



THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN BUILDING A HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT (HLE) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD : DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Home Literacy Environment (HLE) is one of the important factors in supporting the development of early childhood literacy. However, studies on HLE in areas with urban rural mix characteristics are still limited, even though the context provides a more diverse picture of family literacy practices and can enrich the global literature. This study aims to analyze the role of parents in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) in early childhood in Pancawati Village, Bogor Regency. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach by involving three parents ($n = 3$) as participants. Data was collected through in depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using NVivo 12 software assisted thematic analysis through coding, theme grouping, and data visualization. Four interconnected themes emerged from the analysis: parents as literacy mediators beyond resource provision, literacy embedded in everyday family routines, digital media as a dual literacy affordance, and adaptive literacy practices responsive to children's emotional readiness. The findings indicate that HLE quality was shaped less by the quantity of literacy resources than by sustained, responsive parent child interactions and verbal mediation. Digital media functioned neither inherently as a literacy resource nor as a distraction; its role depended on parental mediation, content selection, time regulation, and parent child interaction. These findings conceptualize HLE as an adaptive, interaction driven literacy ecosystem and offer implications for culturally responsive family literacy programs in diverse socio cultural contexts. Parents also apply various strategies, such as learning while playing, storytelling, utilizing educational digital media, and adapting learning activities to the children's emotional readiness. The main findings of the study show that the quality of interaction between parents and children, especially through verbal mentoring, warm communication, and active involvement in literacy activities, determines the success of HLE more than the availability of literacy facilities at home. Theoretically, this research strengthens the ecological perspective that places parent-child interaction at the core of the formation of a literacy environment at home. Practically, the results of this study provide implications for the development of family literacy programs and strengthening the capacity of parents in supporting the development of early childhood literacy in various socio cultural contexts.

Keywords: Home Literacy Environment, role of parents, early childhood literacy, family literacy environment

INTRODUCTION

Early literacy skills are an important foundation for language development, reading skills, and children's readiness to participate in formal education (Santoso & Jaya, 2023). Literacy experience gained from an early age affects vocabulary development, communication skills, symbolic thinking, and learning success at the next level of education (Amalia, Novita, & Hanami, 2025; Buvaneswari & PBuvaneswari, B., & Padakannaya, P. (2017). Development of a home literacy environment questionnaire for Tamil-speaking kindergarten children. *Language Testing in Asia*, 7(1), 14. adakannaya, 2017; Putri et al., 2026). One of the environments that plays the most role in this process is the Home Literacy Environment (HLE), which is a literacy environment that is built through daily interactions between parents and children at home (Lehrl, Evangelou, & Sammons, 2020; Ristiani, Marijah, & Imamah, 2025). In the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, the family is a microsystem that has the closest influence on children's development through the proximal process, namely interactions that take place repeatedly, consistently, and meaningful (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, the success of HLE is not only determined by the existence of reading materials, but also by the quality of interaction, communication, and assistance carried out by parents during literacy activities (Jahra & Imamah, 2024; Lehrl et al., 2020).

Indonesia's persistent literacy challenges also reinforce the importance of strengthening literacy experiences long before children enter formal schooling (Irna, 2019; Widodo & Ruhaena, 2018). Rather than positioning early literacy as preparation for standardized assessment, early literacy development should be understood as a cumulative process shaped by children's everyday language, symbolic, and meaning-making experiences within their closest environments. In this context, the family represents a critical setting in which foundational literacy dispositions and practices begin to develop (Ristiany & Gustiana, 2025; Setyowahyudi, 2025).

Various international studies show that Home Literacy Environment has a positive relationship with vocabulary development, language skills, early reading skills, and children's readiness to enter school (Dowdall et al., 2020; Silinskas, Sénéchal, Torppa, & Lerkkanen, 2020). Activities such as reading together, telling stories, dialogue, introducing letters, and involving children in various daily literacy activities have been proven to be able to improve early childhood literacy skills. Research also shows that the quality of parental involvement during the literacy process has a greater influence than just the provision of books or learning facilities at home (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022; Lehl et al., 2020). These findings are in line with Garzia, Masykuroh, & Qosyasih, (2025) who emphasized that the successful implementation of early childhood literacy requires strong collaboration between schools and parents, so that family involvement is an important part in supporting the development of children's literacy.

