

Parental Involvement and Foundational Literacy Skills of K1 Learners: A Convergent Mixed Method Analysis

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Abstract — This study is a convergent mixed-method analysis of the parental involvement and foundational literacy skills of k1 learners. This study probed into the perception of parents of K1 learners on their parental involvement and compared the result to the foundational literacy skills of learners. Using qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering data, ten randomly selected parents of k1 pupils were interviewed about their level of perception of their involvement in the foundational literacy skills of their children, and 150 k1 learners from five selected schools in Davao del Sur were tested to identify their foundational literacy skills of the k1 learners. The study found that parents believe that their children already have the foundational literacy skills expected of them. It was found out that there are nine foundational literacy skills expected of parents of their children. These foundational literacy skills include reading and letter recognition, sound recognition, writing skills, recognition of shapes, ability to communicate, counting and numeracy, memorization, letter combination, and syllable awareness. It is to be noted that while parents have different expectations of the foundational skills for kindergarten students, all of them think that their children already have the expected foundational skills they ought to acquire. The qualitative findings seem to jive with the quantitative findings of the study that stated the level of the foundational literacy skills of students was on track suggesting that k1 learners have strong base knowledge and are ready to launch into typical early literacy instruction with little or no support.

Keywords — *Parental involvement, foundational literacy skills, k1 learners, convergent-mixed method*

I. Introduction

The early years of children are spent significantly with their parents. It becomes, then, an undeniable fact that parents are among the most influential people in their children's lives. This is supported by a robust number of literatures that point to the importance of parents' involvement in the academic endeavors of their children. However, a most recent study by Albiso, et.al (2022), found that parental involvement is not significantly related to the academic performance of students. While said study serves as an antithesis to different research proving parental involvement's positive influence on learners' academic efforts, it is noteworthy that the scope of which limits parental involvement according to the perception of students. Hence, said research's

recommendation includes the conduct of a qualitative study that would investigate the side of the parents on their perceived involvement in the academic success of their children.

The importance of getting information straight from the parents as to their perception of their involvement in their children's academic performance is supported by the report of the National Academy of Sciences (2016) which states that over the past several decades, there has been a lack of consensus on the elements of parenting that are most important to promoting child well-being despite having identified parenting-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices that are associated with improved developmental outcomes for children. Moreover, Bartolome, Mamat, and Masnan (2017) stated in the recommendation of their study that although there have been different researchers claiming the importance and positive effects of parental involvement, there remains a barrier to promoting and doing it and the primary reason for such is that those studies did not consider parents perspectives.

Furthermore, the need to examine parental involvement in education in younger years has been claimed to be vital by McDowell, Jamp, and Compton, (2018), who said that although parental involvement has been extensively researched globally, there has been limited research that specifically describes parental involvement in the kindergarten level. And while parental involvement and academic achievement have been researched extensively and found to have a positive relationship by Toppings and Wolfendale (2017), developmental changes emerge over time. (McDowell, Jamp, Compton, 2018). As a result, the measures for academic achievement may be needed to be considered along with said changes (Fan, 2011).

In the Philippines, Hernando-Malipot (2021) quoted in a national newspaper, the then Department of Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones said that parents play a vital role in the success of the learners in the lessons that they learn from their teachers. Stating further that since parents are the most significant adults inside the house, the parent's role had become more crucial, especially in a blended learning set-up. In recognition of this role, DepEd conducted a webinar entitled "Parents Role for a Better Learning at Home." This could only be telling DepEd's recognition of further capacity building parents need (to improve parental involvement in the academic journey of learners), (Hernando-Malipot, 2021). Despite efforts by the DepEd, it was reported by Bartolome, Mamat, and Masnan (2017) that although there are programs and current practice on parental involvement, there has been no in-placed national policies to support Early childhood Education. More than this, most of the literature on parental involvement are primarily American or Western literature, which brings about the need to contextualize parental involvement.

Finally, Nierva (2009) claimed that parental involvement remains vague in the Philippines since there is still a need to improve parent involvement practices, especially those promoting active involvement in the child's learning both at home and in school.

