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HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT: A STRATEGY TO MAKE READING FUN AGAIN

Chusna Apriyanti, Nursita Fathichatul Ulfiah, Winda Afianti

chusna.apriyanti@gmail.com, nursitaulfiah@gmail.com, afiantywinda5@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to know the implementation of Home Literacy Environment in Pacitan. The researchers used descriptive research design. The data were taken from 44 mothers selected by random sampling technique. The data were gathered by implementing questionnaire with 31 questions in the form of nominal scale question. To support the data collection technique, the researchers also used interview. After being collected, the data will be analyzed and described into chart by considering four aspects of Home Literacy Environment factors, including: family resources, parental literacy behavior and attitudes, parental beliefs and understandings, and family literacy activities and practices.

Keywords: Literacy, Home Literacy Environment, Children

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the skill that can be developed from the early year of birth and continue expanding days by days as long as children age. It is not enough to wait the children entering school to make them love reading and build their literacy. Parents and other family members as well as the caregivers need to start the children literacy ability as early as possible. They need to be involved in children literacy movements.

Viewing the literacy program means seeing the future of a nation. Children who remain illiterate, are more likely to be poor, unemployed or commit criminals (Hall & Moats, 1999). In addition, according to National Institute for Literacy, 43% of people who are illiterate or have low literacy skills live in poverty and 70% of prisoners cannot read as a proficient level.

Due to this urgently, reading must be stated as the right path for children in Indonesia. The children must love reading activities. They need to love books. It is not only the teachers and governments duty to make children love reading, but also the parents' role in developing children literacy. Indonesia, through the program "*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*" has point out several methods to increase the literacy level for students. The additional 15 minutes to read a book before the school subject started is one way to make students love reading. Other ways including giving millions book for school and other supporting materials both from the government or other private parties have been done.

In order to raise children interest on reading skill, a home literacy environment is needed. According to Carter (2000), reading is not only a skill and ability, but also it should be a desire. Children should not want to read just to pass classes in school, they should be taught that reading offers something marvelous and purposeful, that books can provide a means of escape and a way to uncover information about their interests. Parents and caregiver are important to make home literacy environment.

However, many parents do not become involved in the literacy education of their children. They may not know how to foster their children reading abilities or understand that reading is better than watching a television or playing gadget. Some parents still believe that making children literate is the duty of school teachers. However, this misconception needs to be stopped. Developing good home literacy environment is essential.

The relation between children's home literacy environment, reading behavior, and reading comprehension has been well established in previous studies. For example, a meta-analysis showed that primary school children who read frequently during their leisure time perform better on a variety of language and reading tasks (Mol & Bus, 2011).

HLE is an umbrella concept that captures a variety of child-parent activities related to literacy, as well as parental characteristics and parental expectations (e.g., Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Umek, Podlesek, & Fekonja, 2005) in Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton and Snowling (2017). According to the Home Literacy Model (Sénéchal, 2006), the HLE activities can be grouped into two broad categories that are largely independent from each other: the formal and the informal HLE activities. Formal HLE activities are code-focused and engage children directly with print through activities such as teaching letters, words, and spelling. They have been found to contribute primarily to letter knowledge and phonological awareness (e.g., Evans et al., 2000; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002), and through the effects of these emergent literacy skills to reading accuracy (e.g., Evans et al., 2000; Manolitsis, Georgiou, & Tziraki, 2013) in Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton and Snowling (2017).

In turn, informal HLE activities are meaning-focused and expose children to print incidentally through activities such as storybook reading by parents. Several studies have shown that the informal HLE activities contribute primarily to vocabulary knowledge (e.g., Evans et al., 2000; SénéchalLeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998) and through the effects of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension (e.g., Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002; Sénéchal, 2006) in Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton and Snowling (2017).

Swain and Cara (2017) points out four element of Home Literacy Environment as follows:

1. Family Resources included (i) the ages of the parent and child; (ii) the number of children aged under 18 years living in the family home; (iii) the sex of the child and parent; (iv) the main language the parent spoke with their child; (vi) the parent's highest educational qualification; (vii) whether the parent had attended another family literacy programme; (viii) the number of books and (ix) the number of children's books in the family home; (x) the parent's SES(eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) is used as a proxy for this).

2. Parental Literacy Behavior and Attitudes referred to (i) the frequency that the parent read various materials (books, magazines etc.), including digital texts;(ii) personal attitudes to reading for one self; (iii) parental attitudes on the importance of reading with their child.

