
| BOOK REVIEW

Assessing the Home Literacy Environment as a Foundation for Enhancing the Literacy Skills of Grade Two Learners

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| ABSTRACT

This study assessed the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) as a foundation for enhancing the literacy skills of learners. Specifically, it examined the status of the HLE in terms of physical environment, parent literacy habits, child literacy habits, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs, as well as the learners' literacy skills in word recognition, sentence reading, reading fluency, and comprehension. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design and was conducted in a public elementary school setting. Using total sampling technique, the respondents consisted of five Grade Two teachers and 157 parents of Grade Two learners. Data were gathered through a Survey Questionnaire for Parents adapted from Buvanewari and Padakannaya and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) developed by Tancioco and Ortega-Dela Cruz. Statistical tools included frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that the home literacy environment was generally supportive of literacy development, and learners demonstrated stronger foundational reading skills than higher-level reading competencies. The results indicated that home literacy conditions contributed meaningfully to learners' reading development. The study concluded that strengthening home-school collaboration is essential in improving early literacy outcomes. Based on the findings, a Literacy Skills Enhancement Plan was proposed to reinforce parental involvement and support school-based literacy instruction.

| KEYWORDS

Home literacy environment, early literacy, reading skills, parental involvement, word recognition, reading fluency, comprehension

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

The home literacy environment (HLE) is widely recognized as a critical foundation for children's early reading development, especially during the formative years of early childhood and primary education. The HLE includes several dimensions such as availability of reading materials, parental involvement in literacy activities, and the family's overall attitude toward reading (Korat et al., 2021). Numerous studies have shown that children exposed to literacy-rich environments at home tend to acquire stronger oral language, vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills than peers in less stimulating settings (Torppa et al., 2020; Burgess & Wasik, 2021). Parents are central to this environment, and their reading habits, interaction styles, and literacy expectations significantly influence children's emergent literacy trajectories.

The HLE is often conceptualized as comprising three interrelated domains: material resources (e.g., books, reading spaces), behavioral components (e.g., shared reading frequency), and psychological factors (e.g., parental beliefs about reading) (Niklas et al., 2022). For instance, studies have found that children benefit from homes where reading is a regular and valued activity, and

where adults model reading behaviors or actively engage in book-related discussions (Inoue et al., 2020). Dedicated reading areas and access to age-appropriate books have been shown to enhance reading motivation and sustained engagement. Similarly, when parents demonstrate enthusiasm for reading and express the belief that literacy is important, children tend to develop stronger decoding, comprehension, and lifelong reading habits (Fitton et al., 2021).

Literacy development follows a cumulative and hierarchical process, starting from letter and word recognition, progressing to sentence reading, and eventually developing into fluent and meaningful comprehension (Lonigan & Burgess, 2021). Word recognition the ability to accurately and automatically identify written words is an essential prerequisite for fluency. Fluent readers not only read accurately but also with appropriate speed and expression, which enables deeper understanding of texts. Children raised in literacy-enriched homes typically reach these milestones faster and more effectively (Mullis et al., 2021). In contrast, children from literacy-poor households often face early gaps in decoding and comprehension, which can lead to long-term academic disadvantages.

In the Philippine context especially in rural and under-resourced schools such as Aloguinsan Central Elementary School disparities in the home literacy environment are common. While Filipino families generally value education, structural barriers such as poverty, limited access to print materials, and low parental literacy rates hinder their capacity to support children's reading development (David et al., 2022). In rural households, literacy activities are often constrained by time, work schedules, and lack of awareness of effective reading strategies. These socioeconomic and cultural factors shape the quality and frequency of home literacy interactions, underscoring the importance of situating HLE research within the local context.