Parental Involvement. As operationally defined by Fan (2001), parental involvement is perceived as parental aspirations for their children's academic achievement, parents' communication with their children about education and school matters, parents' participation in school activities, parents' communication with teachers about their children, and parental supervision at home. This appears to be the same with the statement by Henderson and Mapp (2000) who said that parental involvement has been defined across studies as representing many different behaviors and practices at home or at school, including parental aspirations, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs regarding their child's education. Meanwhile Bartolome, Mamat, and Masnan (2017) defined parental involvement as referring to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to the schooling of his/her children. This definition of parental involvement is closely synonymous with the definition offered by Ginsburg and Bronstein (1993) who see parental involvement as the active participation of a parent who was committed, considerably interested, and well-informed about their kid's education matter. Feurstein (2001) added to the literatures defining parental involvement by describing it as the interconnection between parents and children both at home and school to make sure that students' educational outcomes are going in a positive way.

Smith, Robbins, Stagman, and Mathur (2013) simplified all these definitions of parental involvement by broadly classifying them into two: one being is home-based parent involvement which includes playing games with children that offer learning enrichment, community activities, such as taking children to the library; the other being is school-based parent involvement such as volunteering in child care or early grades classrooms ore attending the parent-teacher conference.

Despite several definitions offered explaining the concept of parental involvement, in the Philippines, Nierva (2009) claimed that parental Involvement remains vague because there is still a need to improve parental involvement practices, especially those promoting active involvement in the child's learning at home and in school. Moreover, Bartolome, Mamat, and Masnan (2017) although there are programs and current practice on parental involvement, there has been no in-placed national policies to support Early childhood Education. More than this, most of the literature on parental involvement are primarily American or Western literature, which brings about the need to contextualize parental involvement.

All these seem to align with the recommendation of the mixed method study of Evangelista (2008) that said parents should participate and be involved in the development of their children's education, especially during their fundamental years, as said stage will serve as foundations of children for them to accelerate in the next level of higher education. Consequently, schools should consider informing parents on how much involvement they should give to improve their children's scholastic performance.

While parental involvement has been established to have a significant effect on the academic pursuits of learners, parents do not have the same level of involvement in their children's education. In fact, as mentioned by Mullis et. Al (2002) despite the number of parents who spend

a great deal of time working with their young children on literacy skills, many parents do not feel they have the capacity to teach their children literacy skills. Hence, reasons vary as to the level of parental involvement in each family.

One reason for this is the amount of time the parent has for her or his children. Stutzel (2009) rationalized that many parents view extra academic activities as taking up a lot of time. Most households have two parents working and their children may be involved in many different activities, so time may be a major issue in most households. An important finding by Mullis (2002) stated that children from middle-income families used literacy activities as a source of entertainment while there were very few children from low-income families who participated in print-related activities. This, according to Stutzel (2009), brings about the concept that the child will have stronger chance of being successful if he or she is raised in “a warm and nurturing environment with many learning experiences and opportunities provided.”

Another reason pointed out by Davies-Keene (2005) affecting parental involvement is the mother’s education and family income. The educational and personal beliefs in relation to their child of the parent can also lead to positive outcomes for their child. There has been link research that determined that the higher education the mother has, the higher the expectations she has for her child. This then resulted in an increase in the child’s academic achievement in both math and reading. As argued, mother’s education and family income are important predictors of the physical environment and learning experiences at home. Her study concluded that “the parents’ years of education and family income influenced the types of literacy-related materials in the home as well as a more positive relationship between the parents and the child” (Davis-Keene, 2005).

How much involvement really should parents give in their children’s academic journey? Georgiou and Tourva (2007) offered an explanation that levels of parental involvement differ due to numerous factors, which include social class, poverty, health, and parents’ perception of their role and their level of confidence in fulfilling it. Moreover, a child’s achievement could also be a factor in the involvement of parents. This means that when a child is better, a parent becomes more motivated to help (Georgiou and Tourva, 2007).

