

The Role of Parental and Guardian Involvement in Early Literacy and Pupils' Performance: Basis for an Enhanced Home-Based Reading Program

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Abstract

Early literacy is a foundational component of pupils' academic development. This study examined the role of parental and guardian involvement in the early literacy development and reading performance of young learners. Specifically, it determined the respondents' profile, described the pupils' reading performance, assessed the extent of parental and guardian involvement, identified barriers to home-based literacy support, and gathered suggestions for improving home reading practices. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed. Data were collected from parents and guardians of Kindergarten to Grade 3 pupils using a researcher-developed questionnaire, an early literacy assessment tool, and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was validated by education experts and pilot-tested, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87. The respondents were predominantly female, married, college-educated parents or guardians. Most reported reading with their children daily or several times a week. The findings indicate that home-based reading activities, assistance with reading assignments, and communication between parents and teachers are important forms of literacy support. However, some families experienced barriers related to time, access to materials, and limited knowledge of reading instruction. The study recommends an enhanced home-based reading program consisting of parent orientation, accessible reading materials, guided home-reading activities, and regular school-home communication.

Keywords: parental involvement, guardian involvement, early literacy, home-based reading, reading performance, family-school partnership

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill that supports learning across all subject areas. Strong early literacy skills enable pupils to recognize words, understand texts, communicate ideas, and participate successfully in classroom activities. Conversely, inadequate reading skills may create barriers to academic achievement and lifelong learning.

The home environment plays an important role in the development of children's literacy. Activities such as reading aloud, discussing stories, asking comprehension questions, encouraging storytelling, and providing access to age-appropriate reading materials can strengthen children's vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and motivation to read. In communities where schools may have limited resources, parental and guardian involvement becomes especially important.

However, not all parents and guardians have the same time, knowledge, resources, or confidence to support reading at home. Some caregivers may have work responsibilities, limited access to books, or difficulty understanding how to teach reading. These circumstances create a need for a structured program that provides families with practical and manageable ways to support children's literacy development. The present study examined the relationship between parental and guardian involvement and pupils' early literacy performance. Its findings served as the basis for proposing an enhanced home-based reading program that strengthens collaboration among pupils, families, teachers, and the school.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky emphasized that children develop knowledge and skills through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals. Parents, guardians, and teachers can support pupils by providing guidance, modeling reading behaviors, asking questions, and gradually reducing assistance as children become more independent.

The study was also informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explains that children's development is influenced by interconnected environmental systems. The home represents a primary microsystem in which children receive direct support and experience learning interactions. A literacy-rich home environment may therefore influence pupils' reading habits and school performance. Epstein (1995) developed a framework that describes six different types of parent involvement (See Figure 1.). The types of family involvement included in his model constitute the most popular framework researchers use to conceptualize the family-school partnership. Epstein argues that schools often have better outcomes when parents are involved because students are influenced by the coherent message that home and school create about the importance of education (Epstein and Sanders, 2000). The theoretical framework of this study was also built on Epstein's six types of parent involvement.

Figure 1.
Epstein's model of six types of parent involvement



Epstein's model of six types of parent involvement Epstein (2018) states that parent involvement can be provided in six different ways in the parent involvement model, which includes some suggestions to improve school-family cooperation. These include parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. The first type of participation is through

primary parenting. Basic parenting means meeting the basic needs of parents, including issues related to health, shelter, safety, and nutrition. It also includes all the activities done to help parents support the learning environment at home. The second type of parent involvement is communication that occurs when effective mutual communication is established between school and family about children's education and development. Communication can take various forms such as phone calls, notes and meetings. The third type, volunteering, occurs when parents take time out to help the school system or participate in school activities. Volunteering refers to voluntary families who contribute to the education of their children. It can be in the form of parents coming to school to help students and teachers traditionally. The fourth type of participation, home learning, includes all activities for helping the child with homework or other lesson-related tasks. Parents can talk to their children about school at home, help them with homework, and help them develop necessary skills. The fifth type, decision making, focuses on the representation of parents in the school system and their formal participation in decisions. By taking part in school-parent unions, families can have a say in the policy and management of the school. The last type, cooperation with the community, refers to the cooperation of parents with the school and society to strengthen school programs and contribute to student learning (Epstein, 1995; 2018).

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this framework provides a solid foundation for improving early literacy development and pupils' academic performance through structured parental and guardian involvement.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of the study. At the base of the schema is the research respondents and research environment which are parents/guardians of Daram 2 District, Daram, Samar during school year 2025-2026.

