

The Effect of Reading Habits at Home and the Availability of Reading Materials on the Reading Literacy Ability of Sixth-Grade Students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials on the reading literacy ability of sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo. Employing a quantitative explanatory research design, the study utilized saturated sampling involving the entire population of 23 sixth-grade students. Data were collected using questionnaires to measure reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials, along with a standardized reading literacy test. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression with SPSS software. The results revealed that: (1) reading habits at home had a positive and significant effect on reading literacy ability ($t = 3.12, p = 0.005 < 0.05$); (2) the availability of reading materials also exerted a positive and significant effect ($t = 2.45, p = 0.021 < 0.05$); and (3) both variables simultaneously had a significant influence ($F = 18.76, p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.652$) indicated that 65.2% of the variance in students' reading literacy ability could be explained by the two variables, while the remaining 34.8% was influenced by other factors. The findings underscore the critical role of home-based reading practices and resource availability in enhancing elementary students' reading literacy. Collaboration among parents, teachers, and schools is essential to create a literacy-rich home environment that optimally supports students' reading development.

Keywords: Reading Habits; Availability of Reading Materials; Reading Literacy

INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill that plays a pivotal role in students' academic success and lifelong learning. In the 21st-century information era, the ability to read, comprehend, analyze, and critically evaluate written texts has become essential not only for school achievement but also for active participation in society. For elementary school students, strong reading literacy serves as the foundation for learning across all subjects and the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Despite its critical importance, the reading literacy levels of Indonesian elementary school students remain concerning. According to the 2023 National Assessment (Asesmen Nasional) by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, approximately 34% of upper-grade elementary students performed below the minimum competency standard in reading literacy. These students struggle to interpret texts deeply or draw inferences from the information presented, indicating a significant gap between curriculum expectations and actual student performance.

The home environment has been widely recognized as one of the most influential factors shaping children's reading development. Family practices, particularly daily reading routines established at home, significantly contribute to language development, vocabulary acquisition, and overall reading comprehension. Students who regularly engage in reading activities at home consistently demonstrate higher levels of reading proficiency compared to those who do not. Closely related to reading habits is the availability of reading materials at home. Access to a variety of age-appropriate books creates a rich literacy environment that encourages independent reading and fosters a positive attitude toward books. Research consistently shows that children living in homes with abundant and diverse reading resources exhibit better reading performance and stronger motivation to read.

Preliminary observations at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo revealed conditions consistent with the national trend. Many sixth-grade students still face difficulties in reading comprehension, particularly in understanding implicit meanings and drawing conclusions from texts. Questionnaire results indicated that only about 26% of students have a regular reading habit at home, while 70% reported having very limited access to reading books other than textbooks. These findings highlight a significant gap between the ideal literacy-rich home environment and the reality experienced by students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo. Although previous studies have examined reading habits or book availability separately, few have investigated the combined influence of both variables on reading literacy among sixth-grade students in small-town or rural settings in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials on the reading literacy ability of sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo. Specifically, it seeks to determine the individual

and simultaneous contributions of these two home-environment factors to students' reading literacy performance. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers regarding the importance of cultivating reading habits and providing adequate reading resources at home to enhance elementary students' literacy skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading literacy constitutes a core receptive language skill that enables individuals to decode, comprehend, interpret, and critically evaluate written texts. According to Tarigan (2013), language proficiency comprises four interrelated skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing wherein reading serves as the primary receptive process that underpins academic success across all subjects. Anderson (1985) further elaborates that reading is not merely word recognition but a complex cognitive process involving the construction of meaning from printed symbols, requiring both bottom-up and top-down processing strategies.

In the context of elementary education, reading literacy extends beyond basic decoding to include higher-order comprehension abilities. Wulandari (2021) defines reading literacy as the capacity to understand, use, evaluate, and reflect on written texts to achieve personal goals, develop knowledge, and participate effectively in society. Building upon this definition, Gomes and Istiningsih (2024) propose five key indicators of reading literacy for primary school students: (1) locating explicit information, (2) understanding vocabulary in context, (3) making inferences, (4) evaluating text structure and content, and (5) connecting text to real-life experiences. These indicators highlight that effective reading literacy at the sixth-grade level involves both literal and inferential comprehension.