3. Parental Beliefs and Understandings included (i) how the parent rated the importance of school homework; (ii) their level of confident in helping their child with homework; (iii) their level of understanding of how reading is taught in school; (iv) knowledge about phonics; and (v) who the parent thought had the greater responsibility for educating their child in literacy (reading, spelling, writing) – the parent or the school.

4. Family Literacy Activities and Practices concerned (i) the frequency with which parents or other members of the family (e.g. siblings) read with the child and(ii) helped the child with literacy school homework; (iii) the usual time of each reading session (e.g. before bedtime); (iv) frequencies of a series of specific interactions with the text while reading, such as asking questions or re-telling the story; and (v) the frequency of parents spending time with their children on a range of other, more specific, literacy-related activities and practices other than reading, including singing songs together, helping with spelling, writing, listening to audio books and borrowing library books.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers used descriptive research design. The data were taken from 44 mothers selected by random sampling technique. The data were gathered by implementing questionnaire with 31 questions in the form of nominal scale question. To support the data collection technique, the researchers also used interview. After being collected, the data will be analyzed and described into chart by considering four aspects of Home Literacy

Environment factors, including: family resources, parental literacy behavior and attitudes, parental beliefs and understandings included, and family literacy activities and practices

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research was analyzed based on the questionnaire that shared to 44 mothers. The researchers counted each category of the literacy requirements that must be completed by parents to build literacy's interest to the children. The results were taken from four factors, including: family resources, parental literacy behavior and attitudes, parental beliefs and understandings, and family literacy activities and practices.

Family Resources

There are five criteria of Family Resource, including mini library ownership, reading book collection, stationary for children before entering school, reading book for children before entering school, reading book except lesson book. All those criteria will be described below:
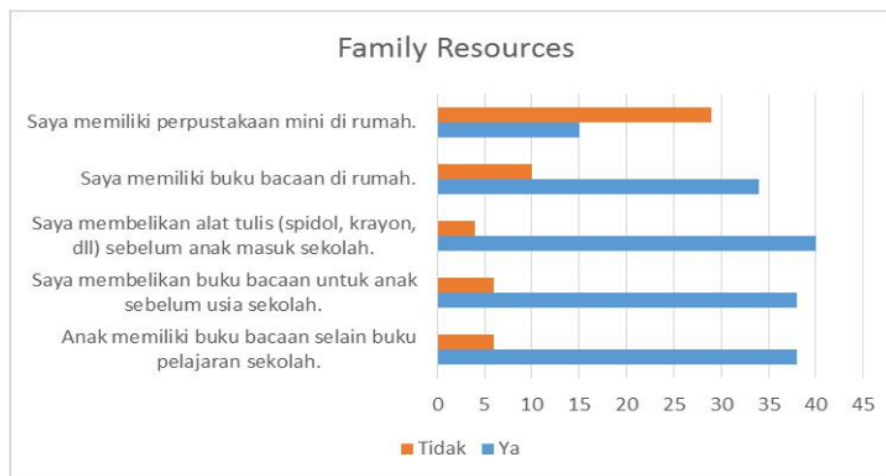
Picture 1. The research's result of Family Resources

There are 15 mothers said that they have mini library at their house and there are 29 mothers said that there is no mini library at their house. There are three factors caused mini library ownership: limited collection of books, limited budget to make mini library, limited space at their house. Some of them said that they tend to access information by using smart phone rather than reading book at their mini library.

However, mini library ownership is contrary to the number of reading books. There are only 10 mothers said that they have no reading books at their home and 34 parents have readings book at their home. They have books from different genre, like cooking book, religious books, and novels. But, related to printed newspaper, there are only three mothers who buy printed newspaper daily.

Instead of supplying children with reading books, mothers need to give stationary for children before entering the school, like crayons, drawing book, pencils, etc. From the total 44 mothers, there are 4 mothers that do not buy stationary for their children before entering school and there are 40 mother that buy the stationary for their children before entering the school. It shows that mother's awareness related to the stationary for literacy movement starting from the early ages is high.

Like stationary, mothers' awareness to buy reading book for their children in the early ages is high. From 44 mothers, there are 38 mothers buy reading book for their children starting in the early ages and there are 6 parents do not buy reading book for their children in the early ages. But, still the number of reading books at their home is limited. There are 11 mothers said that they just have no more than 10 books before their kids entering formal school.

The last is related to reading books except school books. There are 38 mothers said that they have reading books except school books and 6 mothers said that they have no reading book. However, the number of books is still limited. There are only two parents that have more than 50 books when their kids entering formal school.

