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Home–School–Community Partnerships and the Reading Development Experiences of Key Stage 1 Learners: A Qualitative Study at Sto. Tomas Central School

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to home–school–community partnerships and their contribution to the reading development of Key Stage 1 learners at Sto. Tomas Central School. Anchored on Epstein’s Framework of School–Family–Community Partnerships and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to gain a deeper understanding of how parents, teachers, community stakeholders, and learners collaboratively support literacy development among early-grade learners. Participants included Key Stage 1 teachers, parents, community stakeholders, and selected learners from Grades 1 to 3. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis of school literacy programs and reading initiatives. The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis approach. Findings revealed that home–school–community partnerships play a vital role in fostering learners’ reading engagement, confidence, and literacy development. Parents provided home-based reading support and encouragement, teachers implemented learner-centered reading interventions and literacy activities, while community stakeholders contributed through literacy programs, resource assistance, and collaborative educational initiatives. The study further revealed that meaningful communication and shared responsibility among stakeholders strengthened learners’ motivation and participation in reading activities. However, challenges such as limited parental availability, insufficient reading materials, financial constraints, and inconsistent community involvement affected the sustainability of literacy support programs. The study concludes that collaborative partnerships among homes, schools, and communities create supportive literacy environments that contribute positively to the reading development of Key Stage 1 learners. Strengthening stakeholder collaboration, sustaining community-based literacy programs, and enhancing parental engagement are essential in promoting holistic literacy development among early-grade learners.



1. Introduction

Reading is considered one of the most fundamental skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. In the early years of education, literacy acquisition significantly shapes learners' cognitive, social, and academic development. Within the Philippine educational context, improving reading performance among elementary learners remains a major concern, particularly after reports highlighting learning gaps in foundational literacy skills. The Department of Education continuously emphasizes the importance of stakeholder collaboration in promoting literacy development through reading interventions and community engagement programs.

Home-school-community partnership plays a critical role in fostering positive educational outcomes among learners. Parents serve as children's first teachers, while schools provide structured literacy instruction and communities contribute support systems that enrich learning experiences. Collaborative efforts among these sectors create a conducive environment for literacy development and learner achievement. Epstein (2018) emphasized that strong partnerships among families, schools, and communities positively influence learners' academic engagement and educational success. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains that children's development is shaped by interconnected social systems such as family, school, and community environments.

In Sto. Tomas Central School, reading performance among Key Stage 1 learners has become a focal concern due to varying levels of literacy achievement observed among pupils. While schools implement reading programs and interventions, learner performance may also be influenced by the extent of stakeholder participation and support. Some learners experience limited parental guidance at home, inadequate access to reading materials, and inconsistent community involvement, which may hinder literacy acquisition.

Several studies revealed that parental involvement significantly contributes to children's literacy growth and reading achievement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2019; Jeynes, 2020). Community-based literacy initiatives and school-supported reading programs likewise enhance learner motivation and reading comprehension skills (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2021). Despite these findings, there remains limited local research focusing on the integrated role of home, school, and community partnerships in improving reading performance among Key Stage 1 learners in Philippine public elementary schools.

Thus, this study aimed to examine the relationship between home-school-community partnership and the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners of Sto. Tomas Central School. Specifically, it investigated the extent of stakeholder involvement and determined how collaborative efforts contribute to literacy development among early-grade learners.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Epstein's Framework of School-Family-Community Partnerships and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

Epstein's Framework of School-Family-Community Partnerships emphasizes that learners perform better academically when schools, families, and communities collaborate effectively. The framework identifies six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home,

decision-making, and collaborating with the community. These dimensions collectively support learners' academic and social development.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that children's learning and development are influenced by multiple environmental systems, particularly the microsystem involving family, school, and community interactions. Positive relationships among these systems create supportive conditions that enhance children's literacy acquisition and educational achievement.

These theories provide a strong foundation for understanding how collaborative partnerships influence the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners.

