



Parental Involvement in Children Literacy Development

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Article Information

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents on children's literacy development and to identify the relationship between level knowledge, skills and attitudes of parent on children's literacy development with their involvement in children's literacy development at home. This quantitative study uses a survey as a research design. The questionnaire used to obtain the quantitative data distributed to 63 respondents in three different preschools in Baling, Kedah. The gathered data was analyzed using software IBM SPSS Version 22. The result showed that the level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents toward children's literacy development is high and the findings also revealed that there has a significant relationship between level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents toward children's literacy development with their involvement in children's literacy development at home. The implication of this study suggests that preschool need to creatively conduct the parental involvement activity to support children's learning and development.

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement in early childhood education is a crucial component that significantly influences a child's holistic development, well-being, and academic achievement. Research consistently highlights the positive impact of active parental engagement in early childhood education (Ekinci-Vural & Doğan-Altun, 2021; Mohd Nizam Naqiyuddin, Nur Farah Ain & Nur Atiqah Liyana, 2022; and Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). The influence of parents becomes evident in the complex educational journey of the children as a potent thread that runs through the formative years of literacy development. Outside of the school, parents are the children first teacher, principal builders, molding not only their children's cognitive development but also the passion for learning that they carry into adulthood. As importance, it is clear that parental engagement is crucial and indispensable in cultivating the fundamental abilities that serve as the foundation for a child's academic achievement and personal development.

Studies have revealed a literacy gap that exists when pupils start school, and these findings may be related to racial, socioeconomic, and educational preparation concerns (Powell, Son, File, & Froiland, 2012; Wasik & Hindman, 2018; Waldfogel, 2012). As important as other development domain, literacy development plays a crucial role in children academic success. Literacy development must start from home and need support by the parent. Variable reading readiness and experiences after starting school are key factors in preschoolers' development and performance. Parents can influence their children's level of involvement by starting their informal education at home.

Families and parents play a significant role in how well children are educated and raised. Parental involvement, according to Brito and Waller (1994), is a broad term that can refer to a wide range of activities. It can take several forms, such as an indifferent yearly visit to the school, regular parent-teacher conferences, or active school governance. As a result, parental involvement can be categorized along a continuum that spans from very low to very active. In the scientific literature, various definitions and terms are used when referring to forms of cooperation and collaboration between parents, teachers, schools, and the local community. When discussing the various forms of cooperation and collaboration that occur between parents, teachers, schools, and the local community, various terminologies and terms are utilized in the studies. For example, Parental participation, involvement, and engagement, school-family interactions, school-family-community collaborations, and educational partnerships (Boonk et al., 2018; Fox & Olsen, 2014; and Punter et al., 2016).

Parental involvement is a critical factor influencing the educational experiences and outcomes of young children. Early childhood education sets the foundation for a child's academic and socio-emotional development, and the role of parents in this process is widely acknowledged. Parental involvement is a multifaceted concept, as highlighted by Epstein's et. al (2002) framework, which includes parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration. Studies consistently underscore the importance of recognizing and fostering these diverse dimensions to create a holistic approach to parental involvement in early childhood education (Antony-Newman, 2019; Wilder, 2014; and Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Table 1 below explain about parental involvement types as adapted from Epstein et. Al (2002):

Table 1
Types of Parental Involvement by Epstein (2002)

Type of Involvement	Explanation
Parenting	Involves providing a supportive home environment that fosters the child's overall well-being. This includes meeting basic needs, setting expectations for behavior, and creating a positive and nurturing family environment.
Communication	Encompasses regular and effective communication between parents and teachers. This type of involvement includes attending parent-teacher conferences, responding to school communications, and staying informed about their child's progress and school activities.
Volunteering	Involves parents actively participating in school activities and events. This can include volunteering in the classroom, assisting with field trips, or contributing to school-wide events. Volunteering helps parents connect with the school community and demonstrates a commitment to their child's education.
Learning at Home	Refers to parents engaging in educational activities with their children at home. This can include reading together, helping with homework, and providing a stimulating learning environment. Parents play a crucial role in reinforcing and extending classroom learning at home.
Decision-Making	Involves parents participating in school decision-making processes. This can include serving on school committees, attending school board meetings, or contributing to parent-teacher organizations. Participating in decision-making allows parents to have a voice in shaping the educational environment.
Collaboration with the Community	Extends parental involvement beyond the school to the broader community. This may involve parents engaging with community organizations, participating in local events, or advocating for resources and support for the school. Collaboration with the community enhances the overall educational experience.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents on children's literacy development.
2. To investigate the relationship between level knowledge, skills and attitudes of parent on children's literacy development with their involvement in children's literacy development at home.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study and used survey as a research design. According to Glasow (2005) surveys are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population and also well suited to gathering demographic data that describe the composition of the sample. Surveys are inclusive in the types and number of variables that can be studied, require minimal investment to develop and administer, and are relatively easy for generalizing.

