

A Case Study of Barangay Kaludan's Kindergarten Parents' Support for Emergent Literacy Practices at Home Towards a Development of a Proposed Literacy Program

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Abstract

This study examines how kindergarten parents in Barangay Kaludan, Nunungan, Lanao del Norte support their children's emergent literacy within a rural agricultural context. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, particularly the concepts of social interaction and parental scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development, the study explores parents' practices, perceptions, resources, and challenges in fostering early literacy. A qualitative case study design based on Merriam's framework was employed, involving ten purposively selected participants, including parents and daycare teachers. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, observations of home literacy environments, and document analysis, and were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis with triangulation and member checking to ensure credibility. Findings revealed that parents actively support literacy through shared reading, everyday oral language interactions, and exposure to environmental print. They perceive themselves as primary educators, motivators, and partners of the school in their children's literacy development. Despite these efforts, challenges such as limited time due to work responsibilities, lack of confidence in teaching literacy skills, and limited access to print materials were identified. Parents demonstrated resourcefulness by utilizing household items, visual aids, and multimedia tools to create print-rich environments. The study concludes that while parental involvement is strong, structured support is necessary. It recommends the implementation of community-based initiatives, including parent training, improved access to materials, and strengthened school-home partnerships through programs such as the Parent-Led Literacy Support Program (PL-LSP). This study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting early literacy development and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by addressing disparities in rural educational contexts. It also contributes to sustainability by supporting community-based, culturally responsive, and resource-efficient literacy practices that strengthen school-home collaboration and promote long-term educational and socio-economic development.

Keywords: Early Childhood Literacy, Emergent Literacy, Home Literacy Practices, Parental Engagement, Parental Perceptions, Rural Education, Shared Reading, Sociocultural Theory

1. Introduction

Early childhood literacy (ECL) is a critical foundation for children's academic development, shaped by both formal education and home-based learning environments. While global and national initiatives have improved access to early literacy programs, disparities persist, particularly in rural communities where socio-economic conditions, limited resources, and parental constraints influence children's emergent literacy development. This study examines how kindergarten parents in Barangay Kaludan, Nunungan, Lanao del Norte support their children's literacy at home, focusing on their practices, perceptions, resources, and challenges within a rural agricultural context.

1.1 Background of the Study on Parental Support for Emergent Literacy among Kindergarten Learners in Barangay Kaludan

Early childhood literacy (ECL) is widely recognized as essential for long-term academic success, as children develop foundational skills such as vocabulary, phonological awareness, and early writing during their formative years. Global efforts continue to emphasize equitable access to early education; however, disparities remain due to socio-economic inequality, limited resources, and varying parental support (Kim & Park, 2022). In the Philippines, programs such as the Universal Kindergarten Program and Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education aim to strengthen literacy development. While these initiatives have improved access, their effectiveness varies depending on teacher preparation, resources, and parental involvement. Literacy development extends beyond classrooms, with home environments playing

a significant role. In Barangay Kaludan, Nunungan, Lanao del Norte, socio-economic constraints and limited access to early education affect children's literacy opportunities. Only about sixty percent of children aged four to five were enrolled in early childhood programs in 2024. Many families rely on subsistence agriculture, limiting time and resources for literacy activities. Additionally, the scarcity of Maranao-language reading materials restricts children's exposure to print. Community initiatives such as the Karunungan sa Pagbasa Program demonstrate local efforts to support literacy but face sustainability challenges due to limited funding and training.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Home Literacy Practices and Parental Engagement

Research consistently highlights parental engagement as a key factor in emergent literacy development. Children exposed to shared reading, storytelling, and guided writing demonstrate stronger vocabulary, phonological awareness, and positive attitudes toward reading. Even simple home-based literacy practices significantly improve reading readiness in rural contexts. Parental capacity to support literacy is influenced by education, occupation, and access to materials. Limited schooling may reduce parents' confidence, while labor-intensive work constrains time for engagement. Studies in the Philippines show that supportive home literacy environments enhance children's reading skills and classroom participation (Garcia & Alonzo, 2023). However, these findings are largely based on urban settings with better resource availability.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Early Childhood Literacy and Rural Educational Inequality

Globally, early literacy remains a priority, yet inequalities persist in developing countries due to socio-economic disparities. Nationally, Philippine education policies promote early literacy through multilingual and inclusive programs, though implementation varies. Locally, rural agricultural communities such as Barangay Kaludan face compounded challenges, including geographic isolation, limited preschool access, and economic constraints. Cultural and linguistic factors, such as reliance on the Maranao language and limited availability of localized materials, further shape literacy experiences. These conditions highlight the need for context-specific understanding of parental literacy support.

