responses. The highest-rated item is "I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child," with a mean of 4.60, followed by "It is important to develop my child's ability to hear separate sounds," which received 4.58. Other high-scoring beliefs include parental responsibility in teaching reading (4.55) and supporting writing through drawing or storytelling (4.48). All indicators received Excellent ratings, reflecting strong parental support for early literacy development and a high level of awareness regarding their role in fostering reading skills at home.

Table 6. Level of Literacy Skills of the Learners in Terms of Word Recognition and Sentence Reading

Literacy Level	f	%
Advanced	91	94.79
Intermediate	5	5.21
Beginner	0	0.00
Total	96	100.00

Table 6 presents the learners' literacy skill levels in terms of word recognition and sentence reading. The data reveals that the majority of learners are performing at a high level, with 91 out of 96 learners, or 94.79%, classified as Advanced. A small percentage, 5.21% or 5 learners, were identified at the Intermediate level. Notably, none of the learners were categorized as Beginner, indicating that all learners have at least a functional grasp of basic reading skills. These results suggest a strong foundation in decoding and sentence-level reading among Grade Two learners, which may be attributed to both effective classroom instruction and supportive home literacy environments that reinforce early reading development.

Table 7. Level of Literacy Skills of the Learners in Terms of Reading Fluency and Comprehension

Literacy Level	f	%
Advanced	96	100.00
Intermediate	0	0.00
Beginner	0	0.00
Total	96	100.00

Table 7 shows the learners' literacy skills in terms of reading fluency and comprehension. The data indicates that all 96 learners, accounting for 100% of the sample, were classified as Advanced. There were no learners identified at either the Intermediate or Beginner levels. This exceptional outcome suggests that the students have developed strong reading fluency demonstrating accuracy, appropriate speed, and expression as well as a high level of reading comprehension. These results may reflect the cumulative impact of effective literacy instruction, enriched home literacy environments, and active parental involvement. The absence of learners at lower proficiency levels highlights the overall success of early literacy support efforts in this context and the potential for continued academic progress in reading-related areas.

Table 8. Test of Relationship Between the Home Literacy Environment and the Literacy Skills of the Learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Home Literacy Environment and Literacy Skills	0.180	Negligible Positive	0.079	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 8 presents the results of the correlation analysis between the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and the literacy skills of the learners. The computed r-value is 0.180, indicating a negligible positive correlation. The p-value is 0.079, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. As a result, the decision is to not reject the null hypothesis (Ho), leading to the conclusion that the relationship is not statistically significant. Although a slight positive trend exists, it is not strong enough to confirm a meaningful connection between the HLE and literacy outcomes in this sample. This suggests that other factors, such as school instruction or individual learner differences, may play a more dominant role in literacy development.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the overall home literacy environment (HLE) was perceived positively by parents across all five dimensions: physical environment, parent literacy habits, child literacy habits, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs. Parents reported frequent engagement in literacy-supportive practices such as reading with their children, providing educational materials, encouraging conversations, and fostering interest in books and written language. These findings suggest that families are actively

creating environments that support early literacy development, both through available resources and meaningful interaction. Among all dimensions, parental beliefs stood out as particularly strong, reflecting a shared understanding that parents play an important role in supporting their child's reading and writing skills beyond what is taught in school. However, the test of the relationship between the HLE and learners' literacy skills showed a negligible positive correlation that was not statistically significant. This means that while home literacy practices were generally favorable, they did not show a strong or direct link to learners' actual literacy performance in this study. Despite this, learners demonstrated high proficiency in both decoding and comprehension skills, with most performing at advanced levels. This suggests that factors outside the home, such as classroom instruction, teaching strategies, or access to school-based reading programs, may have a more substantial influence on literacy achievement. It also highlights the complexity of literacy development, where home and school environments may interact in different ways depending on context.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the home literacy environment of Grade Two learners was generally supportive of literacy development, as evidenced by favorable physical learning conditions, positive parent literacy habits, active child literacy behaviors, meaningful parent-child interactions, and very strong parental beliefs regarding their role in teaching reading and writing skills. At the same time, the learners demonstrated well-developed literacy skills, particularly in word recognition, sentence reading, reading fluency, and comprehension, indicating that they had successfully established strong foundational reading competencies at an early stage of schooling. These results suggest that both home and school environments contributed positively to learners' literacy growth. However, the results of hypothesis testing indicated that learners' strong literacy performance was not solely dependent on variations in the home literacy environment, implying that effective school-based instruction and literacy programs played a significant role in supporting reading development. This finding highlights the importance of sustaining quality early-grade literacy instruction while strengthening home-school collaboration through structured guidance for parents. From a professional and programmatic perspective, the results support the development of a Literacy Skills Enhancement Plan that leverages parents' strong literacy beliefs, enhances home-based practices, and aligns them with school initiatives. At the policy level, the study reinforces the need for continued support of early literacy programs that integrate family engagement as a critical component of foundational learning.

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