2.Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to home-school-community partnership and its influence on the reading development of Key Stage 1 learners of Sto. Tomas Central School.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do parents, teachers, and community stakeholders describe their roles and involvement in supporting the reading development of Key Stage 1 learners?
2. How do home, school, and community partnerships contribute to the reading experiences and literacy development of Key Stage 1 learners?
3. What practices and strategies are employed by parents, teachers, and community stakeholders to strengthen learners' reading skills?
4. What challenges are encountered by parents, teachers, and community stakeholders in sustaining home-school-community partnerships for literacy development?
5. What insights may be drawn from the experiences of the participants to enhance literacy support programs for Key Stage 1 learners?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design. This design was deemed appropriate because it aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences, perceptions, practices, and challenges of parents, teachers, community stakeholders, and learners regarding home-school-community partnership and literacy development. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed, and contextualized descriptions of participants' experiences related to reading support and collaborative educational practices.

The study specifically employed thematic analysis to identify emerging patterns, themes, and meanings from the participants' narratives concerning literacy support and stakeholder collaboration.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Sto. Tomas Central School located in Santo Tomas, Isabela, Philippines. The school serves Key Stage 1 learners from Grades 1 to 3 and implements various literacy programs and reading interventions aimed at improving learners' reading performance.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study included:

- Key Stage 1 teachers
- Parents of Grades 1–3 learners
- Community stakeholders
- Selected Key Stage 1 learners

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that individuals with direct experiences and involvement in literacy development and home–school–community partnership were included in the study.

The study involved participants who could provide meaningful insights regarding reading support practices, stakeholder collaboration, literacy challenges, and reading intervention experiences.

2.3 Research Instruments

Data were gathered using the following qualitative research instruments:

- Semi-structured interview guide
- Focus group discussion guide
- Observation notes
- Document analysis of reading program materials and school literacy initiatives

The interview and focus group discussion questions were validated by experts in qualitative research and language education to ensure credibility, clarity, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

The semi-structured interview format allowed participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding literacy support and stakeholder involvement.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, permission was secured from the school administration of Sto. Tomas Central School. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the research process.

After obtaining approval, the researcher conducted interviews and focus group discussions with the participants. Classroom observations and document analyses were also conducted to gather additional contextual information regarding literacy programs and stakeholder participation.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Field notes and observational data were likewise documented to enrich the interpretation of findings.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analyses were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach.

The analysis involved the following steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts
2. Coding of significant statements and responses
3. Identification of recurring patterns and themes
4. Reviewing and refining themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Interpreting and presenting the findings

Trustworthiness of the study was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Member checking, triangulation of data sources, audit trails, and thick description were employed to enhance the rigor and reliability of the qualitative findings.

3. Results

Theme 1: Active Parental Involvement in Reading Development

The findings revealed that parents play a significant role in supporting the reading development of Key Stage 1 learners. Many participants emphasized that parental guidance at home positively influences learners' reading habits, confidence, and comprehension skills. Parents regularly assisted learners during reading activities, monitored assignments, and encouraged children to practice reading outside classroom hours. Teachers observed that learners whose parents consistently engaged in home-based reading activities demonstrated better fluency, vocabulary recognition, and comprehension skills.

One teacher participant shared:

"Malaking tulong talaga kapag ang magulang ay may oras na magbasa kasama ang anak sa bahay. Napapansin namin na mas mabilis silang natututo."

Another teacher stated:

"Kapag may follow-up sa bahay, mas nagiging confident ang mga bata sa oral reading activities."

A parent participant expressed:

"Kahit pagod galing trabaho, sinisikap ko pa rin na mapabasa ang anak ko kahit ilang minuto bago matulog."

Another parent explained:

"Importante na may gabay ang magulang kasi minsan nahihiya ang bata magbasa kapag walang nagtuturo."

The responses indicate that parental involvement creates emotional encouragement and academic support that strengthen literacy acquisition among young learners. Home environments that promote reading practices help learners develop familiarity with words, pronunciation, and comprehension strategies. Learners also become more motivated when parents demonstrate interest in their academic progress.

