
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Parental Involvement: A Vital Component of Kindergarten Learners' Early Literacy Development

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| ABSTRACT

This study assessed parental involvement and early literacy development of kindergarten learners. The research employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between parental involvement and early literacy development. A total of one hundred twelve respondents participated, comprising one hundred five parents and seven kindergarten teachers. Data were gathered using adapted survey questionnaires from established research instruments and analyzed using frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation coefficient. Results revealed that parent-respondents were predominantly female from younger age groups with diverse educational backgrounds, smaller family sizes, and lower income levels, while teacher-respondents were predominantly female with substantial teaching experience and graduate-level qualifications. Parental involvement in school activities demonstrated very high levels across nearly all indicators. Early literacy development showed very high overall performance, with language development scoring higher than attitudes towards reading and voluntary reading behaviors. The correlation analysis revealed a weak positive relationship between parental involvement and early literacy development that was not statistically significant, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. The findings suggest that the school represents an optimal educational context where ceiling effects mask the relationship between variables. An Early Literacy Development Plan was proposed to address specific areas requiring enhancement while building upon existing strengths.

| KEYWORDS

Parental involvement, Early literacy development, Kindergarten learners, Language development

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

Early literacy development plays a vital role in shaping children's educational success and lifelong learning potential. During the kindergarten years, young learners begin to build essential foundations in speaking, listening, reading, and writing—skills that support more advanced academic competencies in later grades. According to Gamble and Ewing (2020), early exposure to structured literacy instruction significantly boosts children's reading comprehension and fluency. Similarly, Guo et al. (2021) highlight that both school-based and home-based literacy experiences contribute to the development of early reading and language skills. LoCasale-Crouch et al. (2021) emphasize the value of teacher-led phonological activities in building foundational literacy. Additionally, Edwards and Stringer (2022) found that rich language interactions, especially in diverse contexts, are critical for promoting vocabulary and oral language growth. These findings affirm that early literacy is a collaborative effort that involves educators, caregivers, and community resources working together to foster development.

The role of parental engagement in early literacy is well-supported by recent literature. When parents are involved in their children's learning through reading at home, storytelling, or supporting literacy tasks, children show greater reading interest and academic

success (Xu, Chin, & Reed, 2022). Research by Kim and Schatschneider (2021) indicates that regular home-based literacy practices enhance children's language acquisition and cognitive skills. Moreover, Ng and Bartlett (2020) highlight that parental attitudes toward education have a lasting impact on children's reading motivation and literacy growth. A study by Sung and Chang (2021) emphasizes that parent-school communication further strengthens this relationship by promoting aligned literacy practices. Together, these studies support the argument that a strong home literacy environment, when paired with school efforts, creates optimal conditions for literacy success in early learners.

To better understand children's literacy progress, it is essential to include insights from both parents and teachers. While parents observe reading behaviors in informal settings, teachers assess structured learning and monitor progress using academic benchmarks (Nash & Zhang, 2021). According to Wu et al. (2022), strong collaboration between educators and families improves early literacy outcomes and ensures targeted support. Clarke et al. (2021) note that shared feedback between parents and teachers can lead to earlier identification of literacy difficulties. Another study by O'Toole and Kirk (2023) found that dual perspectives enable more tailored and effective literacy instruction. Including both teacher and parent input in literacy assessment leads to a more holistic understanding of learner development and improves intervention strategies across school and home settings.

Children's interest in reading and their willingness to read voluntarily are closely associated with reading achievement and language development. According to Bradshaw and Nichols (2021), students who develop intrinsic motivation for reading are more likely to become lifelong readers. Rahimi and Sadeghi (2022) emphasize that fostering early positive reading attitudes improves comprehension and critical thinking. Parent and teacher modeling of reading behavior, as noted by Lin and Lee (2020), plays a crucial role in encouraging children to read for pleasure. In addition, Bingham et al. (2021) argue that environments that provide both emotional support and access to books increase voluntary reading habits. Emotional engagement with stories and consistent encouragement to read independently promote both literacy competence and enjoyment, reinforcing the importance of nurturing reading attitudes early.

