

Article

Factors Affecting Early Literacy Learning Spaces of Young Children: The Context of Home Literacy in Saudi Arabia

Merfat Ayesah Alsubaie 

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, King Faisal University, Al-Hassa 31982, Saudi Arabia; malsebiee@kfu.edu.sa

Abstract: This study explores the factors affecting the early literacy learning spaces of young children in home environments in Saudi Arabia from mothers' perspectives. A qualitative research methodology was used. In-depth and semi-structured interviews with 15 mothers of young children (2–5 years old) were conducted. A coding approach was used to analyze the qualitative data, which revealed three themes: (1) direct factors that influence the early literacy learning space at home, (2) indirect factors that influence the early literacy learning space at home, and (3) challenges in creating early literacy learning spaces at home. Several pedagogical implications are suggested at the end of this study that could be useful to parents and caregivers who want to support and improve their children's early literacy learning spaces.

Keywords: early childhood education; early literacy; home literacy; physical environment; literacy practices



Citation: Alsubaie, M.A. Factors Affecting Early Literacy Learning Spaces of Young Children: The Context of Home Literacy in Saudi Arabia. *Educ. Sci.* **2022**, *12*, 791. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12110791>

Academic Editors: Michele L. Stites and Susan Sonnenschein

Received: 6 October 2022

Accepted: 4 November 2022

Published: 6 November 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Highlights

- Factors affecting early literacy learning spaces of young children in home literacy environments in Saudi Arabia are described.
- The physical environment is shown to be a direct factor that influences early literacy learning space at home.
- Parents' demographics are shown to be indirect factors that influence the early literacy learning space at home.
- Challenges of creating adequate early literacy learning spaces in home environments are explained.

1. Introduction

Reading in early childhood provides a critical foundation for a child's early literacy development and academic success in their later years. Hernández-Alava and Popil [1] recognized the vitality of the first years of an infant's life in influencing academic success. However, research has shown that children's reading skills during the formative stages of their lives often vary significantly depending on various factors, including the home environment [2]. Children's foundational formal reading instruction skills include oral language, print knowledge, and phonological awareness. According to Hamilton et al. [3], the home literacy environment (HLE) of students of preschool age influences their foundational skills. There is no universally agreed-upon definition of what constitutes an HLE. Nevertheless, different scholars have attempted to highlight its underpinning characteristics. Hamilton et al. [3] noted that the HLE is an umbrella concept that describes literacy-related interactions, attitudes toward learning, and essential resources that are present in a child's home settings. Furthermore, Niklas et al. [4] noted that the HLE comprises all the literacy resources and interactions within a child's family that enhance their linguistic and literacy learning. Therefore, the HLE is an all-encompassing phenomenon that varies among children but can determine their future literacy and linguistic capabilities.

As an all-encompassing construct, the HLE is underpinned by different factors. Adams et al. [5] posited that the HLE comprises several impactful variables. Moreover,

whether directly or indirectly, the HLE influences and impacts children's literacy in later years. For instance, the nature of the physical environment influences a child's linguistic ability directly, while the parents' sociodemographic characteristics may have an indirect impact [6]. Research has shown a relationship between a child's HLE and their reading skills. For instance, van Bergen et al.'s [7] study revealed an association between HLEs and children's word-reading fluency and accuracy. However, Puglisi et al. [8] have found that, although the HLE correlates with children's language and literacy development, it does not cause variation among learners. These research results are conflicting and inconclusive. The HLE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone a significant transformation over the years. For instance, Alroqi et al. [9] observed that screen media use has increased in most Saudi HLEs. Moreover, Alismail and Faridi's [10] study revealed that more Saudi parents are becoming increasingly involved in their children's education at home. Therefore, given the influence of the HLE on early childhood literacy and on children's linguistic capabilities in later years, it is imperative to explore the direct and indirect factors that describe HLEs in Saudi Arabia.

In this study, the term literacy is defined using the philological perspective and is used throughout the paper to refer to the ability to listen, speak, view, read, visualize, create, write, and deal with digital information for several purposes, such as communication with others and interaction with various materials [11]. Thus, this study is guided by the Home Literacy Model (HLM). According to Silinskas et al. [12], the HLM posits that young children can experience two different forms of literacy activities within their home environments. The first encompasses meaning-related literacy activities, which are often informal. Meaning-related literacy activities can include HLE elements involving print—such as a parent reading a storybook to their children—but are not the focus of parent-child engagement [13]. The second type of literacy activity is code-related and formal; it focuses on reading printed words [14]. Some examples of code-related and formal activities include parents teaching their children vowel sounds or how to read books. Silinskas et al. [13] noted that meaning-related activities indirectly predict a child's literacy acquisition by improving language. In contrast, code-related activities directly influence literacy by improving early literacy skills. According to the HLM, oral language skills acquired within the HLE include listening, narration, comprehension, and vocabulary. Code-related skills include those necessary for interpreting written language, such as reading words. Therefore, from the HLM perspective, the informal literacy dimensions of the HLE indirectly influence early childhood literacy skills, while the formal ones do so directly.

Different scholars have identified and investigated several aspects of the preschool HLE and the factors that characterize it. Cheung et al. [15] noted that the HLE incorporates parents' beliefs, attitudes, and practices that influence their children's learning. Consequently, parents with strong convictions and attitudes toward education are likely to involve their children in preschool learning. AlAhmari [16] conducted a cross-sectional study in Saudi Arabia to explore parents' beliefs and behaviors regarding their children's early literacy development. Their results suggest that parents with strong beliefs in the significance of HLEs engage in preschool literacy improvement activities more than their counterparts without such beliefs. Other studies have also reported the importance of parental beliefs [17–20]. Dong et al.'s [6] meta-analysis established that parental involvement in their children's learning during early childhood enhances their literacy skills in later years. Several variables underpin a rich HLE, including parents' age, marital status, and educational level. For instance, van Bergen et al. [7] noted that parental traits, such as age and family background, can enrich HLE. In another study conducted in Hangzhou City, China, Huan et al. [21] revealed that parental educational levels and the family's socioeconomic status affected the quality of a child's HLE. The influence of parental educational level on the quality of the HLE has also been reported globally [22–25]. This suggests that parents' educational levels influence their participation in early literacy-related activities during early childhood.

Parents' home practices play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of the HLE. For instance, Strauss and Bipath [26] explored the relationship between the demographics characteristics of parents with pre-primary-aged children and their digital and print reading practices using a quasi-experimental research approach. Their results revealed that parents who purchase print materials for home reading and engage their children in enjoyable reading experiences are likely to enhance their children's literacy outcomes in later school years. In another study, Elmesalamy and El-Ater [27] examined the effects of environmental and cultural factors on developmental variations in the phonological awareness of preschool children from different Egyptian households. Their findings indicated that mothers' activities with toddlers, including maternal talkativeness (e.g., storytelling), using dolls to create stories, and singing, enriched the HLE. In addition, parents' reading rate with their children is crucial in enhancing early literacy competencies during the preschool years [27]. Moreover, the mother's educational level is a critical socio-cultural influence on the HLE. Wirth et al. [28] contended that parents' interactions with their children within the HLE determine their literacy competency during the school year. They concluded that parents' shared reading habits could be an effective target for enhancing childhood literacy skills. The role of HLE-based parental interactive activities in improving children's early literacy capabilities has also been reported [29–31]. This suggests that parents' literacy-related interactions with their children can significantly enrich their HLEs.