Going up in the direction of the arrow is a larger frame representing the research undertaking. Inside the big frame are two boxes. The box at the left represents parent/guardian-respondents' profile variates such age, sex, literacy status, educational attainment. The one smaller box at right represent the parental and guardian involvement in early literacy and pupils' performance of parent/guardian-respondents. The two boxes are to one another by two-way arrows which means correlational analysis will be conducted.

The large frame is then connected further upward to a smaller boxes representing the findings and recommendations of the study. The same box is connected to the bottom box with broken line implying its feedback mechanism. The same box is connected to the topmost box representing the goal of the study which is enhanced home-based reading program.

Enhanced Home-Based Reading Program

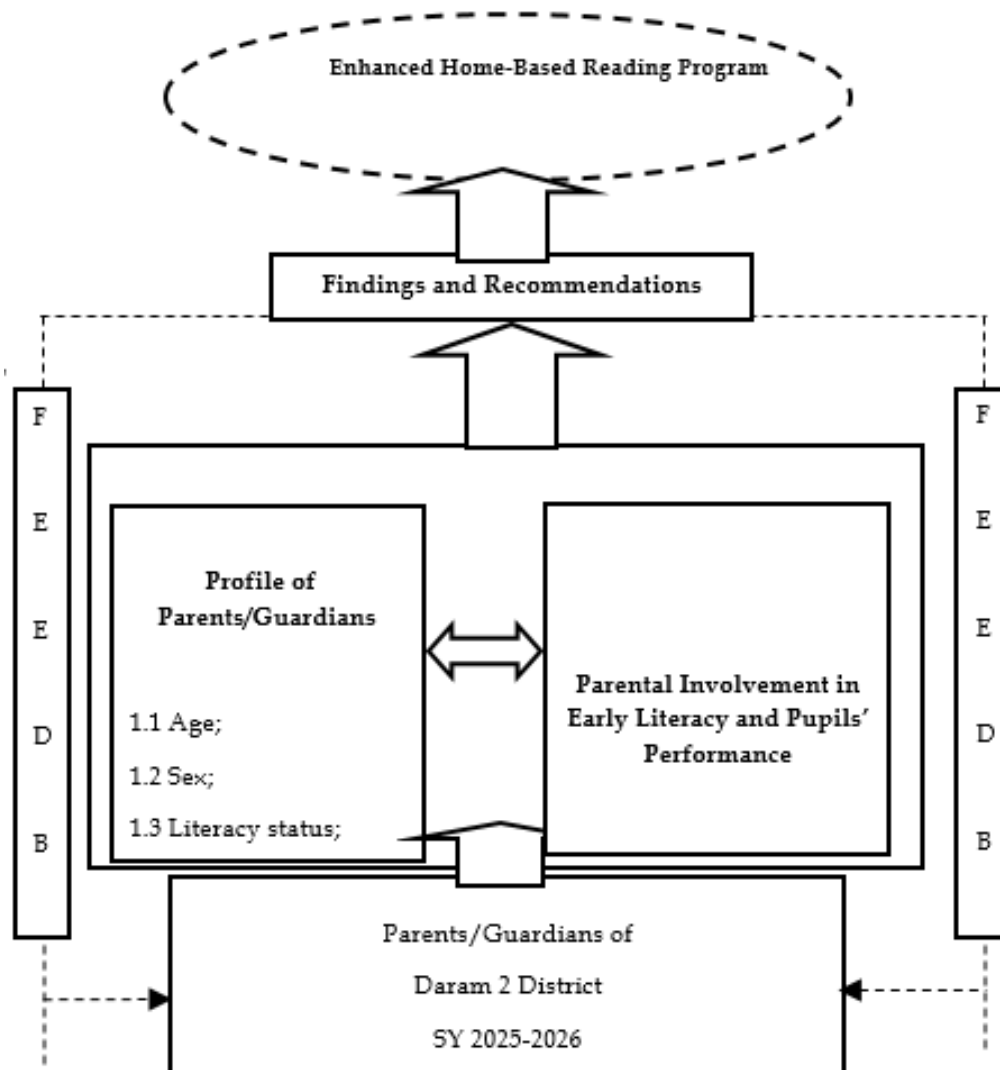


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Objectives

This study aimed to determine the role of parental and guardian involvement in enhancing early literacy and pupils' performance through a home-based reading program. Specifically, it sought to:

1. describe the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, civil status, relationship to the child, and the child's grade level;
2. describe the pupils' early literacy performance;
3. determine the extent of parental and guardian involvement in terms of:
 - home literacy environment;
 - home-based reading activities; and
 - parental responsibilities for reading instruction and support;
4. identify the barriers and challenges experienced by parents and guardians; and
5. gather suggestions for improving home-based literacy support.