1.4 Theoretical or Conceptual Basis: Sociocultural Theory and Parental Scaffolding in Emergent Literacy

This study is grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning occurs through social interaction within a cultural context. Parents serve as primary facilitators of children's learning through activities such as shared reading, storytelling, and conversation. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains how children develop skills through guided support, with parents scaffolding learning until independence is achieved. Home-based scaffolding practices significantly enhance language development and reading readiness. Sociocultural theory also emphasizes culturally embedded literacy practices, such as storytelling and intergenerational interaction, which are particularly relevant in multilingual and rural contexts (Bennett et al., 2023; Gillanders & Barak, 2024). Parent-child interactions and everyday activities contribute to vocabulary and comprehension development (Baker-Doyle et al., 2024; Hartas, 2023). These perspectives support the study's focus on family-based literacy practices as essential learning mechanisms.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on Rural Parental Support for Emergent Literacy

Despite extensive research on parental involvement, there is limited focus on rural agricultural communities where socio-economic conditions and cultural contexts influence literacy practices. Existing studies primarily examine urban settings, leaving a gap in understanding how parents in small barangays support emergent literacy using limited resources. There is insufficient documentation of parents' lived experiences, strategies, and challenges in rural contexts. Few studies explore how cultural and linguistic factors shape home literacy practices in agricultural communities. This study addresses this gap by examining how parents in Barangay Kaludan support their children's literacy, providing context-specific insights to inform educational interventions. The integration of educational technology in modern classrooms has become essential for preparing learners with the competencies required in the 21st century. Technological developments continue to reshape teaching and learning environments, enabling new forms of communication, collaboration, and knowledge construction. However, despite widespread investment in educational technologies, teachers continue to face challenges in integrating these tools effectively in classroom practice. Understanding teachers' perceptions, technological competencies, and contextual barriers is critical for improving educational technology implementation in schools. Educational technologies such as computers, projectors, digital media tools, and online platforms have expanded opportunities for interactive and student-centered learning. Nevertheless, research indicates that technology integration does not automatically improve educational outcomes unless teachers possess the necessary knowledge, support, and pedagogical strategies to use these tools effectively. This study examines the perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding the challenges they encounter when integrating educational technology into classroom instruction. Conducted among public elementary school teachers in Bongao III District, Tawi-Tawi, the study seeks to identify barriers to technology integration and provide evidence that may guide the development of an ICT literacy program to strengthen teachers' capacity to use educational technology effectively.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education by examining how home-based literacy practices support early childhood learning, particularly in underserved rural communities where access to formal educational resources is limited. It also contributes to SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities by addressing disparities in literacy development caused by socio-economic constraints, geographic isolation, and limited access to learning materials in Barangay Kaludan. Furthermore, the study supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, as strengthening early literacy lays the foundation for long-term educational attainment and economic opportunities in agricultural communities. Additionally, it reflects SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals by emphasizing the importance of collaboration among parents, schools, and community initiatives, such as local literacy programs, in promoting sustainable and inclusive literacy development.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability in Rural Education Contexts