In the present study, this review of the current literature suggests that the HLE can significantly enhance children's linguistic competency during early childhood. The HLE is underpinned by various factors, including parents' ages and educational levels and the family's socioeconomic status, all of which all have direct or indirect influences on children's early literacy skills [32]. However, limited research has been undertaken to explore the effects of HLEs in Saudi Arabia. Some Arab studies have examined the effect of the classroom environment on early childhood learning and the development of early literacy skills [33,34]. Moreover, a handful of studies have examined home literacy in Saudi Arabia but from different angles, such as the media environment of young Saudi children [9]. However, to our knowledge, no study has examined the various factors related to early literacy learning spaces in HLEs in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the researcher hopes that the results of this study will encourage all parents or caregivers from different cultures and circumstances to adopt practices and activities related to literacy skills to improve the early literacy learning spaces of young children in the HLE. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that the results of this study will provide insights into how these factors affect children's early literacy learning space. This paper therefore offers a set of various suggestions for practices and activities that parents can share with their children to teach literacy skills in the home environment. The aim of the study was to explore the factors concerning early childhood literacy learning spaces in home literacy environments in Saudi Arabia. Our findings may contribute to the existing literature by providing data on the factors that influence early childhood literacy learning spaces in HLEs in Saudi Arabia, specifically from the perspective of mothers. At the core of this study is the following question: What are the factors that influence the early literacy learning spaces of young children in home environments in Saudi Arabia?

2. Materials and Methods

This study was carried out in Saudi Arabia using qualitative methodology through direct, in-depth, and semi-structured interviews. During these interviews, we gathered and explored maternal opinions and perspectives on the factors affecting young children's early literacy learning environments at home. This methodology was chosen because it enabled the researcher to study mothers' perspectives in depth and to understand and characterize each mother's unique experience [35–37]. Conducting direct interviews either face to face or directly via video conference was crucial since it allowed the researcher to better understand their perspectives in their context and take notice of non-verbal cues. Direct interviewing is an effective way to gather information based on facial expressions (e.g., passion) or the subject's emphasis on seriousness [38].

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 15 mothers from the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia who had young children (2–5 years old). The demographics of this sample varied, and are presented in Table 1, which lists participants' age group, employment status, level of education, and socioeconomic status. In terms of socioeconomic level and education, most participants were middle-income (53.33%), and almost all had a bachelor's degree (60%). More than half of the participants were not employed (homemakers, 53.33%), and most were 25–35 and 36–45 years old in equal proportion (40% in each category). Almost all of the participants were married (86.66%) and lived in urban environments (93.33%). All participants were native Arabic speakers.

Table 1. Sample profile ($n = 15$).

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Socioeconomic level		
High-income	4	26.66
Middle-income	8	53.33
Low-income	3	20
Educational level		
Higher degrees	2	13.33
Bachelor's degree	9	60
High school diploma	4	26.66
Job status		
Employed	7	46.66
Not employed (homemakers)	8	53.33
Age		
25–35	6	40
36–45	6	40
46–55	3	20
Marital status		
Married	13	86.66
Divorced	2	13.33
Living environment		
Urban	14	93.33
Rural	1	6.66
Native language		
Arabic	15	100
English or others	0	0

2.2. Data Collection

After receiving ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at King Faisal University and informed consent from the participants, data were gathered in Saudi Arabia during the first semester of the 2022 academic year. The study's qualitative research process focuses on an in-depth realization of social aspects within a person's normal environment [37,39]. Thus, the qualitative research in this study procedure used in-depth and semi-structured interviews as well as field notes, which were collected and evaluated by comparing the responses of the participants. The researcher provided participants with the Invitation and Informed Consent Form, along with an abstract and the purpose of the study, gathered their signatures, and scheduled an interview location and time. Then, nine of the mothers who agreed to participate were interviewed face to face, and the remaining four were interviewed via video conferencing using the Zoom app.

The semi-structured interviews questions consisted of five questions. These questions led us to focus on themes regarding the factors influencing the early literacy learning space at home, the physical environment and early literacy learning spaces at home, literacy practices related to interaction with learning spaces and playing materials at home, and challenges of creating an early literacy learning space at home. (Tables 2–4).

Table 2. Data thematic analysis of Theme 1: Direct Factors That Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments
<p>Theme 1 Direct Factors that Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home</p> <p>Question 1: You are the mother of children who are in their early childhood. What do you think about the factors that influence the early literacy learning space of young children in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 2: What do you think about the relationship between young children learning their early literacy skills and the physical environment, such as furniture, television, toys, and books in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 3: What do you think about the influence of the socioeconomic status of family, parental education, or the age of parents on the early literacy space learning of young children in the home environment?</p>	1.1. Physical environment before and during COVID-19	1.1.1. Physical environment before -COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces at home environment	Toys	11 (73.33%)	“Toys play a role in our children’s ability to learn early literacy skills at home.”
			Technological Device	8 (53.33%)	“Technological devices in the home, such as iPad , are considered one of the most important components of the physical environment for home literacy.”
			Size of Rooms	7 (46.66%)	“Size of the rooms has an impact on my children’s literacy learning space in my home, as my children learn in the place where they feel comfortable and free.”
			Learning Material	7 (46.66%)	“Learning materials help my children on focus on the picture books and sounds they hear.”
		1.1.2. Physical environment during-COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces at home environment	Learning Materials	5 (33.33%)	“The physical environment of early literacy in our farm house is not rich in learning materials.”

Table 2. Cont.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments	
<p>Theme 1 Direct Factors that Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home</p> <p>Question 1: You are the mother of children who are in their early childhood. What do you think about the factors that influence the early literacy learning space of young children in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 2: What do you think about the relationship between young children learning their early literacy skills and the physical environment, such as furniture, television, toys, and books in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 3: What do you think about the influence of the socioeconomic status of family, parental education, or the age of parents on the early literacy space learning of young children in the home environment?</p>	1.2. Literacy practices related to interaction with learning spaces and playing materials in home environment before and during COVID-19	1.2.1. Intentional literacy practices in the home environment before COVID-19	Reading and listening as a routine	8 (53.33%)	"I make sure to read short stories with my children before bed as a bedtime routine."	
			Deliberate learning	6 (40%)	"I give them pens, crayons, and some papers, and train them to hold the pen in the correct way."	
			Assigning simple tasks	5 (33.33%)	"I ask my child to bring some utensils, pronounce their names correctly, and recognize their first letter."	
		1.2.2. Intentional literacy practices in the home environment during COVID-19	Giving rewards and motivators	4 (26.66%)	"I found the concept of rewards and incentives a wonderful idea that contributes to learning of early literacy skills in the home environment before joining kindergarten."	
			1.2.3. Unintended literacy practices in the home environment before COVID-19	Practices related to entertainment	11 (73.33%)	"My husband asks our children to bring some tool that begins with a certain letter, and the fastest is the winner."
				Practices related to following up on children's school lessons	7 (46.66%)	"While following the older children when performing their tasks, I gave my younger daughter colors, papers, picture books, and literacy worksheets."
		Practices related to routine household chores		4 (26.66%)	"She learned the names and colors of clothes by helping me arrange them and put them in the cupboard."	

Table 2. Cont.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments
<p>Theme 1 Direct Factors that Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home</p> <p>Question 1: You are the mother of children who are in their early childhood. What do you think about the factors that influence the early literacy learning space of young children in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 2: What do you think about the relationship between young children learning their early literacy skills and the physical environment, such as furniture, television, toys, and books in the home environment?</p> <p>Question 3: What do you think about the influence of the socioeconomic status of family, parental education, or the age of parents on the early literacy space learning of young children in the home environment?</p>	1.2. Literacy practices related to interaction with learning spaces and playing materials in home environment before and during COVID-19	1.2.4. Unintended literacy practices in the home environment during-COVID-19	Practices related to entertainment	8 (53.33%)	“I gave them an iPad and I downloaded entertainment and educational apps for them to play and occupy themselves with while I followed their brothers on the educational platform.”
			Practices related to the parent’s job	6 (40%)	“My children sat quietly with their father while he presented his lessons in virtual sessions and listened to his discussions with his students.”