Although there is growing interest in promoting early literacy, existing research often overlooks marginalized populations. Many studies focus on urban or middle-income families, leaving rural and disadvantaged communities underrepresented in the literature (Dangleben et al., 2023). Furthermore, few Philippine-based studies use comprehensive frameworks that examine the multiple dimensions of HLE, such as material access, parental behaviors, literacy values, and child engagement. Research often reports broad reading outcomes, neglecting specific reading components like word recognition, sentence-level reading, fluency, and comprehension. Moreover, there is limited investigation into how parents perceive their role in children's literacy development and how these perceptions align with actual literacy outcomes (Manzon et al., 2023). These gaps are particularly relevant in the early primary years (Grades 1–3), a critical period for developing foundational reading skills.

This study investigates the influence of the home literacy environment on the reading development of learners in Aloguinsan Central Elementary School, a rural public school in the Philippines. It examines parents' perceptions across five key HLE dimensions and assesses learners' abilities in word recognition, sentence reading, fluency, and comprehension. By focusing on a rural and context-specific setting, the study contributes to localized, community-based research that can inform evidence-driven policy and school-based interventions. The results aim to support programs that strengthen home-school partnerships and identify learners at risk of reading delays. Additionally, the study aligns with the Philippine Department of Education's efforts to improve early grade reading outcomes through family and community engagement strategies embedded in national literacy initiatives (DepEd, 2023).

Literature Review

The home literacy environment (HLE) plays a critical role in shaping children's foundational reading skills. It includes the availability of print materials, frequency and quality of literacy-related parent-child interactions, and parents' attitudes and behaviors toward reading (Burgess & Wasik, 2021). Homes that provide developmentally appropriate books and promote shared literacy activities such as storytelling, picture book reading, and oral narratives significantly support children's language acquisition and reading comprehension (Torppa et al., 2020). However, contextual factors such as poverty, limited educational background of parents, and scarce literacy resources in rural areas can constrain these experiences, making it harder for families to create stimulating literacy environments (Manzon et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, evidence shows that consistent engagement in simple literacy activities like song singing, naming objects, and informal reading conversations can positively influence children's emergent reading development when practiced regularly (Fitton et al., 2021). Recent studies have also highlighted that different components of the HLE contribute to specific reading outcomes, such as decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Frequent shared reading activities, for instance, help children develop automatic word recognition and strengthen their understanding of sentence structure and grammar, which are vital for fluent reading (Lonigan & Burgess, 2021). Active parental involvement in decoding tasks and vocabulary-building exercises enhances both phonological awareness and inferencing abilities (Inoue et al., 2020). Furthermore, guided use of digital resources, including phonics-based apps and animated storybooks, has been linked to improvements in early reading performance, particularly when used in interactive and supportive home settings (Korat et al., 2021). In rural Philippine contexts, limited access to training and awareness among parents about effective literacy support techniques underscores the importance of targeted home-school literacy initiatives that build capacity for interactive and meaningful reading practices at home (David et al., 2022).

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to explore the relationship between the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and the literacy skills of Grade Two learners at Aloguinsan Central Elementary School. The descriptive component aimed to capture the current state of the HLE as perceived by parent-respondents, focusing on five key areas: physical resources, parental literacy practices, children’s reading behaviors, parent–child literacy interactions, and parental beliefs about literacy. The correlational component sought to determine the extent to which these HLE dimensions are associated with learners’ performance in specific reading domains. Two main instruments were used: 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 cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The CRLA assessed learners’ reading proficiency across two major domains: decoding skills (word recognition and sentence reading) and comprehension skills (fluency and understanding). The research procedure was carried out in three phases: (1) preparatory steps including securing permissions and informed consent; (2) data collection through survey distribution and literacy assessment; and (3) data processing and analysis. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly observed. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations for descriptive statistics, while Pearson’s Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to assess the relationships between HLE variables and 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	0.88	Excellent
2	My child has three or more puzzles	3.95	1.08	Very Satisfactory
3	My child has toys or games requiring refined movements	4.04	1.06	Very Satisfactory
4	My child has at least 10 children’s books	3.90	1.10	Very Satisfactory
5	My child has toys that help teach the names of animals, vehicles, fruits, etc.	4.10	1.05	Very Satisfactory
6	We have alphabet books/blocks/magnetic letters/flashcards/workbooks at home	3.94	1.10	Very Satisfactory
7	There is a designated place for books and toys at home	3.84	1.16	Very Satisfactory
8	The toys and books are accessible to the child	4.13	1.01	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.01		Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		1.06	

