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Research Article:

Family's Role in Cultivating Students' Reading Habits: Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review explores the role of families in fostering students' reading habits, based on 38 empirical studies analysed using ROSES framework and thematic synthesis. Four themes and eight subthemes were identified: The influence of the parents as reading models, the availability of reading materials, family interaction in reading activities, the role of the parents in digital literacy and interactive reading. The findings show the importance of family engagement, both traditional and digital, shapes children's reading motivation, frequency and long-term literacy outcomes. However, the evidence base is uneven, with regional imbalances and heterogeneous study designs, and findings are largely derived from self-reported data. This review contributes by highlighting how different forms of family involvement intersect to influence literacy, while also outlining the need for more contextually diverse and methodologically robust research.

Keywords: Reading habits, reading skills, literacy development, parents support, family engagement

INTRODUCTION

Reading serves as a fundamental avenue for expanding knowledge. Sustained reading practices significantly influence both academic achievement and lifelong learning. It is therefore imperative to understand the various factors that shape reading habits, particularly among students. Among these factors, the family plays a pivotal role in nurturing children's reading behaviours and shaping their attitudes towards reading (Wirth et al., 2022). This article presents a systematic literature review focusing on the role of the family in the development of students' reading habits.

International literacy assessments such as Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows declination, especially in contexts where home-based literacy support is limited (OECD, 2021). In Malaysia, national data similarly indicates that although students have increased access to reading materials, their motivation to read remains low, partly due to limited parental involvement in home-based reading activities. Empirical evidence consistently identifies parents as central figures in shaping children's attitude and motivation towards reading (Fälth, 2021; Sturges et al., 2022). Reading practices at home, such as storytelling, supplying reading materials, and regular encouragement has been shown to promote stronger reading engagement among students (Qiuchi & Yuxin, 2021).

Besides, intrinsic motivation that encouraged by family positive reinforcement associated with stronger passion for reading and improved performance in literacy assessment (Ganiyeva, 2021). The effectiveness of parental involvement is not only depending on intensity or frequency, but also quality interaction, where meaningful reading experience give a huge impact rather than a regular repetitive routine. Therefore, a supportive home environment and parents are considered vital in the development of students' reading habits (Kamala, 2022).

Although numerous studies emphasised the important of family roles in literacy development, most existing reviews only focusing on general literacy development or home literacy environment without specifically discussing on reading habits. In addition, current proves are dominated by studies from developed countries, while in the context of developing countries is still not explored in depth, making the generalisation of findings quite limited. From a methodological point of view, most studies depend on self-report and less use of longitudinal designs that can illustrates long-term effects. There is a need to consolidate diverse findings in order to understand how different aspects of family involvement, including emotional, behavioural, and environmental factors, contribute to reading habits development. Without such synthesis, it is difficult for educators and policymakers to formulate effective family–school partnerships that are grounded in evidence-based practices.

To address this issue, the present review is guided by the following research question: To what extent does family involvement influence the formation and sustainability of students' reading habits? By synthesising existing literature, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how family dynamics, available resources, and various forms of support contribute to students' reading behaviours. Ultimately, this study seeks to demonstrate how family involvement enhances academic outcomes and nurtures a lasting appreciation for literacy.

METHODOLOGY

Review Protocol – ROSES

This review employed the ROSES framework (Reporting Standards for Systematic Evidence Syntheses) introduced by Haddaway et al. (2018) to ensure clarity and transparency throughout the process. Although originally developed for environmental studies, its structured design is applicable to educational research. To guide the review focus, the research question was formulated using the PICO framework, which covers the problem, intervention, comparison, and outcome. The review process comprised several key stages, including identification, screening, and assessment of article eligibility. Prior to final inclusion, the methodological quality of each study was evaluated based on appraisal criteria developed by Hong et al. (2018). Only studies that met the required quality standards were included in the final synthesis. Data extraction was aligned with the research question to ensure analytical relevance. A thematic synthesis approach was used to identify recurring patterns and trends within the selected studies. This process ensured that the review remained systematic and coherent while maintaining strong alignment between the data and the guiding research question.

Formulation of the Research Question

The research question for this systematic literature review was developed based on key findings discussed in the introduction. Prior studies have consistently highlighted the influence of family involvement, especially parental engagement, in shaping students' reading attitudes and habits (Wirth et al., 2022; Sturges et al., 2022; Fälth, 2021; Qiuchi & Yuxin, 2021; Ganiyeva, 2021; Kamala, 2022). These findings emphasise the importance of the home literacy environment in fostering sustained reading engagement.

