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Home Literacy Practices And Parental Involvement in Supporting Early Childhood Language Development: A Qualitative Study

Restiana Ertika Latifah¹, dan Jamilah Mohd Basir²

¹ Early Childhood Teacher Education, Sekolah Tinggi Pendidikan Holistik Berbasis Karakter

² Early Childhood Education, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

ABSTRAK. Penelitian kualitatif ini mengkaji peran praktik literasi di rumah, pengetahuan awal, dan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung dalam membentuk perkembangan bahasa anak prasekolah. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan orang tua dan guru, serta observasi kelas di pusat-pusat pendidikan anak usia dini di Indonesia. Analisis tematik mengungkap tujuh dimensi literasi di rumah (misalnya, ketersediaan buku, kesadaran orang tua, praktik membaca), empat sub-tema moderasi pengetahuan sebelumnya (misalnya, kemahiran kosakata, ingatan terhadap isi buku, hubungan kontekstual, kesiapan linguistik), dan enam sub-tema dukungan lingkungan belajar (misalnya, integrasi dengan aktivitas lain, interaksi teman sebaya, scaffolding motivasional). Temuan menunjukkan keterkaitan antara praktik literasi di rumah dan sekolah, peran moderasi pengetahuan sebelumnya, serta pentingnya lingkungan kelas yang mendukung secara emosional. Triangulasi antara orang tua, guru, dan pengamatan meningkatkan validitas. Keunikan penelitian ini terletak pada penyajian model ekosistem literasi awal yang terintegrasi dan berakar pada konteks pendidikan prasekolah di Indonesia, sehingga memberikan kontribusi yang berlandaskan budaya dalam wacana global mengenai literasi awal. Studi ini menekankan perlunya intervensi literasi holistik yang melibatkan orang tua, memanfaatkan pengetahuan sebelumnya anak-anak, dan menciptakan konteks sekolah yang mendukung.

Kata Kunci : Literasi di Rumah; Keterlibatan Orang Tua; Pengetahuan Awal; Lingkungan Belajar; Perkembangan Bahasa; Anak Usia Dini

ABSTRACT. This qualitative study explores the role of home literacy practices, prior knowledge, and supportive learning environments in shaping preschool children's language development. Data were collected from parent and teacher interviews, along with classroom observations in Indonesian early childhood centers. Thematic analysis revealed seven dimensions of home literacy (e.g., availability of books, parental awareness, reading practices), four sub-themes of prior knowledge moderation (e.g., vocabulary familiarity, recall of book content, contextual connections, linguistic readiness), and six sub-themes of learning environment support (e.g., integration with other activities, peer interaction, motivational scaffolding). Findings demonstrate the interconnectedness of home and school literacy practices, the moderating role of prior knowledge, and the importance of emotionally supportive classroom environments. Triangulation across parents, teachers, and observations enhanced validity. This study's novelty lies in presenting an integrated early literacy ecosystem model grounded in the Indonesian preschool context, offering a culturally situated contribution to the global discourse on emergent literacy. The study underscores the need for holistic literacy interventions that engage parents, leverage children's prior knowledge, and create supportive school contexts.

Keyword : Home Literacy; Parental Involvement; Prior Knowledge; Learning Environment; Language Development; Early Childhood

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✉ Corresponding author : Jamilah Mohd Basir

Email Address : jamilah.basir@fpm.upsi.edu.my

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, literacy has been recognized as more than just the technical skills of reading and writing; it is now seen as a fundamental competency for lifelong learning, social participation and personal growth. Global frameworks such as UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda emphasize literacy as a key element of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Over the past decade, substantial research has shifted its focus from traditional phonics-based models to more holistic, contextual approaches that view literacy as a socially constructed process emerging from children's interactions with their environments [1]–[4]. Within this framework, early literacy development is considered a multidimensional construct shaped by family practices, socio-cultural context and the availability of learning resources.