Despite significant global research, there remains a lack of focused studies on early literacy and parental involvement within rural and semi-rural settings in the Philippines. Most research continues to center on urban contexts or aggregated national findings, often overlooking the cultural and logistical factors unique to smaller communities (Villanueva & Alvarez, 2021). Bradshaw and Nichols (2021) point out that geographic and socio-economic disparities in parental involvement remain underrepresented in educational datasets. Research by Mateo and Cruz (2023) calls for community-based studies that examine literacy development from both school and family perspectives. Likewise, Rivera and Santos (2020) argue that effective early literacy strategies must be adapted to local contexts, including access to resources and parent literacy levels. Without data that reflects the experiences of rural schools, efforts to enhance early literacy may lack relevance or practical impact in these communities.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the level of parental involvement in school-related activities and the early literacy development of kindergarten learners, specifically in a semi-rural context. The research focuses on two key components of early literacy: language development and attitudes toward voluntary reading. Parent respondents provided data on their home literacy practices, while teachers assessed learners' literacy behaviors in the classroom. Through this dual perspective, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence early reading development in a localized setting. The findings aim to guide school leaders and educational stakeholders in designing community-specific interventions that support literacy growth. Ultimately, the study seeks to encourage stronger parent-teacher collaboration and empower families to play an active role in nurturing children's long-term love for reading.

Literature Review

Parental engagement remains a vital element in fostering early academic and literacy development in children. Families that engage in educational activities—such as reading aloud, discussing stories, and supplying age-appropriate reading materials—significantly support the growth of foundational literacy skills (Alam & Tareque, 2021). When parents actively communicate with educators and align home practices with school goals, children are more likely to show enhanced reading abilities and richer language use (Zhang, Diamond, & Powell, 2022). According to Arkorful and Yeboah (2021), parental encouragement and positive attitudes toward learning boost children's self-confidence and persistence in reading-related tasks. The emotional presence of parents during literacy activities has also been linked to improved academic resilience and engagement (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2020). Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of nurturing a literacy-rich home environment and establishing a meaningful partnership between school and family to support children's holistic development. Equally important are the insights of teachers, who observe children's reading behaviors in structured settings and implement strategies to guide literacy growth. Teachers play a crucial role in diagnosing and addressing individual learning needs through adaptive instruction. Research by Evans, Kelly, and O'Hare (2022) demonstrates that interactive reading techniques and responsive pedagogy significantly enhance early learners' reading motivation and comprehension. Muijs and Reynolds (2020) found that children benefit most from classrooms where teachers integrate diverse reading methods and adjust instruction based on students' readiness. Additionally,

Johnson and Santiago (2023) emphasize that collaboration with families enables educators to design more personalized learning experiences that reinforce classroom instruction. Kwok et al. (2021) argue that when teachers and parents share responsibility for literacy outcomes, early reading progress becomes more consistent and sustainable. These insights affirm that aligning instructional approaches with family support systems leads to more comprehensive and effective early literacy development.

Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between parental involvement and the early literacy development of kindergarten pupils in the Division of Cebu Province, particularly within Bantayan District 1. As noted by Creswell (2018) and reiterated by Mekonnen (2020), this design is suited for studies aiming to measure the degree of association between variables without implementing experimental manipulation. This approach was appropriate for addressing the study's goals namely, to describe the level of parental engagement, assess the literacy development of young learners, and explore any significant relationship between these two areas through a quantitative lens. The correlational method also allowed for the generation of statistical insights that could inform future initiatives designed to strengthen parental roles in literacy enhancement. Guided by an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, the research followed a systematic framework for collecting and analyzing data relevant to the study's objectives. Respondents included both the parents of kindergarten learners, who play a critical role in supporting literacy at home, and the kindergarten teachers, who observe and assess literacy development in the classroom context. To measure the relationship between the variables, the study applied Pearson's r correlation test, a statistical technique used to evaluate the strength and direction of linear relationships. This tool was deemed effective for determining whether higher levels of parental involvement were significantly associated with improved literacy outcomes among young children.