Hypothesis

This study is guided by the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of parental and guardian involvement in early literacy activities and the pupils' reading performance.
2. Parental/guardian involvement in early literacy has no positive effect on pupils' academic performance.
3. The enhanced home-based reading program has no significant effect on pupils' literacy performance.

Literature Review

Early literacy is a key predictor of academic success, and numerous studies highlight the critical role of parental and guardian involvement in nurturing foundational reading skills. This review synthesizes recent research exploring how different forms of parental engagement influence children's reading development and school performance, providing a foundation for the development of an enhanced reading program. Several studies emphasize the importance of home-based literacy activities such as reading aloud, storytelling, and interactive dialogue. According to Badidoy and Tapac (2023), there is a strong positive correlation between parents' active involvement at home and kindergarten pupils' reading readiness. Children whose parents regularly read to them tend to develop broader vocabularies and stronger comprehension skills (The Australian, 2023). These home practices serve as early scaffolds for formal education.

Beyond the home, school-based parental involvement—such as attending parent-teacher conferences or participating in literacy workshops—also contributes to pupil performance. Tabbada-Rungduin et al. (2014) found that literacy outcomes improved when parents and teachers worked collaboratively. Their research indicated that students whose parents engaged with schools were more motivated and achieved higher scores in letter recognition and word decoding tasks.

Intervention studies show that when reading programs incorporate structured parental involvement, student performance increases significantly. A classroom-based action research initiative by Bernal (2020) demonstrated that Grade Four pupils whose parents participated in guided home reading programs performed significantly better in post-intervention reading assessments than those without such support. While the benefits of parental involvement are well-documented, socioeconomic and cultural factors can influence participation levels. Families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face barriers such as limited time, literacy skills, or access to books (Al-Muhtaseb et al., 2022). Additionally, children from multilingual homes benefit when parents use their first language to build foundational literacy, supporting second language development through skill transfer (Burgoyne et al., 2013).

The literature overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that parental and guardian involvement positively affects early literacy and academic outcomes. However, for reading programs to be fully effective, they must consider diverse family contexts and actively support parents through training, resources, and communication strategies. These findings form a compelling basis for designing an enhanced reading program grounded in family engagement.

Methodology

This section describes the research methods used to examine the relationship between parental involvement and early literacy performance among elementary pupils. It outlines the research design, data

collection instrument, validation of instrument and sampling procedures used to gather and analyze the data needed to achieve the study's objectives.

Research Design

This study examined the connection between elementary school students' early reading performance and parental participation using a descriptive-correlational research approach. This methodology was selected in order to characterize the degree of parental involvement and investigate any possible relationships with the reading outcomes of the kids.

Data Collection Instrument

This section outlines the tools used to collect data on the level of parental and guardian involvement and its relationship to pupils' early literacy performance. Multiple instruments were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the variables being studied. To gather the necessary data for this study, three main instruments were used:

1. Parental Involvement Questionnaire

This researcher-developed questionnaire measured the level and type of parental or guardian involvement in early literacy activities. It included both closed and open-ended questions across three categories:

- Home-based involvement (e.g., reading with the child, helping with assignments)
- School-based involvement (e.g., attending meetings, communicating with teachers)
- Perceptions and attitudes toward literacy and education

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Always" to quantify engagement levels.

2. Early Literacy Assessment Tool

A standardized reading test aligned with national curriculum standards was used to assess pupils' literacy skills. It covered key areas such as:

- Letter and word recognition
- Vocabulary and sentence construction
- Reading comprehension and fluency

The test was administered in a one-on-one setting to ensure accuracy and focus.

3. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

To gain qualitative insights, interviews were conducted with a subset of parents and teachers. The guide focused on experiences, challenges, and practices related to supporting children's reading development at home and in school.

All instruments were reviewed by education experts for content validity and were pilot-tested with a small group prior to the main study.

Validation of Instrument

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the Parental Involvement Questionnaire and Early Literacy Assessment Tool underwent a process of expert validation and pilot testing.