The national curriculum under *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes literacy-rich classrooms, yet the home environment continues to play a critical role in shaping children's readiness for reading and writing [5]. This interplay between home and school environments has drawn growing attention from researchers seeking to identify factors that mediate literacy acquisition, such as the home literacy environment, prior knowledge, and the quality of teacher-child interactions [6]–[9].

According to empirical research, children's emergent literacy outcomes are significantly influenced by their home literacy environment (HLE), which includes parental participation, reading material accessibility, and emotional engagement during shared reading [8], [10]. Children who are exposed to books and language-rich conversation at an early age show advanced phonological awareness, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition abilities [11], [12]. Furthermore, prior knowledge moderation has emerged as a key cognitive mechanism that affects how children absorb, comprehend, and integrate new information. Children construct meaning and recall information more easily when reading activities are linked to familiar circumstances [13], [14].

Parallel to this, the learning environment at school including teacher beliefs, classroom resources, peer interaction, and the integration of play-based literacy activities has been shown to reinforce home-based learning. Preschool teachers who receive continuous training in emergent literacy are more likely to implement holistic and engaging literacy practices that promote oral language, comprehension, and social-emotional skills [15]. Thus, literacy development emerges as a synergistic process, bridging home, school, and sociocultural settings.

In Indonesia, challenges related to early literacy remain a significant concern. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked Indonesia 70th out of 81 countries in reading literacy, with a mean score of 359, well below the OECD average of 476 [16]. At the preschool level, national surveys indicate that fewer than 40% of children enter primary school with adequate emergent literacy skills, and disparities are particularly pronounced in households with limited access to books and low parental educational attainment. Preliminary observations conducted at the research site prior to this study further revealed that many children arrived in class with

limited vocabulary and minimal experience of shared reading at home, indicating that home literacy practices are inconsistently implemented even in school-adjacent communities. These gaps point to an urgent need for empirically grounded, context-sensitive research that examines how home environments, cognitive readiness, and school support systems work together to foster early literacy in Indonesian children.

Despite extensive international research, few empirical studies in the Indonesian context have explored how home literacy practices, prior knowledge, and learning environment support interact to influence early literacy development [6], [17]. Previous studies often examined these elements in isolation: home literacy research typically focused on material access [6] or reading frequency [18], prior knowledge studies concentrated on cognitive schemas without examining their interaction with home inputs [13], and learning environment studies largely focused on teacher practices divorced from family contexts [15]. None of these strands sufficiently accounted for the recursive, multi-directional relationships among all three factors within the specific sociocultural context of Indonesian early childhood education. Furthermore, there is limited qualitative evidence capturing the lived experiences of teachers and parents in fostering literacy habits among preschool children in Indonesia, where cultural norms around reading, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and parent-school collaboration differ meaningfully from Western contexts. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring the interconnected roles of parental involvement, children's prior knowledge, and supportive learning environments in shaping early reading and language development.

The theoretical rationale integrates Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which frames literacy as co-constructed through guided interaction; Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which positions the family and school as nested, mutually reinforcing microsystems; and Anderson's Schema Theory [19], which explains how prior knowledge mediates comprehension. Together, these frameworks justify examining home literacy, prior knowledge, and learning environment not as isolated variables but as components of an integrated literacy ecosystem. The novelty of this study lies in proposing and empirically grounding this integrated model within the Indonesian preschool context a contribution that extends both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for curriculum reform under Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do home literacy practices and parental involvement shape language development in Indonesian preschool children? (2) How does prior knowledge moderate children's comprehension and engagement during literacy activities? and (3) How does the learning environment at school reinforce and extend home-based literacy experiences?.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design using a case study approach to explore how home literacy practices, prior knowledge, and learning environment