The findings support the study of Goodall and Montgomery (2019), who emphasized that meaningful parental engagement positively influences children's academic performance and literacy development. Similarly, Jeynes (2020) noted that children whose parents actively participate in educational activities tend to exhibit stronger academic achievement and reading competence.

Furthermore, the findings align with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explains that children's learning development is significantly influenced by interactions within their immediate environment, particularly the family. The home serves as an essential literacy environment where foundational reading habits are cultivated.

Despite positive parental involvement, some participants also disclosed challenges such as limited time due to work responsibilities, insufficient educational background of parents, and lack of reading materials at home. These constraints affected the consistency of home reading support among some learners.

One parent shared:

"Gusto ko sanang tutukan lagi ang anak ko pero minsan gabi na ako nakakauwi dahil sa trabaho."

Another parent admitted:

"Nahirapan din akong turuan siya minsan lalo na kapag mahirap na ang babasahin."

These responses imply that although parents recognize the importance of literacy support, socio-economic realities may limit their active participation. Thus, schools need to provide continuous guidance and flexible literacy programs that can accommodate varying family circumstances.

Theme 2: School-Based Literacy Support and Reading Interventions

The study further revealed that teachers and school administrators actively implemented literacy interventions to improve the reading performance of learners. Participants highlighted the importance of remedial reading activities, individualized instruction, peer tutoring, and classroom-based literacy strategies in helping struggling readers improve their skills.

Teachers explained that reading interventions were integrated into daily classroom routines and after-class remediation sessions. Various instructional approaches such as storytelling, guided reading, phonics instruction, and vocabulary drills were utilized to strengthen learners' literacy skills.

One teacher participant stated:

"Ginagawa naming enjoyable ang pagbabasa gamit ang storytelling at interactive activities para mas maengganyo ang mga bata."

Another teacher shared:

“May remediation kami para sa mga batang nahihirapang bumasa at malaking tulong ito sa kanilang improvement.”

A school head participant explained:

“Priority talaga ng paaralan ang reading dahil ito ang pundasyon ng lahat ng learning areas.”

The findings suggest that schools play a critical role in addressing literacy gaps among early-grade learners through structured interventions and supportive instructional practices. Teachers’ dedication and adaptability contributed positively to learners’ reading engagement and progress.

Classroom observations further showed that teachers employed learner-centered and differentiated instructional strategies to accommodate varying reading abilities. Teachers provided individualized attention to struggling readers while encouraging collaborative learning activities among learners.

One learner participant expressed:

“Masaya po kapag nagbabasa kami kasi may games at stories si teacher.”

Another learner stated:

“Hindi na po ako masyadong nahihiya magbasa kasi tinutulungan po kami ni teacher.”

These responses indicate that supportive classroom environments help reduce learners’ anxiety and increase confidence in reading activities. Positive teacher-learner relationships also contribute to learners’ willingness to participate in literacy tasks.

The findings support the work of Snow et al. (2020), which emphasized that effective literacy instruction and early interventions significantly improve reading achievement among young learners. Similarly, Vygotsky’s Social Constructivist Theory highlights the importance of guided learning and teacher scaffolding in helping children develop literacy skills.

However, participants also identified several school-related challenges affecting reading interventions, including limited instructional materials, insufficient time for remediation, and large class sizes.

One teacher noted:

“Minsan kulang ang oras para matutukan lahat ng batang nangangailangan ng remediation.”

Another participant explained:

“Kulang din kami sa reading materials lalo na para sa struggling readers.”

These findings indicate the need for stronger institutional support, adequate literacy resources, and sustainable intervention programs to enhance reading development among Key Stage 1 learners.

Theme 3: Community Participation and Literacy Support

The study revealed that community stakeholders contribute significantly to literacy development through collaborative educational activities and support initiatives. Barangay officials, community volunteers, local organizations, and other stakeholders participated in reading campaigns, donation drives, and school literacy programs.

Participants emphasized that community involvement strengthens educational support systems and promotes a culture of reading among learners.