Recent international literature published between 2020 and 2025 indicates that Home Literacy Environment research has largely focused on parental involvement, shared reading, book availability, and children's emergent literacy outcomes. Although these studies have established important associations between HLE and children's language and reading development, less attention has been given to the dynamic processes through which parents negotiate literacy practices within everyday family life. In particular, limited research has examined the intersection of children's emotional readiness, parental mediation of digital media, and culturally embedded family routines in developing-country and urban rural transition contexts. This gap suggests the need for context sensitive qualitative inquiry into how HLE is actively constructed, negotiated, and adapted through parent-child interactions.

This gap is clearly seen in the Indonesian context, especially in semi-rural areas that have diverse sociocultural characteristics. Family literacy practice is not only realized through reading books, but also integrated with religious routines, daily conversations, the use of educational digital media, and flexible study time arrangements according to family conditions (Jahra & Imamah, 2024; Suardi, Sultan, & Herman, 2024). Pancawati Village, Bogor Regency, as an area with urban-rural mix, shows a diversity of educational backgrounds, occupations, and parenting patterns that have the potential to affect HLE practices. Based on the results of initial observations, some parents have realized the importance of family involvement in supporting children's literacy, but the forms of assistance carried out are still diverse and influenced by work conditions, family routines, the use of digital media, and the emotional readiness of children when learning. This condition shows that HLE practice in the family environment cannot be understood only from the aspect of the availability of literacy facilities, but also from the quality of interactions built in daily life.

Based on this description, this study offers novelty by exploring Home Literacy Environment (HLE) as a family literacy practice that is built through daily interactions between parents and children, not only based on the availability of learning facilities at home. This study also examines how parents maintain HLE practices in the midst of various supporting and inhibiting factors, including the use of digital media and children's emotional readiness. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of HLE practices in the context of urban rural mix areas in Indonesia while enriching the literature on family literacy in developing countries (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022; Lehl et al., 2020). Based on this novelty, this research is directed to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the role of parents in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) in early childhood in Pancawati Village? (2) What factors support and hinder parents in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) in early childhood? and (3) What strategies do parents apply in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE), including in adapting literacy activities to children's emotional readiness and the use of digital media?

This research is relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) in building a literacy culture

at home for children. Quality family education is the foundation for achieving the SDG 4.2 target on holistic access to early childhood development.

In addition, this research is also a form of implementation of *Asta Cita*, especially the 4th point which emphasizes on strengthening the development of human resources (HR), science, technology, education, and health. Investment in early childhood through strengthening home literacy is a strategic step in realizing superior and independent human resources in accordance with the vision of Indonesia Emas. Thus, this research has strategic relevance both academically and policy.

The Home Literacy Environment has traditionally been conceptualized through children's access to literacy resources and participation in literacy-related activities within the home. Common indicators include book ownership, frequency of shared reading, storytelling, parental teaching of letters and words, and children's exposure to print-related materials. These dimensions remain important because they provide children with opportunities to encounter language, print, symbols, and literacy-related interactions during the early years (Dowdall et al., 2020; Silinskas et al., 2020).

However, a predominantly resource-oriented understanding of HLE may overlook the relational processes through which available literacy opportunities become meaningful for children. The presence of books, digital devices, or educational materials does not automatically produce high-quality literacy experiences. Rather, the developmental value of such resources may depend on how parents introduce, mediate, discuss, and adapt them in response to children's interests and participation. From this perspective, HLE encompasses not only what families possess but also what families do and how family members interact around literacy.

In the present study, HLE is therefore conceptualized as a multidimensional literacy ecosystem encompassing literacy resources, parent–child interaction, everyday family routines, culturally situated practices, and parental mediation of digital experiences. This conceptualization shifts analytical attention from static indicators of literacy provision toward the processes through which literacy opportunities are dynamically produced within family life.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory provides a useful analytical lens for examining the dynamic construction of HLE through the Process–Person–Context–Time (PPCT) model. Rather than viewing children's development as the direct consequence of environmental resources, the PPCT model emphasizes recurring interactions between developing individuals and the people, objects, and symbols within their immediate environments.

