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Phenomenological Study of Parental Perceptions Regarding Components of Early Home Reading

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Reading

by

Shakiba Mobaraki

MS, Walden University, 2017

MD, Zanjan University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Many children struggle with developing their reading skills at the point of starting formal elementary school. Parents contribute to their children's literacy development through early home reading engagement aimed at improving their children's reading skills. Parental styles of literacy interactions are associated with their beliefs and perceptions regarding literacy development of children. Therefore, there was a need to understand parental perceptions regarding (a) the importance of child's readiness for reading interactions, (b) the quality of parent-child reading activities, and (c) the importance of parental preferences regarding specific reading materials. The research questions focused on parents' lived experiences regarding the values of parent-child home literacy activities. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was used to guide this qualitative phenomenological study. A total of eight mothers who experienced home literacy engagement with their preschool children participated in this phenomenological qualitative study via a one-on-one Zoom and phone interview. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which resulted in eight themes. Results referred to parents' perceptions in which early home literacy had positive influences on children's social-emotional competence, behavior, strengthened the parent-child bond, and promoted school readiness by increasing children's confidence to express their feelings with parents and teachers. The insight from this study may promote positive social change by providing useful information to assist researchers and educators to develop strategies for families who have children with or without special needs to have effective literacy engagement.

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Dedication

I like to say especial thank to all parents who participated in this study. Your input helps other parents to extend their knowledge of working literacy with their young children. I truly appreciate your time and effort to provide information for this study.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents who always created the right environment for me to learn by their continuous support and encouragement. Motivation to learn was planted in my heart due to their support with love. I hope my hard work to complete this dissertation makes their souls happy.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband Mr. Hossein Mobaraki whose non-stop support and sacrifices provided more encouragement to move forward through this challenging journey. Without him and his support, completing this journey would not have been possible. This dissertation is also a gift to my beautiful 7-year-old twin daughters, Haleh and Hasti Mobaraki, who made this dissertation topic possible. I enjoyed every moment of early childhood reading development with you both.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this study was to better understand parental perceptions about experiences of literacy activities and the nature of their reading interactions when engaging with their young children to practice reading materials. Scholars have found that early parent-child home reading activities contribute to the children's language development, motivation to read, vocabulary knowledge, and improvement of their academic achievement (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Xie et al., 2018). Less research has been conducted to explore parental perceptions of quality of reading interventions with their young children, their preferences for selecting specific resources, and children's readiness for reading activities (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017). Findings of this study may provide insights that will aid further understanding of early literacy phenomenon and may serve as a basis for future research into approaches to early literacy.

Major sections of Chapter 1 include: the study's background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, the nature of the study, definition of key terms, study's assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitation of the current research. The chapter will end with a discussion of the significance of this study on how findings can lead to positive social change and a summary.

Background

Research studies indicated that early childhood education is associated with positive developmental outcome (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017; Ozturk et al., 2016). For

example, parent-child reading interactions was highlighted by many researchers to emphasize the role of home literacy environment (HLE) on different stages of children learning development (Korucu et al., 2020; O'Farrellya et al., 2018). A significant amount of research studies centered on HLE have linked with language development, phonemic awareness, vocabulary improvement, and development of reading skills among children from toddlerhood to third grade (Akoğlu & Kizilöz, 2019; Hamilton et al., 2016; Korucu et al., 2020; Marchman & Fernald, 2008; Niklas & Schneider, 2013). There is a scholarly literature that explored frequency of print exposure through home-based literacy activities (HBLA) and preschool children's verbal and cognitive abilities such as recognizing synonyms and antonyms (Niklas, 2015). It was also referred by researchers in their scholarly literature that parent-child book reading (PCBR) has positive influences on children's psychological functioning including their attitude, motivation, and reading interest (Korucu et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2018).

As indicated by many researchers, parental support to have reading engagement is associated with their beliefs and perceptions regarding home reading practices (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; Hall et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017). For example, research shows the relation between maternal beliefs about shared reading strategies and preschool children's active participation is a key to address children's readiness to learn to read (Bojczyka et al., 2016). Scholars have identified the link between parents' perceptions of their support and behavior regarding how they interact with their children to help them learn to read (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). Parents who perceive their children show interest to interact in reading activities engage more in literacy practices with children

(Pezoaa et al., 2019). In fact, the researchers highlighted the importance of parents' perceptions of children's reading interest and quality of their literacy practices with children (Pezoaa et al., 2019). The role of family's culture in literacy activities was highlighted in another study. It was identified that parental perceptions of their preschool children's preferences for picture books are influenced by cultural factors including children's age and complexity of each book (Wagner, 2017).

Although many research studies highlighted the importance of parental perceptions regarding parents-child reading interactions and children literacy developments, less research has been completed to explore parental perceptions about three aspects of home reading activities. These aspects that were the focus of this study are understanding parental perceptions about the importance of child's readiness for reading engagement, the quality of literacy activities on how parents present reading materials to their children, and parental preferences to select specific reading resources over others (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017). Exploring these aspects by conducting this study is a key to provide a rationale on how to facilitate development of literacy skills among young children.

Problem Statement

Many children struggle to develop their reading and comprehension skills once they start their formal education at elementary school (De Witt & Lessing, 2018). Reading achievement is one of the important pre-requisites for all students' academic success (Ozturk et al., 2016). Reading skills and literacy development of young children are influenced by multiple factors including teaching styles, implementing early

childhood educational programs, parent-child interactions, children's attitude and motivations to learn or participate in reading activities, and parental beliefs and perceptions of their child's literacy development (Bojczyka et al, 2016; Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; Ozturk et al., 2016). Research studies indicated that exposure to literacy and numeracy concepts at a very early age improves children's interest to learn to read and develops their numerical abilities and reading skills, which have significant impact in their future academic development (Akoğlu & Kizilöz, 2019; De Witt & Lessing, 2018; Pezoaa et al, 2019; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019). For example, exposure to print letters or words, or DVDs that contain reading materials, contribute to children's letter knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, and phonological awareness (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Mol et al., 2014). In addition, daily PCBR from birth to the age of 3 enhances children's early language development, especially if parents receive tutorial support on how to present reading materials to their young children (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Dickinson et al., 2011; Kucirkova et al., 2018; O'Farrellya et al., 2018). As stated by Bojczyka et al. (2016), the quality of shared book reading (SBR) by parents is associated with parental beliefs and perceptions about children's readiness to learn to read (Bojczyka et al., 2016). In addition, children's interest to learn to read at a very young age is associated with type and complexity of content of reading materials (Wagner, 2017). For example, the quality of print materials such as designs of children books, papers, print letters or words, color illustrations, and the level of difficulties for pre-kindergarten children may influence children's interest to engage in reading activities (Wagner, 2017). Therefore, parental perceptions of children's reading interest can influence their decisions, preferences, and

behavior on how to facilitate preschools' literacy development (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017).

In studies about parent-child reading interactions and children literacy developments, the importance of parental perceptions was highlighted with different points of view (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017). A recent scholarly article referred to the importance of maternal beliefs in quality of shared reading strategies with their preschool children (Bojczyka et al., 2016). Pezoaa et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of parents' perceptions of their children's reading interest and quality of their literacy practices with prekindergarten children in a quantitative study. In a recent study, researchers referred to the role of parental mathematical attitudes in developing early number and literacy skills in preschool children (Soto-Calvo et al., 2019).

Of the many aspects of parental perceptions for early reading interventions, understanding the importance of child's readiness for reading engagement is essential. In addition, the quality of literacy activities on how parents present reading materials to their children is another key factor. Finally, parental preferences to select specific reading resources over others provide a rationale on how to facilitate development of literacy skills among young children (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study with a phenomenological design was to explore parental perceptions regarding components of early literacy among eight parents.

Those parents have elected to expose their children to early home reading materials as young as preschool age that may purport to stimulate to develop their children's future literacy skills. This research addressed a gap within the current literature by exploring parents' perceptions about components of early reading including parents' preferences of choosing reading resources, their beliefs about children's readiness for reading engagement, and the quality of reading interventions.

Research Questions

RQ: What are parents' lived experiences regarding the value of home literacy for their young children?

RQa: What are parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children?

RQb: What is the process by which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the sociocultural theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in 1934 (Veraksa et al., 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Based on sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, children's cognitive and learning development are based on their actual and potential levels of development (Vygotsky, 1978; Veraksa et al., 2016). The gap between these two levels of development was referred to by Vygotsky as the zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky stated that the ZPD can be completed by contribution of teachers, parents, peers, or other educational factors in

children's environment in order to develop their knowledge and skills in specific tasks (Vygotsky, 1978).

Based on Vygotsky (1978) theory of learning, teacher-child or parent-child interactions have a significant impact on children's learning achievement (Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Veraksa et al., 2016). In addition, the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky emphasized the role of culture and cultural characteristics in social groups on children's cognitive and learning development (Berk, 2018). For example, family values, beliefs, perceptions, customs, and skills influence children's behavior, cognition, and learning development (Berk, 2018). More detailed explanation about ZPD and Vygotskian sociocultural theory are presented in Chapter 2.

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) guided the study since it emphasizes the role of parent-child interactions in children's learning development. In the process of children's reading development through parent-child home reading interactions, family's cultural values and beliefs, especially parents' perceptions, have a significant impact on the quality of reading engagements and selection of types of reading materials to improve children's motivation to learn (Wagner, 2017).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was based on a qualitative method using a phenomenological approach to explore experiences of parents who were motivated to engage with their children through reading activities as early as preschool age. In this study, parental experiences, perceptions, and behaviors were explored in depth within the context of semi-structured interviews. In addition, the content of the childhood reading

materials, interactions of parents with their children, parents' cultural and educational background, and their understanding of literacy developmental process were considered.

The study consisted of eight participants, all of whom were parents of children who may or may not be attending preschools or kindergarten. I conducted narrative interviews with parents of reading age children who exposed their children to an early home reading program. To recruit potential participants, flyers were distributed to Walden University Participant Pool as well as local parks. In the process of collecting data, after obtaining informed consent, open-ended semi-structured questions were used to provide a foundation for interviews. Volunteer parents were interviewed through the Zoom platform and over the phone to obtain in-depth information about their literacy activities and experiences. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis method along with Quirkos software in order to organize data to categories and themes.

Definitions

Competent Adult

A competent adult is defined as an adult, including a parent or teacher, with the belief that they are able to use knowledge or skills to provide educational interventions through instructions with children in order to help them develop their learning skills (Topping et al., 2013).

Home Literacy Environment

HLE is defined by Hamilton et al. (2016) as any literacy related activities, resources, or attitudes that children may experience at home (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Literacy Development

Literacy development refers to the learning development of a child related to alphabet knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, and sounds within words to be able to read, speak, and communicate with others (Cameron et al., 2020).

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness and refers to awareness of sounds within words (Cameron et al., 2020).

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is defined as "awareness of the sound units comprising a language" (Cameron et al., 2020, p. 244).

Scaffolding

The teaching strategy that emphasizes the importance of social interactions and contribution of experienced teachers is known as scaffolding (Veraksa et al., 2016).

Shared Book Reading

SBR is defined as an interaction between an adult who reads a book and a young nonreading child (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017).

Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky, the ZPD is the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Assumptions

The goal of this phenomenological study was understanding parental experiences of reading engagement with their young children. Therefore, the first assumption was that parents spent time to interact with their children using reading materials. To make sure parents pick reading materials for their parent-child home reading activities, they were asked in the interview session to provide information about their preferred reading programs, materials, or books and the amounts of time that they spent working with their children. The second assumption was that all participants provided honest responses in their interviews. Individuals' memories, perceptions of the phenomenon, and recollections of an event might not be aligned with what really happened and might create lack of reliability in results (Birt et al., 2016). In depth interviews afforded an opportunity to ask more specific questions regarding each aspect of parent-child literacy, which in turn helped participants explore their experience and remember their relevant activities. Using member checking technique, participants were provided with the summary of my interpretation of their interview transcripts. They had an opportunity to provide feedback by checking the accuracy of information or by adding new information based on their experiences (Birt et al., 2016).

The other assumption was that this study has a meaningful aspect which was exploring parents' perspective about home reading activities. Even though exploring this phenomenon through reflection of parental perceptions, beliefs, and experiences may not provide the whole picture of the study problem, but it provided each individual's experiences which were unique from one person to another. Differences among parents'

responses made this qualitative study very comprehensive. In order to reach a coherent picture of information provided by participants, I conducted a data analysis using Quirkos software and organized themes and commonalities among participants' responses.

Scope and Delimitations

The qualitative method with phenomenological approach was used to explore perceptions of parents involved with home reading activities with their children between 3 and 5 years of age. In-depth interviews with eight parents provided detailed information regarding the phenomena of study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This study covered only parents' perceptions regarding their involvement with their children's reading practices. Parents' reports of their perceptions might not be aligned with perceptions of their own children or teachers. However, the focus of this study is only parents' perceptions. The study has three delimitations.

The first delimitation is about the setting. This study considered home as the main setting to explore the experiences of parents during parent-child home reading activities. Other settings such as preschools, kindergarten, or libraries are excluded in this study. The second delimitation is about parents as participants. The participants were limited to mothers since fathers of children were not available for interview due to their job responsibilities. Further, the study focused specifically on parents and not caregivers or baby sitters. Finally, the study was limited to parental perceptions about the reading component of literacy development. While parental involvement could influence other aspects of children's growth and learning development such as mathematics, numerical,

or writing skills, the focus of study is only on reading skills as one aspect of literacy development.

To establish transferability and before generalizing the findings of the study, researchers need to consider setting with the main focus on participants' lived experiences in order to glean insights from collected data (Peoples, 2021). Since my source of data collection was only interviews, I tried to obtain in-depth information through main and follow-up interviews to obtain rich descriptions with deep insights in regard to the phenomenon of the study (Peoples, 2021; Vagle, 2018). In addition, participants who provided consent and volunteered for the study had various ethnicities, levels of education, and geographic locations, which helped to ensure the transferability of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Limitations

Since the data were gathered from parents in the scope of study, this may limit dependability and transferability of the findings. To address transferability, the focus was on setting, participants' lived experiences, and their demographic characteristics' variations. In addition, an audit trail was used to enhance the consistency of findings and address the dependability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As stated by Peoples (2021), a detailed documentation with thorough explanation about the research process is a key to achieve dependability.

This qualitative study encountered potential biases when recruiting participants, collecting data, and interpreting data. A variety of early childhood reading programs that were selected by families were considered in order to prevent any bias for a specific

reading program. When interviewing parents to collect data, open-ended questions were selected in order to provide insight into participants' experiences (Smith & Noble, 2014).