In short, related to family resources, most mothers fulfill the requirement of home literacy environment except mini library ownership. They give reading books starting from the early ages, but they do not have habit to add the books. The number of books is still limited.

Parental Literacy Behavior and Attitudes

Instead of family resources, parental literacy behavior and attitudes also the important factor in implementing home literacy environment. This factor will be analyzed in seven criteria as presented in the picture below:
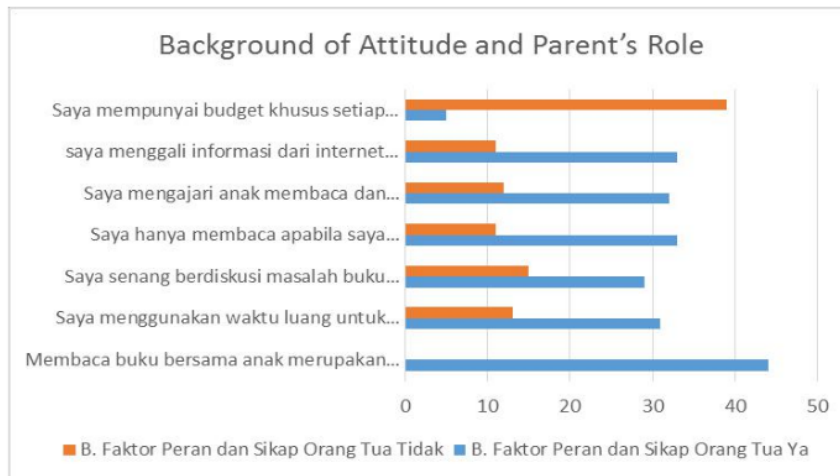
Picture 2. Parental Literacy Behavior and Attitudes

There are seven criteria about the Background of Attitude and Parent's Role. Those criteria consist of budgeting, updating online source information, teaching reading habit since early ages for the children, parent's reading habit, reading book discussion, parents habit of reading book for spending free time, importance of reading book together. All those criteria will be explained bellow:

Related to special budget in buying aids that support home literacy, there are 5 parents set the budget and 39 mothers do not have special budget. The financial condition gives impacts to this condition. However, some parents allocate 50.000 rupiahs until 100.000 rupiahs for buying book. They go to book store or bazaar.

Since internet is inside home, mothers update the information online. Seen from the questionnaire, there are 33 parents always update the information from the internet and 11 parents do not update the information from the internet. They browse the information related to their kid's homework or material. However, still they have less habit to increase their knowledge related to children development.

The next criterion is related to mother's awareness in teaching reading and writing for their kids before entering formal school. There are 32 mothers teach their kids to read and write before entering school. They buy tracing books to teach them writing letter. Then, they buy other books to make their kids love reading and writing. However, there are 11 parents do not teach their kids to write and read before entering school. They believe that reading and writing was taught at seven years old at least.

Parental reading habit is also important to build home literacy environment. The children see the parents' habit. Therefore, having good habit is necessary for parents. From 44

respondents, there are 33 mothers make reading as their habit. However, they have no stable habit at home, like in the morning or at the evening. They just read at their leisure. The rest, 11 mothers have no reading habit yet. They just read when they want to get information and they get problem.

From the result, there are 29 mothers like to discuss reading book with their children and 15 mothers do not like to discuss about the reading book with their children. The discussion related to the story of books, the contents of books even the price.

The last criterion relates to the importance of reading book together. It aims to measure the awareness of the parents about the importance of reading activity together with their children. Based on the questionnaire, 44 mothers believe that reading together activity with their children is important even though the duration is unclear. Since, they cannot measure the stability and habit of reading books together.