support contribute to children's early language and literacy development. The qualitative approach was selected to capture the authentic experiences, meanings, and interpretations of parents and teachers regarding children's reading and communication activities. The design aligns with [20] emphasis on qualitative inquiry as a means of understanding phenomena within their real-life contexts, particularly in early childhood settings where behaviors are socially embedded and developmentally dynamic.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure rich and relevant data. The sample comprised five preschool teachers and two parents of children aged four to five years old from a private early childhood center in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. Participant characteristics are summarized in Table 2. The five teachers ranged in age from 24 to 38 years held undergraduate degrees in various major, fulfill specific teacher training to meet this preschool context, and had between three and six years of teaching experience. All teachers were actively involved in literacy-based classroom instruction. The two participating parents were mothers aged 32 and 35, both with higher education backgrounds, and were selected based on active involvement in school-home communication programs. The school was selected based on its literacy-oriented curriculum and active parental engagement programs. The selection of participating parents was based on their choice to engage in the interview process and their active involvement in teacher-parent coordination. In qualitative case study research, sample size is determined not by statistical power but by depth and richness of data. Consistent with Lincoln and Guba's [21] principle of purposive sampling and theoretical saturation, this sample was deemed sufficient as thematic redundancy was observed during the final interviews, indicating that additional participants would not yield substantially new insights. All participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

With accessible bookshelves, thematic story sessions, and project-based activities that combined reading and play, the learning environment placed a strong emphasis on print. This setting offered a realistic setting for investigating the relationships between reading habits at home and in school. Data were collected over a period of five months (October 2024 – February 2025), structured across three phases: Phase 1 (October–November 2024) involved site familiarization, consent procedures, and initial classroom observations to establish rapport; Phase 2 (November 2024–January 2025) comprised semi-structured interviews and continued thematic observations; and Phase 3 (February 2025) focused on member-checking and data saturation verification. Multiple data sources ensured triangulation [22]. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each of the five teachers and two parents (45–60 minutes each). The interview guide covered six thematic areas: (1) daily home or classroom literacy routines; (2) types and frequency of reading activities; (3) children's vocabulary development and prior knowledge activation; (4) communication and collaboration between home and school; (5) emotional and motivational aspects of literacy engagement; and (6) challenges and resources in supporting early literacy. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Classroom observations were conducted across 10 structured read aloud

sessions, using a semi-structured observation protocol that tracked child engagement, teacher–child interaction patterns, peer literacy interactions, and use of reading materials. Field notes recorded both descriptive and reflective entries. Triangulation across data sources was implemented by cross-checking emerging patterns: parental reports of home reading routines were validated against teachers’ observations of vocabulary recall in class, and both were further confirmed through observational field notes documenting children’s spontaneous literacy behaviors.

The data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke’s [23] six-phase framework, as shown in the flow chart below.

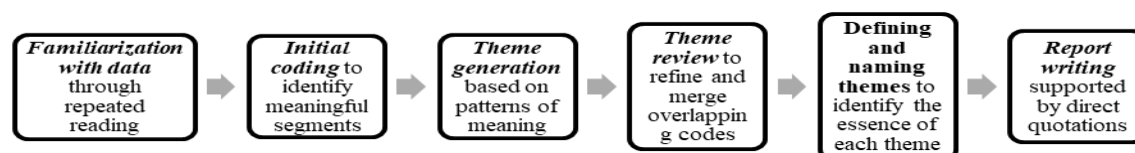


Figure 1. Braun and Clarke’s Steps of Thematic Analysis

NVivo 12 software was used to facilitate systematic coding, retrieval, and organization of data. The coding process followed three iterative stages. First, initial open coding was conducted by reading all transcripts and field notes line by line, generating descriptive codes close to the data (e.g., “bedtime reading routine,” “child recalls word from TV show”). Second, focused coding involved grouping related initial codes into broader categories based on conceptual similarity (e.g., “parental literacy practices,” “vocabulary activation from prior experience”). Third, thematic coding organized these categories into the three major themes—Home Literacy, Prior Knowledge Moderation, and Learning Environment Support—with subthemes inductively refined from the data. Parent nodes represented the three major themes and child nodes captured the subthemes. For example, under “Home Literacy,” child nodes included “book availability,” “parental awareness,” “reading expressiveness,” and “home-school communication.” The iterative coding process allowed for both within-case and cross-case comparison: within-case analysis explored how individual parents or teachers described literacy practices, while cross-case analysis identified convergent patterns across participants. Regular reflexive memos were written throughout to document interpretive decisions and analytical reasoning, supporting transparency and dependability.