In the process of this research study, strategies had to be considered to minimize my bias and its influence on the study. As a parent who has experienced parent-child home reading activities during my twins' first 5 years, there was a potential for me to have personal biases that might have affected study outcomes. One of the methods that was used when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data was reflective journaling to examine my possible personal assumptions (Ortlipp, 2008). Reflexivity was facilitated by keeping self-reflective journals and using them as a method to clarify subjectivities of the data (Ortlipp, 2008). In addition, drawing on reflective journaling in a way that creates an open and honest narrative made the process of data analysis as transparent as possible. Reflective journaling helped to prevent any data inconsistencies that might result due to personal beliefs (Smith & Noble, 2014).

Developing an audit trail in order to establish the trustworthiness of the study is the other strategy that helps to minimize bias (Peoples, 2021). When developing an audit trail, any decisions and activities such as decisions regarding methodological and analytical choices were documented (Carcary, 2009). A detailed audit trail includes a log to explain all research activities including all data collection methods and analysis procedures throughout the research study (Carcary, 2009). In addition, a member checking technique, which involves having participants review my interpretation of their transcripts, added to the accuracy of their recorded responses (Carter et al., 2014). Therefore, developing audit trails, maintaining a log in Excel format or self-reflective

journals, and member checking were strategies that were implemented to establish the confirmability and trustworthiness of the study (Peoples, 2021). The main goal when implementing the above strategies was to make sure that the study's findings were more subjective based on participants' responses rather than my own assumptions (Galdas, 2017).

Significance

This project was unique since it addressed a gap regarding early educational development of children among families who engaged in literacy practices with their preschool children. Exploring parental perceptions of different components of early literacy interventions could have a significant impact on the development of children's reading skills at a very early age (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). Understanding parental perceptions of children reading interventions by interviewing parents provided much-needed insight on how parents select reading materials in order to interact with their children as early as toddlerhood. In addition, the focus of this study was to better understand parental perceptions about literacy activities and the nature of their reading interactions when engaging with their young children to practice reading materials. Insights from this study may aid further understanding of early literacy phenomenon and may serve as a basis for future research into approaches to early literacy. By obtaining input from parents regarding their perspective, educators may better understand children's literacy development when starting preschool. Insight from this study has the potential to assist other parents who are willing to start early literacy engagement with their young children.

Developing reading interests, literacy skills, and early academic success have significant positive social change implications (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). Improving motivation to read in children early on has positive influence in children's psychological functioning and behavior, their social-emotional competence, and their quality of life (Xie et al., 2018).

Summary

HLE is important for children's literacy development. HLE is associated with parental perception in the process of parent-child literacy engagement. For example, parents' perceptions about their children's literacy development may influence the quality of their home literacy activities (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017). When children start their formal elementary school education, they have varying levels of literacy development. Parents have a significant role in developing reading skills of children (O'Farrellya et al., 2018). The home learning environment, which is established through parent-child shared reading interactions, has positive influence in children's transition to formal schooling (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017). Quality of HLE, types of reading materials, and activities that promote early literacy skills are factors associated with parental perception of the process of home literacy engagement. These factors prepare children to enhance their reading skills before starting their elementary school (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017). Exploring and understanding parental perceptions of the above components of home reading practices were the focus of this study. This chapter was dedicated to providing an overview of the gap in relevant scholarly literature and a plan to address the identified gap by conducting a qualitative phenomenological study. The next chapter will provide a comprehensive

overview of the current scholarly literature regarding phenomena of interests, which are

parental perceptions about components of home reading activities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this study, parents' perceptions and beliefs about children's literacy development were explored. In this chapter, the current relevant literature was reviewed for the following topics: (a) early literacy interventions, (b) the literacy environment that helps the child to be exposed to literacy resources, (c) techniques used to motivate children to engage in literacy practices, (d) parental attitude and behavior while interacting with children to develop the child's literacy skills, and (e) the quality of literacy activities. Parents have an important role in developing literacy for their children, especially when scaffolding starts at early age for their children (O'Farrellya et al., 2018). The purpose of this qualitative study, with a phenomenological design, was to explore parental perceptions and beliefs about components of early reading, such as their preference for selecting specific resources, the child's readiness for reading activities, and the quality of reading interventions.

There is a robust literature on the role of parental engagement in the development of literacy for young children, which is reviewed in this chapter in order to further illuminate the topic. This literature review includes research on existing literacy gaps regarding parents who start to interact with their children as early as toddlerhood. In this research, cultural aspects of parents, including their socioeconomic status (SES) and educational experiences, were considered. This literature review was divided into three sections. The first section consists of a review of the conceptual framework of Vygotsky (1978), who proposed a sociocultural model of learning and cognitive development. In

this section, the application of Vygotsky's model for children's literacy development is discussed through reviewing the current relevant literature. The second section consists of a literature review pertaining to reading activities between parents and young children at home, parental behavior and attitude when engaging with literacy activities, parental involvements using different resources or techniques to develop reading skills of their children, and the quality of home reading interventions on how to develop children's reading skills as early as toddlerhood or preschool years. The third section is a summary of literature review findings.

Literature Search Strategy

To search the existing literature, the following databases were used: Google Scholar, PsychINFO, SAGE Journal, ProQuest, PubMed, Taylor and Francis, and Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC). To search these databases for relevant literature, the following keywords were used: *parental perceptions about children literacy development, parental beliefs about home literacy practices, shared book reading, motivation to read among young children, home literacy environment, sociocultural theory,* and *cultural factors among parents who are involved in early home reading activities*. The majority of studies in this literature review were published from 2014 to 2020. Older studies have been cited to include the seminal and foundational studies on the problem, as well as the conceptual framework. About 95%of the reviewed literature was from or after 2014. Only 5% of reviewed literature was from studies published before 2014.

Theoretical Foundation

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social and cultural contexts in children's cognitive and learning development. According to Vygotsky's theory, there are two levels in children's cycle of learning development which are classified as actual and potential levels of development. The *actual level* is the first stage of a child's mental development, which Vygotsky described as the "child's mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85).

As Vygotsky (1978) described in his theory, when children are provided tasks or problems with different levels of difficulties, their independent performances are assessed based on extent of their mental development. For example, when administering a battery of tests to assess a child's mental functioning, results represent the child's mental development since the child performs each task independently. Vygotsky stated that the potential level of development is when a child is able to solve a complex problem with the assistance of a teacher. According to Vygotsky, there is a gap between the actual and potential levels of development defined as ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky described ZPD as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky characterized the child's actual level of mental development as those "functions that have already matured" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) that enable the child to perform tasks independently (Vygotsky, 1978). Functions that "have

not matured yet but are in the process of maturation" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) are conceptualized by Vygotsky as the ZPD. In fact, ZPD per Vygotskian theory refers to a range of tasks that a child cannot perform alone but is able to do with the support of a more skilled mentor (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky referred to conducting assessment testing to evaluate mental function of two children with the same age, about 10 years old, before entry to school to describe actual and potential levels of development in children. Vygotsky stated that if the result of cognitive function assessment of these two children matches with the mental function of an 8-year-old child, it means that they can perform tasks or solve problems that are in degrees of difficulty that has been standardized for an 8-year-old child. But Vygotsky questioned whether these two children with mental abilities of an 8-year-old have the same mental and learning development. According to Vygotsky, the answer is "no" since other factors influence these two children's learning development through their academic years. If one of these children receives assistance from teachers at school to solve complex tasks and the other child gets sick and is absent for half of a year, their mental developments are not at the same level and the subsequent course of their learning will be different as well. For example, their mental development might be in different levels up to 9 years old or even 12 years old. Vygotsky concluded that children's capabilities with equal levels of mental development to learn under guidance of a teacher are varied to a high degree due to their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978).

Berk (2018), Esteban-Guitart (2018), Obukhova and Korepanova (2009), Murphya et al. (2015), and Veraksa et al. (2016) provided examples to elaborate

children's actual and potential levels of development. As stated by Esteban-Guitart (2018), children's mental abilities that help them solve problems on their own represent their actual level of development. For example, gradual development of fine motor skills that helps the infant to hold their bottle or the ability of young children to coordinate their fingers to control the pencil or any other objects refers to their actual level of development (Berk, 2018; Esteban-Guitart, 2018).

According to Murphya et al. (2015), the potential level of development is determined by the child's ability to solve problems under guidance of adults or in collaboration with capable peers. Building a tower with a series of blocks with guidance of parents or teachers is an example of the child's potential level of development (Murphya et al., 2015). Working on origami activities with the guidance of teachers to follow instructions on how to fold papers and relate them with produced designs is another example of potential level of developmental process (Obukhova & Korepanova, 2009). Veraksa et al. (2016) stated that, in the process of a child's learning development, working with a complex task such as puzzles within the child's ZPD provides the support to fit the child's current level of performance. As the child's competence increases in learning any challenging task, effective mentors gradually withdraw the support by turning the responsibility to the child to perform the task independently (Veraksa et al., 2016). In other words, the person offering the support gradually fades assistance as the child becomes more independent in the task.

Per Vygotskian theory, children's cognitive functioning is developing through social interactions such as joint activities with adults or more experienced individuals. As

stated by Topping et al. (2013), competent parents or teachers are those who have the belief that they are able to use their knowledge or skills to provide educational interventions through instructions with children in order to help them develop their learning skills (Topping et al., 2013). The Vygotskian theory emphasized that learning is the combination of perceiving and processing what is perceived and acting accordingly. The Vygotskian concept of ZPD explains that children have potential to learn complex or challenging tasks and master specific skills that are beyond their current capacities with the support and guidance of more skilled adults. For example, linguistic richness of parent-child talk interactions helps young children to mediate their learning process and move beyond their current level of language skills. The language that is grasped by the child with the guidance of parents is beyond the ability of the child to grasp it alone. In addition, skilled teachers provide guidance for children's learning and tailoring their interventions to each child's zone of proximal development. With the support and guidance of parents or teachers, a child learns mental strategies and develops learning functioning, motivation, and creativity to take more responsibility for a specific task (Topping et al., 2013; Veraksa et al., 2016).

The teaching strategy that emphasizes the importance of social interactions and contribution of experienced teachers is known as *scaffolding*, which promotes development of children's learning skills for new tasks at all age groups including infancy and toddlerhood (Veraksa et al., 2016). Even though the concept of scaffolding was not used by Vygotsky himself, this concept was defined by Veraksa et al. (2016) as the role of teachers or parents to provide a learning environment or setting up

instructional situations in order to support learners to develop their learning skills as they move to the next level of development. In an educational context, scaffolding is an instructional structure whereby the scaffolder models the desired learning strategies in order to gradually shift responsibility to the students and help them to accomplish certain tasks that they would not be able to accomplish on their own. For example, a knowledgeable science teacher can create a learning environment using supportive tools to help students expand their current science knowledge with experiments and develop their skills to a higher level of competence (Veraksa et al., 2016).

Vygotsky (1978) theory of children's cognitive development through social interactions was expanded by Venger (1983) visual model. The concept of visual model was explained by Venger in which children are trained to use their visual sensations to create visual schemes while engaged with various tasks (Veraksa & Veraksa, 2018). For example, children can use their visual perception skills in tasks that involve classification of objects, shapes, or colors, as well as activities such as playing with blocks or participating in storytelling. Using visual sensation helps young children to elevate their perceptions to a higher level of mental function. For example, simple geometric shapes or colors of the spectrum are the first visual experiences that are acquired by young children. The schematic drawing produced by young children when asked to draw a picture might not completely match with the real picture, but it represents the developmentally appropriate level acceptable by parents or educators. In fact, children's ability to understand how to employ their visual sensation when performing a task such as drawing a picture represents their cognitive competencies. As stated by Venger, the

visual model is the main tool for children's cognitive development and should be implemented as early as pre-school. Parent-child shared reading engagement is one of the examples that helps children to use their visual perception skills to enhance their literacy development. This type of literacy activity supports Venger's visual model and Vygotsky's theory of social interactions in developing children's literacy skills (Veraksa & Veraksa, 2018).

Barnyak and McNelly (2016) stated that the scaffolding concept within Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory will be more meaningful and effective when guidance is provided by more skilled scaffolders with consideration of the quality of techniques and teaching tools that are used to develop children learning skills in specific or complex tasks (Barnyak & McNelly, 2016). Barnyak and McNally pointed out the role of "adult support" for children's reading comprehension and vocabulary identification in their mixed method study.

The authors compared three groups from a total of 41 children who just finished first, second, and third grades and were enrolled in school district summer reading program. One group was assigned to read e-books independently. The second group received support through reading interactions with their teachers. The third group was a control group enrolled in a program through which they independently read trade books without receiving any support from their teachers. The authors examined two aspects of literacy skills which are reading comprehension and vocabulary identification across all different conditions. The authors compared the group of children who independently read nonfiction e-books with the group of children who received support from their teachers

within their reading practices using nonfiction trade books. Findings indicated that vocabulary identification was improved in all three groups. Regarding reading comprehension, the most accurate retelling stories were shown among the group of children who received support through reading interactions from their teachers.

The result of this study, that was grounded in Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory, supports the importance of adults' interactions using any types of reading intervention to foster children's literacy skills (Barnyak & McNelly, 2016). As stated by Veraksa et al. (2016), the goal of this type of teaching strategy is to help children become independent when solving their problems (Veraksa et al., 2016). The role of adult-child interactions in early childhood education was also evaluated by Veraksa et al. with consideration of ZPD. Findings from the authors' literature review indicated that communication between teachers or parents with children to implement specific educational concept can help the child to develop independent problem-solving skills (Veraksa et al., 2016).

Estban-Guitart (2018) elaborated on the Vygotskian model by focusing on the role of sociocultural interactions. According to Estban-Guitart, children's learning and cognitive development through social interactions are influenced by cultural variations including the social beliefs and values which come into play while collaborating with peers or experienced adults. Since children develop in a cultural environment, their participation in cultural practice through interactions with family members, teachers, or societies is one of the mechanisms for learning and developing new skills (Estban-

Guitart, 2018). From the psychological perspective, children develop their learning ability when they are ready to acquire meaningful cultural values, beliefs, or customs.

