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Integrating School and Family Literacy to Foster Early Reading Habits: Evidence for SDG 4 from Indonesian Kindergartens

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.63230/jocsis.2.3.279>

Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: January 07, 2026

Final Revised: June 09, 2026

Accepted: June 10, 2026

First Available Online: July 09, 2026

Publication Date: September 27, 2026

Keywords:

Childhood Education;

Family Literacy;

Parental Involvement;

Reading Habits;

School-Family Literacy.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the implementation and outcomes of a School-Family Literacy Partnership model in fostering reading habits among children in early childhood education. It also investigates how the integration of school and family literacy practices supports sustainable reading habit formation.

Method: A mixed-methods intervention design was employed involving two early childhood education institutions in Indonesia. Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, documentation, reading journals, and program evaluation records, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. **Results:** Integrating school literacy activities, home reading practices, parental involvement, monitoring, and reading recognition created a supportive literacy environment that strengthened children's reading engagement. Students achieved an average of 71 and 73 books per student, while program effectiveness reached 93.1% and 87.5%, indicating the important role of parental involvement in sustaining reading habits. **Novelty:** A School-Family Literacy Partnership Model is proposed to conceptualize reading habit formation as the outcome of coordinated interactions between school and family literacy environments. The model extends existing literacy interventions by emphasizing cross-context collaboration as a key mechanism for developing sustainable reading habits in early childhood education.

INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy has become a central concern in global educational development due to its fundamental role in lifelong learning, academic achievement, and human capital formation (Hanemann & Robinson, 2022). As emphasized in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, quality education requires ensuring that all children acquire foundational literacy skills that enable them to participate effectively in social, economic, and civic life. Literacy is not merely the ability to decode written text but encompasses the capacity to understand, interpret, and use information for personal and societal development (Chee et al., 2025; Gebre, 2022). Consequently, fostering literacy from an early age has become a strategic priority for education systems worldwide. Despite significant efforts to improve educational quality, many countries continue to face what the World Bank describes as a global learning crisis, particularly in reading proficiency. Learning poverty refers to the condition in which children are unable to read and comprehend a simple text by the age of ten, limiting their future educational opportunities and social mobility (Azevedo et al., 2021). Reading proficiency has therefore become one of the most important indicators of educational effectiveness because it serves as a gateway skill for learning across disciplines and throughout the life course.

The Indonesian context reflects many of these global challenges. National and international assessments consistently indicate that reading literacy remains a significant concern (Wyse & Bradbury, 2022). Data from the Indonesian Student Competency Assessment (AKSI) revealed that only 6.14% of Indonesian students reached the "good"

category in reading proficiency, while 55.85% remained in the “poor” category, indicating that more than half of Indonesian students experience substantial difficulties in reading comprehension. Furthermore, the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported that Indonesia ranked 71st out of 81 participating countries in reading literacy, with a score of 359, significantly below the OECD average (OECD, 2023). These findings suggest that improving reading literacy remains an urgent educational priority.

Beyond reading proficiency, studies also indicate that reading culture in Indonesia remains relatively weak. Solihin et al., (2019) reported that most Indonesian provinces fall into low or very low categories of reading culture, highlighting the persistent challenge of cultivating sustained reading engagement among young people. Such findings suggest that literacy challenges are not solely cognitive in nature but are also closely related to behavioral and cultural dimensions, particularly the development of reading habits. Reading habits constitute a critical foundation for literacy development because literacy skills are strengthened through repeated engagement with texts over time (Zur et al., 2025). Habit formation theory suggests that repeated behaviors performed in stable contexts gradually become automatic and self-sustaining (Wood & Neal, 2007). Similarly, Lally et al., (2010) argue that habits emerge through consistent repetition of desired behaviors until they become integrated into daily routines. Within the context of literacy education, reading habits are therefore not developed through isolated instructional interventions but through continuous exposure to reading opportunities and supportive literacy environments.

Research consistently demonstrates that reading habits established during early childhood have long-term implications for educational outcomes. Early literacy experiences contribute significantly to language development, cognitive growth, academic achievement, and future reading engagement. Araújo & Costa, (2015) found a positive relationship between reading experiences during preschool years and subsequent academic performance in primary education. Likewise, Niklas et al., (2015) reported that children who regularly participated in home-based literacy activities demonstrated stronger literacy development than those who did not. These findings underscore the importance of introducing systematic literacy interventions during early childhood education.