To ensure research validity and reliability, several strategies were employed consistent with Lincoln & Guba criteria for trustworthiness [21] as describe in this table.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Aspects in The Research

Action	Description	Insures
Prolonged Engagement	Investing sufficient time to learn the culture, build trust with participants, understand the scope of target phenomena, and test for misinformation/ misinterpretation due to distortion by the researcher or informant	Credibility (internal validity)
Triangulation of Data	Data collection and analysis interpretation based on multiple sources and methods (interviews, observations, FGDs, and documents)	Credibility (internal validity)
Detailed Contextual Descriptions	Describe procedures, context, and participants in sufficient detail provided to allow readers to determine the applicability of findings to similar settings	Transferability (external validity)

Audit Trail	Records that include raw data; documentation of process and products of data reduction, analysis, and synthesis; methodological process notes; and instrument development/piloting techniques	Dependability Confirmability (reliability and objectivity)
Peer debriefing	Engage in analytic discussions with neutral peer (e.g., colleague not involved in the project)	Credibility (internal validity)

Methodological triangulation was also achieved by cross-validating information from parents and teachers. This is done to ensure that emerging interpretations reflect a holistic understanding of the children’s literacy environment, both at home and at school. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of the affiliated university. Participants received written information about the study’s objectives, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality. All identifiers were removed from transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this qualitative study reveal a dynamic interplay between home, school, and environmental factors that collectively shape children’s emergent literacy. Analysis of parental and teacher interviews, classroom observations, and documentation produced three major themes: (1) Home Literacy Practices and Parental Involvement, (2) Prior Knowledge Moderation, and (3) Learning Environment Support. Each theme consists of several interrelated subthemes that illustrate the social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of children’s literacy learning. A table summarizing the main themes and subthemes derived from the interviews and observations, offering clarity on how different aspects of literacy support were categorized.

Table 2. Overview of Themes and Subthemes

Main Theme	Subthemes	Description/Focus of Analysis
Home Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of Books & Literacy Materials 2. Parental Knowledge & Awareness 3. Parental Reading Practices 4. Communication Environment at Home 5. Parental Attitudes & Motivation 6. School–Home Literacy Connection 	Describes parents’ roles in shaping early literacy through access to materials, expressive reading, communication routines, and collaboration with teachers.
Prior Knowledge Moderation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activation of Background Knowledge 2. Use of Familiar Vocabulary 3. Contextual Connection and Transfer 4. Individual Cognitive Readiness 	Explains how children’s pre-existing experiences and conceptual understanding shape meaning-making during reading and storytelling.
Learning Environment Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of Reading Materials 2. Integration with Learning Activities 3. Motivation and Emotional Engagement 4. Peer Interaction 5. Supportive Atmosphere for Reading 6. Supportive Tools or Materials 	Highlights the physical and emotional context that encourages literacy engagement in both home and school environments.

Home Literacy Practices and Parental Involvement. This theme captures how parents create, sustain, and model literacy experiences within the home. Six subthemes emerged: availability of books and literacy materials, parental knowledge and awareness, reading practices, communication environment at home, attitudes and motivation toward literacy, and school–home connection.