One community stakeholder shared:

“Responsibilidad din ng komunidad na suportahan ang pag-aaral ng mga bata lalo na sa pagbabasa.”

Another participant stated:

“Nakikipagtulungan kami sa paaralan para sa mga reading activities at book donations.”

Teachers acknowledged that community support helped provide additional learning materials and encouraged learner participation in literacy activities.

One teacher participant explained:

“Kapag may suporta ang barangay at stakeholders, mas nagiging successful ang aming reading programs.”

A parent participant added:

“Mas ginaganahan ang mga bata kapag maraming sumusuporta sa kanila.”

The findings imply that community participation reinforces literacy initiatives beyond the classroom. Collaborative partnerships between schools and communities create opportunities for learners to access educational resources and literacy-rich environments.

The findings support Epstein’s Framework of School–Family–Community Partnerships, which emphasized that community collaboration strengthens learner achievement and school effectiveness. Similarly, Ainscow (2020) stressed that inclusive and collaborative educational environments enhance learner participation and educational success.

Despite positive community involvement, participants also reported inconsistencies in stakeholder participation. Some literacy programs were not regularly sustained due to financial limitations and varying levels of stakeholder commitment.

One teacher participant noted:

“May mga pagkakataon na hindi tuloy-tuloy ang support dahil kulang din sa budget.”

Another stakeholder shared:

“Gusto naming tumulong pero minsan limitado rin ang resources ng komunidad.”

These responses indicate that while community participation is valuable, sustainability mechanisms and stronger partnerships are necessary to ensure long-term literacy support.

Theme 4: Challenges Affecting Reading Performance

The findings revealed several challenges affecting the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners. Among the most common concerns identified were limited parental supervision, inadequate reading materials, low learner motivation, technological distractions, and socio-economic difficulties.

Teachers observed that some learners lacked consistent reading practice at home due to parents’ work schedules and limited educational support.

One teacher participant shared:

“May mga batang walang nagga-guide sa bahay kaya hirap silang makasabay sa klase.”

A parent participant expressed:

“Hindi namin agad mabili ang ibang reading materials dahil sa hirap ng buhay.”

Another teacher explained:

“Minsan mas gusto ng bata ang cellphone kaysa magbasa ng libro.”

These responses indicate that environmental and socio-economic factors significantly affect learners' literacy development. Learners who lack access to literacy resources and academic support may experience slower reading progress and reduced motivation toward reading activities.

Additionally, participants highlighted the effects of learning gaps caused by interruptions in classroom instruction and inconsistent literacy exposure.

One teacher stated:

“May mga batang nasa higher grade pero hirap pa rin sa basic reading.”

Another participant explained:

“Kailangan talaga ng mas matinding intervention para sa struggling readers.”

The findings support OECD (2019), which emphasized that socio-economic disparities and insufficient educational support systems negatively affect literacy achievement among learners. Similarly, Gay (2018) argued that culturally responsive and supportive learning environments are essential in addressing diverse learner needs.

The findings imply that improving literacy outcomes requires comprehensive collaboration among families, schools, and communities to address both academic and socio-economic barriers affecting reading performance.

Discussion

The study demonstrated that home-school-community partnership significantly contributes to the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners. Active parental involvement, school-based literacy interventions, and community participation collectively create supportive learning environments that enhance literacy development among young learners.

The findings revealed that learners perform better when stakeholders collaboratively engage in reading programs and literacy activities. Parents provide emotional and instructional support at home, teachers implement learner-centered literacy strategies, and community stakeholders strengthen educational resources and initiatives.

However, the study also identified persistent challenges such as limited parental availability, inadequate literacy resources, socio-economic difficulties, and inconsistent stakeholder participation. These barriers affect the sustainability of literacy interventions and learner reading progress.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening collaborative educational partnerships and sustaining literacy programs to improve foundational reading skills among Key Stage 1 learners.

4. Conclusion

The study established that home–school–community partnership significantly contributes to the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners. Strong collaboration among parents, teachers, and community stakeholders enhances literacy support and improves learner achievement. However, challenges related to resources, parental availability, and community participation continue to affect the sustainability of literacy programs.