The significance of early literacy development has encouraged governments and educational institutions worldwide to implement literacy promotion initiatives (Elek et al., 2025). In Indonesia, one of the most prominent efforts is the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah/GLS), launched by the Ministry of Education to foster literacy culture and strengthen character education through reading activities. The program encourages students to engage in daily reading practices and aims to transform schools into literacy-rich learning environments. However, despite its important contribution to literacy promotion, the implementation of GLS has primarily focused on elementary and secondary education, with relatively limited attention given to early childhood education settings such as kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal (TK/RA).

Moreover, existing literacy initiatives frequently concentrate on school-based interventions while paying insufficient attention to literacy practices within the family environment. This limitation is particularly important because literacy development occurs across multiple contexts, not solely within schools. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes that child development is shaped by interactions among interconnected environments, particularly the family and school microsystems.

Consequently, literacy programs that operate exclusively within schools may overlook critical opportunities for reinforcing literacy behaviors in the home environment.

Family literacy has increasingly been recognized as a key factor in children's literacy development. Family literacy refers to literacy-related interactions, practices, and resources that occur within households and support children's learning processes. Numerous studies demonstrate that parental involvement substantially influences children's reading attitudes, reading motivation, and literacy achievement. Chen (2008) found that both family and teacher influences significantly contribute to the development of students' reading habits. Similarly, Curry et al. (2016) emphasized that parental engagement plays a decisive role in children's literacy acquisition, while Kinkead-Clark (2017) highlighted how children's perceptions of literacy are strongly shaped by family literacy experiences.

International evidence further supports the importance of integrating school and family literacy practices. Ho and Lau (2018) argue that collaboration between schools and families can create positive reading environments that encourage sustained reading engagement among children. Merga and Roni (2018) similarly suggest that schools should establish stronger partnerships with families to support children's literacy development. Several countries with high literacy performance have implemented literacy initiatives that deliberately connect school and home reading activities. In Australia, for example, Home Reading Programs encourage students to borrow books from school and read them at home with parental support. Likewise, reading challenge programs motivate students to engage with books through structured reading targets and recognition systems.

Although the importance of family literacy has been widely acknowledged, previous studies have largely examined either school-based literacy programs or family literacy practices separately. Much of the existing literature focuses on the effects of reading interventions on literacy achievement, reading interest, or reading motivation (Pelletier et al., 2022; Syal & Nietfield, 2024). Comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding how school and family literacy environments can be systematically integrated through an educational management framework to foster sustainable reading habits among young children. Addressing this gap also supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education by promoting early literacy and lifelong learning through integrated school-family partnerships. This gap is particularly significant in early childhood education, where habit formation processes are highly sensitive to environmental influences and adult guidance.

Drawing upon Ecological Systems Theory, Family Literacy Theory, and Habit Formation Theory, this study argues that reading habits are more effectively developed when literacy experiences are reinforced across multiple environments through coordinated school-family partnerships. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an early childhood literacy intervention implemented in Indonesian educational settings and by proposing a School-Family Literacy Partnership model for reading habit formation. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How was the School-Family Literacy Partnership model designed and implemented in Indonesian early childhood education settings?
2. How did the model influence children's reading habits?
3. What role did parental involvement play in supporting reading habit formation?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to contribute to both theory and practice by advancing understanding of how integrated literacy ecosystems can support sustainable reading habit development among young children and provide a scalable framework for literacy promotion in early childhood education.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the ADDIE framework, which consists of five iterative stages: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Molenda, 2003). The R&D approach was selected because the study aimed not only to investigate literacy practices but also to develop, validate, implement, and evaluate an integrated literacy intervention designed to foster reading habits among young children (Sanca et al., 2026). Consistent with the principles of educational R&D, the study focused on producing a practical and empirically validated model that could be implemented in early childhood education settings (Gall et al., 2012).