Within the present study, **Process** refers to recurring parent–child literacy interactions, including conversations, reading assistance, storytelling, direct teaching, and digitally mediated learning. These recurring interactions represent proximal processes through which children actively encounter literacy experiences. **Person** encompasses children's individual characteristics that influence their participation in literacy activities. Particular attention is given to children's interests, attention, engagement, and emotional readiness. Children are therefore understood as active participants whose responses influence how parents organize and modify literacy experiences. **Context** includes the material, relational, cultural, religious, and digital environments surrounding family literacy practices. Literacy resources, parental availability, religious routines, digital devices, and family interaction patterns constitute interconnected contextual dimensions of HLE. Finally, **Time** captures the recurring and evolving nature of family literacy practices. Post-Maghrib learning, bedtime storytelling, daily conversations, and flexible learning arrangements demonstrate how literacy develops through repeated routines and adjustments occurring across everyday family life. Through a PPCT-informed interpretation, HLE is understood not as a static collection of books and learning materials but as a dynamic developmental system constructed through reciprocal interactions among children, parents, family contexts, and recurring routines.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative study design to explore how parents build and implement a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) in the family's daily living practices. This approach was chosen because it is able to provide a deep understanding of contextual and dynamic literacy experiences in the home environment, especially in looking at the interaction between parents and children in literacy activities. (Lehrl et al., 2020; Muzakki, Aghnaita, & Puspita, 2022). The location of this research is located in Pancawati Village, Bogor Regency. The selection of this research place is

based on the diversity of family characteristics in implementing literacy activities at home. The implementation of the research lasted for 6 months, starting from December 2025 to May 2026.

Participants in this study were selected using the purposive criteria sampling technique of 3 families with the following criteria: (1) Parents who have children aged 5-6 years; (2) Directly involved in literacy activities at home, such as reading storybooks and accompanying children's learning activities; (3) Willing to participate in interviews and observations at home. The selection of these criteria is based on previous research that emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in building a literacy environment at home as a key factor in early childhood language development and reading ability. Each family was observed twice with each observation lasting about 60-90 minutes. Observations focused on parent-child literacy interactions, availability and use of literacy resources, daily literacy routines, culturally and religiously embedded literacy activities, and children's involvement with digital media. (Jahra & Imamah, 2024; Santoso & Jaya, 2023). The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1 below

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Participants	The Role of Parents	Child's Age	Parent Education	Jobs	Family Context
R1	Actively introduce literacy through reading Iqra, reading books, accompanying learning, getting used to learning after Maghrib, and involving parents and siblings in the learning process.	5 Years	SD	Housewives	Literacy activities are carried out with families, but are constrained by mother's busyness and the use of gadgets.
R2	Provide reading books, tell bedtime stories, create a study schedule, accompany reading and writing, limit mobile phone use, and involve fathers in quality time and study.	6 Years	High School	Housewives	Parents apply the division of time between studying, playing, learning, and resting with fairly intensive supervision.
R3	Accompanying children to learn to read, providing reading and coloring books, using learning methods while playing, providing motivation, and adapting learning activities to the child's mood.	6 Years	SD	Housewives	Literacy activities at home are more accompanied by mothers, while fathers work outside the home. The learning process is carried out in stages by adjusting the child's mood and interspersed with play activities.

Field notes are written during and immediately after each observation to document interaction patterns, contextual conditions, and relevant literacy events. The observational data were then compared with the interview accounts as part of methodological triangulation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Each participant participated in one primary semi-structured interview that lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Follow-up clarification is carried out when additional information or confirmation of interpretation that arises is required. Interviews are conducted in Indonesian, audio recorded with the consent of participants, and transcribed verbatim. Interviews are conducted in Indonesian, recorded with the consent of the participants, and transcribed verbatim. The interviews focused on parents' experiences in supporting children's literacy, daily literacy practices, and the challenges of building HLE.

The use of semi-structured interviews explores the experiences of more flexible participants, such as those used in family literacy research to contextually explore literacy practices. While observation in the context of family literacy is important to capture real practices that are not always revealed through interviews, especially in looking at reading habits and spontaneous interactions within families. (Puspita Amalia et al., 2023; Yunita & Apriliya, 2022; Silinskas et al., 2020; Suardi et al., 2024)

The data were analyzed using reflective thematic analysis based on the stages presented by Braun and Clarke, namely: (1) Understanding the data; (2) Perform initial coding; (3) Develop a theme; (4) Review themes; (4) Define and name themes; (4) Building an analytical narrative

The thematic analysis approach is used because it is able to identify patterns of meaning in qualitative data systematically and flexibly in the context of educational research. All interview transcripts and observation field notes are imported into NVivo 12 and organized according to

participant codes (R1, R2, and R3). The initial coding is done inductively by assigning descriptive code to meaningful segments of the transcript. The code that represents similar meanings is then grouped into parent nodes and child nodes. For example, codes related to learning aids, hands-on teaching, literacy habituation, and supervision are grouped under parental literacy mediation. Coding comparisons were performed across participants to identify repetitive patterns and contextual variations. A hierarchy chart is used to examine the relative distribution and relationships between coded categories. These visualizations serve as analytical aids rather than as statistical indicators of thematic significance. Themes are not automatically generated by NVivo; Instead, they are developed through repeated researcher interpretations, constant comparisons between cases, and repeated reviews of coded citations. It should be emphasized that this software does not generate themes automatically, but rather themes are developed through a process of repeated interpretation from researchers.