From the Vygotskian perspective, children's learning and cognitive development occurs in two interactive lines. One is biological processing and the other is psychological functioning that is associated with sociocultural origin. Vygotsky (1978) has criticized consideration of only biological models for waiting until a child reaches a certain biological developmental level. Vygotsky stated that children's learning and their developmental process are related to each other and set in motion a variety of developmental processes (Esteban-Guitart, 2018). If no teaching interventions are provided within the child's ZPD, the child's capacities to learn challenging tasks do not develop. For example, to develop children's literacy skills, parents or teachers need to learn the different stages of child development to take advantage of the child's developmentally appropriate literacy capacities (Wagner, 2017). Since Vygotsky emphasized the importance of culture in social interactions in the process of children's literacy development, teaching interventions using pictorial culturally designed reading materials might influence children's interest and motivation while engaging their reading activities (Wagner, 2017). Therefore, application of the Vygotskian model to foster literacy for young children can modify early childhood educational principles in the process of their learning and cognitive development.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Reading Activities

Engaging in reading activities at home or preschool is an opportunity for children to be exposed to printed words, letters, or sentences and to motivate their reading interest to improve their literacy performance. Literacy activities with children in their early years provide a foundation to develop their future reading skills (Hamilton et al., 2016). The HLE is one of the vital opportunities during the preschool years to foster children's reading development. Parents, teachers, or caregivers serve as role models for young children who start to shape their own interest to learn to read (Yeo et al., 2014). Techniques that are used by parents to implement literacy activities as well as their perceptions and beliefs about the quality of HLE, have significant impact on children's motivation to learn to read (Hamilton et al., 2016).

According to Yeo et al. (2014), children's reading performance and motivation to read can be linked to their early exposure to literacy activities in their home environment. In a quantitative research study conducted by Yeo et al., the relation between family literacy activities as part of HLE and young children's reading skills and their reading interest were examined. In this study, the authors selected 193 preschool children from the ages of 5 to 6-year-old. The home literacy activities included parents' engagement to read words, picture books, story books, magazines, or newspapers for their child as well as practice to write their names or simple words such as dog or cat. The results of this study indicated that parent-child literacy activities significantly increased children's reading interest as well as their reading competency especially for families who engaged

the child in both reading and writing activities. In this study, reading competencies included word decoding skills, word recognition, vocabulary building, and reading comprehension. The authors concluded that active parental effort that directly engages young children in literacy practices has significant impact on children's literacy performance and their interest to read (Yeo et al., 2014).

A quantitative study by Pezoaa et al. (2019) also supports the link between early parent-child literacy engagement and children's motivation to learn to read. The authors examined 721 children from pre-K to the end of kindergarten to see how print exposure through home literacy engagement with parents using shared storybooks may develop children's reading interest. The authors assessed children's reading interest by evaluating their attitude and behavior towards reading activities. For example, a child may show positive attitude and enjoy to a desirable and fun reading activity. The results indicated that young children who were exposed to reading materials through shared storybooks activities on a daily basis, showed positive attitude to engage in reading practices with their parents. The authors of this quantitative study emphasized that continuous early home literacy interventions, as early as pre-K, have significant impact on children's reading interest toward reading activities (Pezoaa et al., 2019).

These two studies conducted by Yeo et al. (2014) and Pezoaa et al. (2019) together confirmed that early home literacy interventions improve children's motivation to learn and foster their interest to interact in literacy activities. More information is needed from parents' perspective in regard to the quality of parent-child literacy

engagement to enhance their children's motivation to participate in reading activities (Pezoaa et al., 2019).

Home Literacy Environment

Hamilton et al. (2016) described HLE as any literacy related activities, resources, or attitudes that children may experience at home. Korucu et al. (2020) referred to the role of HLE on different stages of children cognitive or learning development. According to Korucu et al. HLE is related to language development in infancy and toddlerhood, phonemic awareness in preschool children, and improving vocabulary, reading comprehension and reading skills for first to third grade students (Korucu et al., 2020).

Several research studies evaluated the role of HLE on children's cognitive development. For example, the role of early literacy engagement on language competency during toddlerhood was demonstrated by an old study conducted by Marchman and Fernald (2008). As stated by Marchman and Fernald, speed of spoken word recognition and vocabulary size for 2-year-old predict cognitive and language skills in later childhood years. Marchman and Fernald in their longitudinal study, evaluated the role of visual and auditory exposure to words of familiar object names or short sentences on productive vocabularies after 25 months trial. In this study, each infant was seated on the parent's lap exposing to images of target words including dog along with listening to a short sentence related to target word (where is the doggie?). The visual and auditory stimuli through literacy interactions were continued for 25 months. Children's vocabulary size, production, and knowledge were assessed using standardized vocabulary tests such as MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI): Words & Sentences.

Children's language expression including expressive vocabulary, formulating sentences, recalling sentences and word structures was evaluated using Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – 4th ed. (CELF-4). The results of this study indicated that infants who had home literacy interactions through visual and auditory stimuli for at least a year were found to have strong productive vocabularies and language expression after 25 months and during their preschool years (Marchman & Fernald, 2008).

The other study that supports the role of early HLE on children's language and reading competency is the study conducted by Niklas and Schneider (2013). Findings from a longitudinal study by Niklas and Schneider have demonstrated that early home literacy activities predict early linguistic competencies including vocabulary and later reading and spelling competencies. In this study, 921 German children from kindergarten to the 1st grade, between the ages of 5 to 7-year-old were selected to assess the impact of HLE on their language development and literacy competencies. The authors evaluated the sample of children starting one and a half year before school enrolment until the end of 1st grade to see whether HLE has significant role on development of letter knowledge, early vocabulary, and phonological awareness (PA) for kindergarten children and recognition of words, spelling, and reading of syllables and sentences for first grade students. The HLE in this study was considered as the learning environment provided by family including number of books and storybooks that were read by parents in the household or engaging with libraries' reading activities. The results of this study indicated that HLE significantly influenced development of vocabulary as representative

of oral language skills and PA in kindergarten children as well as letter knowledge and academic performance at the end of first grade (Niklas & Schneider, 2013).

The other role of HLE is its influence on children's psychological functioning including their social-emotional competence. In a meta-analysis study by Xie et al. (2018), the authors evaluated effects of PCBR interventional programs on psychological functioning of parents and children. The authors used data from 3264 families who had frequent book reading activities with their children with the mean age from zero to 66 months using different PCBR interventional programs. Using Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment, the authors concluded that PCBR interventions have positive impact on children's social-emotional competence, their reading interest, and their quality of life. For example, parents' attitudes toward reading with their children and the quality of their relationships were improved using PCBR interventions (Xie et al., 2018).

The home learning environment influences children's cognitive development through psychosocial climate of parent-child interactions in addition to engaging with learning materials and resources such as books or toys (Korucu et al., 2020). In a quantitative study by Korucu et al. (2020), the direct and indirect associations between the HLE and social-emotional competence during preschool were investigated. Using Social Competence Behavior Evaluation Scale-short form (SCBE), the authors measured the social-emotional competence on 102 preschool children.

The social-emotional competence included their joyfulness, tolerance, or calmness attitude in their own accomplishments or peer interactions. The authors concluded that enriching literacy environment through activities such as storybook

reading, printing letters, and identifying letter sounds indirectly improved children's social-emotional competence through direct association between the HLE and children's executive functioning (EF) as one aspect of cognitive development (Korucu et al., 2020). Since frequent exposure to literacy resources with more structured reading interactions requires that children shift their attention from distractions to the reading activities, the HLE can promote children's executive functions as well. Parents need to encourage their children to engage in executive functioning skills by listening, paying attention, or practicing self-control (Korucu et al., 2020). Therefore, as stated by Korucu et al. (2020), enriching literacy activities are associated with the development of children's cognitive functions including working memory and inhibition as two components of EFs.

Studies utilizing meta-analysis regarding home literacy activities and children's cognitive development, indicated that there is a link between children's intelligence and the frequency of exposure to print (Niklas, 2015). In a longitudinal study conducted by Niklas (2015) in Australia and Germany, the relationships between the frequency of home-based literacy activities (HBLA) and children's development of verbal and cognitive abilities during the last year before formal school entry was evaluated. In this study, 2500 Australian children from ages of 3 to 8-year-old and 900 German children between 4 to 5-year-old were followed until end of their primary school.

Children's IQ was assessed using Woodcock-Johnson III test of Cognition Ability and Achievement (WJ III). Children's verbal competence was assessed using WJIII verbal ability standard scale which included picture vocabulary, synonyms, and antonyms. Children also were evaluated on how they looked at reading contents such as

picture books or how often the child was read in order to assess the frequency and consistency to expose to reading content. The results indicated that Australian and German children who experienced more frequent HBLA, performed better on both tasks measuring intelligence and verbal ability than those who had less frequent HBLA. The results of this study support that HBLA makes an important contribution to children's cognitive development regardless of children's language or cultural background (Niklas, 2015). As stated by Niklas et al. (2015), children whose parents set up the literacy activities on a daily basis feel more confident in verbal and cognitive tasks including recognizing synonyms, antonyms, or explaining the similarities and differences between words compared with children who experience less literacy practices.

The home-based literacy interactions with children might be formal or informal. Hamilton et al. (2016) and Puglisi et al. (2017), delineated distinctions between formal and informal HLE in their literature review. According to Hamilton et al., in an informal type of home literacy interaction, the primary focus is not the printed words but the meaning of the words in the sentences (Hamilton et al., 2016). Puglisi et al. elaborated on informal type of home literacy activities by providing different examples. According to Puglisi et al. there are a variety of informal literacy activities which include shared storybook readings involving exposure to print through which parents direct their children's attention to printed words including any newspaper advertisements or streets and business signs (Puglisi et al., 2017).

The informal type of home literacy practice that gives opportunities to children to have daily reading experiences through parental interactions supports the development of

oral language skills, vocabulary knowledge, as well as their reading comprehension (Yeo et al., 2014). Oral language development in children is a foundation for development of phoneme awareness. Since storybooks are designed with many rhymes and alliterations, story book reading directly improves children's phonological awareness (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Another form of home literacy activity is formal that mainly focuses on the print per se, rather than the meaning of the print (Hamilton et al., 2016; Puglisi et al., 2017). In formal literacy activities, parents directly work with children to read words, letter names and sounds, or promote print-related skills, such as tracing letters and writing the child's name. For example, identifying letter sounds or labeling letter names are examples of formal literacy practices (Puglisi et al., 2017). According to Yeo et al. (2014), formal home literacy activity helps children to develop their alphabet knowledge, word decoding, and phonological awareness.

The home literacy interactions through formal or informal activities help children to build the foundation for their literacy development. Once young children start to acquire the alphabetic principles through formal literacy activities, shared storybook through parental interactions helps them to comprehend the text (Yeo et al., 2014).

Parental Perceptions About Children's Home Literacy Activities

Children's success in education is associated with their early literacy practices and experiences (Yeo et al., 2014). In addition to school literacy practices, the support that children receive at home through literacy activities helps them to develop literacy skills and strengthen their literacy foundation (Hall et al., 2019). Part of children's home

literacy experiences is engagement with their parents during parent-child home literacy activities (Yeo et al., 2014). Parents plan to engage with their children in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs and perceptions (Wagner, 2017).

Research studies show that there is a relation between parental beliefs and perceptions, and their behaviors about how to interact with their children to help them to learn (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). For example, in a longitudinal study by Dinkelmann and Buff (2016), the role of child-perceived and parent-perceived about parental support, including their "*warmth behavior*" on children's learning and their achievement in mathematics was evaluated. In this study, parental "warmth behavior" was defined as a respectful, empathetic, appreciative, and loving behavior with the emotional responsibility from parents while engaging with any home mathematical activities with their children.

The authors analyzed data from 457 children from the 1st to the seventh grade and their parents. The authors hypothesized that providing a warm and supportive environment not only improves children's motivation to learn but also develops their confidence to work in their educational tasks independently. For example, parental warmth behavior in mathematical activities provides positive impact on children's competence beliefs on task-related achievement in mathematics. The authors also hypothesized that "parent-perceived parental support positively predicts child-perceived parental support" (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016, p. 124). For example, the positive support that children receive from their parents during mathematical activities can lead to

satisfaction of children's psychological needs for their autonomy to solve mathematical problems independently.

The results of this study confirmed authors' hypotheses that parents who perceived providing warmth behavior in their home learning environment improve children's motivation to learn, had significant positive impact on both parents' and children's behavior and attitude when interacting in educational activity (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). Therefore, as stated by Dinkelmann and Buff (2016), children's motivation to learn and their achievement in a specific educational task are influenced by supportive home learning environment provided by their parents and parental perception about the role of this support in promoting learning development.

Many factors influence parents' beliefs about their children's literacy activities. For example, in an experimental study by Wagner (2017), factors that may influence parents' preferences and their perceptions about their children's preferences to read a book were evaluated. Influential factors included cultural prominence, the child's own experience with a specific book, character gender, complexity of the book, and story structure. Wagner defined each factor as follows:

Character Gender: Parents may believe that gender of characters within books may help them in enculturating their children into gender roles (Wagner, 2017).

Complexity: The complexity might be linguistic complexity referred to as "*Words per Page*" or cognitive complexity which refers to the child's ability to track mental states while developing reading skills. For example, picture books may vary in the extent of understanding the characters' mental states or the content of the provided story.

Parents may believe that more complex books develop reading skills of their children regardless of their child preferences (Wagner, 2017).

Cultural Prominence: Children's books are cultural objects. They are available based on overall popularity within society as award earned or spin-off products. Books that are tied to movies and TV show such as Sesame Street or Elmo are examples of books that have cultural prominence. As stated by Wagner (2017), many books are preferred by parents for being more culturally notable than others.

Reflection of the Child's Experience: Parents may prefer books that they believe are matched with their child's preferences regardless of their child enjoys the book (Wagner, 2017).

Story Structure: Picture books are also different in terms of the structure of the story which influences parents' preferences to select a book for their children's reading activities. Some parents select picture books with stories rather than books with no story or books containing just pictures (Wagner, 2017).

In this study, Wagner (2017) asked 149 parents of preschool children from 1 to 5-years of age to rate 87 picture books with different ranges of content, features, genre, style, and function. Most of sample books were selected from Infant Book reading Database (IBDb), books with ties with TV shows, or popular books from Amazon such as Dr. Seuss. Parents were asked to indicate how much they liked a provided picture book and how much they thought their child liked the book.

The results indicated that cultural prominence, story structure, and complexity influenced parents' own preferences to select a reading book for their children. Parents'

own preferences were significantly linked with story structure, such as features of the books as well as cultural prominence of the book, including the critical acclaim and the year of the published book. Most parents preferred popular books that are revised and republished many times.

Parents also preferred books that were matched with their child's level of reading ability. Parents' perceptions of their children's preferences were strongly linked with children's gender as well as the complexity of the book. For example, parents perceived that their daughters preferred books with female characters compared with their sons who did not show any motivations toward books with female characters. Parents also perceived that book with fewer words per page influenced their children preference and motivation to read (Wagner, 2017). The results of this study emphasized the role of parental perception in their choice of specific reading material for literacy practices with their young children. From the perspective of parents, more information is needed to understand why parents prefer specific reading resources over others (Wagner, 2017).