To structure the question systematically, the PICO framework was applied. The problem identified is the inconsistency in students' reading habits, which is often linked to limited family support. The intervention refers to the roles families may play in

promoting reading, while the comparison considers varying levels of engagement. The expected outcome is the development of consistent and sustained reading habits.

Accordingly, the guiding research question for this review is: To what extent does family involvement influence the formation and sustainability of students' reading habits? This question aims to explore how different aspects of family support contribute to students' reading development across educational and sociocultural contexts.

Systematic Searching Strategies

To ensure methodological rigor and transparency, this review adopted a clearly defined and multi-stage search strategy. The overall procedure was guided by the systematic review framework proposed by Shaffril et al. (2021), which consists of three sequential stages: Identification, screening, and eligibility assessment. During the identification stage, a wide range of search terms and related keywords were formulated to capture all relevant literature. The screening phase then involved the application of predetermined inclusion criteria to filter out studies that did not align with the scope of the review. Lastly, an eligibility evaluation was carried out to confirm the suitability and relevance of the selected articles for final analysis. This structured approach enabled the researchers to conduct a comprehensive, replicable, and reliable synthesis of the available evidence (Nawaz et al., 2025).

Identification

This phase focused on three main tasks: refining keywords, applying varied search strategies, and selecting appropriate databases, as suggested by Shaffril et al. (2021). Four key terms were drawn from the research question: (i) support, (ii) family, (iii) reading habits, and (iv) students. To improve the relevance of search results, these terms were expanded using synonyms, related phrases, and word variations. Advanced search techniques such as Boolean operators, phrase matching, field tags, truncation, and wildcards were applied in Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). The same search string was used for ERIC database, but some operators could not be applied due to limitations in its search functions. Therefore, additional manual checking was carried out to identify relevant articles. This phase yielded a total of 1,718 articles. Table 1 presents the full search strings used in each database to ensure transparency and replicability of the identification process.

Table 1. Search string used in the selected database

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((support* OR role* OR influence*) AND (parent* OR family) AND ("reading habit*" OR "reading pleasure" OR "reading culture*" OR "reading enjoyment") AND (student* OR pupil OR children OR learner))
WoS	ALL=((support* OR role* OR influence*) AND (parent* OR family) AND ("reading habit*" OR "reading pleasure" OR "reading culture*" OR "reading enjoyment") AND (student* OR pupil OR children OR learner))
ERIC	((support* OR role* OR influence*) AND (parent* OR family) AND ("reading habit*" OR "reading pleasure" OR "reading culture*" OR "reading enjoyment") AND (student* OR pupil OR children OR learner))

Screening summary

The screening phase involved applying specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to refine the selection of relevant studies, as outlined in Table 2. The initial screening of titles and abstracts was conducted to determine alignment with the review focus on the roles of schools, families, and communities in supporting reading habits. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2019 and 2024 in the fields of Education and Social Sciences were retained. Publications in other languages, conference proceedings, book chapters, and unpublished studies were excluded. Full-text screening was then carried out to assess methodological rigour and relevance to the research question. After removing duplicates and studies that did not meet the criteria, a total of 331 articles were included for final synthesis, ensuring that the review was grounded in high-quality and relevant evidence.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2019–2024	< 2019 and >2024
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication stage	Final	On-going
Subject area	Education and Social Sciences	Besides Education and Social Sciences

Eligibility

A detailed eligibility assessment was carried out on 331 full-text articles that met the screening criteria, as illustrated in Figure 1. Each article was reviewed for content