The validity of the data is maintained through several strategies. Credibility is enhanced through triangulation of methods (interviews, observations, and documentation) and in-depth researcher involvement. Reliability is carried out by compiling a trace audit during the research process. Confirmation is maintained through reflective notes and discussions with peers. The transferability is strengthened by the presentation of an in-depth description of the research context and family characteristics. This approach is in line with family literacy research that emphasizes the importance of triangulation and contextual descriptions in understanding literacy practices at home. (Lehrl et al., 2020; Yunita & Apriliya, 2022)

Prior to data collection, participants were provided with information about the research objectives and procedures. Informed consent is obtained from all participants. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time without consequences. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the identification information is removed from the transcript and each participant is assigned a participant code (R1, R2, and R3). Research data is stored securely and accessed for research purposes only. All data is stored securely and is used only for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The reflexive thematic analysis generated four interconnected themes illustrating how parents constructed HLE within everyday family life: (1) Parents as Literacy Mediators: Moving Beyond Resource Provision; (2) Literacy Embedded in Everyday Family Routines; (3) Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance; and (4) Adaptive Literacy Practices: Responding to Children's Emotional Readiness. The four themes were developed from the results of in-depth interviews with three parents,

Table 2. Node Structure Data Analysis Using NVivo 12

Analytical Theme	Key Analytical Patterns	Illustrative Practices
Parents as Literacy Mediators	Active parental mediation and verbal scaffolding	Direct teaching, answering questions, learning assistance, supervision
Literacy Embedded in Everyday Family Routines	Literacy integrated into culturally meaningful routines	Iqra' reading, post-Maghrib learning, storytelling, daily conversations
Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance	Digital media as both resource and distraction	Educational videos, learning games, content selection, gadget regulation
Adaptive Literacy Practices	Literacy practices responsive to children's affective readiness	Flexible timing, learning through play, changing methods, responsive assistance

In addition to the table of node structures from the data analysis, there is a hierarchy chart that describes the distribution of themes and subthemes based on the number of coding references.

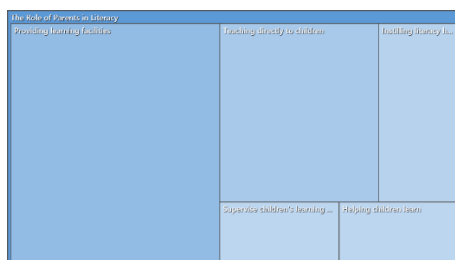


Figure 2. Hierarchy Chart The Role of Parents in Literacy

The results of the thematic analysis show that parents play a role as the main mediator in building a *Home Literacy Environment* (HLE), not only through the provision of learning facilities but also through active involvement in the children's literacy process. Based on the results of the NVivo 12 analysis, this theme consists of providing learning facilities, teaching directly to children, instilling literacy habits from an early age, helping learning, and supervising learning activities. All participants viewed the family as the first environment that shaped children's literacy experiences. One of the participants stated that *"the child's provision from home first, including studying and studying"* (R1), while other participants affirmed that *"even though the child is in school, parents still have to help study at home"* (R3). These findings show that the success of HLE is more determined by the quality of interaction and verbal assistance than the availability of learning facilities alone.



Figure 3. Hierarchy Chart of HLE Supporting Factors

The second theme shows that HLE practices are integrated into daily family routines. The results of NVivo's analysis identified learning routines, parental involvement, learning while playing, *storytelling*, rewarding, and the availability of books as the main elements that form HLE. Based on the results of the interviews, literacy activities were carried out through reading *Iqra'*, learning after Maghrib prayers, daily conversations, and educational games. Parents do not separate learning activities from family life, but rather incorporate them into their daily routines so that children gain literacy experience naturally.

The development of literacy is formed through repeated interactions in the context of family culture. This finding expands the HLE study which has so far emphasized book reading activities by introducing the concept of Culturally Embedded Home Literacy Practices, which is a literacy practice that grows through cultural and religious routines, such as reading *Iqra'*, learning after Maghrib, and daily communication in the family.