The other factor that influences parents' beliefs about their children's literacy activities is parents' perceptions about children's readiness to learn (Bojczyka et al., 2016). As stated by Bojczyka et al. (2016), parents' perceptions about children's readiness to learn to read is associated with active participation of the child in shared book reading. In a cross-sectional study, Bojczyka et al. hypothesized that mothers' beliefs and quality of shared reading practices depend on their perceptions about their children's readiness to learn to read. In other words, mothers perceive that children's active role in shared reading practices can predict the quality of their reading interactions

as well as vocabulary skills of children. The authors evaluated how maternal beliefs about reading practices and quality of parents' reading interactions influence development of preschoolers' vocabulary knowledge and skills.

The sample of this study included 62 mothers and their preschool-aged children from 44-69 months attending Head Start program. Mothers were asked to share a book with their children and their shared reading book was observed. Mothers' beliefs were measured using self-report questionnaire of Parents' Beliefs about Child Participation in Reading (PBCPR). The results of this study supported authors' hypothesis in which mothers' styles of reading activities are based on their beliefs and perceptions. Mothers used high-quality book reading strategies, including dyadic reading technique, that they believed are helpful to encourage their child to actively participate in reading practices.

Findings of this study also indicated that parents' beliefs about active reading strategies depend on their perceptions of their children' readiness to learn to read. Mothers who believed that their child was less ready to learn to read, had high-quality shared reading interactions compared with mothers who believed that their child was ready to learn (Bojczyka et al., 2016). The results of this study confirmed that there is a strong link between parents' beliefs and behaviors regarding their perceptions about children's readiness to learn to read. Further research from the perspective of parents helps to understand the importance of timing and perceived readiness when implementing literacy resources (Bojczyka et al., 2016).

Role of SES in Children's Literacy Activities

Research studies have documented that home literacy environment is associated with family factors such as maternal education and socioeconomic status (McClelland et al., 2014; Niklas et al., 2015; Shahaeian et al., 2018). For example, in a longitudinal study by Shahaeian et al. (2018), the role of family's SES was evaluated as a factor that moderates effects of early shared reading on children's later academic achievement. The authors hypothesized that parents with a higher level of education and SES engage in more frequent reading activities with their children that influence children's later literacy skills and academic achievement.

The authors used data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) with a sample of 4,768 children from 2 to 8-year-old. Parents of children were asked to indicate the frequency of their reading activities, the numbers of children books that were used, and their level of SES including their annual family income, their current occupations, as well as level of their education. Children's nonverbal intelligence was measured using Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, fourth edition (WISC-IV) Matrix Reasoning at 6-7 years of age to assess children's cognitive ability.

Children's school performance and academic achievement were measured based on their scores on National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which included tests for reading, writing, and language conventions such as spelling when they reach third grade. The results indicated that frequent shared reading in early childhood was associated with development in knowledge of shapes, letters, words, and numbers among toddlers. In addition, shared reading at 2 to 3 years of age was strongly

associated with academic achievement in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and mathematics at 8-9 years of age (Shahaeian et al., 2018). Regarding the role of SES, the authors reported that shared reading was strongly associated with subsequent outcomes for children raised in families with low SES. Since children of low SES families displayed less vocabulary knowledge, parents of these children tried to use appropriate home literacy practices in order to improve their children's vocabulary knowledge (Shahaeian et al., 2018). In Shahaeian et al. (2018) study, shared reading interactions were less associated with academic achievement for children of high-SES family since they also used other resources including higher quality childcare or early academic programs.

The results of this study confirmed the link between family SES, the quality of shared reading, and children's academic achievement (Shahaeian et al., 2018). Shahaeian et al. (2018) concluded that stimulating home literacy environment using different strategies is associated with parents' SES and their level of education, which influence parents' beliefs on how to engage with their children. The authors also emphasized the role of parents' SES in quality and frequency of literacy activities.

Quality of Parent-Child Engagement

The quality of parental behavior in home literacy activities is related to parents' beliefs and perceptions (O'Farrellya et al., 2018). O'Farrellya et al. (2018) and Soto-Calvo et al. (2019) elaborated techniques that are used by parents based on their beliefs and perceptions. As stated by O'Farrellya et al., parents may believe that it is important to

ask questions at the end of shared-story book reading to check the child's understanding about the story.

Some parents may place more emphasis on sight words to help the child recognize and isolate words. Some parents believe that their children learn to read only when they are able to recognize letters of alphabet as well as their sounds before starting to read words (O'Farrellya et al., 2018; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019). These parents may work with their children through fun activities such as playing letter games or writing the grocery lists to learn letters first and then words and sentences (Soto-Calvo et al., 2019). Other parents may believe that workbooks or journals help to develop their children's literacy skills. For example, parents may start drawing the picture of the word to expand the child's knowledge of a word while teaching how to read the word (Soto-Calvo et al., 2019).

Some parents may choose the child's favorite stories to read several times for them. These parents' perception is that their children benefit from hearing their favorite stories repeatedly read to them (O'Farrellya et al., 2018). Some parents perceive that their engagement in reading activities is a motivational technique that encourages their child to participate in reading activities (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; O'Farrellya et al., 2018; Wagner, 2017). In fact, these parents believe that it is especially important for children to see their parents are reading or writing when collaborating with them (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; O'Farrellya et al., 2018).

From the psychological perspective, the quality of parent-child literacy interactions including their behavior, attitude, and scaffolding style may influence

children's cognitive and learning development (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016). Parents'
strategies when engaging in literacy activities are linked with their perceptions and
beliefs. As pointed out by O'Farrellya et al. (2018), providing a supportive home reading
environment with positive attitude, increasing the frequency of early literacy exposure, or
implementing a variety of literacy resources are associated with parental beliefs and
perceptions about children's literacy development.

Summary and Conclusion

It is important for children to develop their early literacy skills for their future
academic success (Brown & Byrnes, 2012; Shahaeian et al., 2018). As stated by
Vygotsky (1978) in his sociocultural theory, children develop their cognitive
and learning skills through interactions with competent adults including parents and
teachers. For example, shared book reading engagement with parents refers to the role of
parental contribution in developing reading skills of children (O'Farrellya et al., 2018).
Based on Vygotskian concept of ZPD, children can develop their independent problem-
solving skills with the support and guidance of parents or teachers (Vygotsky,1978).

Parental interactions in home reading activities are influenced by social and
cultural values including parental beliefs and perceptions (Shahaeian et al., 2018). For
example, parental perceptions about children's literacy activities or family cultural
background such as their SES influence parents' interactions in home reading
engagement (Shahaeian et al., 2018). Many research studies were conducted to explore
the role of parents and their experiences in home literacy environment, quality of mother-
child interactions in book reading engagement, or factors that influence parental

preferences for shared reading activities (Bojczyka et al., 2016; Pezoaa et al., 2019; Wagner, 2017). Among the recent literature, what is not known is exploring parental perceptions for what kinds of literacy resources to be used. The other part that is not known is how and when to implement literacy resources to motivate children to learn and develop their reading skills. Results of this study filled the above gaps and helped to better understand why parents choose specific books to engage with their children, how they read to their children, and the importance of timing and perceived readiness for early reading development.

In Chapter 3, the discussion focused on the methodological plan and the role of researcher for the present study. Chapter 3 also includes the descriptions of participants' recruitment, the procedures for selecting participants and collecting data, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study explored experiences of parents who have elected to expose their children to early home reading materials as young as preschool age that may purport to stimulate literacy and develop their children's future literacy skills. The purpose of this qualitative study with a phenomenological approach was to explore parental perceptions regarding components of early reading including parents' preferences of reading resources, their beliefs about children's readiness for reading engagement, and quality of reading interventions.

Chapter 3 contains a discussion about the design and methodology of the study including information on how parents as participants of this study were selected. Other sections in this chapter include the role of researcher, instruments that have been used, data collection procedures, and the data analysis plan. In addition, strategies implemented to establish trustworthiness of the study and procedures to ensure ethical consideration will be discussed.

Research Design and Rationale

In order to have a deep understanding of parental perceptions, beliefs, and experiences regarding early childhood home reading activities, a qualitative method using a phenomenological approach is considered. Conducting a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach provides an opportunity to focus on phenomena of the study and uncover the meaningful information provided by participants through describing their experiences (Goulding, 2005; Vagle, 2018).

Through a phenomenological deign, a researcher can identify the important aspects of participants' experiences with a phenomenon while they describe the phenomenon in detail (Creswell, 2014; Goulding, 2005). The phenomena of this study include parental perceptions, beliefs, and experiences for early parent-child home reading engagements. Home reading activities among parents and children are influenced by many factors including parental perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of children's developmental process (Sonnenschein & Sun, 2017). Parental beliefs about children's developmental process are related to their experiences during parent-child learning engagement (Sonnenschein & Sun, 2017). For example, one important aspect of parental beliefs is their knowledge about child developmental timeline (Sonnenschein & Sun, 2017).

Parents' knowledge about children's developmental timeline may influences their expectations when they engage in early reading activities with their young children (Sonnenschein & Sun, 2017). Some parents may perceive that their children are ready to learn to read as early as toddlerhood. Some parents may believe that they should start working with their children through reading interactions when their child starts kindergarten (Sonnenschein & Sun, 2017). Therefore, parental beliefs regarding children's readiness to learn to read as an important aspect of early home reading, were explored through analyzing parents' lived experiences.

This qualitative study also helps to understand how parents' perceptions about early reading activities influence their behavior while interacting with their children during reading activities. Parental beliefs about early home reading contribute to their

decisions to select specific types of reading resources or implement a specific interventional technique to motivate their children in home reading activities. Therefore, the main rational for designing a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach was to uncover experiences of parents who were motivated to engage with their children through reading activities as early as preschool age. The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ: What are parents' lived experiences regarding the value of home literacy for their young children?

RQa: What are parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children?

RQb: What is the process by which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities?

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher, my roles were recruiting participants, collecting data through conducting and facilitating interview sessions, and transcribing data collected (Jamshed, 2014). Primarily, my role was obtaining data through interviewing parents who described their shared-reading experiences with their children. Since parents of young children were recruited through national level using distribution of flyers and registration through social media resources, there were no personal, professional, or supervisory relationships that involve power over participants. To obtain the relevant data, I conducted interviews through the Zoom platform with parents using an open-ended semi-structured questionnaire in order to obtain in-depth information about parents' perceptions and

beliefs regarding their experience of parent-child home reading activities. I established a positive rapport with each participant from the beginning of the interview to the end of the session. Once participants' information was collected, I was responsible for developing valid interpretations and analyzing parents' experiences and their perceptions regarding parent-child home reading engagement. I was also responsible for transcribing, coding, and summarizing the results.

In qualitative research, the researcher is involved with interpretation of participants' experiences around the phenomena of the study (Creswell, 2014). The process of this interpretation might be influenced by the researcher's personal background, culture, values, or biases (Galdas, 2017). Therefore, one of the important tasks of the researcher in a qualitative study is implementing strategies to prevent any personal or ethical issues (Creswell, 2014; Galdas, 2017).

As a parent of two young children who has experiences of parent-child home reading activities, I had possible biases and expectations regarding the results of the study. To address these potential biases, I used reflective journaling (Galdas, 2017; Peoples, 2021). Reflective journaling will be discussed later in this chapter. In addition, I created an interview guideline (Appendix A) for asking questions during the interview sessions. Following the interview guideline helps to remain aligned with the phenomena of the study and minimize the influence of potential biases.

To address any possible ethical issues, I followed American Psychological Association (APA) ethical principles and Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. For example, informed consent was obtained from parents at the beginning of the study.

In the informed consent, it was disclosed that parents have the right to leave the interview session at any time if they decide not to complete the interview. To protect the confidentiality of participants, all personal information was destroyed.

Methodology

The target population for this study was parents of reading age children who may or may not be attending preschools or kindergartens. The method used for sampling to select parents as participants of this study was purposeful sampling (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As stated by Ravitch and Carl (2016), through purposive sampling, participants with "rich information" are identified and selected to provide their knowledge and experiences about the phenomena of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Participants had to be parents of 2 to 5-year-old children who elected to use reading programs through home reading activities with their children who may or may not be attending preschools or kindergartens. Family's cultural background including parents' level of education and their SES were other criteria for the selection of participants. Parents who provided consent to participate and were recruited in this study had different ethnicities and levels of educations. This variety helped to see how cultural aspects may affect parents' perceptions about reading activities. There was not any consideration for specific religion among participants. Even though participants were recruited through random sample strategy, the study had a variety of multicultural participants. All participants included mothers since all fathers were not available due to their job responsibilities.

As stated by Ravitch and Carl (2016), there are no set rules for sample size in a qualitative research study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In a purposeful qualitative research, the goal is understanding the phenomenon of the study in depth to answer the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, the numbers of participants depend on what the researcher can do within the available time and resources (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To have the appropriate sample size, data saturation needs to be considered (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Once collected data from participants is reached to the point that no new information is observed from additional interviews, data saturation is reached (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The recommended sample size in a phenomenology study is from three to 25 participants (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the data were saturated after collecting information from the eighth participant. The goal was obtaining detailed information from parents in order to cover the phenomena of this study. In this qualitative study, there was no purpose for generalization of results. Therefore, there was no need of having a high range of participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Since the sampling strategy of this study was purposive technique, the participants' pool was rich with the information about the phenomena of interest (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To recruit participants, flyers were distributed to Walden University Pool and local parks to provide information about purpose of the study to parents. In each flyer, my contact information including phone number and email address were included. Parents who were interested to participate to the study were evaluated through a screening questionnaire (Appendix B) to make sure they met criteria for participation. If the participant was interested and met the criteria, I sent the informed consent form

through email to the participant. In the informed consent, parents were notified that their participation was voluntarily and they could withdraw any time during the study. In the provided informed consent, purpose of the study as well as benefits, procedures, confidentiality, and the plan for dissemination of results were disclosed to parents. After parents reviewed the informed consent, they notified me to set an interview session. Before starting an interview, the participant signed the informed consent form by sending an email stating "I consent" in the body of the email.