• Content Validity

The instruments were reviewed by three experts in education and research—one curriculum specialist, one literacy coach, and one educational researcher. They assessed each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Based on their feedback, several items were **revised for wording, and redundant or unclear questions were removed to improve the instrument's overall quality.**

• Pilot Testing

A pilot test was conducted with 50 parents and guardians from a nearby school that was not part of the

main study. The pilot helped determine whether the questions were understandable and appropriate for the target population. Feedback from respondents was used to further refine the questionnaire, particularly in terms of language simplicity and response options.

• Reliability Testing

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating a high level of reliability. This confirmed that the items consistently measured the intended constructs. With both expert validation and pilot testing completed, the instrument was considered valid and reliable for data collection in the main study.

Sampling Procedure

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 50 parents or guardians of pupils from Grades 1 to 3 in a selected public elementary school. The participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in their child's early literacy development, as reported by class advisers and reading coordinators.

The school was selected based on the following criteria:

- Implementation of foundational reading programs,
- Willingness of school administration to support the research,
- Accessibility for data collection activities.

From each grade level (Grades 1 to 3), a proportional number of parent/guardian participants were identified, ensuring representation across different reading ability levels of their children (beginning, approaching, and proficient readers). The selection ensured diversity in reading outcomes to examine how varying levels of parental involvement correspond to pupils' literacy performance.

The sample size of 50 was determined based on study feasibility, available population, and alignment with the descriptive-correlational research design.

Profile of the Respondents

Age and Sex. Table 1 shows that 78.85% of the respondents are female (41 out of 52), whereas only 21.15% are male (11 out of 52). With two guardians or parents, the age group with the most respondents is 25–28 years old. This is followed by 29–32, 33–36, and 37–40 years old, all of which have two guardians or parents. In the age groups of 41–44, 49–52, and 1–52, there were no male guardians or parents listed. There is a reasonably wide range of ages among the respondents, with a mean age of 38.77 years and a standard deviation of 8.37 years.

Table 1
Respondents' Age and Sex Distribution

Age Bracket	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		f	%
	f	%	f	%		
25-28	2	3.85	2	3.85	4	7.69
29-32	2	3.85	7	13.46	9	17.31
33-36	2	3.85	9	17.31	11	21.15
37-40	2	3.85	8	15.38	10	19.23
41-44	0	0	5	9.62	5	9.62

45-48	2	3.85	4	7.69	6	11.54
49-52	0	0.00	2	3.85	2	3.85
Above 52	1	1.92	4	7.69	5	9.62
Total	11	21.15	41	78.85	52	100
Mean (Years)	2.44		5.13		38.77	
SD (Years)	0.92		2.64		8.37	

The data suggest that the sample is predominantly female and generally middle-aged, with the majority between 29 and 40 years old. Females are not only more numerous but are also more evenly spread across age groups, while males are fewer and more concentrated in younger brackets. This demographic profile could influence the results of any study or survey involving these respondents, especially in areas where age and gender may impact perspectives or experiences.

Table 1 indicates a parent/guardian demographic well-suited to implement and benefit from an enhanced home-based reading program. Their age, experience, and likely daily contact with young learners provide a strong foundation for promoting early literacy. Leveraging this profile with targeted resources, especially toward female caregivers, will likely yield improved pupil performance and engagement.

Civil Status. Table 2 shows that the civil status distribution of the 52 guardian/parents 37 out of 52 respondents (71.15%) are married, followed closely by those who are single 13 respondents (25%). This group may include never-married individuals or single parents. While single parents can be just as effective, they may face greater time or resource constraints, which could affect the level of involvement in a home-based reading program. Only 1 respondent each (1.92%) is a widow/widower or separated, showing very limited representation of these groups in the sample. Their experiences may differ significantly, especially regarding emotional or financial capacity to support children's learning at home.

Table 2
Respondents' Profile as to Civil Status

Civil Status	f	%
Single	13	25.00
Married	37	71.15
Widow/ Widower	1	1.92
Separated	1	1.92
Total	52	100.00

This demographic profile indicates that the civil status profile indicates a predominantly married respondent group, which provides a strong base for structured home-based reading programs. However, attention must be paid to single, separated, and widowed guardians, ensuring inclusivity through flexible strategies that accommodate their unique challenges. Tailoring interventions based on family dynamics, as supported by the literature, is essential for maximizing program effectiveness. Table Shows that parental presence and emotional support are more predictive of literacy success than income or family structure, but single parents often need targeted resources and encouragement to maintain involvement levels (Jeynes, W. H. (2005) – Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis).