Table 3. Data thematic analysis of Theme 2: Indirect Factors that Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments
<p>Themes 2 Indirect factors influence learning space of children's early literacy skills at home Question 1: You are a mother of children whom are in their early childhood, what do you think about the factors that have influenced the early literacy learning space of young children in home environment? Question 2: What do you think about the influence of the socioeconomic status of family, parental education, or the age of parents on the early literacy space learning of young children in home environment?</p>	2.1. Parents' education level	Higher degree	-	1 (6.66%)	"We are interested in providing learning materials and toys at home, and try to develop their skills of early literacy by watching educational cartoon movies and discussing their events and characters."
		Bachelor's degree	-	3 (20%)	"We make sure that our home learning environment supports and facilitates our children's learning of early literacy skills before they go to school."
		High school diploma	-	1 (6.66%)	"My husband is not keen on buying learning materials; he believes that children should enjoy their childhood without learning materials, and they will learn early literacy skills in a classroom environment at school."
	2.2. Socioeconomic level	High-income	-	1 (6.66%)	"I am keen to provide everything for my daughter and I plan to get her a private tutor at home who will teach her Arabic language."
		Middle-income	-	2 (13.33%)	"We are not keen on creating a home learning environment for our children to learn literacy skills. Our monthly income is barely enough to pay rent, buy necessities. They will learn on the classroom environment in kindergarten."
		Low-income	-	1 (6.66%)	"We can't buy learning toys for all of our children. They share a few toys and picture books."

Table 3. Cont.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments
<p>Themes 2</p> <p>Indirect factors influence learning space of children's early literacy skills at home</p> <p>Question 1: You are a mother of children whom are in their early childhood, what do you think about the factors that have influenced the early literacy learning space of young children in home environment?</p> <p>Question 2: What do you think about the influence of the socioeconomic status of family, parental education, or the age of parents on the early literacy space learning of young children in home environment?</p>	2.3. Parents' Age	36–45 Years old	-	1 (6.66%)	"My husband is older than me, and he often sits reading in his home office in a calm atmosphere. So, I prepared for my children a playroom and furnished it with toys, a table and chairs, a TV, some picture books, and coloring book."
		46–55 Years old	-	1 (6.66%)	"We lived with my old father, who was a wise man, and he often reads newspapers. He tells stories to my child, and my child shares coloring literacy worksheets with him."

Table 4. Data thematic analysis of Theme 3: Challenges of Creating Early Literacy Learning Spaces at Home.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas	Emergent Ideas	Frequency of Mention	Sample of Comments
Theme 3 Challenges of Creating Early Literacy Learning Spaces at Home Question: Could you describe the challenges of creating an early literacy learning space for young children at home?	3.1. Lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of the home environment	-	-	8 (53.33%)	"The biggest challenge to having early literacy learning spaces at home was a lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of the home environment in their children's learning of early literacy skills."
	3.2. Lack of time spent with young children at home environment	-	-	2 (13.33%)	"Lack of time I spend with my young children may be the biggest obstacle to my child's learning of early literacy skills in the home environment."

2.3. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using a coding approach to transcribe and classify participant responses into major themes and subthemes. First, all interviews were transcribed. Second, after reading each interview transcript, repetitive phrases or statements were highlighted and coded. Third, the interview transcripts were reviewed again to facilitate the identification and categorization of common phrases and sentences. Fourth, the phrases and sentences identified during the first reading were compared to those highlighted and coded during the second reading to create categories (e.g., main themes, sub-themes, and core and emergent ideas). Fifth, the codes and themes were summarized and presented as tables. Finally, these themes were discussed and analyzed to infer implications and develop recommendations [40,41]. In addition, to ensure the reliability of the study results, the researcher recoded the data and analyzed them twice over the course of two weeks, and then compared the results of each round of coding. The codes identified during each round agreed with a confidence level of 97%. Further efforts to maintain credibility included presenting the participants' detailed views of the factors and practices that may affect the literacy learning space in the home environment [37,42,43].

3. Results

The process of analyzing the interviews using the coding approach resulted in three main themes. The first theme is Direct Factors That Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home. The second theme is Indirect Factors That Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home. The third theme is Challenges of Creating Early Literacy Learning Spaces at Home. Each of these themes can be broken down into sub-themes (see Tables 2–4).

3.1. Theme 1: Direct Factors That Influence the Early Literacy Learning Space at Home

All mothers who participated ($n = 15$) in this study stated and described various factors that directly affected the early literacy learning space in their home environments. The first main theme included two sub-themes (direct factors) as follows: (1) the physical environment at home before and during COVID-19 and (2) the literacy practices related to interaction with learning places and play materials at home before and during COVID-19 (see Table 2).

According to participants, sub-theme 1, the physical environment at home before and during COVID-19, was identified as a major issue regarding early literacy learning spaces. All participants discussed the physical environment at home and its relationship to the early literacy learning space of young children in Saudi Arabia. In this study, the physical environment at home included toys and learning materials, the size of the rooms, and electronic devices. Within sub-theme 1, were two core concepts: (1) physical environment pre-COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces in the home environment, and (2) physical environment during COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces in the home environment.

Physical environment pre-COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces in the home environment. Almost all ($n = 13$) participants discussed the physical environment at home prior to COVID-19. One of the mothers described the contents of their physical environment, which included furniture, toys, books, pens, coloring pencils, cubes, and other materials used for play: "These materials play a role in our children's ability to learn early literacy skills at home, whether intentionally or unintentionally, especially since some children do not have much contact with the external environment, like my children. We live with my husband in another city, away from our families and friends, due to my husband's working conditions. We don't have many social relationships in this city." Another participant described the components of the physical home environment and their impact on her children's early literacy learning spaces. She said, "I think that technological devices in the home, such as television, radio, electronic games, iPads, or mobile phones, are considered one of the most important components of the physical environment for home literacy and contribute to our children learning literacy skills at home in early childhood.

Our children memorize songs or rhymes from children's programs on television and learn letters and numbers from apps on iPads".

Another participant explained, "The size of the rooms in my home, especially the living room and the playroom, is large, and the lighting in them is also suitable. Sometimes, my two daughters sit with us in the living room while we are watching TV and drinking tea, one coloring a literacy notebook and the other browsing a storyboard. Sometimes, they sit in the playroom to play with dolls and role play with the windows open to let in the sunlight. Hence, I think all these [factors] have an impact on my children's literacy learning space in my home, as my children learn in a place where they feel comfortable and free".

Moreover, another mother explained the impact of the size of the rooms in her house and its impact on her children's early literacy learning space, saying, "The home in which we live has small rooms, and I have three children in early childhood, so I cannot provide various learning materials for each child. Therefore, I bought some storybooks, picture stories, paper, pens, and colors for each child. I also tried to bring to them some medium-sized toys to match the size of the room for them all to share, but this matter caused a quarrel among them, because each of them wanted to use the toy or the board alone. However, their early literacy skills are good, particularly one of them, who draws and scribbles on the walls of the living room sometimes and in their bedroom".