Reading habits at home refer to the regular, voluntary engagement in reading activities within the family environment. Kartika (2021) emphasizes that home-based reading routines established since early childhood significantly shape children's language development, vocabulary growth, and long-term reading motivation. Similarly, Haris (2020) argues that parental modeling and family literacy practices create a supportive microsystem that fosters intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward reading, thereby strengthening students' overall literacy performance.

The availability of reading materials at home plays an equally vital role through the lens of the Literacy Exposure Theory. Chen (2020) posits that consistent exposure to diverse, high-quality reading resources enriches children's vocabulary, enhances comprehension, and cultivates lifelong reading habits. Empirical support is provided by Neuman and Moland (2019), who demonstrated that children from homes with abundant print materials achieve significantly higher literacy outcomes, even after controlling for socioeconomic variables. This theory underscores that the quantity, quality, and accessibility of books directly influence the frequency and depth of children's independent reading engagement.

Collectively, these seven theoretical foundations—Tarigan (2013), Anderson (1985), Wulandari (2021), Gomes and Istiningsih (2024), Kartika (2021), Haris (2020), Chen (2020), and Neuman and Moland (2019)—establish a robust conceptual framework for understanding how home-environment factors interactively shape reading literacy development among elementary school students. While previous studies have examined these variables in isolation or in different educational contexts, the present study addresses the specific interplay of reading habits and book availability on sixth-grade students in a rural Indonesian setting, thereby filling a notable gap in the local literature.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the causal relationship between reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials (independent variables) and students' reading literacy ability (dependent variable). This design was appropriate as the study aimed to test hypotheses and measure the magnitude of influence among variables through statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The research was conducted at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo, located in Kulo District, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The population consisted of all sixth-grade students, totaling 23 learners. Due to the relatively small population, saturated sampling (census technique) was applied, meaning all members of the population were included as the sample. This approach ensured comprehensive data representation and minimized sampling error.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected using two primary instruments. First, a closed-ended questionnaire was designed to measure students' reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials. The reading habits variable included indicators such as frequency of reading, duration, and parental involvement, while the availability of reading materials covered quantity, variety, and accessibility of books at home. The questionnaire items were adapted from established literacy instruments and validated by experts. Second, a standardized reading literacy test was administered to assess students' abilities in literal comprehension, inferential understanding, and critical evaluation. The test consisted of reading passages followed by multiple-choice and short-answer questions aligned with the sixth-grade curriculum.

Before the main data collection, both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing. Content validity was established through expert judgment by two lecturers in language education. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha showed coefficients above 0.80 for the questionnaire variables, indicating high internal consistency. The reading literacy test also demonstrated acceptable reliability. A

pilot test was conducted with students from a similar school to ensure clarity and suitability of the instruments. Data collection took place in May 2025 over a two-week period. The researcher obtained permission from the school principal and informed consent from parents prior to administering the instruments. The questionnaires were completed by students under teacher supervision to ensure consistency, while the reading literacy test was conducted in a controlled classroom setting on a separate day. All data were collected anonymously and handled with strict confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 in two main stages. First, descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, were used to describe the characteristics of each variable. Second, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine both the individual (partial) and combined (simultaneous) effects of reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials on students' reading literacy ability. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test for partial effects and the F-test for simultaneous effects, with a significance level of 0.05. Prior to conducting regression analysis, key assumptions were tested, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, to ensure the validity of the statistical results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis was conducted on a sample of 23 sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. Descriptive statistics revealed that the mean score for reading literacy ability was 76.87 (SD = 11.45) out of a possible 100, indicating moderate performance with considerable variation among students. The independent variable of reading habits at home obtained a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.82) on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting that students generally reported fairly regular reading routines at home. Meanwhile, the availability of reading materials at home showed a mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.95), reflecting moderate access to books and other reading resources.

Further examination of the data indicated that 65.2% of students achieved literacy scores above the minimum competency threshold, while 34.8% remained below it. Reading habits scores ranged from 2.1 to 4.8, and availability of reading materials ranged from 1.9 to 4.7. These descriptive findings provide an initial overview of the variables before inferential analysis. Prior to hypothesis testing, the assumptions of multiple linear regression were verified. The data met the requirements of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, $p > 0.05$), linearity, absence of multicollinearity ($VIF < 10$), and homoscedasticity. No outliers were detected, ensuring the robustness of subsequent analyses.