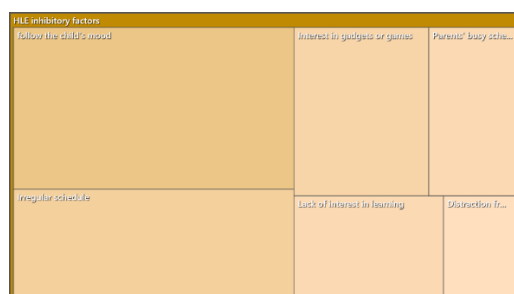


Figure 4. Hierarchy Chart HLE Inhibitory Factors

The thematic analysis revealed that digital media performed a dual function within participating families' HLE practices. Digital resources, including YouTube and educational media, supported children's literacy engagement by providing visually and auditorily stimulating learning experiences. At the same time, digital devices became potential sources of distraction when children preferred games or entertainment content over literacy activities. Across the three cases, parents attempted to mediate this tension through time regulation, content selection, and active accompaniment during children's digital media use.

These findings show that digital media is not inherently a supporter or inhibitor of literacy. In the perspective of PPCT, the benefits of digital media are determined by the quality of parent-child interaction, the characteristics of the child, the family's digital environment, and the timing of use. Therefore, this study offers the concept of Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance, namely digital

media functions as a source of literacy and distraction depending on parental mediation, content selection, time regulation, and parent child interaction.



Figure 5. Hierarchy Chart of Parental Strategies Instilling Literacy

The last theme shows that HLE practice is adaptive to children's emotional readiness. NVivo analysis identified the adjustment of learning activities to children's emotional readiness, flexible learning schedules, parents' busyness, and children's learning interests as factors influencing the implementation of HLE. All participants explained that they do not force children to learn when they are tired or unprepared, but adjust the time, method, and form of activities so that children remain comfortable following the literacy process.

HLE quality is built through responsive interactions with the children's emotional readiness, individual characteristics, family dynamics, and flexible routines. This finding expands the HLE study by introducing the concept of Emotionally Responsive Home Literacy Practices, which is a literacy practice that places children's emotional readiness as the basis for determining mentoring strategies so that literacy experiences take place positively and sustainably.

Literacy development is the result of repeated interactions by considering individual characteristics of children, family life dynamics, as well as changes in routines from time to time. The emotional readiness of the child is part of the individual characteristics that affect the effectiveness of the interaction. Therefore, the quality of HLE depends not only on the existence of literacy activities, but also on the ability of parents to build interactions that are responsive to the child's emotional needs.

DISCUSSION

A PPCT-informed interpretation further illustrates why these literacy practices cannot be reduced to the availability of home resources. The proximal process was represented by recurring parent–child literacy interactions, including verbal scaffolding, shared conversations, and learning assistance. Person characteristics were reflected in children's interests, attention, and emotional readiness to participate in literacy activities. Context encompassed the material, cultural, religious, and digital environments of the family, while Time was evident in recurring routines such as post-Maghrib learning and the gradual adaptation of literacy practices across everyday family life. The interaction among these PPCT dimensions suggests that HLE operates as a dynamic developmental system rather than a static literacy setting.

The findings complicate binary interpretations of digital media as either beneficial or harmful to early literacy. Previous studies have highlighted parental beliefs and involvement as important factors in children's digital reading experiences (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022). The present study extends this argument by demonstrating that digital affordances are relationally produced through parental mediation. Educational videos and digital games became literacy resources when parents selected content, regulated time, and engaged children in follow-up conversations. Conversely, the same devices functioned as distractions when used primarily for entertainment without active mediation. Therefore, the literacy value of digital media does not reside in the technology itself but emerges from the interaction among digital content, parental mediation, and children's engagement. We conceptualize this dynamic as Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance.

Parents as Literacy Mediators: Moving Beyond Resource Provision

Parents play a role as the main mediator in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE). This role is not only realized through the provision of learning facilities, but also through active involvement in accompanying, directing, and building interactions that support children's literacy development. All

participants view that the child's learning process begins with the family before the child gains learning experience at school.

One participant explained that:

"... If the child is for knowledge, yes, to learn from home first before going out, right? So from home first, bekel go out, bekel ngaji yes from home first..." (R1)

Similar views were also expressed by other participants who stated:

"... Even though the children are school, the role of parents at home must also be able to help children a little." (R3)

The family is seen as the first environment responsible for the development of children's literacy. Third, families do not interpret this role as an obligation to provide many books or learning facilities, but as active involvement in every child's learning process. Parents consistently accompany children when learning to read, answer children's questions, introduce letters and numbers, and provide motivation when children have difficulties. Thus, the success of the Home Literacy Environment in this study is more built through the quality of interaction than the completeness of learning resources owned by families.