Educational Background. Table 3 shows that an overwhelming 49 out of 52 respondents (94.23%) have completed college or university education. • Only 2 respondents (3.85%) have completed secondary

education, and just 1 respondent (1.92%) has primary education. No respondents lack formal education, which further emphasizes the overall high literacy and academic exposure of the group.

Table 3
Respondents' Educational Background

Educational Background	f	%
No formal education	0	0.00
Primary education	1	1.92
Secondary education	2	3.85
College/University	49	94.23
Total	52	100.00

This indicates that the majority of respondents possess a high level of formal education, which is often associated with greater awareness of the importance of early literacy and stronger capacity to support children's learning at home.

Relationship to child. Table 4 shows the nature of the respondents' relationship to the children under the care of guardian/parents, 35 of 52 respondents are biological or adoptive parents of the child. This indicates that most of the respondents have a direct parental role, which typically involves greater emotional, legal, and educational responsibility. Parents are often more invested in their children's academic progress and are more likely to engage actively in initiatives like home-based reading programs.

17 out of 52 respondents are guardians, meaning they are not the child's biological or legal parents but take care of the child in a parental role. Guardians may include grandparents, aunts/uncles, older siblings, or foster carers. Their involvement is still crucial, though they may face different challenges, such as generational gaps, limited authority, or economic hardship, which could affect their capacity to support literacy development at home. — Implications for Home-Based Reading Programs

Table 4
Respondents' Relationship to Child

Relationship to child	f	%
Guardian	17	32.69
Parent	35	67.31
Total	52	100.00

This indicates that most of the respondents have a direct parental role, which typically involves greater emotional, legal, and educational responsibility. Parents are often more invested in their children's academic progress and are more likely to engage actively in initiatives like home-based reading programs. The data suggest a need for inclusive program design that accommodates both parents and guardians. While parents may readily engage with structured literacy support, guardians may require additional guidance, motivation, or tailored resources to fully participate. Emphasizes the importance of recognizing all forms of caregivers, not just biological parents, in promoting student success (Epstein, J. L. (2001) – School, Family, and Community Partnerships).

Grade Level. Table 5 shows the grade level of the children under the care of the 52 respondents, offering insights into the educational stage of the pupils who would benefit from a home-based reading program.

38 out of 52 children (73.08%) are enrolled in Grades 1 to 3, with Grade 3 having the highest number at 17 respondents (32.69%).

Table 5
Respondents' Child Grade Level

Grade Level	f	%
Kindergarten	14	26.92
Grade 1	12	23.08
Grade 2	9	17.31
Grade 3	17	32.69
Total	52	100.00

The data indicate that the majority of children are within Kindergarten to Grade 3, a pivotal period for literacy development. A home-based reading program tailored to this developmental span is both relevant and timely. Program design should consider the varying literacy needs across these grade levels and provide age-appropriate, engaging activities that parents and guardians can implement effectively. Confirmed that parental engagement in reading activities at home during Kindergarten and early grades improves word recognition and comprehension skills, particularly for struggling readers. . (Piasta, S. B., & Wagner, R. K. (2010).

Home Literacy Environment. Table 6 shows that how often respondents engage in reading activities with their children at home, offering valuable insights into the home literacy environment—a key factor in early literacy development. 13 respondents (25.00%) read to their children daily, and 23 respondents (44.23%) do so a few times a week. Combined, 36 out of 52 respondents (69.23%) are regularly involved in home reading activities. This is a positive indicator of a supportive literacy environment, suggesting that many households prioritize reading, which is known to enhance vocabulary, comprehension, and school readiness. 8 out of 52 respondents (15.38%) read to their child only once a week, and another 8 (15.38%) do so rarely. No Reported Cases of 'Never' Reading (0.00%). It is notable that no respondent reported never reading to their child, which implies a general awareness of the importance of reading, even among those who read less frequently.

Table 6
Home Literacy Environment

How often do you read to your child at home?	f	%
Daily	13	25.00
A few times a week	23	44.23
Once a week	8	15.38
Rarely	8	15.38
Never	0	0.00
Total	52	100.00

These figures indicate that nearly one-third of the respondents engage in infrequent reading, which may limit the child's exposure to consistent literacy experiences. This subgroup may benefit from targeted

support or motivation to increase reading frequency, such as tips on time management or access to engaging reading materials. Emphasized that families who engage in frequent home reading activities, even just a few times per week, provide critical literacy exposure that compensates for school limitations (Neuman, S. B., & Celano, D. (2001).