First, Availability of Books and Literacy Materials. Parents reported providing a range of age-appropriate books at home, including character-based stories such as *Transformers* or *Vivi and Dito*. Some described introducing cloth or hardcover books as early as infancy often read by grandparents during bedtime. Such early exposure fostered children's visual familiarity with print, color, and symbols. Conversely, teachers observed that children who lacked access to books at home were less likely to engage with reading tasks in class, suggesting that book accessibility remains a decisive factor in shaping reading interest. *Second, Parental Knowledge and Awareness.* Parents' awareness of the importance of early reading was often influenced by teachers' encouragement. One parent acknowledged that they began regular read-aloud sessions only after being advised by educators. This indicates that school-initiated literacy guidance can significantly enhance parental literacy engagement at home.

Third, Parental Reading Practices. The majority of parents practiced daily or nightly shared reading routines. Expressive reading using varied intonation and gestures was highlighted as critical for sustaining children's attention. As one parent explained, "*If we don't use intonation and expression, the child might get bored.*" Such statements underline the affective dimension of literacy, where parental enthusiasm and consistency cultivate a positive reading climate. *Fourth, Communication Environment at Home.* Parents described homes rich in verbal interactions. Children were encouraged to ask about unfamiliar words, retell stories, and connect reading materials with real-life experiences. For example, one child spontaneously identified a "*flammable gas*" sign after hearing it read at home, demonstrating how literacy practices extended into environmental print recognition.

Fifth, Parental Attitudes and Motivation toward Literacy. Parental motivation was sustained by observing visible progress in their children's speech and comprehension. Families reported intentionally limiting gadget use and allocating specific hours (e.g., 7–9 p.m.) for reading and reflection. This sense of structure transformed literacy into a shared family ritual rather than an imposed academic task. *Sixth, School–Home Literacy Connection.* Teachers observed clear alignment between classroom and home literacy practices. When parents continued reading at home, children arrived in class ready to participate, recall stories, and retell them independently. Documentation from communication books and parent interviews confirmed bidirectional literacy reinforcement, where teachers and parents co-constructed a consistent literacy experience across settings.

The study confirms that the home literacy environment (HLE) serves as the earliest and most influential context in shaping children's language and literacy outcomes. Parents in this study provided children with access to books, engaged in expressive read-aloud, and established nightly reading routines. These findings support earlier evidence that the HLE is a strong predictor of emergent literacy [6], [8], [11], [24]. Consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory literacy learning occurs through social interaction and shared meaning-making within the child's zone of proximal development. In this case, parents act as mediators scaffolding children's understanding through tone, questioning, and contextual elaboration during reading.

Furthermore, the consistent routines described by parents (e.g., bedtime reading between 7–9 p.m.) align with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory [25], which positions the family as a microsystem providing direct developmental influence. Children who experienced regular literacy routines demonstrated stronger narrative memory, vocabulary retention, and expressive speech, confirming that frequency and emotional quality of reading jointly predict early literacy success [1], [26].

Interestingly, the study also highlights the reciprocal nature of home–school collaboration. Teachers observed that children whose parents practiced daily reading showed superior comprehension and story recall, while parents acknowledged that teachers’ advice motivated them to improve at-home reading. This bidirectional dynamic contrasts with Feng and Tan [24], who found that home school communication can sometimes negatively predict language outcomes when it heightens parental anxiety rather than confidence. In the present Indonesian context, teacher-initiated guidance was positively received, suggesting that the nature of home school communication may be culturally mediated and that culturally adapted communication strategies are necessary for fostering positive parental literacy engagement. This two-way influence supports the idea of ecological continuity [25], in which consistent values and experiences across home and school systems enhance developmental stability and learning outcomes.