Another mother provided us with an example of her children's interaction with the physical environment in her home and how this affected their early literacy learning skills in the home, saying, "Praise be to God, I have two twin children in early childhood, and we live in a large home. I tried to buy my children several kinds of learning materials, such as dolls, picture books, storybooks, literacy workbooks, alphabet games, letter flashcards, paper, crayons, and pencils. At first, I bought them without the intention of teaching the children literacy skills, but as toys and materials they would play with. However, I noticed that one of them was trying to color neatly. Then, I showed my twins how to use the toys on their own under the supervision of my mother, who is elderly and does not know how to read or write, as I spend most of the working day outside the home. Interestingly, I observed that my children's focus on the picture books and sounds they hear had become stronger, their vocabulary expanded, and the way they held pens and crayons developed".

Physical environment during COVID-19 and early literacy learning spaces in the home environment. Five participants described the physical environment in their homes during COVID-19. One of the mothers described the physical environment in her home and its relationship with her child's early literacy skills, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained, "Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I did not care much about the physical environment of literacy at home or did not pay attention to its importance in my child's learning of literacy skills. However, during the pandemic and the introduction of distance learning, I had to make changes to the physical environment at home to suit the environment of distance learning for my children, who were in elementary and intermediate schools. I had to make sure the physical environment at home was filled with learning materials, such as books, papers, and pens, in addition to electronic devices, such as iPads and laptops. I have noticed my little boy reacting to these changes and trying to use them. For example, he holds the pen and scribbles on paper and in the books of his siblings".

With regard to the physical environment of early literacy at home and its relationship to young children's early literacy learning skills during the COVID-19 pandemic, another mother explained her experience. She explained, "After adopting the distance learning system in Saudi Arabia for all stages during the COVID-19 pandemic period, I had to make my child (4 years old) live with my elderly parents in their house on a farm so they could take care of him, as there are many responsibilities and pressures on me from every side. I am an elementary school teacher and was required to present my lessons through a new educational platform for the first time. In addition, I had to keep checking on my three children who were studying in the elementary school grades and learning through the new educational platform. Therefore, I noticed during this period that my youngest child, who lived with my parents in their house on the farm, did not recognize the shapes of letters or

use the correct pen grip, although his vocabulary has increased and his focus on what he hears and sees has become stronger. [This is] because the physical environment of early literacy in the farmhouse is not rich in learning materials and toys”.

Sub-theme 2: Literacy practices related to interaction with learning spaces and playing materials at home before and during COVID-19. All participants in this study indicated that their literacy practices as parents in their home environment enhanced their children’s learning of early literacy skills through interactions with learning places and playing materials at home, whether intentionally or unintentionally. According to the discussions with these mothers about their at-home literacy practices as parents, the sub-theme brought out two main ideas: (1) intentional literacy practices in the home environment and (2) unintentional literacy practices in the home environment.

Intentional literacy practices in the home environment pre-COVID-19. These practices were undertaken by parents with the intent of promoting young children’s learning of early literacy skills in the home environment before COVID-19. The participants described their intentional practices, which may influence the early literacy learning skills of their young children in the home environment. This included several core ideas, such as reading as routine, deliberating learning, and assigning simple tasks.

Reading and listening as a routine. Eight participants indicated that they read stories daily with their children as a bedtime routine. One of them noted, “I make sure to read short stories with my children before bed as a bedtime routine. My children remind me of this routine in case I forget it. Sometimes, I let my children choose the story they would like me to read to them.” Another mother indicated that seeing their parents regularly browsing and reading newspapers enhanced her children’s desire to browse newspapers and storybooks. She noted, “My husband used to read newspapers regularly after breakfast on weekends at home and at work on weekdays. This routine at home stimulated my child’s early childhood readiness for reading. I noticed that my child, who is 3 years old, tried to imitate her father and browsed the newspaper.” In addition, one of the mothers indicated that a family member’s daily listening to the news at home positively affects early childhood literacy learning skills, saying, “I am a divorced woman, so my child and I live in my parents’ home. My father listens to the news via the radio on a daily basis, and my five-year-old son likes to sit and accompany his grandfather most of the time. I have since noticed that my child uses good vocabulary and listens carefully when I speak”.

Deliberate learning. Six of the participants indicated that they deliberately taught early childhood literacy skills at home. One mother said, “Since I am a housewife and I have a housekeeper, I take care of my two young children who are in the early childhood stage. I give them pens, crayons, and some papers, and train them to hold the pen in the correct way, and I train them to write and pronounce the alphabet correctly.” The second participating mother stated, “I read and discuss with my child various types of picture books, with the intention of increasing his vocabulary”.

Assigning simple tasks. Five participants indicated that they carry out their literacy practices at home in a way that is intended to contribute to their children’s learning of early literacy skills. One of them said, “I give my child simple household tasks that we do together in an entertaining way. For example, while I am preparing and cooking lunch in the kitchen, I ask him to bring some utensils, vegetables, or fruits, pronounce their names correctly, and recognize their first letter.” Another mother noted, “I ask my child to do some simple tasks that help him handle a pen correctly. For instance, while I follow up on the homework and assignments of my children in elementary and intermediate schools, I give my little girl crayons and a literacy coloring book. Then, I ask her to color them and mention the names of the colors she uses”.

Intentional literacy practices in the home environment during COVID-19. The participants described their intentional practices during COVID-19, which may influence the early literacy learning skills of their young children in the home environment. This sub-theme included one core idea: giving rewards and motivators.

Giving rewards and motivators. Four of the participants indicated that they provided rewards and incentives to their young children to encourage them to learn early literacy skills in the home environment. For instance, one of them described her experience with her young children and early literacy learning skills in the HLE: "I have three young kids who are about the same ages (3, 4 and 5 years old), and they love to play a lot, so sometimes they don't listen very well to my directions. I find it difficult to teach them early literacy skills on my own, especially during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, as their father spends most of his time working outside the home and in another city. Therefore, I found the concept of rewards and incentives a wonderful idea that contributes to students' learning of basic and early literacy skills in the home environment before joining kindergarten or school. I prepared a joint playroom and learning space in the home; I furnished it with furniture suitable for their ages; I bought games, learning materials, and toys, such as matching games (matching letters, pictures, colors), coloring books, picture stories, blocks, electronic games, various sized toy cars and animals, and encouraging posters. I also give them simple assignments, and whoever commits to performing them gets points, and at the end of each week, whoever collects the highest number of points gets a gift or fast food."

Unintended literacy practices in the home environment pre-COVID-19. This sub-theme encompasses the literacy practices undertaken by parents unintentionally but reinforces young children's early literacy learning skills at home before and during COVID-19. Participants described their unintended practices, which may influence the early literacy learning skills of their young children in the home environment. This included some core ideas, such as practices related to entertainment, following up on children's lessons in schools, and practices related to routine household chores.

Practices related to entertainment. Eleven participants stated that some of their family entertainment activities in their homes play a role in teaching young children early literacy skills. For example, one of them told us about her family activities on the weekend: "My husband spends most of the time outside the home as he works outside the city we live in, so he doesn't spend much time with us, especially our children. Therefore, on vacations and weekends, he makes sure to compensate for this through the activities he does at home, which may contribute to our children's early literacy learning skills in an unintended way. For example, when it is time for the family meeting for tea, he chooses a specific letter and asks our children to tell us the name of a person, food, animal, and city that begins with the same letter, and the fastest to answer is the winner. Sometimes he asks them to bring some utensils that begin with a certain letter, and the fastest is the winner." Another mother stated, "Sometimes I have guests with their children who are in the early childhood stage at my home, and this requires me to prepare the playroom for their children to play with my children quietly, under the supervision of my eldest daughter (14 years old). My daughter turns on the TV for them and puts on Barney or Dora (Arabic versions), and they watch and dance along with the songs. Lately, I noticed that one of my children used some Arabic terms in a fluent, beautiful way, and when I asked her how she learned to do it, she told me that it was from Barney and Dora".