The data in Table 1 show that the physical environment at home is generally supportive of literacy development, with an aggregate rating of Very Satisfactory (WM = 4.01). The highest-rated item was the presence of toys that teach basic concepts (WM = 4.21), rated Excellent. Other highly rated indicators include accessible books and toys (WM = 4.13) and toys that teach names of objects (WM = 4.10). Slightly lower, but still very satisfactory, were items like having 10 or more children’s books (WM = 3.90) and a designated place for books (WM = 3.84). The standard deviation (1.06) suggests variation across households. Overall, the results indicate that most homes offer a favorable physical environment for early literacy development.

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Our family buys and reads daily newspaper	3.73	1.11	Very Satisfactory
2	My child sees me writing/typing	4.10	0.97	Very Satisfactory
3	My child sees me reading non-work-related things, for pleasure	3.89	1.04	Very Satisfactory
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword, etc.	3.85	1.10	Very Satisfactory
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family	3.85	1.10	Very Satisfactory
6	I go to bookstores/library along with my child	3.84	1.03	Very Satisfactory
7	I personally enjoy reading as a habit	3.91	0.98	Very Satisfactory
8	My child sees me reading books/magazines/newspapers	3.87	1.10	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.85		Very Satisfactory

Table	S/N Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description	2.
Status	Aggregate Standard Deviation		1.06		of

Literacy Environment at the Learner's Home in Terms of Parents' Literacy Habits

The data in Table 2 reveal that parents' literacy habits are Very Satisfactory overall (WM = 3.85), indicating active modeling of reading and writing behaviors at home. The highest-rated habit was parents writing or typing in front of their child (WM = 4.10), suggesting visibility of literacy use in daily routines. Parents also showed strong engagement in reading for pleasure (WM = 3.89) and visiting bookstores or libraries with their children (WM = 3.84). Activities like discussing books (WM = 3.85) and playing word games (WM = 3.85) further reflect a supportive literacy environment. The standard deviation (1.06) indicates moderate variability among households. These findings suggest that parent's model positive literacy behaviors, reinforcing children's exposure to reading and writing at home.

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	My child asks for help learning the letters of the alphabet	4.04	1.04	Very Satisfactory
2	My child asks for help while writing	3.94	1.09	Very Satisfactory
3	My child asks for books to be read to him/her	3.83	1.11	Very Satisfactory
4	My child pretends to read from books or says stories to himself/herself	3.75	1.17	Very Satisfactory
5	My child shows interest in reading signboards when we go out	4.08	1.05	Very Satisfactory
6	My child shows interest in identifying the product by looking at an advertisement or the product label	4.03	1.02	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.94		Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		1.08	

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

Table 3 shows that learners exhibit Very Satisfactory literacy habits at home (WM = 3.94), indicating active engagement with reading-related behaviors. The highest-rated item was children showing interest in reading signboards when going out (WM = 4.08), suggesting environmental print awareness. Learners also often seek help learning letters (WM = 4.04) and identifying products through print labels (WM = 4.03), reflecting early decoding interest. Asking for help with writing (WM = 3.94) and pretending to read or tell stories (WM = 3.75) further demonstrate foundational literacy behaviors. The overall standard deviation (1.08) shows some variability in responses. These results suggest that children in most households are actively developing literacy habits through curiosity, imitation, and environmental interaction.