The findings underscore the importance of strengthening collaborative reading initiatives and sustaining stakeholder involvement to improve foundational literacy among early-grade learners.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study provide significant educational, social, and policy implications regarding the importance of home–school–community partnership in improving the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners. The results emphasize that literacy development is not solely the responsibility of schools but rather a shared commitment among parents, teachers, school administrators, community stakeholders, and educational institutions.

Educational Implications

The study highlights the critical role of collaborative literacy support in strengthening learners' reading performance. The findings imply that teachers should continuously implement learner-centered and differentiated reading instruction to address the varying literacy needs of early-grade learners. Schools may strengthen remedial reading programs, peer-assisted learning activities, and contextualized literacy interventions to improve reading comprehension and fluency among struggling readers.

Moreover, the findings suggest that schools should institutionalize regular parent literacy orientation programs to equip parents with effective strategies for supporting children's reading development at home. Since parental involvement was found to positively influence learner achievement, schools may develop structured home-reading activities, reading logs, and family literacy programs that encourage sustained parent participation.

The study further implies that literacy development should extend beyond classroom instruction. Community-based reading activities such as mobile libraries, storytelling sessions, book donation drives, and literacy outreach programs may help strengthen learners' exposure to reading materials and literacy-rich environments.

Policy Implications

The findings imply the need for stronger implementation of literacy-related educational policies and stakeholder engagement initiatives within the basic education sector. Educational leaders and policymakers may strengthen school-family-community collaboration frameworks aligned with the

programs of Department of Education to support foundational literacy development among early learners.

The study also suggests that schools should receive adequate institutional support, funding, and instructional resources for sustainable literacy interventions. Policies focusing on equitable access to reading materials, teacher training in literacy instruction, and stakeholder collaboration mechanisms may further improve reading outcomes among Key Stage 1 learners.

Additionally, local government units and community organizations may develop partnerships with schools to support reading programs and literacy campaigns. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration may contribute to more sustainable and inclusive literacy initiatives within communities.

Social Implications

The study underscores the importance of shared social responsibility in promoting children's literacy development. The findings imply that communities play a vital role in creating supportive educational environments where children are encouraged to read and learn. When parents, schools, and communities work collaboratively, learners develop stronger confidence, motivation, and interest in reading activities.

The findings also imply that socio-economic realities affecting learners' literacy development must be addressed through collaborative support systems. Families experiencing financial difficulties and limited access to educational resources may benefit from community-based assistance programs and school-supported literacy initiatives.

Furthermore, the study suggests that fostering a culture of reading within homes and communities may contribute to long-term educational improvement and lifelong learning among children.

Implications for Teachers and School Administrators

The study implies that teachers should strengthen communication and collaboration with parents to monitor learners' reading progress effectively. Frequent parent-teacher engagement and feedback mechanisms may help identify literacy concerns early and provide immediate interventions for struggling readers.

School administrators may also use the findings as a basis for developing sustainable school literacy frameworks and stakeholder engagement programs. Strengthening partnerships with parents and community stakeholders may improve the implementation and sustainability of reading interventions and literacy activities.

Moreover, administrators may provide professional development opportunities for teachers focusing on literacy instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, and family engagement approaches to improve literacy outcomes among learners.

Implications for Future Research

The findings imply the need for further studies exploring home-school-community partnerships and literacy development in different educational contexts. Future researchers may conduct mixed-methods or longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of stakeholder collaboration on learners' academic achievement and literacy growth.

Researchers may also explore additional variables such as socio-economic status, digital literacy, parental educational attainment, and learner motivation in relation to reading performance. Comparative studies involving rural and urban schools may likewise provide broader insights into literacy challenges and stakeholder involvement in diverse educational settings.

Overall, the study emphasizes that strengthening collaborative partnerships among homes, schools, and communities is essential in improving reading performance and fostering holistic literacy development among Key Stage 1 learners.

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