This study contributes to educational sustainability by promoting effective early literacy practices that can be sustained within home and community settings. It supports socio-economic sustainability by addressing barriers faced by low-income agricultural families and highlighting strategies that do not rely heavily on financial resources. The research also contributes to cultural sustainability by recognizing the role of local languages and culturally embedded practices in literacy development. Furthermore, it supports community sustainability by informing the development of community-based literacy programs and strengthening school-home partnerships. By providing insights into parental engagement in rural contexts, the study contributes to policy and institutional sustainability, guiding educators and policymakers in designing inclusive and context-responsive literacy interventions.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore parents' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to emergent literacy within their natural home environments. Qualitative research was appropriate because it enables an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena and focuses on interpreting meanings rather than generating statistical generalizations. Specifically, the study utilized a qualitative case study approach based on Merriam's framework, which defines a case study as a comprehensive examination of a bounded system (Merriam, 1998). The bounded system in this research consisted of kindergarten parents in Barangay Kaludan and their involvement in supporting their children's literacy at home. This design allowed for a detailed exploration of how parental practices are influenced by interconnected factors such as educational background, occupation, family routines, and access to resources. By focusing on a specific group within a defined rural setting, the study captured the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions shaping emergent literacy practices.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Barangay Kaludan, a rural community where most families rely on farming, small-scale trading, and other informal livelihood activities. The environment presents several challenges that influence early literacy development, including limited access to books and learning materials, economic constraints, and parents' limited educational attainment. Many parents have only completed elementary or secondary education, which may affect their confidence in guiding literacy activities. Additionally, labor-intensive work reduces the time available for structured learning interactions at home. These conditions highlight the importance of understanding how parents in resource-limited rural settings support their children's emergent literacy despite these constraints.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of kindergarten parents residing in Barangay Kaludan whose children were enrolled in local educational institutions, including the public elementary school, daycare centers, and Arabic schools. Participants were selected to represent parents actively involved in supporting their children's literacy development within the home environment. They included adult individuals aged 18 years and above, both male and female, who had resided in the barangay for at least two years. The participants also varied in literacy proficiency, including those with and without reading and writing skills, allowing for a broader understanding of different parental experiences and capacities in supporting emergent literacy.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling, which is appropriate for qualitative case study research as it ensures that participants possess characteristics relevant to the phenomenon being examined (Merriam, 1998). The selection focused on kindergarten parents who met specific inclusion criteria, including being legal guardians of enrolled children, having sufficient residency in the community, and willingness to participate in interviews and observations. A total of ten participants, including two daycare teachers, were included in the study. This group represented a subset of parents within a predominantly agricultural community and was selected to provide insights into how individuals with varying educational and professional backgrounds support their children's literacy development. The sampling approach allowed for in-depth exploration rather than broad generalization.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument in this study was the researcher, consistent with qualitative case study methodology (Merriam, 1998). The researcher was responsible for designing and conducting data collection and ensuring that the gathered information accurately reflected participants' lived experiences. To guide the process, a semi-structured interview guide was developed, containing open-ended questions focused on parents' understanding of emergent literacy, home literacy practices, available resources, the influence of work and educational background, challenges encountered, and perceived support from schools and the community. The flexible nature of the interview allowed for probing and deeper exploration of emerging themes. An observation checklist was also utilized to document non-verbal behaviors, home literacy environments, and the presence of learning materials. Supporting documents such as reading logs and school communications were reviewed when available. To ensure validity, the instruments were evaluated by experts in early childhood education and qualitative research, and pilot testing with a non-participant parent was conducted to refine clarity and relevance.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted systematically through several stages. Prior to the process, formal permission was obtained from the Municipal Education Office, the Barangay Kaludan local government, and the administrators of the participating schools. Coordination with school heads and program administrators facilitated the identification and recruitment of participants. Interviews were conducted using the semi-structured guide, allowing participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences. Observations of home literacy environments were carried out with consent, and relevant documents were collected when available. The process ensured that data were gathered ethically, respectfully, and in alignment with the study's objectives.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed Merriam's (1998) qualitative case study approach, emphasizing inductive analysis of patterns, categories, and themes. Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, allowing emerging insights to inform subsequent data gathering. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim, while observation notes, documents, and field notes were systematically organized. Open coding was initially applied to identify significant statements and actions related to emergent literacy practices. These codes were derived directly from the data to ensure that findings remained grounded in participants' experiences. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, which led to the development of major themes reflecting key aspects such as literacy activities, resource access, time management, professional influences, and school-home partnerships. Triangulation was employed by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents to enhance credibility and ensure consistency. The findings were interpreted in relation to the study's research questions, conceptual framework, and relevant literature. Member checking was conducted with selected participants to validate interpretations, while peer review by the research adviser ensured analytical rigor. This process resulted in a comprehensive understanding of how parents in Barangay Kaludan support emergent literacy and the challenges they encounter.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles of respect, confidentiality, and informed consent. Approval was obtained from the Saint Columban College Research Office, as well as relevant local authorities and school administrators. Participants were provided with informed consent forms detailing the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and voluntary nature, with the option to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying details. Data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. Interviews and observations were scheduled at convenient times and conducted in private settings, with participants retaining control over what aspects of their home environment could be observed. The study minimized potential risks by ensuring that questions were respectful and non-intrusive. Data were used solely for academic purposes, and all identifiable materials will be securely deleted after the study's completion, while anonymized records will be retained in accordance with institutional guidelines.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Emergent Literacy Practices of Kindergarten Parents

3.1.1 Shared Reading as a Bonding Routine

Parents regularly engaged in shared reading activities with their children, often integrating these into daily routines such as bedtime. Children were observed participating in reading sessions with storybooks and school-provided materials, with parents asking questions, encouraging interaction, and guiding comprehension. Reading sessions typically occurred several times per week and lasted for short but consistent durations, supported by home reading logs and school materials. These findings indicate that shared reading is both a routine and interactive practice that strengthens literacy development and parent-child relationships. This aligns with Lai et al. (2024), who found that read-aloud sessions improve vocabulary and

comprehension, and Lerkkanen (2025), who emphasized the role of interactive reading in developing narrative skills. Similarly, Kim et al. (2024) highlighted the socio-emotional benefits of shared reading, while Karpava (2021) noted that regular reading exposure enhances familiarity with language structures and vocabulary, particularly in resource-limited settings.