Table 4 indicates that parent-child interactions related to literacy are Very Satisfactory overall (WM = 4.03), highlighting strong engagement in home-based reading activities. Parents commonly encourage conversation (WM = 4.15), teach nursery rhymes (WM = 4.15), and use expressive reading techniques to capture children's interest (WM = 4.11). They also support literacy by pointing out words (WM = 3.97), reading stories (WM = 3.97), and involving children in storytelling and reading-related games (WM = 4.03). High engagement was also seen in helping children connect stories to real life (WM = 4.10) and encouraging interaction with text and pictures (WM = 4.05). The standard deviation (1.00) shows consistent responses. Overall, the data reflect strong parental involvement in developing early literacy through frequent, meaningful interactions.

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.)	4.11	1.00	Very Satisfactory
2	I encourage my child to talk and take time to listen	4.15	1.05	Very Satisfactory
3	I teach nursery rhymes and songs to my child	4.15	1.07	Very Satisfactory
4	I name pictures in books and talk about the pictures	3.96	1.01	Very Satisfactory
5	I read stories to my child	3.97	1.03	Very Satisfactory
6	I point out words in magazines/newspapers	3.97	1.02	Very Satisfactory

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
7	I help my child solve jigsaw puzzles	3.90	1.09	Very Satisfactory
8	I encourage my child to act out a story	4.00	1.02	Very Satisfactory
9	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs, and signboards	3.99	1.03	Very Satisfactory
10	When I read, I try to sound excited so my child gets interested	4.11	0.93	Very Satisfactory
11	I ask my child a lot of questions when we read	4.08	1.00	Very Satisfactory
12	I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his/her life	4.10	0.98	Very Satisfactory
13	When we read, I talk about the pictures as much as the words	4.05	0.99	Very Satisfactory
14	When we read, I encourage my child to tell the story	4.03	1.00	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
16	I play reading-related games with my child	4.03	1.00	Very Satisfactory
17	I tell stories to my child	4.03	0.97	Very Satisfactory
18	I point my child's finger to words when I read to him/her	4.13	0.93	Very Satisfactory
19	I speak to my child about what happened during the day	4.06	0.90	Very Satisfactory
20	My child and I make up new rhymes by playing with words/sounds	3.95	1.05	Very Satisfactory
21	I ask my child to guess what the characters will do next	3.90	1.01	Very Satisfactory
22	I talk to my child about what he/she watches on TV	3.99	1.06	Very Satisfactory
23	I translate stories into our home language when my child does not understand English words	3.99	1.03	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.03		Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		1.00	

Table 5 shows that parental beliefs about literacy are generally Excellent (WM = 4.18), reflecting strong awareness of their role in supporting early reading development. The highest-rated belief was that children perform better in school when parents teach them to read at home (WM = 4.28), followed by the view that parents can help their children read and write beyond school instruction (WM = 4.27). Parents also strongly agreed that they share responsibility in teaching literacy (WM = 4.24) and should supplement school learning at home (WM = 4.22). Other positively rated beliefs involved encouraging reading interest (WM = 4.08) and phonemic awareness (WM = 4.17). With a standard deviation of 0.94, responses were relatively consistent. These findings suggest strong parental commitment to literacy support.

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Parents can teach alphabets to their child in addition to what is taught in school	4.13	1.01	Very Satisfactory
2	Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school	4.27	0.97	Excellent
3	Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home	4.28	0.98	Excellent
4	Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child	4.24	0.93	Excellent
5	Most parents should supplement the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home	4.22	0.76	Excellent
6	Parents should select books based on their colorful illustrations, high-interest content, and natural language	4.19	0.84	Very Satisfactory
7	Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing, writing, etc.)	4.15	0.93	Very Satisfactory
8	Parents should help in developing the child's ability to divide a word into parts or syllables to read new words	4.05	1.01	Very Satisfactory
9	I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading in my child	4.08	1.06	Very Satisfactory

S/N Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
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"	4.17	0.93	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.18		Excellent
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.94	

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

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

Literacy Level	f	%
Advanced	99	63.06
Intermediate	35	22.29
Beginner	23	14.65
Total	157	100.00

Table 6 reveals that the majority of learners demonstrate strong foundational literacy skills in word recognition and sentence reading. Out of 157 learners, 63.06% were classified as Advanced, indicating high proficiency in identifying words and reading simple sentences accurately. 22.29% were categorized at the Intermediate level, suggesting developing skills with occasional decoding difficulties. Meanwhile, 14.65% fell under the Beginner level, showing limited recognition of words and requiring additional instructional support. These results suggest that most learners have successfully developed early reading abilities; however, a notable portion still needs targeted interventions to strengthen basic decoding and sentence-level fluency. Addressing these gaps is crucial to ensuring all learners are prepared for more complex reading tasks in higher grade levels.