In identifying the level of parental involvement, Epstein (2002) suggested that it should be understood based on five dimensions which include parenting, helping with homework, communicating with the school, volunteering at school, and participating in school decision-making. Ho (2009) claimed that although family background seems to be a powerful determinant of parental involvement in the early years if duly encouraged, can devote extra time and effort to assisting with their children’s education which happens in both home and school settings. While Bartolome, Mamat, and Masnan (2017) asserted that for a child to succeed, the contact between home and school should be maintained especially in the early years and this could be done only if parents exert a lot of influence on their child’s cognitive development. Evangelista (2008) furthered this statement by claiming that parent support and participation become well-defined if the principal, teachers, and parents go hand in hand in achieving the progress of the pupils.

Avvisati, Besbas, and Guyon (2010) quoted a model proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), stating the three constructs that primarily influence parents' involvement decisions are as follows:

1. The parents' understanding of their role in the child's life: what parents believe that they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education and educational progress. This means that parents become involved in schools if they hold the belief that they should be involved.
2. The parents' sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed in school: the question of whether or not parents believe that their involvement can exert a positive influence on children's educational outcomes.
3. The general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement by both the child and the child's school which is synonymous to saying if parents perceive that their children or their children's school want them involved.

Gafoor and Naseema (2001) added in the literature of parental involvement the parental involvement scale (PIRS) which is another way of measuring parental involvement. The PIRS has the following components: Parental acceptance, Parental aspirations, Parental Attention, Parental Encouragement, Parental Guidance, Parental Influence, Parental Decision-making, Parental Provision of Physical Facilities, and Parental Care for the Physical Fitness of the Child.

Foundational Literacy. Foundational literacy skills, as defined by Stutzel (2019) in her study, are early literacy skills that are critical for a child to have to be proficient in reading throughout their educational career. Lindsey (2022) complemented such a definition for foundational literacy skills as a concept that encompasses the knowledge and abilities necessary to support successful reading. Proficiency in foundational skills which includes phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and spelling is known to predict reading success which supports long-term achievement. This is synonymous with what most educators consider foundational skills which include print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency. Lindsey (2022) claimed that they don't represent all the skills and knowledge children need to become great readers. She added that beginning readers need a strong foundation in oral language to build vocabulary and comprehension, along with many other cognitive skills and processing abilities that predict reading success.

Stutzel (2019) added that early literacy skills start well before a child enters kindergarten which is a stage she claims where parental involvement becomes critically important to ensure that the child does not fall behind before even starting school. Adding that foundational literacy skills are important for children to acquire even before they enter kindergarten, otherwise they may already be behind their peers. This seems to be in harmony with the statement made by Hattori H., Cardoso M., and Ledoux B. (2017) emphasized that Acquiring literacy in the early grades of primary is crucial because doing so becomes more difficult in later grades, for those who are

lagging behind and furthered that the ability to read and understand a simple text is one of the most fundamental skills a child can learn.

All these underscored the importance of early childhood literacy. As quoted by Stutzel (2019) in her study from *Make way for books 2019*, when a child is born, their brain begins to form immediate connections. Ninety percent of children's critical development occurs by age five. This is supported by Shrier (2013) who said that "if the learners are coming into kindergarten lacking these skills, then it is up to the teacher to teach them these early literacy skills before they are even able to read. This then already puts the child behind their peers, and it is harder to get caught up. Eighty-three percent of students who are not reading on grade level by the beginning of fourth grade are at risk of failing to graduate on time".

An added importance of early literacy, according to some research, is that it is said to be a determining factor for the success of a particular child. Crosby, Rasinski, Padik, and Yildirim (2015) reported that children who are poor readers at the end of grade one would remain poor readers at the end of grade four. Additionally, it was also found out that those who are reading at grade level by grade three are four times less likely to graduate from high school on time compared to those who are already proficient readers at grade three.

Gutierrez, Jimenez, Seoane, and De Leon (2019) articulated in their research the importance of early screening of foundational reading skills of kindergarten students as it provides a data-based guideline for identifying students requiring a more intensive response-based intervention before starting elementary school. Wanzek and Vaughn (2007) seem to agree as they advanced that early intervention of foundational reading skills has been shown to have a beneficial impact on later reading performance.