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of both the development process and implementation outcomes, the study adopted a mixed-methods design that integrated quantitative and qualitative data throughout the research process. Quantitative data were used to evaluate model validity, reading participation, and program effectiveness, whereas qualitative data were employed to explore literacy practices, parental engagement, implementation experiences, and contextual factors influencing reading habit formation. The integration of both forms of evidence enabled a more comprehensive evaluation of the proposed literacy intervention.

The resulting intervention, known as the Aku Suka Baca Program, was developed by integrating principles of the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah), School-Based Literacy, Family Literacy, educational management based on Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC), and Habit Formation Theory. The conceptual foundation of the model reflects the need to strengthen reading habits through coordinated literacy practices across school and family environments.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in two early childhood education institutions in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, namely RA Ma'arif NU 001 Plus and TK Melati. These institutions were selected as pilot sites because both had implemented literacy-related activities but had not yet adopted a structured literacy program integrating school and family participation. The implementation phase of the study was conducted from August 2025 to May 2026. The intervention involved students, teachers, school principals, and parents as key stakeholders in literacy development. A total of 53 students participated in the implementation phase, comprising 29 from RA Ma'arif and 24 from TK Melati. The literacy program was implemented through collaborative activities involving schools and families, emphasizing parental participation in home-based literacy practices and reading habit development.

Development Procedures

The School-Family Literacy Partnership Model was developed using the ADDIE framework. Each stage generated outputs that informed subsequent phases of refinement and implementation. The overall development process is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Development stages of the school-family literacy partnership model based on the ADDIE framework

ADDIE Stage	Main Activities	Outputs
Analysis	Assessment of literacy conditions, reading habits, teacher needs, parental involvement, literacy resources, and environmental factors	Identification of literacy challenges and development needs
Design	Development of conceptual framework, literacy components, procedures, monitoring systems, and evaluation instruments	Initial model design and implementation framework
Development	Preparation of guidebooks, reading journals, SOPs, monitoring instruments, and validation procedures	Validated program model and implementation package
Implementation	Application of the program in participating schools and families	Operational implementation of literacy intervention
Evaluation	Assessment of validity, implementation quality, reading participation, and effectiveness	Finalized model and effectiveness evidence

1. Analysis Stage

The analysis stage examined existing literacy conditions within participating institutions, including students' reading habits, teacher needs, parental involvement, literacy resources, and environmental factors affecting literacy development. Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis to identify barriers and opportunities for fostering reading habits among young learners.

2. Design Stage

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, the conceptual structure of the Aku Suka Baca Program was developed. This stage included the design of literacy components, implementation procedures, monitoring mechanisms, evaluation systems, and supporting instruments. The model was constructed through the integration of School Literacy Movement principles, family literacy approaches, educational management functions, and habit formation theory.

3. Development Stage

During the development stage, program materials and implementation tools were produced. These included teacher guidebooks, parent guidebooks, student reading journals, standard operating procedures (SOPs), monitoring forms, evaluation instruments, and interview guidelines. Expert review and revision processes were conducted to improve the feasibility and quality of the model prior to field implementation.

4. Implementation Stage

The program was implemented in the participating institutions through coordinated literacy activities involving schools and families. Students borrowed books from school, conducted reading activities at home with parental support, documented reading activities in reading journals, and participated in monitoring and recognition activities. Teachers and school administrators coordinated book circulation, literacy monitoring, and communication with parents to ensure continuity between school-based and home-based literacy experiences.

5. Evaluation Stage

The evaluation stage assessed model validity, implementation quality, reading participation, stakeholder responses, and overall program effectiveness. Evaluation findings were subsequently used to refine the model and assess its suitability for broader implementation in early childhood education settings.

Data Collection

Multiple sources of evidence were used to enhance the credibility and comprehensiveness of the study (Goff et al., 2023). Data collection methods included observations, interviews, questionnaires, documentation analysis, reading journals, and expert validation procedures.