Parental Belief and Understanding

This factor is analyzed by using six criteria: parents' understanding to help children homework, parents' participation to join children's school, increasing self-intelligence to follow the children development, increasing self-reading skill, increasing self-writing skill, using smart phone to browse the science field. All those question criteria will be described with the picture bellow:
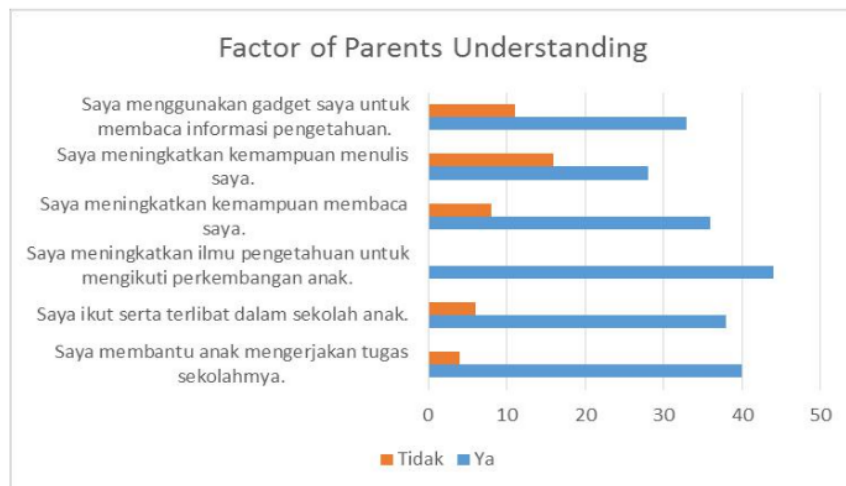
Picture 3. Parental Belief and Understanding

Since people live in digital age, all parents have smart phone in their daily life. However, the smartphone provides many utilities, including sending message or calling application, social media, reading information, shopping necessities, etc. The smart phone really can make people "smart" or even useless based on their usage. Smart phone provide many things,

both bad thing and good thing. However, parents need to utilize their smart phone well to gain the positive effects of internet. Based on the research data, there are 33 mothers that always use their smart phone for gaining information related to their children development and 11 parents cannot maximize the function to increase their knowledge of children development. Social media still play the highest use of smart phone.

Instead of enriching their knowledge of children development, parents must increase their self-writing skill. Literacy also deals with the ability to write the text wisely, including posting information on social media wisely, avoiding abuses on social media, sharing useful information and turning back hoax. The result shows that there are 28 mothers have self-understanding to increase their writing skill and 16 mothers do not have self-understanding to increase their writing skill.

Literacy also cover increasing parents reading skill. It is not only covering the quantity of books being read or the quantity of pages being completed. Literacy deals with their discourse analysis and understanding related to the content of reading texts. The result shows that 36 mothers have self-understanding to increase their reading skill and 8 mothers do not have self-understanding to increase their reading skill.

Talking about children development is an endless series of learning. Parents must know their children development well to complete their role in family. Based on the research data, there are 44 mothers have understanding to increase their intelligence. It means that all mothers believe that increasing knowledge for children development is important.
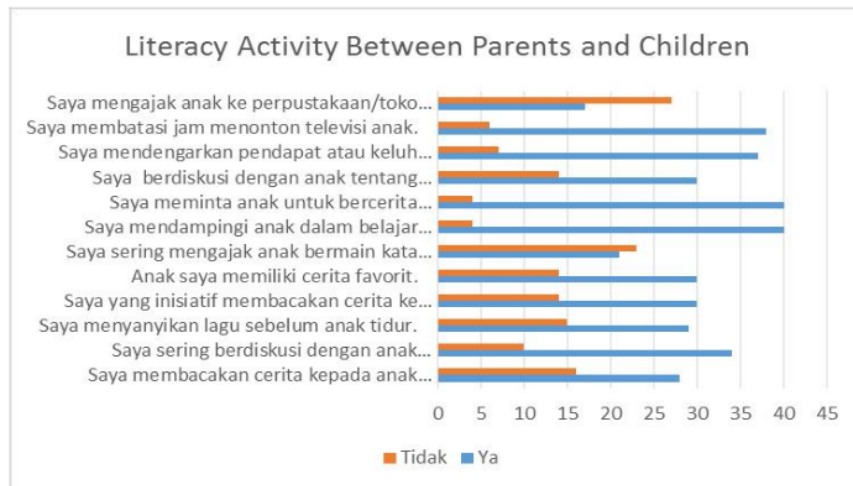
Those children development will give good impacts on children both at school and at home. The parents cannot separate their role at their house and at the school. The combination of triangle education (parents-students-teachers) can increase the quality of education in Indonesia. Therefore, the parents need to build good communication with their kids' teachers. They must support each others. One of the examples is parents' participation in completing students' homework. Parents are not allowed to complete the students task. They just accompany their children in learning and give supports for their children learning process both at school and at their home. From the data, the researcher concluded that there are 38 mothers have contribution to their children's activity at school and 6 parents do not have contribution to their children's activity at school.

The last question is parents' understanding to help children home work. Based on the data, there are 40 parents always help their children in doing their children's home work and 4 parents do not care with their children's home work. Some mothers send their children into

extra courses. There, they complete their homework. So, parents do not help them in completing students' home work.