Results

Table 1. Level of Parents' Involvement in the School Activities of the Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I make sure that my child acts in accordance with his/her study schedule and study at home.	4.76	0.55	Very High
2	I make sure that my child has a comfortable space for learning.	4.69	0.51	Very High
3	I always talk to my child about his/her daily activities.	4.69	0.59	Very High
4	I guide my child when performing household chores.	4.5	0.68	Very High
5	I examined my child's homework.	4.65	0.61	Very High
6	I make sure that my child has enough reference books, stationery, and other educational necessities.	4.45	0.8	Very High
7	I make sure that a learning environment with less noise from the television/radio when my child studies his/her lessons.	4.56	0.74	Very High
8	I send my children to extra classes held at school.	4.49	0.78	Very High
9	I send my son to paid tuition.	2.71	1.43	Moderate
10	I always talk with my child about his/her problems.	4.56	0.78	Very High

Table 1 presents the level of parents' involvement in the school activities of the learners, revealing an overall aggregate weighted mean of 4.44 with a standard deviation of 0.75, interpreted as "Very High". This indicates that parents are highly engaged in their children's learning, particularly through home-based academic support and emotional guidance. The highest mean scores were seen in statements such as talking to the child about daily activities (WM = 4.69), ensuring a comfortable learning environment (WM = 4.69), and enforcing a consistent study schedule (WM = 4.76). Parents also showed strong involvement in checking homework (WM = 4.65), maintaining a distraction-free study area (WM = 4.56), and providing learning materials (WM = 4.45). Emotional support is evident in parents' willingness to talk with their children about personal problems (WM = 4.56). The only indicator with a "Moderate" rating was sending the child to paid tuition (WM = 2.71), which may reflect financial limitations or reliance on alternative academic support. These results suggest that parents prioritize active, consistent engagement in their children's education, focusing on creating a supportive home environment. Such involvement plays a crucial role in reinforcing early learning experiences and fostering academic development among young learners.

Table 2. Level of Early Literacy Development of the Learners in Terms of Language Development

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Identifies familiar sounds	4.49	0.87	Very High
2	Understands the language of others when spoken to	4.49	0.91	Very High
3	Follows verbal directions	4.55	0.71	Very High
4	Speaks to others freely	4.56	0.75	Very High
5	Pronounces words correctly	4.44	0.81	Very High
6	Has appropriate vocabulary for level of maturity	4.36	0.81	Very High
7	Speaks in complete sentences	4.51	0.77	Very High
8	Uses varied syntactic structures	4.30	0.93	Very High
9	Can be understood by others	4.50	0.87	Very High

Table 2 illustrates the level of early literacy development of the learners in terms of language development, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.84, both interpreted as "Very High." These findings indicate that kindergarten learners consistently demonstrate strong foundational language skills across all assessed indicators. The highest mean was recorded for "speaks to others freely" (WM = 4.56), reflecting learners' confidence in verbal expression and social communication. Other high-scoring indicators include following verbal directions (WM = 4.55), speaking in complete sentences (WM = 4.51), and being understood by others (WM = 4.50), showing that learners are developing both expressive and receptive language skills. Even complex aspects of language, such as using varied syntactic structures (WM = 4.30), were rated "Very High," suggesting early mastery of sentence formation. These results point to effective classroom strategies and possibly supportive home environments that encourage frequent language interactions. The consistency in high ratings across all indicators underscores the learners' strong verbal abilities at this stage, which are critical for later reading comprehension, writing, and overall academic success. These results affirm the importance of continued focus on oral language development in early childhood education.