Stutzel (2019) identified the foundational literacy skills that are expected out of kindergarten students to ensure that they are ready to enter first grade. Kindergartners must be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the organization and basic features of print, such as being able to follow print from left to right, recognize that spoken words can be represented with written language, understand words are represented by spaces in print and recognize all letters of the alphabet. Kindergartners must also be able to demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds. They need to be able to recognize and produce rhyming words, blend segment syllables in spoken words, isolate and pronounce different sounds in a word, and add or substitute sounds in simple words to make new words. They also need to be able to match letter sounds to the written letter and use decoding skills to read unfamiliar words and be able to read common high-frequency words with ease.

Lindsey (2023) identified the foundational literacy skills among kindergarten learners. Among these are print concepts, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, grapheme awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and morphology. Print concepts include knowing how printed texts operate and hold meaning. An example would be holding a book correctly and

pointing to one written word for each spoken word. Phonological awareness includes identifying and manipulating units of sounds in oral language. An example of this is hearing and making rhymes. Phonemic awareness includes identifying and manipulating phonemes, the smallest units of sounds in oral language. An example of this is segmenting to say each sound in a word. Grapheme awareness pertains to the written representation of sounds which could either be letter sounds or letter combination sounds. Alphabet knowledge involves knowing letter names, sounds, and forms while phonics is about mapping letters and letter combinations to sounds. Knowledge of morphology is measured by making the child identify and manipulate morphemes – the smallest units of meaning in the language. An example of this is when the child reads *retake*, does the child identify that the prefix *-re* means again?

Closely synonymous with Lindsey's (2018) foundational literacy skills laid down and wanted to be identified by the survey designed by Really Great Reading (2018). The designed survey intends to identify the foundational literacy skills of children in terms of their functional vocabulary, phonological/ phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, decoding, and high-frequency words.

1. Functional Vocabulary – it intends to measure a receptive knowledge of the meaning of the words. Really Great Reading (2018) advances that it is critical for students to understand how to use identified terms so students can respond to direct and explicit foundational literacy skills instructions. If in the given test the student gets low or emerging, they may not understand some of the words necessary to respond to foundational literacy skills instructions which may result in a limited ability to fully engage in the lessons. If students are on track, it indicates that they understand functional vocabulary resulting in an increased likelihood that they can follow typical early literacy instructions.
2. Phonological/ phonemic awareness – is a necessary skill for a child to be able to decode words. Students who struggle to read words in kindergarten have difficulty with phonemic awareness. (WETA, 2022; Gemm Learning, 2023; DESE, 2023). If students score low or emerging, it is an indicator that the student does not have adequate phonological awareness and it may lead to difficulty in decoding words and requires that intensive support is given. If students are on track, it is an indicator that the student understands that words are made of sounds and can skillfully hear the sounds in words. This means that decoding words starts from matching letters to sounds.
3. Letter Knowledge – this requires a child's ability to name letters and knowledge and letter-sound combination. A child's ability to name letters is one of the best predictors of later success in reading while a child's knowledge of letter-sound combinations is critical for his decoding success. If a child scores low or emerging in this indicator, this means limited exposure to letters or print. If a student is on track, this could mean that the teacher can proceed with foundational literacy skills instruction with confidence

that the student is able to build upon letter-sound and letter-name knowledge while moving toward decoding simple words.

4. Decoding – pertains to the child’s ability to read closed-syllable words. If at the beginning of the school year, a student does not read any words correctly, it may be an indication that the student has had little exposure to word reading although, generally students are not expected to decode words at the beginning of kindergarten. If a student is on tract, it is an indication that the student is well on the way to developing accurate, automatic, and fluent decoding skills.
5. High-Frequency Words – measures the exposure of a child to words frequently occurring in texts. Kilpatrick (2015) revealed that once students are able to decode a phonetically high-frequency word, students are likely to unitize that word, and that word is automatically added to their sight word vocabulary. Really Great Reading company cited the findings of

Correlation of Parental Involvement and Foundational Literacy Skills. Literature abounds examining the relationship between parental involvement and its effect on learners’ academic endeavors. While there are studies claiming a positive relationship between said variables, some others found otherwise.