The experience of literacy develops through social relationships that occur repeatedly between parents and children. Activities such as answering children's questions, inviting discussions, and accompanying them when reading create opportunities for children to build vocabulary, understand symbols, and develop language skills in meaningful contexts. Therefore, literacy does not emerge as an academic activity separate from family life, but becomes part of daily communication. The quality of the Home Literacy Environment is not solely determined by the ownership of literacy facilities. Although some families in this study had a limited number of books, children still received adequate literacy stimulation through consistent interaction with parents. This shows that interpersonal relationships have a greater contribution to the formation of literacy experiences than just the existence of learning media at home.

The results of this study are in line with Lehl et al., (2020) who emphasized that the quality of interaction between parents and children is the main component in the Home Literacy Environment. Silinskas et al., (2020) also explained that parental involvement during literacy activities has a stronger influence on reading development than just providing reading materials. Nevertheless, most previous studies still measured HLE quality through resource-oriented indicators, such as the number of books at home or the frequency of reading together.

In contrast to this approach, this study shows that the practice of Home Literacy Environment in the context of families in Pancawati Village is built through a mediation process carried out by parents in their daily activities. Parents act as facilitators, motivators, as well as learning partners who actively adjust assistance to their children's needs. Thus, this study expands the conceptualization of the Home Literacy Environment from a resource-oriented perspective to an interaction based perspective of the Home Literacy Environment, which is a literacy environment formed through the quality of interaction between parents and children.

Literacy Embedded in Everyday Family Routines

Home Literacy Environment (HLE) does not take place as a learning activity separate from family life, but is integrated into daily routines that have cultural and religious meaning. Literacy activities are not only carried out through reading books together, but also through reading Iqra', studying after Maghrib prayers, memorizing short prayers, daily conversations, and educational games that are carried out repeatedly in the family. This routine becomes part of daily life so that children get literacy experience naturally without viewing it as a purely academic activity.

One of the participants explained that learning activities at home always begin after Maghrib prayers.

"... usually after Maghrib study first, recite first, then when it is finished then play again or rest..." (R2)

Other participants also revealed that the activity of reading Iqra' has become a habit that is carried out with children from an early age.

"... The child's provisions are from home first, including studying with Ngaji. So every day it is customary to recite Iqra', even if it is a little important routine..." (R1)

This phenomenon shows that literacy activities in the family are not built through rigid formal learning schedules, but through routines that have become part of family culture. Reading Iqra', learning after Maghrib, and memorizing prayers is not only understood as a religious activity, but also a medium for children to recognize letter symbols, practice phonological skills, enrich vocabulary, improve listening skills, and build reading habits from an early age. In other words, families indirectly integrate the development of literacy with the religious values that have been lived in their daily lives.

Children's literacy development takes place through experiences that have social and cultural significance for families. Children not only learn to read because of the demands of school, but because these activities become part of the family routine that are carried out consistently. This condition creates a more meaningful learning experience because children associate literacy activities with interactions with parents, religious values, and family habits that have taken place repeatedly. Therefore, the literacy process develops as a social practice built through relationships between families, not just as an academic skill.

This statement strengthens the argument of Lehl et al., (2020) who explain that the Home Literacy Environment is built through repeated interactions in the family environment. In addition, Suardi et al., (2024) also emphasized that the culture of reading in the family develops through habituation carried out in daily activities. However, most research on HLE still places shared reading, book ownership, and frequency of reading together as the main indicators of the literacy environment at home (Dowdall et al., 2020; Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022). This approach tends to depart from the context of Western society which makes storybooks the center of family literacy activities.

Activities of reading Iqra', learning after Maghrib, memorizing prayers, and conversations about religious values not only function as a means of religious learning, but also as a medium that supports the development of language skills, early reading, and children's literacy habits.

Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance

Digital media has an ambivalent role in building a Home Literacy Environment (HLE). On the one hand, parents use digital media such as YouTube, educational videos, and learning games as a means to introduce new letters, numbers, colors, and vocabulary to their children. On the other hand, digital media is also a challenge when children are more interested in using gadgets to play games or watch entertainment than participating in learning activities. Thus, digital media in this study does not appear as a factor that fully supports or inhibits, but has a function that depends on how it is used in the family.

One of the participants explained that digital media is used as a learning medium when children start to feel bored learning using books.

"... Sometimes learning through YouTube too, because if it's just a children's book you get bored quickly. If the video is interesting, he is more enthusiastic about learning..." (R2)

However, other participants admitted that the use of gadgets also often reduces children's interest in doing literacy activities.