Literacy Level	f	%
Advanced	13	8.28
Intermediate	84	53.50
Beginner	60	38.22
Total	157	100.00

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

Table 7 presents the learners' performance in reading fluency and comprehension, showing that most learners fall within the Intermediate level (53.50%), indicating partial development of reading pace, expression, and understanding. A substantial portion (38.22%) were classified as Beginners, suggesting difficulties in maintaining reading flow and grasping meaning from text. Only 8.28% achieved an Advanced level, demonstrating strong comprehension and fluent reading. These results highlight a need for focused instruction in fluency-building and comprehension strategies, especially for the large group of learners still struggling with these essential skills. Strengthening these areas is vital for enabling deeper understanding and long-term academic success, particularly as texts become more complex in higher grade levels.

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	0.217*	Negligible Positive	0.006	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 8 shows the statistical relationship between the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and the literacy skills of learners. The correlation coefficient is $r = 0.217$, indicating a negligible positive relationship. Despite the weak correlation strength, the p-value

= 0.006 is less than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the decision to reject the null hypothesis. This means the relationship is statistically significant, suggesting that improvements in the home literacy environment may have a positive though limited impact on learners' literacy skills. These results highlight that while HLE contributes to literacy development, other factors such as classroom instruction, learner motivation, and socio-economic conditions may also play critical roles in shaping literacy outcomes.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the home literacy environment (HLE) across all five dimensions physical environment, parental literacy habits, child's literacy behaviors, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs is generally supportive and conducive to early literacy development. Most households provide children with toys, books, and other resources that encourage exploration and learning. Parents are also actively involved in promoting literacy by modeling reading and writing behaviors, engaging in shared reading activities, and expressing strong beliefs about the importance of their role in literacy development. Children, in turn, show enthusiasm for reading-related activities, such as recognizing letters, exploring environmental print, and requesting to be read to. These positive home practices create a strong foundation for developing early reading skills. Despite the favorable home environment, literacy outcomes, particularly in fluency and comprehension, show that many learners are still in the beginning or developing stages. A significant portion of learners struggle with reading smoothly and understanding text, highlighting the need for further support. While the correlation between HLE and literacy skills is statistically significant, the strength of the relationship is minimal. This suggests that although the home environment contributes to literacy growth, it is not the sole factor. Other influences, such as classroom instruction, learner readiness, and school resources, also play crucial roles. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening both school-based instruction and family engagement strategies to address learning gaps and support holistic literacy development among early grade learners.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Home Literacy Environment of Grade Two learners was generally supportive of literacy development, with positive conditions observed across physical resources, parental literacy habits, child literacy behaviors, parent-child interaction, and parental beliefs. Learners demonstrated strong foundational skills in word recognition and sentence reading, while reading fluency and comprehension remained developing areas that required sustained instructional support. These findings indicated that literacy development in the early grades was shaped by both home-based practices and school instruction, with the home environment serving as an important complementary context that reinforced learning. The results underscored the need to strengthen home-school collaboration in professional practice, particularly in guiding parents to support reading fluency and comprehension through consistent and meaningful literacy activities at home. The findings also provided a sound basis for program development, supporting the creation of a Literacy Skills Enhancement Plan that integrates family engagement with targeted classroom interventions. In terms of policy implementation, the study affirmed the importance of existing early literacy initiatives that promote parental involvement and highlighted the value of translating these policies into context-responsive, school-based programs that sustain early literacy growth among Grade Two learners.

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