Prior Knowledge Moderation. This theme reflects how children’s existing knowledge and experiences facilitate comprehension, vocabulary expansion, and narrative understanding during literacy activities. Four subthemes were identified: activation of background knowledge, use of familiar vocabulary, contextual connection, and individual differences in cognitive readiness. First, *Activation of Background Knowledge.* Both parents and teachers noted that children often made spontaneous connections between stories and their prior experiences linking illustrations to previous outings, TV shows, or classroom lessons. When asked about a “T-Rex,” for instance, children recalled seeing similar characters on television. Such evidence supports the role of schema activation in comprehension: children actively integrate new textual input with existing mental models. Second, *Use of Familiar Vocabulary.* Repetition and contextual usage of familiar words enhanced retention. Parents intentionally reinforced vocabulary through daily conversation e.g., explaining the difference between “dog” and “guguk,” or “excavator” and “beko.” Teachers, in turn, scaffolded word understanding by emphasizing rare terms (“kukuh,” “locomotive”) within story discussions, creating bridges between every day and academic language.

Third, Contextual Connection and Transfer. When exposed to visual or experiential cues, children displayed greater comprehension. For instance, one child recalled a “monitor” from home discussions during a computer-center activity, showing how cross-contextual learning occurs. Such observations affirm that prior knowledge functions as a moderating variable, shaping how meaning is constructed from stories. Fourth, *Individual Cognitive Readiness.* Teachers also reported differences in engagement levels: some children readily made predictions and analyses from book covers, while others required guided questioning. This variation underscores how prior knowledge

interacts with developmental readiness, emphasizing the need for differentiated literacy instruction.

The findings revealed that children actively connected stories to familiar experiences, such as linking story elements to TV characters, real-life events, or previously learned vocabulary. This aligns with schema theory [19] which posits that comprehension depends on activating and integrating pre-existing cognitive structures. Recall and summary measures assess the ability of the reader to retrieve the meaning of the text but they do not require the reader to integrate what they have just read into pre-existing schemata [27].

When children recognized words like “excavator,” “monitor,” or “wiper” from previous experiences, they demonstrated an ability to retrieve semantic knowledge and apply it in new contexts, an essential cognitive mechanism for reading comprehension [14]. Moreover, the tendency of some children to predict story outcomes or identify images before reading suggests that background knowledge shapes inferential thinking. These findings in line with previous research about children’s prior conceptual familiarity that enhances learning efficiency by enabling meaningful information processing [13]. In the present study, children’s capacity to relate familiar concepts across contexts (e.g., books, classroom displays, real-world objects) shows how home experiences, vocabulary richness, and environmental exposure form a coherent knowledge base that facilitates comprehension.

Such results also illustrate the interaction between cognitive readiness and social mediation, as children with higher verbal proficiency often led classroom discussions, indirectly scaffolding peers’ understanding. This supports Vygotsky’s notion of peer-assisted learning, emphasizing that social dialogue is a mechanism through which cognitive schemas expand. Critically, these findings diverge from studies in Western contexts where individual differences in prior knowledge are primarily attributed to SES-related book access [28]; in this Indonesian sample, prior knowledge differences were more closely tied to the quality of verbal interaction at home rather than material resources alone [6]. This suggests that intervention strategies focused solely on book distribution may be insufficient and that dialogic reading practices where parents engage children in active verbal exchange during reading may be more critical in this context. Such a conclusion carries meaningful implications for the design of parent training programs under Indonesia’s Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes learning through meaningful interaction.

Learning Environment Support. The last theme illustrates the external conditions that nurture literacy development within both home and school environments. Six subthemes were synthesized: availability of reading materials, integration with learning activities, motivation and emotional engagement, peer interaction, supportive atmosphere for reading, and supportive tools or materials. First, *Availability of Reading Materials.* Both homes and classrooms were described as book-rich environments. Books were displayed on shelves within children’s reach, and learners were encouraged to revisit previously read books. Such accessibility fostered independent engagement, as noted by teachers: “If there’s spare time, they’ll automatically pick up a book and start

reading on the carpet.” Second, *Integration with Learning Activities*. Literacy was not limited to reading sessions but was embedded in broader classroom routines such as drawing journals, guessing games, and thematic play. Teachers integrated letter-sound activities, storytelling, and motor-skill exercises (e.g., air-tracing) to connect literacy with movement and creativity. This multimodal integration made reading a natural extension of play.