Table 2. Data collection procedures

Instrument	Participants	Purpose
Observation	Teachers and students	Examine literacy practices and reading activities
Interviews	Principals, teachers, and parents	Explore experiences, perceptions, and implementation challenges
Questionnaires	Teachers and parents	Assess literacy implementation and parental involvement
Reading Journals	Students	Monitor reading participation and progress
Documentation	Schools	Verify implementation processes and outcomes
Validation Forms	Experts	Assess model validity and feasibility

Observations were conducted to examine literacy practices, classroom activities, and student engagement throughout implementation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and parents to explore perceptions regarding literacy development and program implementation. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative information concerning literacy practices, parental involvement, and implementation quality. Student reading journals documented reading participation throughout the intervention period, while documentation analysis was employed to verify implementation processes and outcomes. The use of multiple instruments enabled methodological triangulation and strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings.

Model Validation

Prior to implementation, the Aku Suka Baca Program underwent expert validation involving six validators representing educational management, early childhood education, literacy studies, literacy practice, and school leadership. Validation focused on theoretical relevance, developmental appropriateness, literacy content, implementation feasibility, and program management. As presented in Table 3, the overall validity score reached 91.9%, indicating that the model met the criteria of a highly valid educational intervention and was suitable for implementation in early childhood education settings. The highest score was obtained from the educational management expert (96.6%), followed by the early childhood education expert (95.0%). All validators rated the model within the “highly valid” category, confirming its theoretical soundness and practical applicability.

Table 3. Expert validation results of the school–family literacy partnership model

Validator	Validation Focus	Validity Score (%)	Category
Educational Management Expert	Program management, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability	96.6	Highly Valid
Early Childhood Education Expert	Developmental appropriateness, emergent literacy, learning principles, and parental involvement	95.0	Highly Valid
Literacy Expert	Literacy concepts, reading habit formation, and content relevance	89.6	Highly Valid
Literacy Practitioner	Practicality and implementation feasibility	89.6	Highly Valid
School Principals (2 users)	Usability and applicability in school settings	90.6	Highly Valid
Overall Average	Overall model validity	91.9	Highly Valid

Recommendations provided by the validators were incorporated into the final revision of the model and its supporting instruments prior to field implementation. These revisions primarily focused on strengthening monitoring procedures, improving the practicality of implementation guidelines, and enhancing the clarity of parental literacy instructions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequencies, averages, and achievement categories. These analyses were used to evaluate reading participation, implementation effectiveness, and model validity (Rowe et al., 2025). Qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were coded, categorized, and interpreted thematically to identify recurring patterns related to literacy implementation, parental involvement, reading practices, and reading habit formation. Findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated during interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the School–Family Literacy Partnership Model in fostering reading habits among early childhood learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Designing the School–Family Literacy Partnership

The findings indicate that the literacy intervention was developed in response to the limited effectiveness of existing literacy initiatives in fostering sustainable reading habits among young children. Initial needs assessments identified several interconnected challenges, including limited access to age-appropriate reading materials, inconsistent literacy practices between schools and families, varying levels of parental involvement, and the absence of systematic mechanisms for monitoring children's reading activities (Klass et al., 2024). These findings highlighted the need for a more integrated approach that connects educational and family contexts. Accordingly, the intervention was designed as a School–Family Literacy Partnership model that positions reading habit formation as a shared responsibility between schools and families. Grounded in the view

that reading habits develop through repeated exposure, social reinforcement, and continuous engagement with texts, the model conceptualizes literacy development as an ongoing process extending across children's daily environments rather than being confined to classroom activities.

A central feature of the model is the integration of school literacy practices, family literacy activities, and educational management functions within a coordinated framework. Schools provide reading materials, organize literacy activities, monitor progress, and manage program implementation, while families reinforce literacy through home reading, shared discussions, and reading journals. The intervention further incorporates planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring processes, supported by reading journals, monitoring forms, operational procedures, and literacy guidelines that facilitate communication between teachers and parents. These mechanisms create an integrated literacy ecosystem in which schools, teachers, parents, and students assume complementary roles, transforming reading from an occasional educational activity into a sustainable practice embedded within children's everyday lives.

Implementing Literacy Activities Across School and Home Contexts

The implementation of the literacy intervention demonstrated how coordinated literacy activities can create continuity between school and home environments. The program was operationalized through a series of interconnected literacy practices that encouraged students to engage with books regularly while simultaneously strengthening collaboration between teachers and parents. At the school level, literacy activities focused primarily on facilitating access to books and creating opportunities for reading engagement. Teachers organized book circulation systems that enabled students to borrow books from school and take them home for independent or assisted reading. The availability of reading materials was a critical component of the intervention because previous observations indicated that limited access to books constituted a significant barrier to literacy development. By ensuring that students had continuous access to reading materials, the program sought to increase the frequency and consistency of reading experiences.