"... If you have a cell phone, you want to continue playing games. So you have to limit the time, otherwise it's hard to learn..." (R3)

Digital media does not have a single influence on the development of children's literacy. The educational value of digital media does not lie in the technological devices themselves, but in how parents manage their use. When parents choose appropriate content, accompany their children during the use of digital media, and regulate the duration of their use, digital media can be a means that enriches the literacy experience through an interesting combination of visual, audio, and interaction. On the contrary, without assistance, digital media is more likely to turn into a source of distraction that reduces children's opportunities to engage in more meaningful literacy activities.

The quality of the Home Literacy Environment in the digital era is no longer determined by the existence of technology, but by the ability of parents to conduct parental mediation on the use of digital media. Parents in this study did not completely prohibit the use of gadgets, but applied various strategies such as limiting the time of use, choosing educational content, accompanying children when watching learning videos, and directing children to rediscuss the material that has been learned. Thus, technology is positioned as a tool that supports parent-child interaction, not as a substitute for parental involvement in the learning process.

The debate about the impact of digital media on children's literacy development cannot be understood dichotomously as something positive or negative. The family experience in this study shows

that digital devices can produce different literacy experiences depending on the parenting pattern. Therefore, the effectiveness of digital media does not lie in the frequency of its use, but in the quality of the interaction that accompanies the use of the technology.

The results of this study are in line with Kucirkova and Flewitt (2022) who explain that the benefits of digital media for children's literacy development are greatly influenced by parents' beliefs and involvement in accompanying children's digital activities. Suardi et al. (2024) also emphasized that the family has an important role in directing the use of technology to continue to support the development of literacy culture. However, some previous studies still tend to position digital media as a threat to conventional reading activities or, conversely, as an innovative solution in early childhood learning. This approach does not fully explain how technology is interpreted and used differently by each family.

The function of digital media is contextual and depends on the mediation process carried out by parents. Technology does not automatically improve or decrease the quality of the Home Literacy Environment. On the other hand, digital media becomes effective when used as part of parent-child interaction, for example through watching educational videos together, discussing the content of the show, or connecting information obtained from digital media with daily experiences. On the other hand, when the use of digital media takes place without assistance and without time management, digital devices have the potential to be a source of distraction rather than learning media.

This research offers the concept of Digital Media as a Dual Literacy Affordance, namely digital media has dual potential as a means of developing literacy as well as a source of distraction for children. This potential is not determined by the technology itself, but by the quality of parental mediation, content selection, the regulation of the duration of use, and the interaction built between parents and children during the use of digital media. This concept expands the study of Home Literacy Environment by placing digital media as part of the family literacy ecosystem that is dynamic, adaptive, and depends on the quality of the relationship between parents and children, not just on the existence of digital devices at home.

Adaptive Literacy Practices: Responding to Children's Emotional Readiness

Home Literacy Environment (HLE) applied by parents is adaptive to children's emotional readiness. Parents do not apply a completely rigid learning schedule, but adjust the time, method, and form of literacy activities based on the child's emotional condition, interests, and readiness level. In addition, various factors such as parents' busyness, children's emotional readiness, and family routines also affect how literacy activities are carried out in daily life. These findings suggest that the sustainability of HLE practices is not only influenced by the consistency of routines, but also by the ability of parents to respond to the dynamics that occur in the family.

One of the participants explained that learning activities are not carried out when children are feeling tired or not excited.

"... If the child is tired or doesn't want to study anymore, I am not forced. Later try again when the mood is good so that the study also enters..." (R3)

Other participants also revealed that learning methods are often changed so that children remain interested in participating in literacy activities.

"... If you're bored, learn while playing, sometimes using videos, sometimes while talking, the important thing is that the child wants to do it first..." (R2)

The success of literacy practice at home does not depend on adherence to a fixed learning schedule, but on the ability of parents to build learning experiences that are appropriate to the children's emotional readiness. Parents understand that early childhood has a variable range of attention, motivation, and readiness to learn. Therefore, they prefer to adjust learning strategies rather than forcing children to participate in literacy activities when their emotional conditions are not supportive. This approach allows children to still view literacy activities as a fun experience, not a form of pressure.

Emotional responsiveness is an integral part of the Home Literacy Environment. Reading, writing, and learning activities together are not only influenced by the methods used, but also by the quality of the emotional relationship between parents and children. When parents recognize children's changing affective readiness and adjust the form, timing, and intensity of literacy assistance, children are more likely to participate voluntarily in literacy activities.