3.1.2 Everyday Oral Language Engagement

Parents frequently engaged their children in conversations during daily activities such as meals, play, and household routines. Children were encouraged to express ideas, describe experiences, and ask questions, while parents responded and guided their language use. Observations confirmed that these interactions occurred regularly and involved both spontaneous dialogue and structured questioning, supported by occasional use of school-related materials. These results suggest that oral language engagement is a consistent and natural form of literacy support within the home. This is supported by Hutton et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of conversational turn-taking in language development, and Kim et al. (2024), who noted that everyday conversations foster vocabulary growth. Gilman (2021) and Gillanders and Barak (2024) further highlighted that storytelling and elaborative dialogue strengthen phonological awareness and conceptual understanding, reinforcing the role of daily communication in early literacy development.

3.1.3 Environmental Print Exposure at Home

Parents utilized environmental print, such as labels, calendars, packaging, and signage, to introduce children to letters and words. Observations showed children interacting with printed materials in their surroundings, guided by parents who encouraged reading, recognition, and identification of familiar words. These practices occurred naturally within routine activities and were supported by materials from school programs. These findings demonstrate that environmental print serves as an accessible and practical literacy resource in the home. Hooker (2024) highlighted that exposure to familiar print enhances early reading skills and symbol recognition, while Breeze and Halbach (2024) emphasized the effectiveness of real-life print contexts in engaging children. Campbell (2021) further noted that such exposure increases motivation and print awareness, particularly in low-resource environments.

3.2 Parents' Perceptions of Their Role in Literacy Development

3.2.1 Parents as Primary Literacy Guides

Parents perceived themselves as the first educators responsible for introducing foundational literacy skills such as letters, sounds, and basic reading. They reported actively teaching their children at home and preparing them for school learning. This perception reflects the critical role of parents in early literacy development. Coskun (2021) and Chen et al. (2022) emphasized that early exposure to literacy at home strengthens phonological awareness and reading readiness. Gilman et al. (2021) further identified parental involvement as a predictor of early reading success, while Guo et al. (2021) highlighted that recognizing literacy as a parental responsibility enhances children's motivation and preparedness.

3.2.2 Parents as Motivators and Encouragers

Parents emphasized the importance of encouragement, praise, and emotional support in motivating children to engage in literacy activities. They reported actively supporting their children's efforts and building confidence through positive reinforcement. These findings highlight the role of emotional support in literacy development. Kilag et al. (2023) found that parental encouragement increases engagement and reduces reading anxiety, while Hutton et al. (2021) noted that recognition of effort enhances persistence. Gillanders and Barak (2024) and Gavora (2022) further emphasized that motivation fosters interest and creates a supportive learning environment, reinforcing children's confidence and willingness to learn.

3.2.3 Parents as Partners of the School

Parents viewed literacy development as a shared responsibility between home and school, following teachers' guidance and assisting with reading activities and assignments. They recognized the importance of collaboration in supporting their children's learning. This aligns with Chung (2024), who found that home-school collaboration improves reading progress, and Coskun (2021), who emphasized consistency across learning environments. Chen et al. (2022) also highlighted the benefits of parental adherence to instructional guidance, while Breeze and Halbach (2024) demonstrated that collaborative partnerships enhance literacy readiness and reduce learning gaps.

3.3 Challenges Affecting Parental Support for Emergent Literacy

3.3.1 Limited Time Due to Work and Household Responsibilities

Parents reported difficulty balancing work, household duties, and literacy support, resulting in limited time for consistent engagement with their children. This finding reflects broader socio-economic constraints. Cruz et al. (2022) and García et al. (2021) identified time limitations as a major barrier to home literacy practices, while Breeze and Halbach (2024) emphasized that reduced time affects shared reading opportunities. Bigozzi et al. (2023) further noted that work-related fatigue limits parental involvement, consistent with the experiences of parents in Barangay Kaludan.

3.3.2 Lack of Confidence in Teaching Literacy Skills

Parents expressed uncertainty in teaching reading and literacy concepts, particularly due to limited educational background and lack of training. This aligns with Brown (2021), who linked low parental confidence to reduced literacy engagement, and Chung (2024), who noted that uncertainty may lead parents to rely solely on teachers. Bigozzi et al. (2023) emphasized that confidence improves children's learning outcomes, while Chung (2024) highlighted that lack of guidance can negatively affect literacy exposure and skill development.