Practices related to following up on children's school lessons. Seven participants noted that their young children unintentionally learned early literacy skills at home while they followed up on their other children's elementary school lessons. One of them stated, "I have four children in the elementary stage and one in early childhood, so I needed to put in more effort and focus on the older children. While observing the older children as they performed their tasks, I gave my younger daughter (3 years old) colored pencils, papers, picture books, and literacy worksheets so that she would not distract me and take up my time. I later noticed that she was better prepared than her brothers to learn literacy skills, especially in writing." Another mother described an interesting experience with her young child's learning at home while following up on her other child, who was in elementary school: "I have two daughters, one of whom was in elementary school, and the other was in early childhood. My younger daughter was very jealous of her sister,

and we were concerned about this jealousy until later we found that it had positively and indirectly affected her learning of early literacy skills at home. We used to buy her the same school supplies we bought for her older sister, such as a school uniform, a bag, pencils, crayons, papers, literacy notebooks, and picture books. When I followed up with our older child's lessons and homework, I sat the younger child next to me. My husband and I have noticed that jealousy has subsided and that she has become calmer than before. The interesting thing was that she learned many early literacy skills at home easily before entering elementary school. Therefore, I did not get tired of teaching her and checking with her doing homework when she entered school".

Practices related to routine household chores. Four mothers indicated that their young children may unintentionally learn early literacy skills in the home through daily routines. One of them noted, "My three-and-a-half-year-old may have learned some early literacy skills at home by noticing a written list of things we need to buy from the supermarket and the grocery store. I often record and write this list and hang it on the fridge door in the kitchen with some stickers it has, like fruit stickers. My child was able to distinguish the names, colors, and sizes of the fruits." Another mother mentioned that her little girl (4 years old) learned the names and colors of clothes by helping her arrange the clothes and putting them in the cupboard after washing and ironing them.

Unintended literacy practices in the home environment during COVID-19. Participants also described unintended practices that might influence the early literacy learning skills of their young children in the home environment. These discussions brought up two core ideas: practices related to entertainment and practices related to parents' jobs.

Practices related to entertainment. Eight of the mothers spoke about their experiences with their children, as they learned early literacy skills at home through recreational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. One mother said, laughing, that "the COVID-19 pandemic, home quarantine, and my five children, especially two of them who are in early childhood, were for me the biggest punishment I have received and lived through in my life. I had to follow my three kids on the distance-learning platform, and at the same time, I had to take care of my two naughty kids, so I gave each of them an iPad, even though I was against giving children of this age electronic devices, such as a mobile or iPad. I downloaded entertainment and educational apps for them to play and occupy themselves with while I followed their brothers on the educational platform. Thank God, after this, I became very comfortable, as they were busy with the devices, and at the same time, I noticed that they acquired new vocabulary and memorized some songs".

Practices related to the parent's job. Five mothers who participated in the study indicated that the actions of their husband may have unintentionally contributed to their children's learning of early literacy skills at home. One mother said her husband is a teacher who prepared lessons and corrected the assignments and duties of his students at home. The children were used to seeing and using pens and paper at home, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and during distance teaching via the educational platform. Her children sat quietly with their father while he presented his lessons in virtual sessions and listened to his discussions with his students. This unintentionally contributed to enhancing her children's listening skills and listening to her directions.

3.2. Theme 2: The Indirect Factors Influence the Learning Space of Children's Early Literacy Skills at Home

The indirect factors that influence early literacy learning spaces at home were captured from the demographic information of the participants in addition to what was mentioned by some of the participants during the interview. This main theme comprises three sub-themes (indirect factors) as follows: parents' education level, family's socioeconomic status, and the age and marital status of the parents (see Table 3).

Parents' education levels. Five participants stated that the parents' education may influence children's early literacy learning spaces in the home environment. One mother, who has a bachelor's degree and whose husband has a high school diploma, indicated,

“My husband is not keen on buying learning materials and toys, picture stories, or literacy worksheets for our children in early childhood, as he believes that children should enjoy their childhood without educational materials, toys, and games at home. He believes that children will learn early literacy skills in a classroom environment at school.” Another mother explained, “Although my husband did not complete his university studies due to his father’s death, he loves education and wishes to continue his education. He is keen on educating our young children in early literacy skills. He furnished the playroom in our home and bought learning toys and materials, a blackboard, crayons, literacy worksheets, picture stories, dolls, and cubes. In fact, he spends more time with them in this room than I do. He often plays with our two children, unlike me. I just ask them to go to this room and play by themselves, because I am busy with the housework and take care of their little sister.” In addition, one of the mothers said, “Because I am a teacher and my husband is a university professor, we make sure that the home learning environment supports and facilitates our children’s learning of early literacy skills before they go to school. Therefore, we are interested in providing learning materials and toys at home and trying to develop their skills in early literacy by watching educational cartoon movies and discussing their events and characters. My husband is very interested in reading stories with them, especially before bed. In addition, we make sure to download educational apps on iPads for our children”.

The family’s socioeconomic status. Four of the participants indicated that their economic and social status may indirectly affect their children’s early literacy learning spaces at home. For instance, one mother, who is low-income, pointed out, “My husband and I have high school diplomas. Unfortunately, our home is small, and there are not many rooms, so we do not have a playroom. My children play in the living room where family members gather. We can’t buy learning toys for all of our children; we have three children in the early childhood stage. They share a few toys and picture books. Despite our situation at home and the lack of a suitable physical environment for learning, my children have acquired early literacy skills from their interactions with each other and from talking to their grandmother, who lives in the home with us and often tells them stories. They have a wide vocabulary; moreover, one of them speaks with fluency.” Another mother, who is middle-income, said, “My husband and I are trying to provide our children with simple things and general toys. Our monthly income is barely enough to pay rent, buy necessities, and pay the bank loan. Frankly, for our children to learn early literacy skills, we rely on the kindergarten classroom environment. Therefore, we are not keen on creating a home learning environment for our children to learn these skills. In addition, I believe that formal education in kindergartens and schools is preferable.” A high-income mother stated, “In fact, I am keen to provide everything for my only daughter, who is 4 years old, and I am trying to compensate her for not sitting with her, as I am often away from home due to work. My child’s early literacy skills are excellent, as she has learned the most important skills at this stage, such as recognizing letters and numbers, memorizing songs, building puzzles, and distinguishing between colors and sizes. She learned these skills through her interactions with her nanny and with toys, learning materials, picture stories, and television programs. Did you know that she learned these skills in the English language? This is because her nanny speaks English and spends most of her time with her at home. Therefore, recently, I was keen to be at home and talk to her in Arabic for a longer time so that she could listen to Arabic as well. I plan to get her a private tutor at home who will teach her Arabic. It is fun to learn early literacy skills in both languages”.

The age of the parents. Only two of the participants raised the age of parents as a potential factor in their children’s early literacy learning spaces at home. One mother was divorced and lived with her child in her father’s (the child’s grandfather’s) home. She pointed out, “It was good that we live with my old father, who is a wise man, and he often reads newspapers. He tells stories to my child, and my child shares literacy coloring worksheets with him, and puzzle pieces. In addition, my father is patient and does not get angry quickly, unlike my child’s father, who is in his late twenties. He is a nervous man,

and cannot stand the inconvenience of a child". The other mother stated, "My husband is older than me, and we have three children in early childhood. He is a businessman and loves to read a lot but in a calm atmosphere. Hence, he often sits reading in his home office and rarely allows our children to come in and sit with him in his home office. Therefore, I prepared a playroom and furnished it with toys, a table and chairs, a TV, picture books, and coloring books. I spend a lot of time with them in this room".