Teachers played a central role in facilitating literacy activities. Beyond administrative responsibilities, teachers acted as literacy mentors who encouraged reading participation, guided students in selecting books, and communicated regularly with parents regarding reading progress. Their involvement contributed to the creation of a literacy-supportive school culture in which reading was consistently promoted as a valued activity. The home environment represented an equally important implementation context. Students were expected to continue reading activities outside school hours, thereby extending literacy experiences beyond the classroom. Parents were encouraged to accompany children during reading sessions, listen to story retellings, discuss book content, and provide motivational support. This approach recognized that reading habit formation requires repeated exposure and that opportunities for repetition are significantly expanded when literacy activities continue at home.

Reading journals functioned as a key mechanism connecting school and home literacy environments. Each reading activity completed at home was recorded in the journal, creating a documented record of children's reading engagement. The journals served multiple purposes. First, they encouraged accountability by making reading activities visible to both parents and teachers. Second, they facilitated communication between

schools and families. Third, they provided students with a tangible record of their reading achievements, which helped sustain motivation over time. Monitoring and evaluation procedures were integrated throughout implementation. Teachers regularly reviewed reading journals and reading records to assess participation levels and identify students requiring additional support. This continuous monitoring process enabled schools to track progress systematically rather than relying solely on periodic assessments. As a result, literacy development became an ongoing process characterized by regular feedback and intervention.

The implementation process also included recognition mechanisms designed to reinforce reading behaviors. Students who achieved specified reading milestones received certificates acknowledging their accomplishments. While seemingly simple, these forms of recognition contributed to maintaining motivation and fostering positive attitudes toward reading. Achievement recognition transformed reading from an obligatory educational task into an activity associated with personal accomplishment and social appreciation. Overall, the implementation findings demonstrate that literacy interventions can be strengthened when reading opportunities are distributed across multiple environments and supported through coordinated institutional and familial practices. The combination of access to books, parental support, systematic monitoring, and achievement recognition created conditions conducive to sustained reading engagement among young learners.

Parental Engagement in Reading Practices

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the role of parental involvement in supporting children's reading habits. Across both participating schools, parents emerged as critical actors in the literacy process, contributing not only to reading participation but also to the establishment of literacy-supportive home environments. The intervention encouraged parents to assume active roles in literacy activities rather than functioning merely as observers of their children's educational experiences. Parents participated by accompanying children during reading sessions, helping them select books, listening to story retellings, discussing story content, providing encouragement, and completing reading journals. These activities transformed literacy from an individual learning task into a shared social experience.

Interview and observational data suggested that parental involvement generated several important outcomes. First, parental presence during reading activities increased children's willingness to engage with books. Young learners often demonstrated greater enthusiasm for reading when reading sessions involved interaction with parents. The social nature of these activities appeared to make reading more enjoyable and meaningful. Second, parental involvement contributed to the creation of consistent reading routines. Because reading activities occurred regularly at home, children became accustomed to allocating time for reading within their daily schedules. This routine element is particularly important from a habit formation perspective because habits emerge through repeated behaviors performed in stable contexts. The establishment of regular reading schedules therefore provided an important mechanism through which reading behaviors became increasingly normalized. Third, parents served as literacy role models. Consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of social modeling, children who observed family members engaging positively with books appeared more likely to perceive reading as a valuable activity. The intervention

therefore extended beyond direct instructional support and influenced broader literacy attitudes within households.

The findings also revealed that parental engagement strengthened communication between schools and families. Reading journals and monitoring activities created regular opportunities for interaction regarding children's literacy development. This communication enhanced parental awareness of educational goals while providing teachers with insights into children's literacy experiences outside school. Importantly, parental involvement did not require advanced educational qualifications or specialized literacy expertise. Rather, effective participation was characterized by consistent encouragement, interest in children's reading activities, and willingness to allocate time for shared literacy experiences. This finding suggests that family literacy interventions can be implemented across diverse socioeconomic and educational contexts provided that appropriate support structures are established. Overall, the evidence indicates that parental engagement functioned as a critical mechanism linking school literacy initiatives with children's everyday literacy experiences. Through their participation, parents reinforced literacy practices introduced at school and helped create conditions necessary for sustained reading habit formation.