Being the child’s primary supporter, a parent plays an important role in the journey of his/her own child. As Jaiswali and Choudhuri (2017) put it, parental involvement in the education of their children is a key function of a child’s total functioning as well as academic success.

Stutzel (2019) claimed that parental involvement had increasingly become more important for children even before entering school as parents who engage in family literacy with their students, set them up for success when it comes to reading and literacy skills in school. The finding of Evangelista (2008) in her mixed method study seems to agree as it revealed that the academic involvement of parents is still visible to their children in terms of peers, school activities, and others. It was recommended in her research that parents should participate and be involved in the development of their children’s education, especially during their fundamental years because this stage will be the foundation for children to be able to accelerate to the next level of higher education. Powell (2010) added his assertion that although findings from studies have found a link between children’s educational outcomes and parent involvement, the quality of current evidence pertaining to the long-term effects of studies, specifically small-scale, is scant and inadequate.

Statistics show the low level of reading competence of children, studies reveal the gap in understanding Parental Involvement from parents’ perspective, and the Philippine EFA goals recommend expanding access to parental involvement programs in every barangays as it supports the general picture derived from the research Dor & Rucker-Naidu (2012) which asserts that family involvement leads to better attendance, higher scores on standardized tests, higher motivation to study, lower absenteeism, and improved behavior at home and at school.

Most of the research that has been done has shown a positive correlation between parental involvement and a positive increase in literacy skills and reading development. However, there has been a contradiction in the research study conducted by Hartas (2010) shows very little to no correlation between learning at home and a child's success in school. Hartas (2010) started his study by taking 19,000 children between the ages of nine and eleven months. It is noteworthy that his study did not determine whether the child came from a wealthy home and whether parents have good educational backgrounds are determinants for students' success in school (Hartas, 2010).

Additionally, the quantitative-correlational study of Albiso, et.al (2022) found a low negative significant relationship between parental involvement and the academic performance of junior high school students. While in the study of Paulson (1994) gender played a factor in its predicted effect on the academic achievement of students. Girls' reports of parenting did not predict achievement, but boys' reports of parenting predicted achievement.

II. Methodology

The study utilized the convergent mixed-method approach or also known as the concurrent mixed method. Cresswell (2012) explained this design's fundamental justification is that one data gathering form offers advantages to counterbalance the disadvantages of the alternative form and that gathering both leads to a more comprehensive knowledge of a study problem. This approach requires that both quantitative and qualitative data be simultaneously collected, analyzed separately, compared the results of both datasets, and interpreted if results contradict or support each other.

For the qualitative method part of this research, parents of k1 pupils were interviewed about their level of perception of their involvement in the foundational literacy skills of their children. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2014), is an inquiry process of understanding that explore a social or human problem by conducting the study in a natural setting. In qualitative research, researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants.

For the quantitative research part of this study, the foundational literacy skills of the k1 learners were measured using an adapted questionnaire from Kindergarten Foundational Skills Surveys by Really Great Reading.

As mentioned in the purpose of this research study, the convergent analysis of the two variables of this study will provide information on issues that have not been addressed by previous research.

The primary participants of this study were one hundred and fifty (150) k1 learners from five selected schools in Davao Del Sur, where thirty (30) k1 learners for each of the five schools were randomly selected to answer the kindergarten foundational skills surveys, an adopted

questionnaire to measure foundational literacy skills of students by the Really Great Reading (2018).

The secondary participants were ten (10) randomly selected parents of k1 learners from five selected schools in Davao del Sur. They were interviewed to identify their perception of their parental involvement in their children's education and their assessment of the foundational literacy skills of their k1 children.

Simple Random Sampling, according to Creswell (2012), is the most popular and rigorous form of probability sampling. In this study, the participants came from a population who have equal chances of being selected.

III. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this convergent mixed-method study was to probe into the perception of parents of k1 learners on their parental involvement and compare it to the result of the foundational literacy skills of the students. The respondents of the study were selected public elementary k1 learners and their parents at Matanao, Davao del Sur. This study sought to address the gap in literature that takes into consideration the parent's perception of their involvement in their children's education.