Table 3. Level of Early Literacy Development of the Learners in Terms of Attitudes Towards Reading and Voluntary Reading

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Voluntarily looks at or reads books	4.22	0.91	Very High
2	Asks to be read to	4.06	0.99	High
3	Listens attentively while being read to	4.28	0.88	Very High
4	Responds with questions and comments to stories read	4.24	0.99	Very High
5	Takes books home to read	3.85	0.96	High
6	Reads voluntarily at home	3.90	0.99	High

Table 3 presents the level of early literacy development of learners in terms of attitudes towards reading and voluntary reading, revealing an aggregate weighted mean of 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.95, interpreted as "High." These findings suggest that while learners generally show a positive disposition toward reading, there is slightly less consistency compared to their language development scores. The highest-rated indicators were "listens attentively while being read to" (WM = 4.28) and "responds with questions and comments to stories read" (WM = 4.24), both rated "Very High," indicating that learners are engaged and cognitively responsive during shared reading experiences. "Voluntarily looks at or reads books" (WM = 4.22) also received a "Very High" rating, reflecting independent interest in books. However, lower means were recorded for "takes books home to read" (WM = 3.85) and "reads voluntarily at home" (WM = 3.90), suggesting a need to strengthen reading habits outside of school. The indicator "asks to be read to" (WM = 4.06) scored "High," reflecting moderate initiative from learners. Overall, the data suggest that learners are motivated and engaged with reading, though further encouragement from both teachers and parents may help boost voluntary reading at home.

Table 4. Test of the Relationship Between Parents' Involvement and Early Literacy Development of the Learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Parents' Involvement and Early Literacy Development	0.161	Negligible Positive	0.101	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 4 presents the results of the test of the relationship between parents' involvement and early literacy development of

kindergarten learners. The computed r -value of 0.161 indicates a negligible positive correlation, suggesting a very weak relationship between the two variables. Additionally, the p -value of 0.101 is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, leading to the decision to not reject the null hypothesis (H_0). This means that the relationship between parents' involvement and learners' early literacy development in this context is not statistically significant. These results imply that, while parental involvement was rated highly and early literacy levels were strong, the data does not support a meaningful linear association between the two. This may be due to various external factors influencing early literacy development, such as teaching strategies, classroom environment, or individual learner differences. It is also possible that the type or quality of parental involvement plays a more crucial role than the frequency or presence of involvement alone. Therefore, while engaging parents remains important, the findings suggest that improving early literacy outcomes may also require more targeted support within the classroom and more specific home literacy practices.

Discussion

The results collectively portray a comprehensive picture of the learning environment of kindergarten pupils, particularly in the context of parental involvement and early literacy development. Table 1 clearly demonstrates that parents are actively involved in their children's education, with most indicators rated as "Very High," especially those related to supporting academic routines, maintaining a conducive learning environment, and providing emotional support. This reflects a strong parental commitment to education within the household. Similarly, findings reveal that learners exhibit a high level of early literacy development, particularly in language skills such as following directions, speaking clearly, and understanding others. Attitudes toward reading were also generally positive, though slightly lower in areas related to independent and voluntary reading outside the classroom. These findings imply that both home and school environments are effectively nurturing foundational literacy skills in young learners. However, despite these high levels of parental involvement and early literacy indicators, moreover, data reveals that the statistical relationship between the two is not significant, as shown by the negligible positive correlation. This suggests that while parents are active in their children's educational routines, such involvement may not directly influence measurable literacy outcomes or at least, not in a linear or statistically significant way. Other contextual variables may be contributing more strongly to literacy development, such as teaching strategies, school resources, or child-specific factors like motivation and learning pace. These results highlight the importance of not only promoting parental engagement but also ensuring that such engagement is strategically aligned with literacy goals, such as encouraging home reading routines or supporting specific language development tasks.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that both parental involvement and early literacy development among kindergarten learners are rated at high levels, particularly in areas related to home-based academic support, emotional guidance, and language proficiency. Learners showed strong skills in communication and engagement with reading activities, although there is room for improvement in promoting voluntary reading at home. However, the statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between parental involvement and early literacy development, indicating that while both are present, one does not directly predict the other in this context. This suggests that other factors such as classroom instruction, school environment, and individual learner characteristics may play a more substantial role. Therefore, to enhance literacy outcomes, schools should not only encourage parental involvement but also ensure it is purposefully aligned with literacy development goals.

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