Instrumentation

One-on-one phone and Zoom interviews were used as the instrument of data collection in this study. Individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to collect data (Kallio et al., 2016). To establish content validity and answer research questions, a semi-structured interview was selected as it helped to keep questions aligned with the topic (Pandey & Chawla, 2016). In addition, semi-structured interviews provided flexibility to ask relevant or follow-up questions based on participants' answer (Kallio et al., 2016). As stated by Rubin and Rubin (2012), to conduct an in-depth interview, creating main questions, follow-up questions, and probe questions are recommended (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

An interview protocol that contained main questions was used as the framework and source for each Zoom interview (Appendix A). The interview protocol contained a list of open-ended questions that were aligned with the research questions of the study and covered the study's main areas of interest. I had to ask follow-up questions to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' answers. Follow-up questions helped me to

gather in-depth information on parents' experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For the clarification of parents' answers, I had to use probes as well (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Interviews were recorded using a call recording application. The content of each interview was transcribed using the Otter application. Participants were provided with my interpretation of their transcripts to review and verify accuracy of collected data. As stated by Kallio et al. (2016), reviewing the transcript or interpretation of interview transcript is an opportunity for each participant to amend possible discrepancies, or to add and clarify original statements.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To recruit participants, I created a letter of cooperation as a proof of granting permission to conduct this study. This letter (Appendix C) was used as a flyer to recruit participants. The flyers contained information regarding the purpose of the study as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Interested parents who were willing to participate were asked to email or call me to receive more information on how to proceed.

An email with an attached demographic questionnaire was sent to each volunteer participant to complete. Once the eligible participants were determined, I sent them the informed consent by email. The informed consent included research title, purpose statement, method of participation through interview, duration of participation, potential minimal risks, procedures for ensuring confidentiality and data security, and my contact information. Participants who agreed to the content of the informed consent were asked to send the electronic copy of signed informed consent to my email by indicating "I

consent" in the body of their email. Once I received signed copies of the informed

consent form, I contacted participants to schedule an interview.

The interview was conducted through the Zoom platform with seven participants

and a phone call with one participant due to her preference. All participants were

interviewed in their own home. Each interview was recorded through digital recording

with participant's permission. At the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the interview

protocol with each participant. I asked interview questions based on the interview

guideline. At the end of the interview, participants had opportunities to ask any questions

that they had. Each interview session ran for 45 to 55 minutes. Once all participants

answered interview questions, I transcribed the recording using an Otter application. All

participants received a summary of my interpretation of their transcripts to review for

accuracy and determine coherency of the information. A member checking session was

scheduled for each participant to receive participants' feedback and clarification of

information in interpretations. To ensure confidentiality, no personal and identifying

information of parents or their children were included in the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis method along with Quirkos software.

As stated by Nowell et al. (2017), thematic analysis is a flexible approach that provides a

rich and detailed information. The step-by-step approach to conduct the thematic analysis

helped me meet certain criteria for trustworthiness of findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

Therefore, the process of coding followed six phases of thematic analysis. The first phase

was familiarizing myself with the data through transcribing raw data, reviewing it line by

line, archiving files, documenting my thoughts about potential codes or themes, and transferring data from Word to Excel in order to organize the data (Nowell et al., 2017; Vagle, 2018). For the second phase, I generated initial codes using Quirkos software. In the third phase, I searched through the data to develop themes. In the fourth phase, I reviewed themes for phase five to define and name themes. In phase six, I produced the report by describing detailed processes of coding and analyzing data (Nowell et al., 2017). During data analysis, I looked for common themes in the transcribed data (Vagle, 2018). More details about the process of thematic analysis are explained in Chapter 4.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In a qualitative research study, the researcher needs to implement procedures to assess the quality of findings. In other words, establishing the trustworthiness in a qualitative study is important to make sure analyzed data accurately reflects the lived experiences of participants (Nowell et al., 2017). To establish trustworthiness of findings, the resulting data should meet the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017).

Credibility

Credibility of a qualitative study refers to the accuracy of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility counterparts to internal validity in a quantitative study (Nowell et al., 2017). To establish the credibility of the study, first, I interviewed participants until saturation of data occurred. Saturation was determined once no new data provided any additional insights to the phenomenon of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Credibility is also determined when analyzing data that are interpreted and represented by the

researcher fits with the readers' views (Nowell et al., 2017). The credibility of the data was enhanced through member checking technique (Carter et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021). Participants reviewed summary of my interpretation from their interview transcripts to determine the accuracy of the results and coherency of the information (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021).

Transferability

Ravitch and Carl (2016) defined transferability as transferring data to other types of research in the area being studied. Peoples (2021) expanded transferability by stating that the resulting information from lived experiences of participants might be similar to the information from other populations with similar experiences. To establish transferability, the researchers need to consider the setting and lived experiences of participants before generalizing the resulting data (Peoples, 2021). Analyzing data to generate meaningful themes within data may provide insights to parents, teachers, and educators as audience of this study (Peoples, 2021).

Participants who provided consent to participate in my study were from different ethnicities and locations that helped me to establish transferability of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I interviewed participants with four different ethnicities who lived in different geographical locations.

Dependability

Dependability is the level of reliability of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). To achieve dependability and ensure my study's findings are replicated, the research process had to be clearly documented (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021). Therefore, audit trail

was used to audit the research process and ensure dependability of the study (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021). I documented inputs and outputs of each step involved in participants' recruitment as well as data collection and data analysis of the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability counterparts with objectivity of the study (Nowell et al., 2017). Confirmability is established when the researcher's interpretations and conclusions are clearly derived from the collecting data (Nowell et al., 2017). To establish confirmability and protect my study from potential personal bias, I used reflexivity (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021).

Since I have a pre-understanding about the parent-child home reading experience with my daughters, there was a potential personal bias to affect the confirmability of the study. Using a hermeneutic phenomenology, I needed to implement strategies to protect my research from my personal bias (Peoples, 2021). One strategy that was used as part of hermeneutic circle was reflective journaling (Peoples, 2021). Reflective journaling helped me to be aware of my personal biases. It also helped me to identify my projections that were distractions for the study and may prevented me to have a better understanding of phenomenon of the study (Peoples, 2021). My goal was revising my thoughts from questions that were created from my personal biases (Peoples, 2021). Using hermeneutic circle through reflective journaling helps researchers to revise the potential biases and replace their thoughts and conceptions to new meanings that align or make sense with the phenomenon of the study (Peoples, 2021).

Ethical Procedures

Since this study involves human participants, IRB approval from Walden University was necessary before starting the study. The study was approved by IRB with the approval number 02-23-21-0523282. The study was granted until February 22, 2022. Once the IRB approved this study, I started to distribute the flyers to Walden University Participant Pool and local parks to recruit participatns. Participatns who were recruited in this study, were provided informed consent. The consent form contained information about the details of the study, including the purpose of study, benefits, and procedures, as well as participants' rights and roles in the study before agreeing to participate in the study.

The ethical concerns in the informed consent included confidentiality, data security, and optional voluntary of participation in the study. To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed that their identification would not be disclosed to any other entity. To keep participants' information confidential, I assigned each participant to have an alphanumeric code as a pseudonym. These pseudonyms were used in the process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. After reviewing the informed consent, participants signed the informed consent stating that they understood and agreed to participate in this study voluntarily. Each participant was given the option to leave the study or withdraw their interview data at any point during the study.

In addition to confidentiality and the nature of voluntary participation, the other ethical concern was data security. To keep all files safe and secure, I kept electronic data, including documentations of interview transcripts and audiotapes in password-protected

files in my personal computer. All data shared only with authorized individuals to validate the final resulting information. Once the study was ended, all emails with attachment files and downloaded documents were deleted. The collected data are kept for a period of 5 years as required by Walden University IRB.

Summary

This qualitative study was conducted using a phenomenological approach to address research questions and purpose of the study. Semi-structured Zoom interviews with eight parents of 2 to 5-year-old children were used as the data source for this study. Data were analyzed through qualitative thematic analysis. The strategies that were used to establish trustworthiness of the study are included in this chapter. Chapter 4 will provide the results of the data transcription and analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore parental perceptions regarding components of early literacy among eight parents who have elected to expose their children to early home reading materials as young as preschool age. Data were collected and analyzed to address the following research questions:

RQ: What are parents' lived experiences regarding the value of home literacy for their young children?

RQa: What are parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children?

RQb: What is the process by which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities?

Chapter 4 includes the following sections: settings in which interviews were conducted, demographics of the participants, data collection strategies, approach to data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study findings, and a summary. In this chapter, I discuss the data collection procedures as well as the data analysis method that was used to find the results of the study. I also discuss the themes generated from the data gathered from interviews with eight parents of children between 2 to 5 years of age.

Setting

Semi-structured Zoom interviews with seven parents were used as the data source for this study. A phone interview was conducted for one parent due to her preference. Participants were interviewed in their own home. Inteview with five participants were

conducted through audio and video using Zoom platform. During the interview with one participant whose 9-month-old baby started crying, I had to pause the questions for a couple of minutes in order for the participant to calm her baby down. The interview was continued without any further interuptions after the participant's baby fell asleep.

Three participants were not comfortable to turn their camera on. Therefore, Zoom interviews were conducted through audio only with these participants. There were no specific background distractions, noises, or intrusions noticed during the interviews with all participants. I conducted Zoom interviews for all participants for member checking after sending my interpretation of each interview. Interviews were conducted using a Zoom platform because COVID restrictions precluded in-home interviews.

Demographics

I interviewed eight participants in this study. All participants were mothers of children between the ages of 2 and 5. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of each participant including participants' ethniciy, their levels of education, age of child at the time of interview, and age of the child when starting home reading activities.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Parents	Ethnicity	Level of education	Age of child	Age of child at start of reading activities
P1	Mother	African American	Bachelor's degree	4	8 months-old
P2	Mother	Asian	Bachelor's degree	5	8 months-old
P3	Mother	Iranian	Bachelor's degree	5	1 year-old
P4	Mother	African American	Master of science	3	1 year-old

P5	Mother	African American	Graduate degree	4	1 year-old
P6	Mother	Caucasian	Master of science	3	6 months-old
P7	Mother	African American	College degree	4	2-year-old
P8	Mother	Iranian	Master of science	4	3-year-old

Data Collection

I recruited eight participants through Walden University Participant Pool as well as distributing my flyer to local parks. After recruiting potential participants who met the criteria for the study, I contacted them to send informed consent by email. Once they consented by email, I contacted them to schedule a Zoom meeting. At the beginning of interview session, I expressed my gratitude to participants for volunteering for this study. Then, I reviewed informed consent including the purpose of the study, the information regarding audio recording, and the confidentiality of participants' personal information. I also explained that their participation is voluntarily. They could withdraw any time during the study. Once each participant agreed to the conditions, I used the Otter application on my smart phone to record the audio and transcribe the conversation to text. The interview was conducted by asking semi-structured interview questions that are seen in Appendix A. Each participant had one main interview session and one member checking session. On average, each interview session ran for 45 to 55 minutes for the first interview and 20 minutes for member checking.

Data Analysis

In the process of data analysis, I started by transcribing the raw data from recorded audio. I transcribed the raw data using the Otter application on my smart phone.

I used the Otter application once I found out from Google search that this application transcribes the audio to text during the interview conversation. The Otter application made the process of audio transcription easier and faster. I stored the audio and transcribed data on my personal computer. After transcribing each interview, I reviewed the transcribed text several times to become familiar with the content of data before coding.

The collected data were analyzed using Quirkos software along with following six phases of thematic analysis. In the process of thematic analysis, I familiarized myself with the data through transcribing raw data, reviewing it line by line, documenting my thoughts about potential codes or themes, and transferring the data from Word to Excel in order to organize the gathered information (Nowell et al., 2017; Vagle, 2018). Reviewing the detailed information line by line helped me organize sentences and sentence clusters that revealed the phenomenon of study (Vagle, 2018). With the help of Qurikos software and Word Cloud as part of this software, I was able to organize generated codes. For the second phase, I reviewed generated codes and highlighted similar codes to identify related categories within the data. This process enabled me to compare the categories and identify similar categories that are meaningful to the phenomena of the study. In the third phase, I organized the codes and generated the categories following the Quirkos instructions. Based on common categories, I developed eight themes in the fourth phase. In the fifth phase, I reviewed themes to create names and define them to address the research questions. In the last phase, I produced the narrative report by describing the detailed process of coding and analyzing data (Nowell et al., 2017). Using the Quirkos

software was an advantage for the process of analyzing data since the instruction helped

me to organaze similar words, phrases, sentences, and cluster sentences in a bubble

format to make the process of generaing themes easier. In addition, the final report from

this software helped me organize and display demographic characteristics of participants

in a table format.

Themes

Eight themes emerged during data analysis as shown in Table 2. The first six

themes, including reading and comprehension skills, school preparation, parent-child

relationships, social-emotional skills, children's daily routine, and children's interest to

read, are aligned with the main RQ. These six themes emerged from the lived experiences

of parents regarding the value of early parent-child home reading activities. The seventh

theme, which is interesting and informative content, was a meaningful category to make

sense of parents' selection of reading resources. The last theme, which is creating

motivation to learn to read, aligns with Sub-Question B and refers to the process by

which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities.

Table 2

Table of Themes

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Reading and comprehension skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School preparation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent-child relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social-emotional skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Children's daily routine	X	X	X		X		X	X
Children's interest to read	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Interesting and informative content	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Creating motivation to learn to read	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme 1: Reading and Comprehension Skills

The first theme is reading and comprehension skills. This theme referred to the one of the important values of early parent-child home literacy engagement and was stated by all parents. The initial codes related to this theme include repeating words or letters, recalling or retelling the story, and asking questions. The categories include decoding skills, developing the child's skills for phonological awareness, listening skills, cognitive development, and concentration skills.

Theme 2: School Prepration

The second theme is school prepration. All parents reported that early parent-child home reading engagmenet prepared their child for their school. The examples of initial codes for this theme are school structure, answers teacher's questions, confidence to ask, concentrate to study at school, and group reading. The generated categoires include skills of confidence, listening skills, concentration skills, and communication skills.

Theme 3: Parent-Child Relationships

The third theme is parent-child relationships. This theme also refers to one of the important values of early home literacy for young children. Some examples of initial codes relevant to this theme are getting to know each other, enjoy reading together, closer relationships, building friendship, feeling support, feeling more secure, feeling comfortable to talk or ask questions, strengthened connections, and enjoying doing things together. Some examples of categories that relate to this theme include bonding and attachment and ability to express feelings.

Theme 4: Social-Emotional Skills

All parents indicated that the theme of social-emotional skills was a value of early parent-child home reading activities. Some examples of initial codes include making friends, learning to share and be fair, respect peers, protect younger kids, ability to interact with other children, friendly behavior, feeling comfortable to chat with friends, working in a group, boosting self-esteem, feeling confident and comfortable to talk, ability to differentiate right and wrong, being fair to others, saying no to bullying, following rules, ability to apologize when wrong, and being extroverted. The categories for this theme include social skills, communication skills, feeling responsible, positive behavior, developing relationships, confidence skills, and express feelings.