Population and Sample

This study has been done in three different preschools in Baling District, Kedah and total of population is 75 parents. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination, a total of 63 parents are sufficient to be selected as a sample for this study to represent the population.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire is created using google form which consist of 29 items covered on demographic of the respondent, level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents toward children’s literacy development and parent’s involvement in children’s literacy development at home. The details of the questionnaire are explained in table 2 below:

Table 2:
Number of items in Questionnaire

Part	No of Items
Part A: Demographic	4
Part B: The level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents towards children's literacy development	16
Part C: Parents' Involvement in Children's Literacy Development at Home.	9
Total of items	29

The questionnaire was created using a Likert Scale to rate statements. Two professors reviewed the surveys, and proper changes were made before disseminating to the respondents for pilot test. The pilot test was done to 30 participants then analysed to check the reliability. The result showed that the Cronbach’s alpha value for this questionnaire is 0.91 which mean excellent (George & Mallery, 2003).

Data Analysis

The revised questionnaire distributed to 75 parents in three different preschools in Baling, Kedah using google form. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Science Social, SPSS to determine the mean level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents toward children literacy development and the relationship between level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents toward children literacy development and their involvement children's literacy development at home.

RESULT

Respondent Demography

The background of the respondents is described based on the gender, roles, academic background, and occupation sector. Table 3 below explain about the respondent’s background involved in this study. 98.4% respondent are female and all of them are mother and guardian of the children in the preschool. No father involved in this study. Majority of the respondent have Diploma (76.2%) and working in government sector (90.5%).

Table 3
Demography of respondents

Demography	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	1	1.6%
Female	62	98.4%
Role		
Father	0	0%
Mother	50	79.4
Guardian	13	20.6
Academic Qualification		
PMR	1	1.6
SPM	4	6.3
STPM	1	1.6
Diploma	48	76.2
Bachelor Degree	3	4.8
Master Degree	5	7.9
PHD	1	1.6
Occupation Sector		
Government	57	90.5
Private	4	6.3
Self-Employed	2	3.2

Level of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of Parents Towards Children's Literacy Development

Table 4 shows the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents toward children’s literacy development. The mean interpretation was made based on the mean score interpretation table by Moidunny (2009). The result shows that level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents towards children’s literacy development is high.

Table 4:
The level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents towards children's literacy development.

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Knowledge			
How would you rate your understanding of the importance of early literacy development in children	3.73	0.54	High
My understanding of the stages of children's literacy development from birth to 6 years old is	3.75	0.48	High
My knowledge of strategies in helping to develop children's literacy is	3.56	0.50	High
My knowledge of suitable activities to help children's literacy development is	3.68	0.53	High
Skills			
I am able to invite my child to read and write together with me.	3.95	0.455	High
I am able to make reading activities a daily routine for my child.	3.87	0.49	High
I always attend/participate in workshops/programs to increase my skills in helping my child's literacy development.	3.63	0.60	High
I am always sensitive to my child's literacy education whether at home or at school.	3.93	0.35	High
I can convey a story effectively and interestingly.	3.78	0.66	High
I can choose/determine suitable reading books for my child according to his developmental level.	3.84	0.45	High
Attitudes			
Reading story books to children every day will help improve their literacy skills.	4.09	0.58	High
Reading and writing are crucial to a child's academic success.	3.92	0.68	High
Parents at home need to work with the school to improve children's literacy skills.	4.34	0.54	High
Children's literacy skills need to be developed through fun activities.	4.27	0.54	High
Children's literacy skills need to be developed at home first before entering preschool.	4.19	0.59	High
I often buy interesting reading books for my child.	3.98	0.58	High