3.3. Theme 3: Challenges of Creating Early Literacy Learning Spaces at Home

Some of the study participants ($n = 8$) agreed that the biggest challenge and obstacle to having early literacy learning spaces at home was a lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of the HLE in their children's learning of early literacy skills. They realized that the family and the home environment play a role in learning and developing these skills alongside other aspects of life, such as their job, following up on their other children's lessons in schools, housework, and social relationships. However, some of them ($n = 5$) indicated that they did not believe that there were challenges and difficulties related to the early literacy learning spaces in their HLEs. For example, one participant noted, "There are no challenges or obstacles in the home learning environment. I think that the learning space for early literacy skills in the home environment is wide and flexible, particularly in the era of technological transformation. Children can learn early literacy skills through the electronic devices they carry, such as iPads and mobile phones, and from the apps they download to them, which contribute to them learning numbers and colors and memorizing some songs." Two of the mothers participating in this study indicated that the lack of time they spend with their young children may be the biggest obstacle to their children's learning of early literacy skills in the HLE. One of them said she worked in the morning outside the house while her child was with his elderly grandmother, and when she came back in the afternoon, she was busy preparing lunch, following up on the lessons of her older children, and completing household chores. She did not sit with her younger child much, except when feeding him, changing his clothes, and when he sat with her while she followed up on his brothers' lessons.

4. Discussion

The current study improved our knowledge of the connections between early childhood HLE experiences and later literacy skills. There were several important findings in this study. First, there is an association between HLE variables and children's early literacy skills. Parents' education levels and home literacy resources, such as the physical environment and literacy practices of family members, had a comparable positive relationship with the quality of early literacy learning spaces at home. Additionally, there was a comparable significant relationship between the impact sizes of parental literacy involvement and beliefs and the early literacy learning space at home. Parent literacy involvement and beliefs about learning spaces in HLEs, however, showed much larger effect sizes than home literacy resources. The correlations between HLE and reading comprehension did not significantly change for any of the potential moderators (parental activity involvement methods, home literacy resource types, sampling location, and grade), as also observed by [44,45]. The results of this study indicate that children's reading ability is affected more by parents' involvement than by home literacy resources, which suggests that parental involvement has a statistically more favorable correlation with children's early literacy skills in early childhood than home literacy resources [6,46–48], which is in line with information transfer theory.

Parental literacy beliefs and involvement both had comparable effect sizes. The findings confirmed that parent–child interaction is a successful method for passing on knowledge and improving the early literacy learning space [7,49,50]. Parental involvement creates a role for parents in their children's education and increases children's understanding of the benefits of self-efficacy and the early literacy learning space at home. Parental knowledge reinforcement may be used to adapt parents' involvement to children's varying

levels of literacy and task performance [51]. The effect size of parents' education levels on early literacy skills was moderate, and it was consistent across all early childhood levels. The findings corroborated the notion proposed by information transfer theory: parents with greater knowledge would be better able to impart that knowledge to their offspring, starting in the home environment [52,53]. However, the impact of parental education levels on early literacy learning spaces in HLEs could be indirect. Other parent–child interaction activities may also have an impact, such as parental teaching behaviors.

Moreover, the physical environment was found to be significantly correlated with children's early literacy learning skills within HLEs. The findings also show that the physical environment needs to comprise toys, activity boards, books, and other learning materials, and needs to be expanded to include real-world objects that may facilitate and be applied to early literacy skills. The importance of the physical environment has been stated in some studies, such as that of [54], who found that the HLE often includes different literacy-related activities consisting of owning books, teaching sounds and letters, library visits, and parental reading behavior. Therefore, it can be concluded that the physical environment can be affected by other factors, such as parental education level and beliefs about education within the HLE.

The findings also support the design of a comprehensive and helpful early literacy promotion strategy and program that incorporates HLEs, the school, and individual readers [55]. They also confirmed the significant contributions that children's HLEs, whether directly or indirectly, make in terms of early literacy learning spaces in Saudi Arabia. The main determinant of children's literacy achievement was the children's early literacy self-efficacy, with independent and significant contributions also coming from a number of home context variables, such as the physical environment, literacy practices of parents, level of parents' education, or socioeconomic status of family.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent period of distance learning, the change in the HLE during this time had major effects on the early literacy learning spaces of young children. There was a sharp decline in the proportion of adults who routinely read to children due to changes in their daily routines. Caregivers described using virtual options for story time. In the end, families were still able to provide their children with regular amounts of reading time during COVID-19, but the format of that reading time altered. The findings showed that parents allowed their children to access different items, such as technological devices, which ultimately and unexpectedly led to improved learning comprehension and early literacy skills [56]. Therefore, this shows that COVID-19 had a significant impact on the early literacy learning space at home.

This study supports earlier findings regarding the significance of engaging children in literacy activities at home, including caregivers' efforts to do so [8,57,58]. As Rose et al. [59] concluded, the effectiveness of caregiver–child interactions is a better determinant of children's outcomes than factors related to family background, which include income and level of education. As a result, there is a need to improve caregivers' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to enrich HLEs. Resources must also be combined and mobilized to assist parents in improving their children's early literacy learning spaces and language development in the HLE [54]. In addition, the findings of this study have shown the success of family literacy treatments, which work to improve parents' ability to involve children in literacy activities. This agrees with Boonk et al. [49] and Hutton et al. [54], who indicated that family literacy initiatives have the potential to help practitioners, policy makers, and researchers tackle important problems associated with young children's acquisition of reading and other related skills.

The findings of this study will be of great importance across the education sector. Family literacy initiatives have the opportunity to assist researchers, policy makers, and practitioners in tackling important problems related to young children's acquisition of early literacy skills. Family engagement can further promote young children's early literacy and language development through early learning programs that support both school-based and home-based parental approaches [46,47,55]. For example, schools can encourage

parental contribution to children's learning and give parents or caregivers the skills they need to aid their children by offering training sessions on specific early literacy improvement strategies, such as learning skills, or by creating a curriculum that links school and home practices.

5. Implications

The results of the current study revealed many significant implications for parents and caregivers. For example, working mothers who spend a lot of time working outside the home should allocate specific time to sit with their young children, talk with them about the highlights of their day, and discuss these highlights. In addition, they must engage their young children in literacy activities, whether intentional or unintentional, such as drawing, coloring, watching cartoon films, and discussing the plot and characters with them. Regarding the physical environment in the home, parents should use the available space in the home's rooms and furnish them with simple learning materials, such as a table and chair, a set of picture books, and notebooks with colored pens or pencils. Young children feel the importance of early literacy learning skills in the first environment in which they grow and interact with its contents. In addition, with regard to electronic devices, parents should ensure that the content of these devices is educational, stimulating, and enjoyable for young children (2–5 years old) to encourage them to learn early literacy skills in the home environment. In addition, parents should ensure that the dialogue between them is calm and uses appropriate vocabulary, especially in front of their children, as children are influenced by parents' practices and acquire language, especially vocabulary, early in their lives. On the other hand, it is important for parents to be keen to buy educational and recreational toys, which contribute to young children's early literacy learning skills in home environments in an unintended way. It is also valuable for parents to provide their young children with various opportunities to practice activities that contribute to their learning of early literacy skills in the home environment through intentional or unintentional activities that are fun for the children. In addition to what was mentioned above, we encourage mothers to instill the importance of culture in the home environment and its role in teaching young children early literacy skills at home.