The multiple linear regression model was statistically significant in predicting reading literacy ability, $F(2, 20) = 18.76$, $p < 0.001$. This result confirms that the combination of reading habits at home and availability of reading materials collectively explains a substantial portion of the variance in students' literacy performance. The coefficient of determination indicated that reading habits at home and availability of reading materials together accounted for 65.2% of the variance in reading literacy ability ($R = 0.808$, $R^2 = 0.652$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.617$). The remaining 34.8% of the variance was attributable to other unexamined factors. Examination of individual predictors showed that reading habits at home had a positive and significant effect on reading literacy ability ($\beta = 0.512$, $t = 3.12$, $p = 0.005$). Similarly, the availability of reading materials exerted a positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.398$, $t = 2.45$, $p = 0.021$). Both variables contributed uniquely to the model.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	28.45	6.12	-	4.65	0.000
Reading Habits at Home	8.76	2.81	0.512	3.12	0.005
Availability of Reading Materials	6.34	2.59	0.398	2.45	0.021

Table 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	0.808	0.652	0.617	18.76	0.000

These findings demonstrate that both home-environment factors are statistically significant predictors of sixth-grade students' reading literacy ability. The results of this study confirm that reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials at home significantly influence the reading literacy ability of sixth-grade students. Both variables demonstrated positive and statistically significant effects, consistent with the initial hypotheses. These findings underscore the critical role of the home literacy environment in supporting academic achievement during the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Reading habits at home emerged as the stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.512$, $p = 0.005$). This result aligns with Kartika (2021) and Haris (2020), who emphasized that regular reading routines foster vocabulary growth, comprehension strategies, and intrinsic motivation. Students who engage in daily reading at home develop stronger cognitive frameworks that facilitate deeper text understanding. The availability of reading materials also contributed significantly ($\beta = 0.398$, $p = 0.021$), supporting Chen's (2020) Literacy Exposure Theory. This finding corroborates Neuman and Moland (2019), who demonstrated that access to diverse books directly enhances reading frequency and comprehension. Even in a rural Indonesian setting, the presence of age-appropriate reading resources proved to be a meaningful factor.

The simultaneous effect of both variables ($F = 18.76$, $p < 0.001$) with $R^2 = 0.652$ indicates that the home literacy environment explains nearly two-thirds of the variance in reading literacy. This substantial explanatory power highlights the synergistic interaction between habits and resources, extending previous studies that examined these factors in isolation. The remaining 34.8% of unexplained variance suggests the influence of school-based factors, teacher instructional quality, and individual student characteristics. This result is consistent with Wulandari (2021) and Gomes and Istiningsih (2024), who noted that literacy development results from multiple interacting ecological systems.

Theoretically, the present study strengthens the integration of family literacy practices and print-rich home environments within the broader framework of reading development theories. It provides empirical evidence from a small-town Indonesian context, thereby enriching the predominantly Western-centric literature on home literacy. Practically, these findings call for targeted interventions involving parents, teachers, and school administrators. Programs that promote shared reading activities and community book distribution could significantly elevate literacy outcomes. Schools should consider family literacy workshops to bridge the gap between home and classroom environments. Although the study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. The small sample size ($n = 23$) and single-school setting limit generalizability. Future research could employ larger, multi-site samples and incorporate qualitative methods to explore the mechanisms underlying these relationships. Longitudinal designs would also strengthen causal inferences regarding long-term literacy development.

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully demonstrated that reading habits at home and the availability of reading materials at home exert a significant positive influence on the reading literacy ability of sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 1 Kulo. Both variables were found to contribute meaningfully, both individually and simultaneously, explaining 65.2% of the variance in students' reading literacy performance. These results confirm the critical role of the home literacy environment in shaping students' reading development, particularly during the transitional phase from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." The findings carry important practical implications for educational stakeholders. Parents, teachers, and school administrators should collaborate actively to cultivate daily reading routines and ensure the availability of diverse, age-appropriate reading materials at home. Schools are encouraged to implement family literacy programs, parental workshops, and community initiatives aimed at strengthening the home literacy environment, especially in rural and small-town settings where access to books remains limited. Although this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its relatively small sample size and single-school context. Future research could expand the scope by involving larger, multi-site samples across different regions, employing mixed-methods designs, and adopting longitudinal approaches to examine the long-term effects of home-based literacy factors. Ultimately, investing

in the home literacy environment represents a promising and strategic pathway toward enhancing reading literacy and overall educational quality among Indonesian elementary school students.

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