Theme 5: Children's Daily Routine

Many parents reported that it is very important for both parents and their child to establish home reading activities as their daily routine. The codes for this theme include daily routines, good habits, follow a planned schedule, and continuous daily reading. The category for this theme includes children's daily habit.

Theme 6: Children's Interest to Read

Children's interest to read was reported by all parents as a sign that the child is ready to learn to read. All mothers stated that their children showed their interest and motivation to engage in reading activities by bringing a book or showing excitement when it is time to read. The initial codes for this theme include requesting to read, enjoying the reading time, retelling the story, concentrating during the reading sessions, asking questions, showing curiosity about the details of the story, repeating words,

observing their mothers' lips, listening to the story, following parents when reading a word, and showing postive attitude. The categories include motivation to read and children's readiness to learn to read.

Theme 7: Interesting and Informative Content

This theme is generated to address parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children. The initial codes for this theme include child's concentration, child's interests, Google search, asking librarians, recommendations by friends, personal decisions, personal preferences, and social media. The categories for this theme include parents' selection of reading resources, hardcopy reading resources, digital reading resources, and motivational factors.

Theme 8: Creating Motivation to Learn to Read

This theme refers to parents' process of home reading activities. The initial codes for this theme include make reading fun, rewarding the child, praising the child, clapping hands, congratulating the child, singing, saying nice words, changing the voice, animating the story, demonstrating the story, visualizing, dramatizing, role playing, and variation in tone of the voice. The categories for this theme include fun activities and reading presentation.

Results

Through the initial coding and thematic analysis process, I obtained interesting findings regarding parents' perceptions of components for early home reading engagement. Parents shared their experiences regarding the value of early home reading activities, their approaches to selection of reading materials, and the process that they

engage their children. In the following subsections, I present the results with corresponding themes that address research questions.

Main Research Question

The main research question was what are parents' lived experiences regarding the value of home literacy for their young children? To explore this research question, six themes were generated as meaningful units with which to understand the participants' experiences. These themes include reading and comprehesion skills, school prepration, parent-child relationships, social emotional skills, children's daily routine, and children's interest to read.

Reading and Comprehension Skills

As part of interview questions, I asked participants to reflect upon the importance of starting home reading activities before their child starts preschool. All parents reported that early parent-child home reading interactions improved reading and comprehension skills of their children. All participants reported that their children can recognize letter sounds and words since many words are repeating in the story books. For example, P1 stated that "reading will help my daughter to know better about the words and her reading skills are advancing with time." P2 mentioned that "my daughter gets familiar with words, especially many words are repeated in books, and it becomes easier for her to understand."

All participants emphasized the importance of asking questions while reading a story, which helps their children to recall the story and develop their comprehension skills. P1 stated that "in terms of getting to read stories, you can like ask questions or you

can do some bit demonstration when you read stories involving animals." P3 stated that "if you ask questions while reading a book, it helps him to think, recall, and answer questions. So, it helps him to comprehend better." P4 mentioned that "if you think she is not understanding, you could ask questions, so that way she will be able to concentrate." P5 stated that "when she is asked to talk about the details of a story, she can easily do that, because she understands the story." P6 stated that "the more reading a book, they will be asking more questions to find answers. For my 3-year-old son, I usually ask questions from the story. That can help him to develop his comprehension skills." P7 mentioned "allowing the child to ask questions, she can ask more questions about the details of the story or when you read a story to your child, you can ask questions about the story. That can develop her comprehension skills." P8 stated that "parents also can ask questions about the details of the story, that can help the child to develop his comprehension skills."

Some participants referred to other ways that can help their children to develop their comprehension skills. For example, two participants stated that if children participate in group reading with other children or peers, they will be motivated to listen to the story, concentrate on the content of the story, and recall the story. P1 stated:

> If the other children are around her, may be her sister or just a friend, when children are together, they tend to encourage each other and is kind of fun, because maybe it involves them in certain reading activity one by one.

P7 stated that "when you involve other children around your neighborhood, when you have reading times, so that now, when the child sees that it is time for reading and the other children are also sitting there, she'll definitely concentrate."

School Preparation

Participants discussed that early home reading engagement prepare their children for formal schooling. Some parents believed that parent-child home reading promotes school readiness of their children by identifying a range of skills including skills related to psychological functioning such as developing confidence and self-esteem. Some parents referred to the value of developing reading and language skills. Some parents emphasized the value in aiding communication. Some parents stressed on other abilities including developing listening skills or following school routines.

For example, P1 emphasized in developing her child's language skills, confidence, and self-esteem as values for school readiness. She also referred to parents' ability to observe their child's learning progress as another value when parents implement their scaffolding style:

I think when you are reading to your child, you will be able to like get to tell how well she is learning, get to tell how well is her pronunciation of such words, you can get to boost her confidence, you can get to encourage her and also give her more confidence even before she goes to school. So, she will be able to like express herself and I guess if she feels something bothering her in terms of her understanding, she will ask and she will be with high self-esteem.

P4 referred to the communication skills as a sign of confidence that helped her child to ask for needed assistance:

> You are preparing your child to go out to the world and be an independent person. Like when my son went to school in a daycare setting, when the teachers would ask him a question like asking what letter it is, he was able to respond without having any hesitations. They learn to ask questions from their teacher at school if they don't understand the lesson.

Some participants discussed how early reading prepared their children to develop their language by becoming familiar with sight words that are taught at preschool. P2 stated that "I also wanted my daughter becomes familiar with words and letters so when she starts her preschool, she already is familiar especially with sight words." Some participants expressed that parent-child home reading helps their children to improve their listening skills. For example, P3 stated:

> When I read, he has concentration. He tells me what I missed or which part I didn't say meaning he listens well. This is a good practice to have concentration when he goes to school and pick up the subject quickly.

> P8 stated that "involving him at home for one hour for example, prepare him to concentrate better at school because he already learned at home that he has to listen."

Some participants discussed early reading helps their children to become familiar with school's daily schedule. For example, P3 stated that "it helps him to get familiar with

school's schedule and their routine." P5 and P7 also referred to getting familiar with

school schedule. P5 stated:

> She will be more prepared for the school set up because the school set up for
>
> those hours, where you're supposed to be reading, and this time to play, or this
>
> time to sleep. So, she is able to know the school structure.

P7 stated that "once she participates actively in our home reading and it becomes as her

daily routine schedule, she will understand her school structure and school's daily

schedule."

Parent-Child Relationships

All participants shared that their reading experiences with their young children

influenced their relationships with their child. All parents expressed their views that

reading activities strengthened their bonding and attachment with their children. For

example, P1 stated that "it will encourage my daughter to tell you in case she has a

problem, you can get to know her more. It will encourage her to get to know you better."

P2 stated:

> It is like sitting down and be quiet and you can concentrate. We have high quality
>
> moments to improve our relationship, like we enjoy reading together or we
>
> discuss the book, and we both have fun when the book is interesting.

P3 referred to having a closer and friendly relationship by stating:

> Reading a book makes our relationship closer. The fact that I spend time for him
>
> or I sit with him to read a book for him, he likes that moment that I am with him,
>
> next to him. The relationship between me and my son, brings us together. He likes

it when I am next to him and read together. Based on the story of the book, at the end of reading a book, I explain to him, my dear if you do this, this good or bad reaction happens. In fact, it creates a friendly chat especially at the end of the story reading which expand our relationship.

P4 stated that "my son feels more secure when reading together especially when he is in my lap. When he repeats words or letters, I kiss him or we hug each other. He knows that I am there to support him." P5 also referred to the strengthening of their relationship by stating:

Our relationship has gotten better and better at times because we are coming more together, especially during reading time and just it has strengthened our connection and in case of any problem, she is able to communicate, she feels comfortable to ask more questions.

P6 perceived that early home reading influenced her relationships with her children in a positive way. She stated:

It is kind of fun. You can build memories. For my 3-year-old, once we finish our reading, he comes to me and hugs me or gives me a kiss. I think he understands sitting together to read a story is fun for him and is something that he likes to learn.

P7 stated:

You get to become friends; you get to do things together. You get to know what is challenging to the child and you are able to know what is your child's strengths, her weaknesses, what she likes, what she dislikes.

P8 expressed that reading strengthens her relationship with her son stating:

> It helped us to be closer to each other in a way that he can express his feelings at times, he is open to me, he feels more secure to talk or I can say more comfortable to talk at times like to talk about something that bothers him.

Social-Emotional Skills

All parents referred to the role of parent-child home reading activities on children's development of social-emotional skills with different perspectives. All mothers stated that home reading engagement improved their children's social and communication skills with peers or family members. All mothers reported that their children are able to have conversation or interact with peers regarding the story that they read.

Four mothers stated that lessons learned from age-appropriate non-fiction books helped their children to show positive behavior when communicating with peers. For example, P2 stated that "we read the book be fair and share many times. And after we read a lot of times, she is more like sharing." P2 also stated that "after reading books, my daughter knows bullying is not good. She needs to say no to bullying." P3 stated that "I read some books about sharing and respecting others. My son pays attention to younger kids and tries to be careful not to hurt them." P8 stated:

> I sometimes read books to my son that have ethical or moral lessons. So, he respects other kids since he learned about the content of that book. So, I see that he is more comfortable to talk with his friends and explain what he was read to him.

P7 explained that reading books helped her daughter to communicate with respect to others and follow instructions. When asked how reading activities influenced her daughter's behavior, P7 stated:

> She is able to understand some of the things that are required for her, like in terms of obedience, in terms of respect, in terms of caring for children that are around her, in terms of knowing the right things to do and what not to do, and in terms of following the instructions that being said to her.

P1 stated that "my daughter slowly learned to differentiate what is right and what is wrong. She is now able to like sense when she is wrong and she can apologize very fast."

Four mothers explained how home reading engagement helped their children to express their feelings at times they needed. For example, P1 stated that "my daughter is able to like express herself and I guess if she feels something bothering her in terms of her understanding, she will ask." P3 stated that "my son expresses his feeling. He talks about issues that happened in the past that he did not talk about it." P5 stated that "you are able to know anytime there is a problem, because she is extroverted. She is able to express her feelings at times and talk about something that she needs." P8 stated that "my son talks about himself more often especially when the story is related to the topic that he wants to talk or relates to himself."

Children's Daily Routine

Six parents believed that reading activities will become part of children' daily routine if parents start home reading with their children at an early age. For example, P1

stated that "I feel like it should be made as sort of a routine for parents to do that for our children and to become part of their children's daily routine." P2 also stated:

> I think reading is very important. The earlier if we can establish reading as a good habit for them, they will benefit from reading in their future. They will keep reading and learning in their future. So, this becomes a good habit for them. This is the most important thing I want her to have.

In response to the importance of early home reading engagement, P3 stated "it is very important to start reading before his preschool because he will be familiar with books and use them on a daily routine. I wanted reading be part of his daily routine." P5 explained:

> When you think that doing something as a child's daily routine, like reading a book helps your child to learn, even not every day or every night, it definitely helps the child to learn about words, letters, structure of sentences, or even the child can comprehend the meaning of the story.

P7 also referred to reading as a child's daily routines stating:

> It will make him fall into a schedule like he definitely knows when it is time to play, when it is time to eat, when it is time to sleep, or when it is time to read a book. So, it is a schedule for them. I mean they will be kind of learning the routine schedule.

P8 expressed her perception about the importance of starting reading activities early on stating "when reading becomes as a daily habit and they practice reading story books every day, their reading skills are improved."

Children's Interest to Read

All parents believed that their children's interest to read, ability to listen to a story, or repeat a sound or word is a sign of their readiness to engage in home reading activities. P1 stated that "my daughter shows excitement when reading to her. When she was 2-year-old or two and half around there, she said please mom, can you read this for me." P2 also stated that her daughter requested her to read a book stating that "she requested me to read to her every day when she was two or three or maybe two." P3 and P4 referred to their sons' ability to mimic the sounds as a sign of their readiness to learn to read. P3 stated:

> When he was 1-year-old, as long as he was able to sit and say some words even though was not clear, like I say words, he was able to mimic the sounds, I thoughts he can listen to the story that I read to him.

P4 stated:

> When he began to mimic me, he would repeat some of the things that I said, are like some of the sounds that I have made. So that I was thinking okay, he may be ready to fully understand how to sit and listen to some of the things that I was trying to teach him.

P5 referred to her child's listening and concentration skills as signs of her readiness stating that:

> I felt that she was ready because anytime I used to talk to her even with interactions, you find her she is listening to me, she is like observing my lips, so she can engage with you even though she is not able to construct the whole sentence. I thought it is time for her to do reading with her.

P6, P7, and P8 referred to their children's motivation to learn to read by asking parents to read their favorite books or answering questions about the story as a sign of child's readiness for reading activities. P6 mentioned:

> When I started to read, my 3-year-old son had desire to start reading. He enjoys being read to, because I do like dramatizing at the end. He asks me to read it again or even sometimes when we finish one book, he picks another book and asks me to read that book to him.

P7 stated that "she enjoys the reading by asking me to read the book again, or bringing another book and asking to read that book." P8 also stated that "When I see my son asking questions, it is a sign that he is ready to learn more. He is motivated to learn by asking questions."

Sub-Research Question A

The first sub-research question was what are parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children? To answer this question, the theme interesting and informative content was generated.

Interesting and Informative Content

Parents used different types of reading resources for their parent-child home reading activities. For example, all parents used picture story books including popular stories such as Elmo or Dr. Suess story books series. Some parents referred to available reading programs such as preschool prep, ABC Mouse, or Khan Academy. All parents stated that they allow their children to watch YouTube reading programs that teach children alphabetic letters through songs or programs that a person reads a book.

As part of interview guideline, I asked parents why they selected a specific reading materials as their preference. All parents provided reasons associated with the content of reading resources including picture books or digital reading resources. Parents referred to the content of resources as they attract their children or create motivation to engage with the story content. They also stated that picture story books helped their children to develop stories or visualize the story.

Some parents reported picture story books are very informative and provide age appropriate information for learning. For example, P1 stated "they are more interesting, they bring attention to the child, and definitely they are not boring even to you. Because it is also enabling them to visualize. Visualization is very important for easy understanding." P2 stated "picture books are interesting, and we can learn something from this book, like letters, words, or moral lessons. Many of them having teaching lessons like ethical lessons." P3 mentioned that "because he likes them and when I read the books with characters, he imagines those characters." P4 reported:

> Picture books when they have the word in the bottom and then the picture at the top, they are able to develop a story. So, with my daughter, she doesn't really read as well as my son. She is still able to develop the story with my son. The picture they are seeing connects, so the cat, like it is literally as simple as that, the cat. My son understands that the picture of the cat in this page is going to talk about a cat. So, they visualize the cat and make a story.