As a result, this study found that all parents-interviewees believe that their children already have the foundational literacy skills expected of them. From the interview, it was found out that there are nine foundational literacy skills expected of parents of their children. These foundational literacy skills include reading and letter recognition, sound recognition, writing skills, recognition of shapes, ability to communicate, counting and numeracy, memorization, letter combination, and syllable awareness. It is to be noted that while parents have different expectations on the foundational skills for kindergarten students, all of them think that their children already have the expected foundational skills they ought to acquire.

All the parent-interviewees believe that they are actively involved in their children's education. While they have different opinions on their involvement, the fact remains that all of them believe that they are supportive of the education of their children. The parent-interviewees mentioned different forms of involvement in their children's education. These are supportive presence, direct teaching and tutoring, homework, and assignment support, mentoring and encouragement, teaching basic skills, and participating in school activities.

The level of the foundational literacy skills of students is on track suggesting that k1 learners have strong base knowledge and are ready to launch into typical early literacy instruction with little or no support. Although there are two indicators of foundational literacy skills where the respondents had emerging skill levels, the overall foundational literacy skill remained on track.

Finally, the perceived parental involvement of parents is present among all parent-interviewees and the foundational literacy skills of k1 learners are on track. This means that those k1 learners whose parents are involved in their education are likely to have high foundational literacy skills and that their level of foundational skills makes them ready for literacy instruction at their level even without the support of their parents.

Analysis

K1 learners already have the foundational literacy skills expected of them by their parents even prior to entering formal school. Parents have strong conviction on the acquisition of foundational literacy skills of k1 learners even before entering formal school because they are particularly involved in the teaching their children acquire such skills.

Parents of K1 learners are actively involved in their children's education. Involvement in their children's education comes in different forms and degrees, but it boils down to the bottom line which is that they are involved. Parents ensure that they are available to lend support where they are needed especially when it comes to their children's early education.

Kindergarten 1 (K1) learners already possess the essential literacy skills that align with the expected standards for their developmental stage. This confirms the expectations parents have with their k1 learners.

Parental involvement is consistently observed among all the parents who were interviewed. Additionally, it is evident that Kindergarten 1 (K1) learners have established foundational literacy skills in line with the expected standards. This suggests that K1 learners whose parents actively engage in their educational process are more likely to possess strong foundational literacy skills. Furthermore, the strong foundational skills of these students indicate that they are well-prepared for literacy instruction at their developmental level, even in cases where parental support may be less prominent.

Discussion

While the overall foundational literacy skills of K1 learners are on track, teachers should identify areas where some students may have emerging skills and provide targeted support. This can help ensure that all students have a well-rounded foundation.

Moreover, the Department of Education should acknowledge and encourage the active involvement of parents in their children's education. Providing resources and guidance for parents to further support their children's early literacy development can be beneficial.

Schools should foster collaborative relationships with parents, recognizing that parents are valuable partners in their children's educational journey. Regular communication channels, workshops, and informational sessions can facilitate this collaboration. Schools can offer additional early literacy programs or resources to K1 learners to build upon their existing

foundational literacy skills. This can help ensure that all students, regardless of their parental support, receive a strong foundation in literacy.

Future researchers could consider broadening the scope of variables, environmental factors, and participant demographics under examination, thereby ensuring the generalizability of the study's outcomes to a more comprehensive context.

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The author is 27 years old at present, born on March 12, 1997, in Digos City. She is the eldest among her four lovely and kind sisters. She graduated at Cor Jesus College with a degree of Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English last 2017. She took and passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers just the same year she graduated. She just recently got married to her husband Kevin Jayson F. Jumawan and is looking forward to being blessed with children by the grace of our Lord.

She is a grade 1 teacher in Sinawilan Elementary School, municipality of Matanao, where she is currently residing. She has been in the Department of Education for six years now. At this present time, she is also finishing her Master's degree in Master of Arts in Educational Management at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. in Davao City.

More of her love of teaching, she loves to cook and make her own recipes. She is also adventurous and fond of exploring places that unite her with the beauty of nature.

Stephanie believes that everything in this life happens at the right time when you are ready and when God allows. Indeed, her favorite Bible verse is from the book of Isaiah 60:22 " When the time is right, I the Lord will make it happen.