Table 5 shows the level of parental involvement in children’s literacy development at home. The measurement scale of mean also made based on the mean score interpretation table by Moidunny (2009). Based on the result, we can conclude that level of parental involvement is high. Parent concern and help to develop their child’s literacy development at home. The highest mean score is I always support/participate in any programs related to the development of my child's literacy organized by the school (4.14) and the lowest is I often invite my child to go to the library or to the bookstore (3.68).

Table 5:
Parents' Involvement in Children's Literacy Development at Home

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I often discuss with the teacher about my child's level of literacy development.	3.93	0.56	High

I always support/participate in any programs related to the development of my child's literacy organized by the school.	4.14	0.53	High
I feel comfortable talking to the teacher or asking for opinions and suggestions about my child's development.	4.07	0.48	High
I set up a dedicated space in my home that is rich in reading material for my child to use.	3.69	0.63	High
I often invite my child to go to the library or to the bookstore.	3.68	0.64	High
I always help my son in choosing reading materials for him.	3.92	0.60	High
I often help my children to complete the tasks given by the teacher related to literacy.	4.04	0.52	High
I often read story books/tell stories to my child.	3.80	0.53	High
I will encourage my child to ask/discuss the content of the storybook I read.	3.82	0.55	High

The Relationship between level knowledge, skills and attitudes of parent on children's literacy development with parental involvement

Table 6 show the value of correlation between knowledge and parents' involvement is 0.342, meanwhile skills is 0.672 and attitudes 0.672. This means that there has a significant relationship between knowledge (sig=.006; p<.05), skills (sig=.000; p<.05), and attitudes (sig=.000; p<.05), of parents towards children's literacy development with parents' involvement in Children's Literacy Development at Home.

Table 6:
Relationship between level knowledge, skills and attitudes of parent on children's literacy development with parental involvement

		Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Parent's Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.342**	.672**	.672**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000	.000
	N	63	63	63

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the study, the level of parental involvement in literacy development is high and this result similar with the current research by Ishak, Satar dan Zakaria (2020). The results also revealed that most of the parents involved in this study have a high academic background and work in the government sector. These characteristics influenced the level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes on the literacy development and parental involvement as mentioned by Lee and Bowen (2006). From the result we can conclude that if parents know about the concept and importance of literacy development, have a good skills and positive attitude in developing children's literacy development, they have a higher tendency to participate in collaborating with teacher and school to boost their child's literacy development. A lot of studies already revealed that parental involvement positively influences children's literacy development. Parents who engage in activities like reading with their children, discussing stories, and providing a print-rich environment contribute to better literacy skills. Children often model their behavior after their parents. If parents demonstrate a positive attitude towards reading and engage in literacy activities, children are more likely to develop a similar enthusiasm for reading and learning.

Teachers play a vital role in fostering parental involvement. Regular communication between teachers and parents can provide insights into a child's progress, offer suggestions for activities at home, and create a collaborative learning environment. On top of that, preschool should actively promote family literacy programs by providing resources, guidance, and workshops to help parents support their children's literacy development at home. (Siti Soraya, Abdul Halim, & Nor Hashimah Hashim, 2023).

This research can be extended to other demography of respondent or other type of preschools. Further research can be done on parental involvement in children's literacy development such as investigating the effect of bed time story in language acquisition among preschools, the type of parental involvement in developing children's literacy and effect of shared reading in vocabulary enhancement among pre-schoolers.

CONCLUSION

By involving parents in the educational process, parental involvement offers preschools a significant chance to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Increasing the involvement of parents has been demonstrated to improved preschool climate, higher parent and teacher satisfaction, and optimized children's development and achievement. Preschools may have partnership programs in place that continuously create, carry out, assess, and enhance strategies and practices promoting family and community involvement in order to enhance effective parental involvement not only literacy development but covers all developmental domain as well.

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