P5 stated "I think because they don't have inappropriate content like violent content. They have just legitimate content." She also added "they are baby friendly in terms of the

pictures. They are able to communicate with content of the book through pictures." P6 discussed why she preferred to use preschool prep that she found it by chance at a local store. She stated "I found the preschool prep with its DVDs just by chance. The DVDs from the preschool prep are so engaging and repetitive, repetitive, and repetitive." P7 who preferred to use digital reading resources including YouTube platform, stated:

> The reading programs from YouTube is more informative. They are more simplified. They are very easy to understand for your child. They teach the alphabets with songs and music. They have more details for teaching the child. My daughter loves them.

P7 also added, "like you can find there is the reading of words, vowels, or stories or like there is everything in one combination. They teach all details of a word with a song." P8 stated that "because it is simple to read and simple to learn for their age. I mean they are age appropriate and easy to read for the child."

I asked each parent what factors influenced their decisions for choosing reading materials? All parents referred to environmental factors including recommendations by frieneds, librarians, social media, or searching through Google. For example, P1 stated, "when I used to go to the library, I used to get the list of books from librarians for my daughter. Currently because of pandemic, library is closed. I usually search Google or sometimes I find them from YouTube." P2 mentioned that "I Google it or also I use books that are recommended by friends. So, yeah, or maybe from library, or sometimes I like exchange books with friends."

P4 referred to the environmental factors including her family or tools that she learned from her workplace. She stated that:

> For the tools, I don't think it is cultural, I think it is more environmental and my family influences too. I was helping a special education classroom for those kids who don't know how to read. So, I was given the opportunity to see a lot of different materials that teach children how to read. I mean, I see a lot of techniques that teach children how to read. And so, that was an influence on the types of tools that I use.

P5 and P7 referred to the social media as the other motivational factor that influenced their decisions to select reading materials. P5 stated that "when it goes through social media, we will find that many people are doing this and you are able to feel motivated to use those like books, magazines, or YouTube. So, social media has also influenced of that." P7 shared her experience stating "social media encouraged me to use these resources. Because, I found other children will easily get content from this and that is fun for children too. That is why it influenced me to use it."

P8 referred to her friend's recommendation stating "mostly environmental factors like I have friends who have the same age kids as my kids and they use or recommend those books."

Sub-Research Question B

The second sub-research question was what is the process by which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities? The theme of creating motivation to learn to read was generated in order to answer this question.

Creating Motivation to Learn to Read

All parents referred to their style of presenting reading materials that motivates their children to engage in reading activities. I asked parents how they present their reading resources in a way that engage their children in reading activities. P1 stated:

To increase her motivation, like by clapping your hands and saying kind words to her like motivating her and maybe rewarding her for something she likes. For example, rewarding her with something she loves. Maybe you promise her by the end of the weekend she gets her pizza if she can read quite well.

P1 referred to dramatizing the story stating:

You can do some bit demonstration or you can read stories involving animals. You can tell her to be there, like an elephant and you will be there, so like for example, you say the elephant was walking then you walk like the elephant. That way she is also interested in the story, like dramatizing the story.

P2 stated "just maybe sometimes, she can read a book by herself, I will like praise her, maybe like a gift to her, a kiss, or maybe a small toy." P3 referred to dramatizing the story stating "I read for him. I make character sounds like sounds of old or young characters or animal sounds to make him more interested." P3 also added:

To increase his motivation to participate, when there is a toy or stuffed animal or character that relates to the book, I use the toys. He usually asks me to talk like the character or play the role of the character. He also plays like the character by changing his voice.

P4 referred to her style that motivates her son to participate in reading sessions stating "I put on a song, oh, it is reading time and they get ready. I'll put like on a song to help them to get engaged and ready to read." When asked P4 how she presents her reading activities to her son, she stated:

> I make the book a little bit more animated than it is, to increase his imagination. He will be able to visualize the story. So, if we say the cat. And then, we go back and look at the cat or we analyze the cat like what is that cat doing? Or what do you think it is going to do or what color is that cat? When we get more into the book beyond just what is on the page to keep him there.

P5, P6, and P7 referred to the dramatizing and visualizing the story. P5 stated:

> If it is time for story, I just find a place which is kind of outside around the house. For example, when you are reading a story to her, you are able to explain to her. Maybe it is an animal that she doesn't know, you are able to like demonstrate to her. Maybe if it something that she is not able to understand, you can give her an example of your surroundings. Most of the time, the things that you are reading are in our surrounding. For example, when you are talking about houses, she is able to like visualize the house.

P6 stated:

> I read the story with changing my voice up and down to create excitement for him. I point to the pictures and explain the story. Sometimes, I dramatize the story for them to have an imagination of the characters while showing or pointing to the pictures. In this way they can visualize while looking at the pictures.

P7 mentioned "I change my tone of voice to create fun and motivation for her to listen, learn, and participate when we have reading time." P7 added:

> Sometimes, I dramatize the story and act like an animal in the story for her to visualize and imagine the story better. In our reading session, I motivate her by congratulating her at the end of story reading or clapping hands or telling nice words like good job.

P8 also referred to the dramatizing the story when presenting reading books stating that "I usually ask him questions or making fun like acting as the character of the story or changing the voice like dramatizing."

> Parents' teaching style to scaffold their children's learning through observing their progress or creating motivation was referred by some parents as another value of parent-child home reading interactions. For example, P1 stated:

> I think when you are reading to your child, you will be able to like get to tell how well she is learning or how well is her pronunciation of such words. You can get to boost her confidence. You can get to encourage her and also give her more confidence even before she goes to school.

P2 referred to her teaching style to increase her concentration while reading a book. She stated "I ask her to read by herself, so, she needs to be focused because she needs to read by herself. So, I will make a request. I will ask her to read by herself." P4 valued her scaffolding style when she makes the reading time fun by creating a song or making a turn when reading a book. She stated "I'll put on like a song to help them to get engaged

and ready to read. We will sit down and we will start our book. It is like to have or switch it around."

P5 and P7 referred to their teaching style that prevents their children to be bored by reading different stories or changing their tone of voice while reading materials. P5 stated:

I think the monotony is kind of boring to the child, you have to come up with different stories every day or different books. That is very important to read different books for a child, not the same story over and over.

P7 stated "I change my tone of my voice to create motivation for her to listen to the story or she becomes excited when she listens to story. I do it for her to put her attention to the story."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To establish the trustworthiness of the study, I ensured that collected data and analysis of findings were of good quality through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). The credibility of the study was ensured through the process of member checking. First, I interviewed participants until saturation of data occurred. Saturation is determined once no new data provide any additional insights to the phenomenon of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Then, I sent summary of my interpretations to each participant. All participants reviewed my interpretation of their interview transcripts to determine the accuracy of the information (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021). Participants who responded to my recruitment flyers had a diversity in ethnicities and locations that helped me to establish transferability of

the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I interviewed participants with four different ethnicities who lived in different geographical locations. I provided an audit trail to improve the dependability of the data. I documented the process of each step involved in the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis of the study.

When using a hermeneutic phenomenology, researchers need to focus on possible interactions between their understanding of the phenomenon of the study and the collected data (Peoples, 2021). I had to modify my understanding and monitor my thoughts and assumptions regarding the phenomenon of the study using hermeneutic circle (Peoples, 2021). Therefore, I started to document my experiences, assumptions, and interpretations regarding parent-child home reading engagements. Since I have personal experience in home reading activities with my daughters, there was a potential for having personal biases. The strategy that I used to establish confirmability was reflexivity (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021). Using reflective journaling helped me to concentrate on collected data and avoid distractions due to personal biases (Peoples, 2021). I used reflective journaling to revise my thoughts and assumptions that were created by my personal bias. Renewing my thoughts helped me to modify my understanding about the resulting information that was shared by parents (Peoples, 2021).

Summary

In Chapter 4, I discussed in details about the settings, demographics of the participants, data collection and analysis procedures, and the evidence of trustworthiness.

There were eight interviews conducted for this study. The resulting data were analyzed using a thematic analysis. Eight themes were generated from the data. Those

themes include reading and comprehension skills, school preparation, parent-child relationships, social-emotional skills, children's daily routine, children's interest to read, interesting and informative reading content, and creating motivations to learn to read. The themes addressed research questions that referred to parents' lived experiences regarding parent-child home literacy, parents' approaches to selection of reading materials, and the process by which they engage their preschool children in reading activities. In Chapter 5, I will provide the conclusions along with the interpretation of the findings. In Chapter 5, the implications and limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore parental perceptions regarding components of early literacy among eight parents who exposed their children to early home reading materials as young as preschool age. I interviewed a total of eight mothers as participants for this study. After analyzing participants' interview responses, eight themes emerged that were related to meaningful categories within the data. First, parents perceived that their contributions in early home literacy engagement helped their young children to improve their reading and comprehension skills, prepare them for formal school setting, develop their social-emotional competence, and establish reading as their daily routine. All parents perceived that their child's interest to engage in reading sessions was a sign of child's readiness to learn to read. Second, parents experienced that their approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities were the informative and interesting reading content. All parents shared their experiences that they were motivated by their environmental factors including social media, recommendations by friends or public librarian, or Google search to find a specific reading material to have reading engagement with their children. Third, parents perceived that the process by which they engage their children in reading activities was to create motivations for their children to learn to read. They all shared their experiences of making reading fun in order to develop interest for their children to engage in reading sessions.

Interpretations of the Findings

The interpretation of findings revealed parents' perceptions regarding the value of early parent-child home reading interactions on children's cognitive development, reading competency, and their psychosocial functioning. For example, all parents perceived that parent-child home reading engagement improved their children's reading and comprehension skills and prepared them for their formal schooling. Parents shared their experiences in which home reading engagement improved their relationships with their children as well as developed their children's social-emotional competence.

When comparing findings of this study to scholarly literature, there were multiple consistencies. The results of this study also provided additional knowledge to previous research studies.

Reading and Comprehension Skills

The theme *reading and comprehension skills*, with its categories of decoding, phonological awareness, cognitive development, and listening and concentration skills, was developed as one of the values parents ascribed to parent-child home reading activities. This theme is reinforced by previous research studies that explored the role of HLE on developing phonemic awareness, identifying letters, improving vocabulary, and developing reading and comprehension skills among preschool and kindergarten children (Hamilton et al., 2016; Korucu et al., 2020; Niklas & Schneider, 2013; Shahaeian et al., 2018; Yeo et al., 2014). For example, Korucu et al. (2020) discussed how parent-child home reading interactions help children to develop their listening skills as well as their attention and concentration skills. The authors emphasized that children's executive functioning, including working memory and inhibitions, is developed through reading

engagement that helps children to shift their attention from distractions to reading activities in order to comprehend the content of the story (Korucu et al., 2020).

Psychological Functioning

This study's findings also corroborated previous research that HLE has positive influences on children's psychological functioning including their social-emotional competence and parent-child relationships (Korucu et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2018). Korucu et al. (2020) referred to social-emotional competence as children's joyfulness, tolerance, prosocial skills, cooperative attitude, emotional expression, or calmness in their own accomplishments or interactions with peers or adults. Parents in my study also reported that shared storybook reading improved the social-emotional skills of their children including their prosocial skills when interacting with peers as well as their ability to express their appropriate emotions with parents, family members, or teachers. The study by Xie et al. (2018) supported my study's findings in which parent-child book reading interventions have a positive impact on children's social-emotional competence as well as quality of parent-child relationships, including the positive attitude of both parents and children toward reading engagement and children's reading interest. Parents in my study referred to their positive attitude by having friendly chats with their children regarding the content of the story at the end of the reading. They also reported observing positive attitudes from their children, including giving hugs or kisses to parents as well as feeling more secure to talk, ask questions, or express their feelings.

School Preparation

The theme *school prepration* was generated from data related to values of home reading activities that helped children to develop their confidence to communicate with their teachers and peers when they start their formal schooling. Parents in my study believed that home reading engagement boosts their children's self-esteem to express themselves by answering teachers' questions, asking for clarification, or communicating with peers when participating in group school activities. Some parents discussed how reading engagement develops children's listening skills and concentrations to improve their language skills. Some valued daily reading activities as preparation for children's school daily schedule. These findings provided additional knowledge to previous research studies that emphasized the positive impact of home reading literacy for children's school and academic performance through developing children's oral language skills, vocabulary knowledge, and reading competencies (Niklas & Schneider, 2013; Shahaeian et al., 2018). For example, Shahaeian et al. (2018) stated that frequent parent-child shared reading was associated with the development of knowledge of letters and words among toddlers. The authors added that continued shared reading was strongly associated with academic achievements in reading, writing, spelling, and grammar when children start their elementary school (Shahaeian et al., 2018). Niklas and Schneider (2013) also referred to early linguistic competencies and vocabulary development as well as later reading and spelling competencies as positive outcomes of early parent-child home reading.

Children's Daily Routine

The theme of *children's daily routine* provides additional knowledge to previous research studies. Parents in this study believed that early parent-child home reading interactions on a regular basis can establish reading activity as a habit that becomes part of children's daily routine. The concept of children's daily routine as a result of parent-child home reading practicies was not apparent from the reveiw of scholarly literature in this area. There was some knowledge that shared storybook reading on a daily basis helps children to engage in reading practices with a positive attitude (Pezoaa et al., 2019). In a study by Niklas et al. (2015), it was reported that children of parents who set up home reading activities on a daily basis feel more confident in verbal and cognitive tasks such as explaining the similarities and differences between words.

Exploring parents' experiences regarding the value of home literacy in this study indicates that early parent-child literacy activities on a daily basis not only establishes reading as a habit with children's daily routines, but also helps children give value to their other daily scheduled activities. Six mothers perceived that if early home reading engagment is provided as a regular basis, it becomes part of children's daily routines. Two mothers mentioned that having early home reading with children not only helps children to become familiar with reading concepts but also prepare them to accomplish their other daily routines both at school and at home. These parents suggested that daily reading can improve parents' scaffolding style and develop their children's motivation and interest when presenting reading materials.

Children's Interest to Learn to Read

Parents' perceptions in this study in which children expressed their interest and motivation to participate actively in reading sessions was supported by Pezoaa et al. (2019). There is a link between early parent-child literacy engagement and children's motivation to learn to read (Pezoaa et al., 2019). Pezoaa et al. (2019) emphasized that early home literacy interventions on a regular basis have a positive impact on children's reading interests. In addition, Bojczyka et al. (2016) stated that parents' perceptions regarding their children's readiness to learn to read is related to children's active participation in SBR. Parents in my study also perceived that their children's interest to engage in reading activities indicates their children's readiness to learn to read. Some parents referred to their children's active engagement in reading practices as a sign of their readiness to learn. For example, all mothers stated that their children were asking them to read together or bringing their favorite books to remind their mothers to start reading practices. Some parents reported that their children participated actively in reading practices by repeating sounds of the letters or asking detailed questions about the content of the stories. All parents perceived that children's interest or active participations in reading practices was a sign of their readiness to learn to read, an idea that was supported by Bojczyka et al. (2016).