Parental and Guardian Involvement

Parental and guardian involvement was evident through several activities, including:

- reading with the child at home;
- helping with reading assignments;
- asking questions about stories and texts;
- providing books, magazines, or other reading materials;
- encouraging storytelling;
- monitoring the child's reading behavior; and
- participating in school meetings and literacy activities.

Home-based involvement appeared to be the most direct form of support because it occurred during regular parent-child interactions. School-based communication was also important because it enabled families to understand the child's reading needs and receive guidance from teachers.

Barriers to Participation

The study identified several possible barriers to effective home literacy support. These included limited time, lack of knowledge about teaching reading, insufficient reading materials, and children's limited interest in reading.

Parents and guardians also differed in their capacity to support children. Single, separated, widowed, or working caregivers may require more flexible reading schedules and simplified activities. Guardians may likewise need additional orientation to ensure that they understand the child's reading level and the appropriate strategies to use at home.

Statistical Results

The raw data included a chi-square test examining the association between age and sex. The result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(23)=25.913$, $p=.305$. A second chi-square test examining the association between sex and educational attainment was also not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2)=1.246$, $p=.536$.

These tests describe relationships among respondent characteristics. They do not establish the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' reading performance. Therefore, the final study should include the appropriate correlation or regression analysis for the main research hypothesis. The manuscript should report the exact coefficient and significance value before concluding that parental involvement has a statistically significant relationship with literacy performance.

Discussion

The findings indicate that parents and guardians are important partners in the development of early literacy. Most respondents reported reading with their children at least several times a week, suggesting that many families recognize the value of home-based literacy activities.

The results are consistent with the theoretical assumptions of Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. When adults read with children, ask questions, explain unfamiliar words, and model fluent reading, they provide scaffolding within the child's Zone of Proximal Development. Through repeated interaction, pupils gradually develop greater independence and confidence in reading.

The findings also support Bronfenbrenner's view that the home environment influences children's development. A home in which reading materials are available and literacy activities are encouraged can provide continuous learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

The results further reinforce Epstein's school-family partnership framework. Reading development is more likely to be sustained when parents and teachers communicate regularly and when families receive practical guidance. The school should therefore avoid treating parents and guardians merely as recipients of information. Instead, they should be engaged as active partners who help plan, implement, and monitor reading activities.

The high educational attainment of most respondents may have supported their ability to assist children with reading. However, educational attainment alone does not guarantee consistent participation. Time, access to materials, family responsibilities, and confidence in teaching reading may influence how often and how effectively caregivers provide literacy support.

The results also demonstrate the importance of inclusive program design. Since nearly one-third of respondents were guardians, the proposed intervention should address all caregivers, not only biological parents. Instructions should be simple, culturally appropriate, and usable by adults with different levels of education and reading confidence.

Proposed Enhanced Home-Based Reading Program

Based on the findings, the enhanced program may include the following components:

1. **Parent and guardian orientation.** Conduct short sessions on shared reading, questioning techniques, vocabulary development, and comprehension monitoring.
2. **Home-reading kits.** Provide graded reading materials, story cards, word lists, activity sheets, and a simple reading log.
3. **Daily or weekly reading routine.** Encourage families to spend 10–15 minutes reading together, depending on the child's age and reading ability.
4. **Guided reading activities.** Include before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading questions that caregivers can easily follow.
5. **Flexible participation.** Offer printed and digital materials when possible so families can choose resources suited to their schedules and access.
6. **Regular teacher-family communication.** Provide updates on pupil progress and recommend specific activities based on the child's reading level.
7. **Monitoring and evaluation.** Conduct pre- and post-assessments to determine whether the program improves pupils' reading performance.

Conclusion

The study suggests that parental and guardian involvement is an important support for early literacy development. Reading with children, helping with school reading tasks, providing reading materials, and communicating with teachers can contribute to a more supportive literacy environment.

However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the manuscript contains inconsistencies in the reported sample size and does not yet present the complete statistical analysis required to test the main hypotheses. Before publication or final submission, the researcher should reconcile the data, verify the number of respondents, provide complete literacy-performance results, and report the appropriate correlation or regression tests.

An enhanced home-based reading program should therefore combine parent orientation, accessible reading materials, guided activities, flexible participation, and continuous school-home communication. Such a program can strengthen family involvement and provide pupils with additional opportunities to practice reading in meaningful contexts.

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