Reading Habit Outcomes

The effectiveness of the School-Family Literacy Partnership model was reflected in substantial levels of reading participation achieved across both pilot schools. Program evaluation data indicated that students not only engaged actively with reading materials but also demonstrated reading frequencies that exceeded initial program expectations. At RA Ma'arif, program implementation achieved a success rate of 93.1%, with students reading an average of 71 book titles during the intervention period. Similarly, students at TK Melati achieved a success rate of 87.5%, with an average of 73 book titles read per student. These outcomes suggest that the intervention was successful in encouraging sustained reading participation among early childhood learners. The magnitude of reading participation is particularly noteworthy given broader concerns regarding reading culture and literacy engagement in Indonesia. National assessments and literacy studies have repeatedly highlighted challenges related to reading frequency and reading interest among students. Against this backdrop, the ability of participating students to engage with large numbers of books over the intervention period provides evidence that structured literacy support can significantly influence reading behavior.

The findings further suggest that reading habit formation was supported by the interaction of multiple program components rather than by any single intervention mechanism. Access to reading materials increased opportunities for reading. School-based monitoring ensured accountability. Reading journals provided continuity between school and home environments. Parental involvement reinforced literacy activities beyond the classroom. Recognition systems maintained motivation. Together, these components created an integrated literacy environment that supported repeated reading engagement. Beyond quantitative indicators, qualitative evidence suggested that students increasingly viewed reading as a routine activity rather than as a compulsory educational requirement. Teachers reported greater enthusiasm toward book borrowing, increased participation in reading-related activities, and stronger engagement with literacy tasks. Parents similarly observed improvements in children's willingness to read independently and discuss reading materials at home.

From a habit formation perspective, these findings indicate that repeated reading experiences supported by multiple social environments contributed to the gradual normalization of reading behaviors. The intervention therefore appears to have influenced not only reading frequency but also the behavioral routines underlying sustained literacy engagement. Taken together, the findings provide evidence that reading habits among young children can be strengthened through integrated literacy interventions that connect school and family environments. The results support the argument that literacy development is most effective when reading experiences are reinforced across multiple ecological settings and supported by coordinated partnerships between educational institutions and families.

Discussion

Reading Habit Formation as an Ecological Process

The findings of this study suggest that reading habit formation among young children should be understood as an ecological process rather than as an outcome of isolated school-based interventions. While literacy programs are often designed and implemented within educational institutions, the evidence from this study demonstrates that reading habits emerged through the interaction of multiple environments that collectively shaped children's literacy experiences. This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that child development is influenced by interconnected social contexts, particularly the family and school environments.

The success of the School-Family Literacy Partnership model indicates that literacy development cannot be fully explained through classroom instruction alone. Students participated in reading activities at school, borrowed books for home use, discussed stories with parents, recorded reading activities in journals, and received feedback from teachers. Consequently, reading became embedded within daily experiences occurring across multiple settings rather than remaining confined to formal educational spaces. Such continuity appears to have contributed significantly to the development of sustainable reading behaviors. This finding is particularly important in the context of early childhood education. Young children spend substantial portions of their daily lives within family environments, making home contexts critical sites of literacy development (Soyoof et al., 2023). Literacy interventions that focus exclusively on schools may therefore overlook opportunities for reinforcing reading behaviors through family engagement. The present study suggests that literacy promotion is most effective when children encounter consistent literacy expectations and practices across both school and home environments.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to emerging discussions regarding literacy ecosystems. Rather than conceptualizing literacy as a discrete educational activity, the results support a broader understanding of literacy as a socially embedded practice sustained through interactions among institutions, families, and individuals. Reading habits appear to develop not simply because children are taught to read but because they participate repeatedly in literacy-supportive environments where reading is valued, encouraged, and normalized. The ecological perspective also helps explain why reading participation levels were relatively high throughout the intervention (Allen et al., 2023). Because literacy activities were reinforced across multiple contexts, children experienced repeated opportunities to engage with books (Schmidt, 2023). Repetition is widely recognized as a fundamental mechanism of habit formation, and the interaction between

school and family environments increased the frequency and consistency of reading experiences. Consequently, the findings support the proposition that reading habit formation is best understood as the outcome of coordinated ecological influences rather than isolated educational interventions.