Interesting and Informative Content

The theme *interesting and informative content* refers to parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children. All parents reported that their preferences for reading resources were based on informative content, their child's interests, and designs of resources that attracted or motivated their children

to engage in reading practices. For example, some mothers reported that picture story books motivated their children to develop their own stories. Some parents stated that picture story books are simplified and age appropriete for kids to learn the content. Some indicated that the famous characters in the story motivated their children to participate in reading activities. The findings that the content of reading resources influenced parents' preferences to select a spcific reading material for their reading activities were supported by existing literature. For example, Wagner (2017) reported that story structure, complexity of reading resources, child's preferences, and popularity within society influenced parents' preferences to select reading resources for their children. Parents in my study provided additional information to the existing literature when asked if their own cultural factors influenced their decisions to select a specific reading material. All mothers referred to the influence of environmental factors on their preferences of reading materials. They all stated that environmental factors including recommendations by friends, librarians, social media, Google search, or YouTube platforms influenced their preferences in selecting reading resources.

Creating Motivation to Learn to Read

The theme *creating motivation to learn to read* was developed from the data related to parents' approaches to engage their children in reading practices. The findings of this study corroborated previous research that quality of parent-child home reading practices is related to parents' beliefs and perceptions of how to present literacy activities to their children (O'Farrellya et al., 2018; Soto-Calvo et al., 2019). The results of this study indicate that parents used different techniques including dramatizing the story, role

playing, singing, changing their tone of voices, using nice words, or rewarding their child while presenting the reading materials to their children. Those parents believed that making reading sessions fun while implementing their own scaffolding styles creates motivation for their children to engage in reading practices.

As stated by O'Farrellya et al. (2018) and Soto-Calvo et al. (2019), techniques that are used by parents are based on their beliefs and perceptions. For example, according to Soto-Calvo et al. (2019), parents believed that working with their children through fun activities including playing letter games or drawing a picture of an image helps their children to learn letters or words in sentences. As reported by previous research, parents perceived that providing a supportive home reading environment through parents' engagement in reading practices is a motivational technique that encourages their children to participate in reading activities (Dinkelmann & Buff, 2016; O'Farrellya et al., 2018; Wagner, 2017).

All parents in my study percieved that implementing fun activities in their scaffolding style to provide a learning environment had a postive outcome in increasing their children's motivation. They all believed that their children responded in a positive way by concentrating when reading or engaging with parents when parents implemented their teaching style through fun activities.

Contribution to Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory. Based on Vygotskian theory, children's knowledge and their independent problem-solving skills in specific tasks are developed by contribution of parents, teachers, peers, or other

educational factors in children's environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In this theory, the roles of social and cultural contexts were emphasized in the process of children's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) created a foundation for children's learning development that emphasized children's ZPD. Vygotsky referred to the contribution of adults who are able to implement strategies to help children to learn a specific task in the process of ZPD. Vygotsky stated that teaching styles that are presented by teachers or parents are based on cultural patterns. For example, a teacher may use a specific style or implement a teaching tool to explain the meaning of a word, sign, or symbol (Veraksa & Veraksa, 2018). Vygotsky referred to words, signs, or symbols as "cultural tools" that necessitate teachers to implement teaching strategies that are based on cultural patterns for children's mental and cognitive development (Veraksa & Veraksa, 2018). Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory was interpreted by Veraksa and Veraksa (2018), who emphasized the extent to which a cultural-based teaching style is essential to evolve children's thinking activities and develop their language. For example, styles that are used to teach correct pronunciations, tell a story, or draw a picture are designed based on cultural-patterns. These styles are essential teaching tools for children's learning development (Veraksa & Veraksa, 2018).

The findings of this study regarding the value of parent-child home literacy activities strengthened the support for Vygotskian theory in both social and cultural aspects. Parents shared their experiences in which their contributions in reading practices not only increased their children' motivation to participate in reading practices, but also helped their children to develop their literacy skills that prepared them for their formal

schooling. In addition, parents perceived that their home-reading interactions helped their children develop their confidence to express their feelings or to communicate with parents and peers. The findings of this study showed that parents implemented different teaching strategies to increase children's motivations to engage in reading activities, which highlights the role of parental beliefs in regards to cultural aspect in sociocultural theory. Parents' teaching styles that visualized the content of the reading materials through singing while telling the story, demonstrating, role-playing, or dramatizing, represent implementing their cultural-based strategies. Parents created their teaching strategies based on their own beliefs, which supports the cultural aspect of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory.

Limitations of the Study

The data may limit transferability and dependability. I was able to interview eight mothers of children between 2 to 5 years of age from four ethnicities of Caucasians, African Americans, Asians, and Middle Eastern, who lived in different geographic locations with different levels of education. The participants were limited to mothers, since fathers had job responsibilities which precluded their availability for participation or they were not involved in early home reading practices with their young children. Since I conducted this study with a small number of participants, the findings cannot be generalized to all parents of children who are younger than five. The findings of this study are representative of only parents who participated in this study. To reduce limitation due to dependability and inconsistency, I documented each step in the process

of participants' recruitment, data collections, and data analysis and reviewed each step using audit trail method.

The other limitation is the influence of any potential biases including my personal bias on the process of this study. All parents used a variety of early childhood reading programs which shows no bias for a specific reading program. I also experienced parent-child home reading activities during the first 5 years of my twin daughters. To minimize my potential bias and possible personal assumptions, I followed hermeneutic approach (Peoples, 2021). I used reflective journaling to modify my understanding about the parent-child reading activities when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Peoples, 2021). As stated by Peoples (2021), reflective journaling helps researchers to revise their thoughts or questions that might be created due to personal biases. Finally, member checking in which all participants reviewed my interpretation of their transcript helped to reduce the limitation associated with confirmability.

Recommendations

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to explore parental perceptions regarding home literacy activities among eight parents who exposed their young children to home reading materials as early as preschool age. Parents shared their perceptions regarding the value of parent-child home reading engagements including social emotional competence and parent-child relationships as two aspects of psychological functioning. Parents of this study used a variety of reading resources such as picture books, social media reading programs, or TV reading programs. One possible area of future qualitative research would be exploring experiences of parents who

specifically exposed their young children to reading programs provided by social medias including YouTube platform. Future research study can focus on the role of parental literacy engagement using social media reading programs on other aspects of children's psychological functioning such as children's negative behavior and emotional regulations as well as quality of their life.

Another area for future study would be exploring the experiences of parents who have children with special needs regarding children's psychological well-being in response to early parent-child reading interactions. For example, the focus of future studies can be the impact of early parent-child literacy practices on parent-child attachment among children who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It would be valuable to study, in depth, whether early home literacy practices influence the social-emotional bond between children with ASD and their parents.

Future researchers might also consider evaluating the impact of early literacy practices on bonding and attachment with caregivers of foster care children with emotional disorders including Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). Future studies may focus on the influence of home literacy practices on emotional connections between adopted children with RAD and their foster parents. For example, future research can consider evaluating the impact of home literacy activities on developing social-emotional and behavioral competences of foster children with RAD.

All of my study participants had Bachelor of Science or Master of Science degrees. Future researchers might consider exploring the perspectives of parents who are not college educated and explore parents' own experience in developing literacy and how

that might influence their approach to their children's early home literacy. Future researchers might consider conducting a quantitative study or mixed methods study to assist with the study's transferability.

Implications

This study has potential impact for positive social change for parents, educators, children, and future researchers. Findings from this study broadened the understanding of parental perceptions regarding the experience of literacy activities when engaging with their young children to practice reading materials. There were some findings that were unique to my study especially in regard to psychological functioning of children. For example, most parents reported that shared reading activities improved their children's prosocial skills as part of socio-emotional competence when interacting with peers at school or during their playing activities. Parents referred to positive behavior of their children when interacting with peers or school teachers. For example, they believed that reading engagement influenced their children's attitude and behavior to share their things without any hesitations or to be fair in their relationships with peers. They stated that children learned to be focused when engaged in reading. Parents shared other positive behaviors of their children due to reading engagement including developing bonding and attachment with parents, respecting other family members, following rules at home or school, and developing confidence to express their emotions or work in a group activity.

The other finding that was unique to my study was that most parents emphasized on continuing reading activities with children in a daily basis in order to become part of both parents and children's daily routine. The positive influence from parents' perception

was that once reading becomes a habit for children, they learn to plan reading in their daily schedule. In addition, parents benefit from reading activities to develop their scaffolding method in a way that motivates their children to engage in reading activities.

The resulting information from this study may assist parents and educators to extend knowledge of developing young children's literacy skills. For example, educators can develop strategies for parents to have effective literacy engagement. The other important area of positive social change is extending knowledge regarding psychological well-being of parent-child reading interactions including children's social-emotional competence, their reading interests and attitude, parent-child relationships, and their confidence to solve problems independently. The input from parents in this study served as a foundation for future researchers to conduct studies into approaches to early literacy.

Conclusion

The phenomenological research method was chosen to inquire the lived experiences of parents and their perceptions when practicing reading materials with their children as early as preschool age. Eight mothers shared their experiences regarding the value of parent-child home literacy practices, the process of their reading interactions, and their approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children. The findings of this study supported existing literature regarding the importance of parent-child home reading interactions in developing children's reading and comprehension skills and improving children's psychological functioning. The resulting data also supported previous research studies in which the informative or interesting content from reading resources motivated parents to select a specific reading

resource to practice with their children and motivated children to participate actively in reading sessions. The reported information by parents in this study also supported peer-reviewed literature in which parents implement their scaffolding style to create motivation for their children to engage in reading activities.

Findings of this study provided additional knowledge regarding parental perceptions about home literacy practices. For example, parents perceived that establishing reading activity as a regular basis in early ages, encourages children to show positive attitude to reading practices. They believed that early reading activities change children's attitude to participate actively in reading practices in their daily routine schedule. In addition, parents emphasized that regular reading helps children to be prepared to follow their schools' daily schedules and develop their communication skills with peers and teachers. The shared experiences from parents of this study can be a foundation for future research studies to explore more about psychological functioning of parent-child home reading engagement.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

RQ: What are parents' lived experiences regarding the value of home literacy for their young children?

1. What are your experiences of interacting with your child to teach him/her how to read before your child starts preschool or kindergarten?

2. At what age did you start home reading practices for your child to help him/her to learn to read? (How old was your child when you started home reading practices?) Why?

    a. What were some indications for you that your child was ready to begin reading at the age you began your home reading practices with him/her?

3. When do you think your child is ready to participate in early home reading practices?

    a. What are the indications that your child is ready to participate in early home reading practices?

4. What factors motivated you to start early reading activities with your child before he/she starts preschool?

    a. What are the factors including any personal factors (e.g., family background, culture, race, etc.) that influenced your decision?

    b. What are the other factors (e.g., influence of friends or relatives, social media, or TV reading programs) that influenced your decision?

5. How important is for you to start reading activities with your child before he/she starts preschool?

6. In what ways do you think early home reading interactions with your child can improve his/her reading and comprehension skills when he/she starts the elementary school?

7. In what ways do you think your child's active participation in reading practices at home helped to prepare your child for formal schooling (kindergarten, and so forth)?

8. If your child is playful during reading interactions, how do you think your child is learning the material?

9. In your experience, what is the overall significance of the parent-child home reading activities before starting preschool?

10. Do you think that early home reading has helped your child in any other areas than preparing him/her for school? If so, what other areas do you think have been impacted?

11. Have you noticed any change in social skills of your child while embarking on home reading activities?

12. Do you feel that engaging in home reading activity has impacted the quality of your interaction with your child? If so, how this activity has impacted your relationship with your child?

RQa: What are parents' approaches to selection of reading materials for home literacy activities with their children?

13. What types of reading material do you use to work with your child at home to help him/her to learn how to read? For example, do you use books, magazines, index cards, flash cards, or online reading programs using CDs, DVDs, or Smart phones?

    a. If you use books, what kind of children books do you use? (For example, do you use popular books such as Sesame Street, Elmo, Dr. Seuss, or Scholastic books? Why do you use this particular reading resource?

14. Why do you think this type of reading program is good to work with your child?

15. What factors influenced you to select this type of reading materials for your child?

    a. What are the factors including any personal factors (e.g., family background, culture, race, etc.) that influenced this decision?

    b. What are the other factors (e.g., influence of friends, family members, relatives, social media, or TV reading programs, etc.) that influenced this decision?

RQb: What is the process by which parents engage their preschool children in reading activities?

16. How do you support your child when you have reading practices at home to help him to learn to read?

17. How do you present reading activities to your child in a way that he/she shows interest to engage in reading practices and help him/her learn how to read?

18. What do you do to increase your child's motivation to participate in reading activities and improve his/her interest to learn to read?

    a. Do you read yourself to your child?

    b. Do you play fun activities with your child while teaching reading materials?

    c. Do you think that you child has enjoyed the process of at home reading activity?

19. How many times per day do you have reading activities with your child?

20. How much time you spend in each reading practice session with your child?

21. In what time of the day, you prefer to practice reading with your child?

    a. Do you prefer to have reading practice during the day or reading a book at nights?

22. How do you feel when you have reading activity with your child? Do you enjoy reading or are you just a reader?

23. Do you feel reading book with your child influences your relationships with him/her?

24. How did you learn to read when you were a child? To what extent is your choice of home reading activity different than how you learned to read?

25. Did home reading activities play any part in your own literacy?

Appendix B: Demographic and Screening Questionnaire

Are you a parent?

If yes, are you the mother or the father?

Do you have a child or children between 2-5 years old?

Does your child (children) live with you at home?

Is your child (children) attending preschool or kindergarten?

What is your highest degree or level of education that you have completed?

How do you identify your ethnicity?

Appendix C: Flyer

Calling for Volunteer Parents of Children Between the Ages of 2-5

If you have the following characteristics:
- Have a child between 2 to 5 years old
- Live with your child at home

Then, you are invited to participate in a study about parent-child home reading activities. The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand experiences of parents who engage with their children through reading activities as early as preschool age. Findings of the study may help parents and educators to extend knowledge of developing young children's literacy skills.

About the study:
- The interview will take place over the phone or through Zoom
- Your privacy will be protected by keeping your information confidential

This study is part of my doctoral program as a PhD student at Walden University.

If you are interested, please contact me through email ████████████████████ or call or text me at ████████████

Thank you for your time!