6. Limitations and Future Research

It should be noted that there are a few limitations to this research study that might be resolved through future studies. Future studies could expand on this research by collecting firsthand observations, which may be helpful, as this would provide data from several sources. In addition, future studies could use the quantitative method via a questionnaire aimed at both parents. Furthermore, the growth of children in their early literacy skills and home literacy activities was not considered in this study. Such information could lead to more in-depth knowledge of HLEs across languages and provide significant insights into how HLEs affect the acquisition of different early literacy skills. In order to better understand the mechanisms underlying the effects of the HLE on children's acquisition of early literacy skills, future studies should consider in more detail the challenges posed to providing adequate early literacy learning spaces at home from the point of view of children's educators. In addition to what was mentioned above, all participants were from the Eastern Province. Therefore, generalizing these results to mothers from the other four governorates in Saudi Arabia is difficult. For this reason, it is important that future studies obtain data from a larger and more diverse population. Furthermore, because this study contains results related to the period before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended to conduct a future study that measures the factors affecting early literacy learning spaces of young children in the home environments in Saudi Arabia after the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in terms of methodology, this study can be conducted using the action research method, which may reveal other factors that influence the early literacy learning space of young children in the home environment.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors concerning early literacy learning spaces in HLEs in Saudi Arabia from a maternal perspective. The current study based its conclusions on the combined findings of in-depth interviews with 15 mothers with young children. The results of this study support the existence of a positive relationship between learning spaces in HLEs and children's acquisition of early literacy skills. The findings suggest that indirect factors, such as the physical home environment and family members' literacy practices, are related to children's interaction with learning spaces and playing materials at home. The findings also suggest that indirect factors, such as parents' education level, socioeconomic status of the family, and the age of the parents, are related to children's early literacy learning spaces in a home environment. These findings support the information transfer theory's arguments about the impact of parental instruction, which holds that parents, through different forms of literacy activities, can intentionally or unintentionally teach early literacy skills to children in the home. Additionally, this study found a separate connection between reading proficiency and aspects of the HLE, suggesting that some factors had little to no impact. Parents' education levels had substantially greater effect sizes than domestic literacy resources. The findings of this study suggest that raising children's early literacy levels is more dependent on parental expectations and beliefs for literacy, and parent's involvement in literacy-related activities.

Funding: This research was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia (GRANT1736) And The APC was funded by Discount Voucher: fe2ce6284d5671f9 (malsebiee@kfu.edu.sa).

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) of the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of King Faisal University (protocol code KFU-REC-2022- SEP-ETHICS131).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data are not available due to confidentiality concerns.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Hernández-Alava, M.; Popil, G. Children's development and parental input: Evidence from the UK millennium cohort study. *Demography* **2017**, *54*, 485–511. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Taylor, J.; Ennis, R.C.; Hart, A.S.; Mikolajewski, J.A.; Schatschneider, C. Home environmental and behavioral risk indices for reading achievement. *Learn. Individ. Differ.* **2017**, *57*, 9–21. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Hamilton, G.L.; Hayiou-Thomas, E.M.; Hulme, C.; Snowling, J.M. The home literacy environment as a predictor of the early literacy development of children at family risk of dyslexia. *Sci. Stud. Read.* **2018**, *20*, 401–419. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Niklas, F.; Wirth, A.; Guffler, S.; Drescher, N.; Ehming, C.S. The home literacy environment as a mediator between parental attitudes toward shared reading and children's linguistic competencies. *Front. Psychol.* **2020**, *11*, 1628. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Adams, A.-M.; Soto-Calvo, E.; Patel, H.; Hartley, C.; Giofre, D.; Simmons, R.F. Characteristics of the preschool home literacy environment which predict writing skills at school. *Read. Writ.* **2021**, *34*, 2203–2225. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Dong, Y.; Wu, S.X.Y.; Dong, W.Y.; Tang, Y. The effects of home literacy environment on children's reading comprehension development: A meta-analysis. *Educ. Sci.* **2020**, *20*, 63–82. [[CrossRef](#)]
- van Bergen, E.; van Zuijen, T.; Bishop, D.; de Jong, P.F. Why are home literacy environment and children's reading skills associated? What parental skills reveal. *Read. Res. Q.* **2017**, *52*, 147–160. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Puglisi, M.L.; Hulme, C.; Hamilton, L.G.; Snowling, M.J. The home literacy environment is a correlate, but perhaps not a cause, of variations in children's language and literacy development. *Sci. Stud. Read.* **2017**, *21*, 498–514. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Alroqi, H.; Serratrice, L.; Cameron-Faulkner, T. The home literacy and media environment of Saudi toddlers. *J. Child. Media* **2021**, *16*, 95–106. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Alismail, S.; Faridi, R.M. Harnessing the power of IRTIQAA: An initiative inspired by vision 2030, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Acad. Strateg. Manag. J.* **2021**, *20*, 1–10.
- Edwards, D.; Potts, A. What is literacy? Thirty years of Australian literacy debates (1975–2005). *Paedagog. Hist. Int. J. Hist. Educ.* **2008**, *44*, 123–135. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Silinskas, G.; Torppa, M.; Lerkkanen, M.K.; Nurmi, J.E. The home literacy model in a highly transparent orthography. *Sch. Eff. Sch. Improv.* **2020**, *31*, 80–101. [[CrossRef](#)]