Third, *Motivation and Emotional Engagement*. Children’s enthusiasm was closely linked to teacher expressiveness, the use of interactive techniques, and appreciation. Teachers noted that when they used dramatic tone or rewarded attentiveness, students became highly responsive and even requested applause or verbal praise. These findings highlight how emotional reciprocity sustains literacy engagement. Fourth, *Peer Interaction*. Peer relationships reinforced motivation and comprehension. During shared reading or guessing games, children corrected each other, retold stories collaboratively, and discussed book content. This aligns with Vygotsky’s notion that social interaction mediates cognitive growth, transforming literacy into a cooperative process.

Fifth, *Supportive Atmosphere for Reading*. Teachers and parents jointly cultivated positive routines-scheduled bedtime stories, quiet corners, and morning literacy sessions. These consistent routines created predictability and emotional security, allowing children to anticipate reading as a joyful event. Sixth, *Supportive Tools and Materials*. The use of puppets, pop-up books, and letter cards further enhanced engagement. Teachers emphasized the need for diverse media, including interactive and culturally relevant materials, to sustain interest. Parents echoed this by noting that book variety and novelty maintain children’s curiosity.

Findings further reveal that the learning environment functions as a reinforcement system, integrating emotional, physical, and pedagogical supports that strengthen literacy experiences established at home. Teachers who provided visually appealing materials, expressive storytelling, and active games (e.g., guessing or letter-sound activities) reported higher engagement and vocabulary recall among children. These practices embody Self-Determination Theory [29], which suggests that motivation thrives when children’s needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. In this study, children’s enthusiasm asking for applause or volunteering to answer questions indicates intrinsic motivation cultivated through emotionally supportive classroom climates. Similarly, the freedom to choose books and revisit favorites enhanced children’s sense of agency and ownership in reading.

The integration of literacy with play-based and sensory-motor activities, such as drawing journals, air-tracing letters, and puppet storytelling, also reflects developmentally appropriate practice. It bridges literacy and fine-motor development while sustaining focus. This supports another research which found that preschool teachers’ continuous training in emergent literacy directly enhances the quality of their literacy-supportive practices [15].

Additionally, peer interaction played a crucial role. Children who retold stories together, guessed missing details, or discussed unfamiliar words collaboratively displayed higher engagement and comprehension. Such collaborative exchanges

reinforce Vygotsky’s social constructivist view, positioning literacy as a shared and dialogic process rather than an individual skill. Notably, the present findings extend SDT beyond individual motivation to the classroom-as-community level: when teachers fostered peer interaction and collaborative storytelling, they simultaneously met children’s needs for relatedness and competence as a collective, not merely individual, experience. This is a theoretical contribution to SDT applications in early childhood settings, where group dynamics have not always been foregrounded in motivation research.

Triangulation and Cross-Validation. The integration of parental interviews, teacher insights, and classroom observations established a strong triangulated framework confirming that home, school, and environmental supports are interdependent. Parents’ descriptions of consistent bedtime reading correlated with teachers’ reports of improved vocabulary and comprehension in class. Observational data of children’s participation in book-based play and retelling activities further validated these patterns. Thus, triangulation not only strengthened the credibility of findings but also illuminated how literacy flourishes through ecological continuity when values, practices, and stimuli across contexts align harmoniously.

Table 3. Triangulation Summary

Data Source	Key Focus	Main Converging Evidence
Parental Interviews	Reading routines, materials, emotional bonding	Confirmed consistency and affective motivation in home literacy practices.
Teacher Interviews	Classroom engagement, skill transfer	Supported evidence of vocabulary improvement and comprehension among children read to at home.
Observation Field Notes	Behavioral engagement, peer interaction	Validated thematic consistency through observable reading behaviors and enthusiasm.

Integrative Theoretical Model. From these findings, a figure that maps out how the themes interact within the broader ecological model of literacy development, offering a conceptual view of the interconnectedness between home, school, and peer environments.