Family Literacy Activities and Practices

The communication between parents and children is important. This factor wants to measure about the intensity of literacy activity that done together between parents and children. This factor will be analyzed in twelve criteria. All the criteria will be described in the picture bellow:

Literacy Activity Between Parents and Children

	Tidak	Ya
Saya mengajak anak ke perpustakaan/toko...	27	17
Saya membatasi jam menonton televisi anak.	6	38
Saya mendengarkan pendapat atau keluh...	7	37
Saya berdiskusi dengan anak tentang...	14	30
Saya meminta anak untuk bercerita...	4	40
Saya mendampingi anak dalam belajar...	4	40
Saya sering mengajak anak bermain kata...	23	21
Anak saya memiliki cerita favorit.	14	30
Saya yang inisiatif membacakan cerita ke...	14	30
Saya menyanyikan lagu sebelum anak tidur.	15	29
Saya sering berdiskusi dengan anak...	10	34
Saya membacakan cerita kepada anak...	16	28

Picture 4. Parental Literacy Activities and Practices

The explanation of each criteria question will be described below:

a. Parents intention to go to bookstore or book exhibition

There are 17 mothers often ask their children to the public book place and 27 mothers do not ask their children to the public book place. The factors like the long distance between book store and their house becomes important causes here.

b. Parents limit their kids in watching television

There are 38 mothers limit the children's watching TV time and 6 mothers ignore their children to watch TV and do not do time limitation. Besides, there are 40 mothers supervise and control the TV program and four mothers do not control the TV program watched by their kids. The cartoon series is the allowed program by mothers.

c. Parents listen children opinion

By listening children opinion and feeling create good atmosphere for the communication between parents and kids. They will feel warm. It can increase their self esteem in facing the world. Based on the research data, there are 37 parents listen their

children problem and want. On the contrary, there are 7 parents do not hear their children' want and problem.

d. Parents discuss with their kids before taking the decision

Discussion between parents and children in deciding some things for their life is important to tight the relationship. The data show that there are 30 mothers always discuss with their kids before deciding something and 14 parents do not discuss it with their children.

e. Parents ask children to tell a story after going home

Based on the research data, asking children to tell their story at school give two benefits for parents: They get the information related to school because their kids will tell the story honestly and to strengthen mothers-children relationship. Based on the research data, there are 40 parents that always ask their kids to tell a story of their daily activities in school and 4 parents do not ask the children. By telling story, the children can raise their self-confident in speaking and increase their literacy development.

f. Parents accompany their kids in learning

Based on the data, there are 40 accompany their kids in learning and 4 parents do not stay with kids in learning process. Some parents said that they invite private teacher to teach their kids at home.

g. Parents ask their kids to play together

The majority mothers play together with their kids, but the duration is different. Seven mothers said that they play with kids in only one hour or less due to their full activities related to their works. Based on the research data, there are 21 parents play together with kids and 23 parents do not collaborate with their kids in playing.

h. Children have their special story books

There are 30 mothers said that their kids have favorite story and 14 parents do not know what is their kids' favorite story.

i. Parents initiate "reading before sleeping"

Based on the data, there are 30 mothers initiate their kids to listen their story and 14 parents do not initiate to read story for their kids.

j. Parents sing songs before their kids sleep

Singing before sleeping is effective way to raise children literacy development starts from the early age. Based on the data, there are 29 parents sing songs before their children sleeping and 15 parents do not do this activity

k. Parents discuss with children

Based on the data, there are 34 parents discuss many things at home with their children and 10 parents do not discuss with their kids. Discussing before buying kids' stuff is important to raise their responsibility in taking decision. Later, the sense of democratic is implemented here.

l. Parents read stories for children

There are 28 mothers always read the story book for their children and 16 mothers do not read stories for children. Reading books for children before sleeping consist of three benefits: mothers exist in important time of children (before sleeping), mothers stimulate children development, and mothers raise children imagination through the story.

CONCLUSION

Home literacy environment is essential to be implemented at home. It supports the program of school literacy. Literacy do not merely deal with the quantity of books they completed; it also deals with the quality of their reading text. Literacy does not stop at pages they read, but literacy is the perspectives that the readers can understand the information written inside the books, criticize the contents and implement it in their life. Considering four factors in home literacy environment is important for parents. They are Home Literacy Environment factors, including: family resources, parental literacy behavior and attitudes, parental beliefs and understandings, and family literacy activities and practices.

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