13. Silinskas, G.; Sénéchal, M.; Lerkkanen, M.K. Home literacy activities and children's reading skills, independent reading, and interest in literacy activities from kindergarten to grade 2. *Front. Psychol.* **2020**, *11*, 1508. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
14. Krijnen, E.; van Steensel, R.; Meeuwisse, M.; Jongerling, J.; Severiens, S. Exploring a refined model of home literacy activities and associations with children's emergent literacy skills. *Read. Writ.* **2020**, *33*, 207–238. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Cheung, K.S.; Dulay, M.K.; Yang, X.; Mohseni, F.; McBride, C. Home literacy and numeracy environments in Asia. *Front. Psychol.* **2021**, *12*, 578764. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
16. AlAhmari, S.F. Children's literacy development: A cross-sectional study in Saudi Arabia. *Front. Pediatr.* **2022**, *10*, 1–8. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Stephenson, A.K.; Parrila, R.; Georgiou, G.; Kriby, R.J. Effects of home literacy, parents' beliefs, and children's task-focused behavior on emergent literacy and word reading skills. *Sci. Stud. Read.* **2018**, *12*, 24–50. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. Krijnen, E.; Steensel, V.R.; Meeuwisse, M.; Severiens, S. Measuring parental literacy beliefs in a socio-economically, linguistically, and ethnically diverse sample. *Early Educ. Dev.* **2021**, *32*, 608–635. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Tsirmpa, C.; Lavidia, K. Beliefs of parents of preschool children about literacy: Facilitative and conventional approaches. *Eur. Early Child. Educ. Res. J.* **2021**, *29*, 519–532.
20. Brezel, E.; Hallas-Muchow, L.; Shipchandier, A.; Hall-Lande, J.; Bonuck, K. Parents' beliefs regarding shared reading with infants and toddlers. *Dev. Disabil. Netw. J.* **2021**, *2*, 55–66.
21. Huan, X.; Zhou, X.; Hua, L.; Zhang, M.; Wang, S.; Qin, S.; Chen, J.; Wang, X.H. The association between home environment and quality of life in children and adolescents in Hangzhou City, China. *J. Child Fam. Stud.* **2021**, *30*, 1416–1427. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Brown, W.M.F.; Gillon, G.T. Early storybook reading with babies and young children: Parents' opinions and home reading practices. *Australas J. Early Child* **2017**, *42*, 69–77. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Lau, C.; Richards, B. Home literacy environment and children's English language and literacy skills in Hong Kong. *Front. Psychol.* **2021**, *11*, 569581. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Brown, J.M. Home Literacy as a Way to Improve Students' Academic Achievement and Motivation, Foster Strong Familial Relationships and Bridge the Gap Between Home and School: A Framework for Custom Family Literacy Programs. Master's Thesis, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI, USA, August 2021.
25. Ames, N. Home Literacy Environment and Effects of Reading Development in Children. Master's Thesis, Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR, USA, 11 June 2022.
26. Strauss, M.A.; Bipath, K. Exploring the influence of parents' home reading practices on emergent literacy. *J. Lang. Teach.* **2020**, *54*, 195–213. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Elmesalamy, A.A.E.; El-Ater, H.M.F. The role of the home literacy environment and parent education in effecting the developmental differences of phonological awareness during early childhood. *Am. J. Appl. Psychol.* **2022**, *11*, 36–48.
28. Wirth, A.; Ehmig, C.S.; Niklas, F. The role of the home literacy environment for children's linguistic and socioemotional competencies development in the early. *Soc. Dev.* **2022**, *31*, 372–387. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Mascarenhas, S.S.; Moorakonda, R.; Daniel, M.L. Characteristics and influence of home literacy environment in early childhood-centered literacy orientation. *Proc. Singap. Healthc.* **2017**, *26*, 81–97. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Boerma, E.I.; Mol, E.S.; Jolles, J. Parents adjust the quality of their home literacy environment to the reading interest of their third to sixth-graders. *Parent. Sci. Pract.* **2018**, *18*, 243–261. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Segers, E.; Kleemans, T. The impact of the digital home environment on kindergartners' language and early literacy. *Front. Psychol.* **2020**, *11*, 538584. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Aram, D.; Korat, O.; Saiegh-Haddad, E.; Arafat, S.H.; Khoury, R.; Elhija, J.A. Early literacy among Arabic-speaking kindergartners: The role of socioeconomic status, home literacy environment and maternal mediation of writing. *Cogn. Dev.* **2013**, *28*, 193–208. [[CrossRef](#)]
33. Al-Othman, H.F.; Gregory, E.E.; Jessel, J.; Khalil, A.S. Early literacy model in a Saudi Arabian preschool: Implementation in a different cultural context. *Int. J. Cross-Disc. Subj. Educ.* **2015**, *5*, 2511–2522. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Taibah, N.; Haynes, C. Contributions of phonological processing skills to reading skills in Arabic speaking children. *Read. Writ.* **2011**, *24*, 1019–1042. [[CrossRef](#)]
35. Creswell, J.W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*; SAGE Publications Inc.: Los Angeles, CA, USA, 2009.
36. Creswell, J.W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*; SAGE Publications Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2013.
37. Marshall, C.; Rossman, G.B. *Designing Qualitative Research*, 5th ed.; SAGE Publications Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2006.
38. Opdenakker, R. Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Qual. Soc. Res.* **2006**, *7*, 4–11.
39. Stahl, N.A.; King, J.R. Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *J. Dev. Educ.* **2020**, *44*, 26–28.
40. Saldana, J. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 2nd ed.; SAGE Publications Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2013.
41. Elliott, V. Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *Qual. Rep.* **2018**, *23*, 2850–2861. [[CrossRef](#)]
42. Chilisa, B.; Preece, J. *Research Methods for Adult Educators in Africa*; Pearson Education: Cape Town, South Africa, 2005.
43. Creswell, J.W.; Miller, L. Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Pract.* **2000**, *39*, 124–130. [[CrossRef](#)]
44. Carroll, J.M.; Holliman, A.J.; Weir, F.; Baroody, A.E. Literacy interest, home literacy environment and emergent literacy skills in preschoolers. *J. Res. Read.* **2019**, *42*, 150–161. [[CrossRef](#)]

45. Hemmerechts, K.; Agirdag, O.; Kavadias, D. The relationship between parental literacy involvement, socio-economic status and reading literacy. *Educ. Rev.* **2017**, *69*, 85–101. [[CrossRef](#)]
46. Alsubaie, M.A. Distance education and the social literacy of elementary school students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Heliyon* **2022**, *8*, e09811. [[CrossRef](#)]
47. Alsubaie, M.A. Ten Elementary School Teachers' Voices: How They Build Effective Literacy Learning in the Lives of Their 2nd Grade Children. Doctoral Dissertation, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, USA, June 2018.
48. Inoue, T.; Georgiou, G.K.; Parrila, R.; Kirby, J.R. Examining an extended home literacy model: The mediating roles of emergent literacy skills and reading fluency. *Sci. Stud. Read.* **2018**, *22*, 273–288. [[CrossRef](#)]
49. Boonk, L.; Gijsselaers, H.J.; Ritzen, H.; Brand-Gruwel, S. A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educ. Res. Rev.* **2018**, *24*, 10–30. [[CrossRef](#)]
50. Park, S.; Stone, S.I.; Holloway, S.D. School-based parental involvement as a predictor of achievement and school learning environment: An elementary school-level analysis. *Child. Youth Serv. Rev.* **2017**, *82*, 195–206. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Camacho, A.; Alves, R.A. Fostering parental involvement in writing: Development and testing of the program Cultivating Writing. *Read. Writ.* **2017**, *30*, 253–277. [[CrossRef](#)]
52. Hamlin, D.; Flessa, J. Parental involvement initiatives: An analysis. *Educ. Policy* **2018**, *32*, 697–727. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Boerma, I.E.; Mol, S.E.; Jolles, J. The role of home literacy environment, mentalizing, expressive verbal ability, and print exposure in third and fourth graders' reading comprehension. *Sci. Stud. Read.* **2017**, *21*, 179–193. [[CrossRef](#)]
54. Hutton, J.S.; Dudley, J.; Horowitz-Kraus, T.; DeWitt, T.; Holland, S.K. Associations between home literacy environment, brain white matter integrity and cognitive abilities in preschool-age children. *Acta Paediatr.* **2020**, *109*, 1376–1386. [[CrossRef](#)]
55. Niklas, F.; Schneider, W. Intervention in the home literacy environment and kindergarten children's vocabulary and phonological awareness. *First Lang.* **2017**, *37*, 433–452. [[CrossRef](#)]
56. Aladsani, H.; Al-Abdullatif, A.; Almuhanha, M.; Gameil, A. Ethnographic reflections of K–12 distance education in Saudi Arabia: Shaping the future of post-pandemic digital education. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 9931. [[CrossRef](#)]
57. Al-Abdullatif, A.M.; Aladsani, H.K. Parental involvement in distance K-12 learning and the effect of technostress: Sustaining post-pandemic distance education in Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 11305. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Liu, C.; Georgiou, G.K.; Manolitsis, G. Modeling the relationships of parents' expectations, family's SES, and home literacy environment with emergent literacy skills and word reading in Chinese. *Early Child. Res. Q.* **2018**, *43*, 1–10. [[CrossRef](#)]
59. Rose, E.; Lehl, S.; Ebert, S.; Weinert, S. Long-term relations between children's language, the home literacy environment, and socioemotional development from ages 3 to 8. *Early Educ. Dev.* **2018**, *29*, 342–356. [[CrossRef](#)]