The Importance of Integrating School and Family Literacy Practices

A second important finding concerns the significance of integrating school literacy and family literacy practices. Although both school-based literacy and family literacy have been extensively discussed within the literature, they are frequently treated as separate domains of inquiry and intervention. The findings of this study suggest that the effectiveness of literacy programs may depend less on the strength of either domain individually and more on the extent to which they are connected through deliberate and systematic collaboration. The results support previous studies emphasizing the importance of partnerships between schools and families in supporting literacy development. Ho and Lau (2018) argue that collaboration between schools and families can create positive reading environments that encourage children's literacy engagement. Similarly, Merga and Roni (2018) emphasize the importance of stronger school-family relationships in promoting literacy development. The present study extends these arguments by demonstrating how such collaboration can be operationalized through an integrated literacy intervention.

One notable feature of the intervention was its ability to eliminate the traditional separation between school literacy activities and home literacy experiences. In many educational contexts, literacy programs end when students leave school. Consequently, opportunities for reading engagement become dependent on individual family circumstances rather than being systematically supported through institutional mechanisms. The School-Family Literacy Partnership model addressed this limitation by creating structured pathways through which literacy activities continued beyond school hours. This continuity appears to have generated several advantages. First, it increased the amount of time children spent interacting with reading materials. Second, it strengthened consistency between educational expectations and family practices. Third, it enabled schools and families to share responsibility for literacy development. Rather than operating independently, teachers and parents became partners in supporting children's reading experiences.

The findings therefore challenge the assumption that literacy development can be achieved primarily through school-based interventions. While schools remain central actors in literacy promotion, their effectiveness may be significantly enhanced when literacy practices are reinforced within family environments. This insight has important implications for literacy policy, particularly in contexts where reading culture remains relatively weak and where schools alone may lack sufficient capacity to transform literacy behaviors. The Indonesian context provides a useful illustration of this challenge. National assessments and literacy studies have repeatedly identified low reading engagement as a persistent concern. The present findings suggest that addressing this challenge may require moving beyond institutional literacy programs toward more comprehensive approaches that mobilize both educational and family resources.

Parental Involvement as a Mechanism of Reading Habit Formation

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study concerns the role of parental involvement in reading habit formation. Existing research consistently identifies parents as important contributors to children's literacy development. Chen (2008), Curry et al.

6 (2016), and Kinkead-Clark (2017) all emphasize the influence of family environments on literacy learning and reading behavior. However, the findings of this study suggest that parental involvement should be understood not merely as a supportive factor but as a central mechanism through which reading habits are formed and sustained. The intervention encouraged parents to participate actively in reading activities through reading assistance, story discussions, motivational support, and reading journal completion. These practices transformed reading from an individual task into a shared social activity. As a result, children experienced reading not only as an educational requirement but also as an opportunity for interaction, communication, and relationship building.

29 This finding resonates with social learning perspectives, which emphasize the importance of observation and modeling in shaping behavior. Children who observe parents engaging positively with literacy practices are more likely to internalize reading as a meaningful and desirable activity. The present study suggests that parental involvement contributes not only to literacy skill development but also to the social normalization of reading within family life. Another important contribution relates to routine formation. Habit formation theories emphasize that repeated behaviors performed in stable contexts are more likely to become automatic over time. Parents played a crucial role in establishing these stable contexts by creating regular opportunities for reading within daily household routines. Reading activities became embedded within children's everyday schedules, thereby increasing the likelihood that reading behaviors would persist beyond the duration of the intervention.

The findings also indicate that parental involvement contributed to children's motivation to read. Motivation is frequently identified as a key determinant of reading engagement, particularly during early childhood. Yet motivation is often treated as an individual characteristic rather than as a socially produced outcome. The present study suggests that parental encouragement, praise, and participation can enhance children's willingness to engage with reading activities, thereby strengthening motivation through interpersonal relationships. Importantly, the effectiveness of parental involvement did not appear to depend primarily on educational background or literacy expertise. Rather, meaningful participation was characterized by consistency, encouragement, and engagement with children's reading experiences. This finding has significant practical implications because it suggests that family literacy interventions may be accessible to a wide range of households, including those with limited educational resources.