The effectiveness of the Home Literacy Environment is not only determined by the intensity of literacy activities, but also by the sensitivity of parents to the emotional needs of children. So far, HLE practice is often associated with a reading routine that is done consistently. However, the results of this study show that consistency does not always mean applying the same schedule every day. Consistency can also be realized through parents' commitment to continue to provide a positive literacy experience by adjusting their approach to their child's condition.

The quality of interaction in the family is the main factor that affects the development of children's literacy (Lehrl et al., 2020). Yunita & Apriliya (2022) also emphasized that responsive parental involvement is able to create a more effective learning environment at home. However, most research on the Home Literacy Environment still emphasizes the importance of the frequency of reading activities or structured learning routines. This approach has not fully taken into account that early childhood is an individual whose emotional development is so dynamic that it requires a flexible mentoring strategy.

Flexibility is not a form of inconsistency in the implementation of HLE, but an adaptive strategy that allows literacy activities to continue in various family conditions. Parents do not reduce their commitment to children's literacy development when the learning schedule changes, but change the way activities are delivered to suit the needs and readiness of the child at that time. Thus, the quality of the Home Literacy Environment is more determined by the ability of parents to adjust learning strategies than by maintaining rigid routines.

These findings suggest that flexibility should not be interpreted as inconsistency in HLE practices. Rather, flexibility represents an emotionally responsive literacy strategy through which parents sustain literacy engagement while recognizing children's fluctuating affective readiness. We refer to this pattern as Emotionally Responsive Home Literacy Practices.

Theoretically, this study proposes an Adaptive Interaction-Driven HLE perspective. This perspective conceptualizes the Home Literacy Environment as a dynamic literacy ecosystem constructed through reciprocal parent-child interaction, culturally embedded family routines, parental mediation of digital resources, and responsiveness to children's emotional readiness. The findings extend resource-oriented HLE conceptualizations by demonstrating that literacy opportunities are not simply determined by what families possess but by how parents transform available resources, routines, and interactions into meaningful literacy experiences.

Practically, family literacy programs should move beyond recommendations focused primarily on increasing book ownership or the frequency of formal reading activities. PAUD institutions and family education programs should strengthen parents' capacity in verbal scaffolding, responsive literacy interaction, digital mediation, and the integration of literacy into culturally meaningful family routines. Such programs may be particularly relevant for families in semi-rural and socio-culturally diverse contexts where literacy resources and family routines vary considerably.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the small number of participating families limits the transferability of the findings across broader socio-cultural contexts. Second, the study primarily captured parental perspectives and did not directly examine children's interpretations of home literacy experiences. Third, the research was conducted within a single semi-rural community, and literacy practices may differ across urban, rural, and culturally diverse family settings. Future research should involve more diverse family configurations, incorporate children's voices, and employ longitudinal or comparative qualitative designs to examine how adaptive HLE practices evolve over time and across socio-cultural contexts. The proposed Adaptive Interaction-Driven HLE perspective also requires further empirical examination in larger and more diverse family settings.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the Home Literacy Environment is not merely a physical setting defined by books and learning materials but an adaptive and interaction-driven literacy ecosystem dynamically constructed through parental mediation. Across participating families, literacy experiences emerged through responsive parent-child interaction, culturally and religiously embedded routines, mediated engagement with digital resources, and flexible responses to children's emotional readiness.

The findings challenge material-centered conceptualizations of HLE by showing that the quality of literacy experiences depends less on the quantity of resources available than on how parents transform everyday interactions, resources, and family routines into meaningful literacy opportunities. Digital media similarly did not function inherently as either a literacy resource or a distraction; its role was shaped by parental mediation and the interaction surrounding its use.

The study therefore proposes an Adaptive Interaction-Driven HLE perspective, emphasizing the relational, cultural, digital, and emotional dimensions of family literacy. This perspective offers a contextual contribution to HLE scholarship, particularly within semi-rural and developing-country contexts. Strengthening family literacy should consequently focus not only on providing literacy materials but also on developing parents' capacity to mediate, interact, adapt, and create meaningful literacy experiences within children's everyday lives.

Suggestions

Parents are advised to maintain active involvement in literacy activities through reading habits, positive communication, and consistent learning assistance according to the needs of the child. PAUD institutions are expected to strengthen collaboration with parents through family literacy programs. Further research is suggested to involve more diverse informants and wider coverage of areas in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the application of Home Literacy Environment (HLE) in early childhood.

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