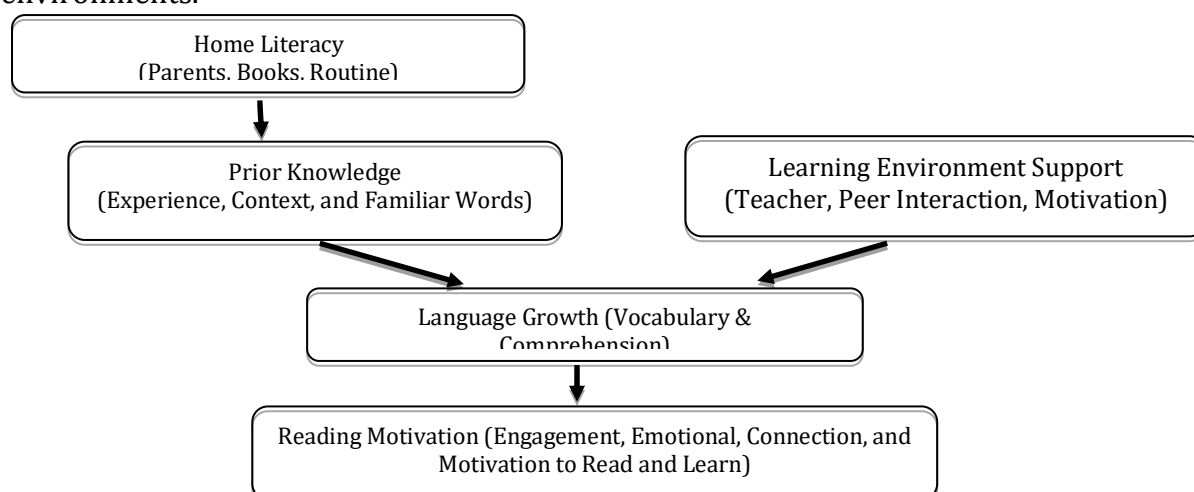


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Integrated Early Literacy Ecosystem

This model visualizes early literacy development as an interactive ecosystem. Home literacy creates the initial foundation, prior knowledge moderates children’s understanding, and the learning environment supports (home, school, and peer groups)

and reinforces the acquisition of literacy skills. This interconnected model highlights the need for an integrated approach across home, school, and peer interactions to foster holistic literacy development. It emphasises the importance of effective early literacy programmes that move beyond isolated interventions to strengthen connections among families, educators and contextual experiences. Ultimately, this work deepens our understanding of how literacy develops through meaningful and relational experiences that are connected to a child's daily life, rather than merely from reading instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to a holistic understanding of early literacy development in the Indonesian preschool context by demonstrating that children's language growth emerges from the dynamic and reciprocal interplay among home literacy practices, prior knowledge, and supportive learning environments not from any single factor in isolation. The study's key theoretical contribution lies in proposing and empirically grounding an integrated early literacy ecosystem model that synthesizes Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Schema Theory, and Self-Determination Theory within the Indonesian preschool context. Unlike prior studies that treated these frameworks separately, the present model demonstrates how they operate in concert: the family microsystem establishes foundational exposure, prior knowledge schemas mediate comprehension, and emotionally supportive classroom environments reinforce and extend home-based learning. Practically, these findings carry direct implications for multiple stakeholders: for teachers, the results affirm the value of expressive, dialogic read-aloud practices and multimodal literacy integration in daily instruction; for parents, they underscore that consistent verbal engagement and home reading routines regardless of socioeconomic status are decisive factors in children's emergent literacy; for school administrators and policymakers, the findings call for structured parent-teacher communication programs and teacher professional development in emergent literacy, particularly within Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka reform. Regarding limitations, this study's sample was restricted to five teachers and two parents from a single private school in Depok, which constrains the transferability of findings to public schools, rural settings, or families with lower literacy access. The absence of child assessment data further limits direct measurement of literacy outcomes.

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