Taken together, these findings support a reconceptualization of parental involvement within literacy research. Parents should not be viewed merely as external supporters of school programs but as active co-producers of literacy environments. Their participation represents a critical mechanism through which reading habits are reinforced, normalized, and sustained over time.

Toward a School-Family Literacy Partnership Model

2 The final contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual model that integrates insights from literacy research, habit formation theory, and ecological perspectives on child development. While previous studies have extensively examined school literacy initiatives and family literacy practices, these strands of literature have often developed independently. The present findings suggest that greater attention should be given to the interaction between these domains.

Based on the findings, this study proposes a School–Family Literacy Partnership Model consisting of five interrelated components: (1) access to reading materials, (2) school literacy facilitation, (3) parental engagement, (4) monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and (5) reading recognition systems. The first component, access to reading materials, addresses one of the most frequently identified barriers to literacy participation. Without adequate access to books, opportunities for reading engagement remain limited regardless of motivation or instructional quality. The second component, school literacy facilitation, ensures that literacy activities are organized, supported, and monitored within educational settings. Teachers play a central role in creating literacy-rich environments and encouraging reading participation.

The third component, parental engagement, extends literacy experiences into family contexts and provides opportunities for repeated reading practice. The fourth component, monitoring and feedback mechanisms, creates accountability and continuity across school and home environments. Reading journals, progress records, and teacher feedback help maintain engagement while enabling ongoing assessment of literacy participation. Finally, recognition systems reinforce reading behaviors by acknowledging achievements and encouraging sustained commitment to literacy activities. Together, these components create a literacy ecosystem that supports reading habit formation through repeated exposure, social reinforcement, and environmental consistency. The model therefore extends existing literacy frameworks by emphasizing the importance of coordinated interactions between schools and families rather than treating these environments as separate spheres of influence.

From a theoretical perspective, the model contributes to literacy scholarship by integrating Family Literacy Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, and Habit Formation Theory into a unified framework for understanding reading habit development. From a practical perspective, it offers a potentially scalable approach for literacy promotion in early childhood education settings, particularly in contexts where reading culture remains underdeveloped. Ultimately, the findings suggest that sustainable reading habits are unlikely to emerge from isolated literacy initiatives. Instead, reading habits develop when literacy experiences are consistently reinforced across multiple environments through collaborative partnerships among schools, families, and children themselves. This insight represents the central contribution of the present study and provides a foundation for future research examining integrated approaches to literacy development in early childhood education.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The integrated School–Family Literacy Partnership Model effectively strengthened children's reading habits by connecting school literacy activities, family literacy practices, parental engagement, monitoring, and reading recognition systems. Reading habit formation emerged through continuous interactions between school and home environments, demonstrating that literacy development is an ecological and collaborative process rather than a school-centered activity alone. **Implication:** The findings support the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and sustainable literacy development through school–family collaboration in early childhood education. They also contribute to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by highlighting the importance of partnerships among schools, families, and communities to strengthen literacy culture and improve educational outcomes. **Limitation:** The intervention was conducted in only two early childhood education institutions, limiting

the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the research focused on reading participation and habit formation without examining long-term literacy achievement or reading comprehension outcomes. **Future Research:** Future research should examine the long-term sustainability of reading habits through longitudinal studies involving larger and more diverse samples across different cultural and educational contexts. Further investigation is also needed to evaluate the scalability of the proposed model and its impact on literacy achievement, reading comprehension, and other educational outcomes.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ida Farida contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, methodology development. **Rusijono** was instrument development, data collection, formal analysis. **Karwanto** was manuscript drafting, and project administration. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors state that no financial or personal conflicts of interest exist that may have affected the content or findings of this research.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI OR DIGITAL TOOLS IN WRITING

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other digital writing assistants were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All stages of the research process, including data analysis, interpretation, and manuscript writing, were conducted solely by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the content presented in this article.

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