3.3.3 Limited Access to Print Materials and Resources

Parents reported limited availability of books and learning materials, relying mainly on school-provided resources or alternative tools such as mobile devices. This finding is consistent with Gillanders and Barak (2024), who noted that limited access to print slows literacy development, and Gilman (2021), who identified resource scarcity in rural Filipino communities. Karpava (2021) and Groenhout (2022) further emphasized that lack of materials restricts opportunities for reading practice and increases dependence on schools for literacy exposure.

3.4 Strategies and Resources Used to Foster a Print-Rich Environment

3.4.1 Use of Everyday Household Items

Parents integrated literacy activities into daily routines by using household items, labels, and real-life contexts to teach reading and vocabulary. This supports Hutton et al. (2021), who emphasized the effectiveness of real-world print exposure, and Kim et al. (2024), who highlighted the benefits of labeling objects. Lynch and Mirabal (2025) further noted that embedding literacy in daily routines creates meaningful learning experiences.

3.4.2 Use of Visual Literacy Materials

Parents utilized charts, flashcards, posters, and recycled materials to reinforce letter recognition and reading skills within the home environment. This aligns with Lynch and Prins (2021) and Lai et al. (2024), who found that visual aids enhance decoding and recognition skills. Lerkkanen (2025) further emphasized that visual materials promote reading readiness, while Kilag et al. (2023) highlighted their effectiveness in resource-limited contexts.

3.4.3 Integration of Play and Multimedia

Parents incorporated songs, games, and digital tools to make literacy activities engaging and interactive. These findings are supported by Hutton et al. (2021), who demonstrated the benefits of play-based learning, and Karpava (2021), who emphasized guided use of digital tools. Kim et al. (2024) further noted that interactive applications enhance engagement and literacy outcomes when combined with parental support.

3.5 Proposed Literacy Program

The findings revealed the need for structured support to strengthen parental involvement in literacy development. A community-based program was proposed to enhance parents' skills, provide accessible resources, and promote consistent literacy practices at home. The program focuses on training parents, providing materials, encouraging home-based activities, and strengthening collaboration between families, schools, and the barangay. This initiative reflects the importance of parental engagement and community support in improving children's literacy outcomes. By equipping parents with practical strategies and fostering partnerships, the program aims to address existing challenges and create sustainable, print-rich learning environments for children.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study found that parents of kindergarten learners in Barangay Kaludan actively support their children's emergent literacy development through various home-based practices, including shared reading, oral language interaction, and exposure to environmental print. Parents perceive themselves as primary facilitators of learning, serving as teachers, motivators, and consistent supporters of their children's literacy growth. Despite their active involvement, they encounter challenges such as limited time due to work responsibilities, lack of confidence in teaching literacy skills, and restricted access to learning materials. Nevertheless, parents demonstrate resourcefulness by integrating literacy into daily routines and utilizing available materials to create print-rich environments. These findings highlight the important role of parental involvement in early literacy development and the need for structured support to enhance home-based literacy practices.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that schools and barangay officials provide regular parent-focused literacy workshops that demonstrate practical strategies such as storytelling, letter recognition, phonics, guided writing, and the use of multimedia resources to strengthen parents' skills and confidence. Access to affordable and appropriate literacy materials should be improved to support the development of print-rich home environments, alongside guidance on how to effectively use these resources in daily routines. Teachers and community leaders should collaborate in designing structured home-based literacy activities aligned with classroom learning to ensure consistency between school and home. Additionally,

establishing parent support groups can promote the sharing of experiences and strategies, fostering motivation and collaboration among families. The formal implementation of the Parent-Led Literacy Support Program (PL-LSP) is also recommended to provide a sustainable framework for strengthening parental involvement and supporting children's literacy development within the community.

This study is limited to a small group of kindergarten parents in Barangay Kaludan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or populations. The use of a qualitative case study design focuses on in-depth understanding rather than broad generalization, and the data are based primarily on participants' self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by personal perceptions and recall. Additionally, the study is confined to a rural agricultural setting, and variations in socio-economic, cultural, and educational conditions in other communities may produce different results. These limitations suggest that the findings are context-specific and should be interpreted within the scope of the study.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study adhered to established ethical principles, ensuring voluntary participation, respect for participants, and confidentiality throughout the research process. Data were collected through non-experimental qualitative methods, and all information was handled with care to protect participants' privacy.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest related to this study.

Statement of ethical approval

This study involved non-invasive qualitative data collection methods, and formal ethics approval was not sought or required.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and no personal identifiers were included in the reporting of results.

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