relevance, methodological soundness, and alignment with the research question. A total of 293 articles were excluded due to reasons such as limited scope, unrelated focus, discrepancies between titles and abstracts, or lack of full-text availability. Following this process, 38 articles were selected for qualitative synthesis, ensuring the inclusion of studies that met the required standards of quality and relevance.
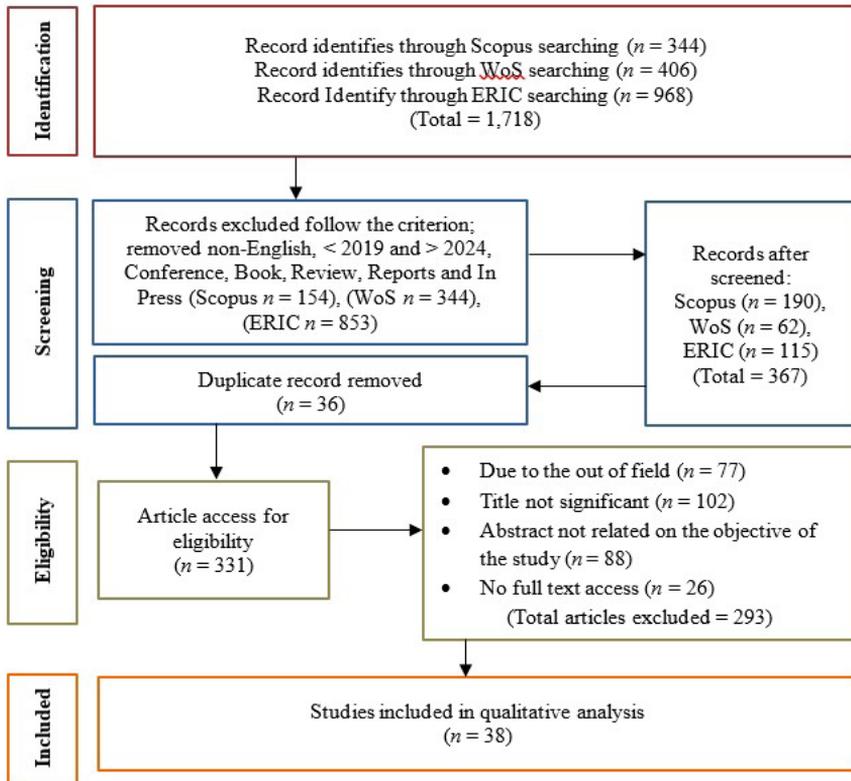

Figure 1. Flow diagram of the study

Quality Appraisal

The quality of the 38 selected studies that were included in the final synthesis was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) developed by Hong et al. (2018). This tool supports the evaluation of diverse study designs across five categories: qualitative research, randomised controlled trials, non-randomised studies, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed methods research. Before appraisal, the studies underwent initial filtering through title and abstract screening, followed by a full-text review. Each included article was then assessed using five MMAT criteria based on its

methodological design. Responses were marked as "yes", "no", or "can't tell", depending on how clearly each criterion was met. The appraisal focused on elements such as clarity of research aims, appropriateness of methods, sampling strategies, and consistency of results, as summarised in Table 3. Only studies that met at least three out of five criteria were retained for final synthesis. Among the 38 selected studies, 28 fulfilled all five criteria, eight met four, and two met three (Table 4). This evaluation process ensured that the findings were grounded in studies with adequate methodological quality.

Table 3. Quality assessment (QA) criteria for different research designs (Hong et al., 2018)

Research design	Quality assessment criteria
Qualitative (QL)	QA1: Appropriateness of qualitative approach for the research question
	QA2: Adequacy of qualitative data collection methods
	QA3: Proper derivation of findings from data
	QA4: Sufficient substantiation of result interpretation by data
	QA5: Coherence among qualitative data sources, collection, analysis, and interpretation
Quantitative Descriptive (QN-DC)	QA1: Relevance of sampling strategy to research question
	QA2: Representativeness of sample for target population
	QA3: Appropriateness of measurements
	QA4: Low risk of nonresponse bias
	QA5: Suitability of statistical analysis for research question
Quantitative Non-randomised (QN-NR)	QA1: Representativeness of participants for target population
	QA2: Appropriateness of outcome and intervention/exposure measurements
	QA3: Completeness of outcome data
	QA4: Consideration of confounders in design and analysis
	QA5: Proper administration of intervention/occurrence of exposure during study
Mixed Methods (MX)	QA1: Adequate justification for mixed methods design
	QA2: Effective integration of study components to address research question
	QA3: Appropriate interpretation of integrated qualitative and quantitative results
	QA4: Adequate addressing of divergences between quantitative and qualitative results
	QA5: Adherence of each component to quality criteria of respective methodological traditions

Table 4. Findings from the quality evaluation

No.	Authors	Year	Research design	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Total QA score
1	Dunn et al.	2023	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
2	Loh et al.	2020	MX	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
3	Narentuya & Mengchen	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
4	Yildiz	2020	QN-NR	/	X	/	X	/	3/5
5	Rishidev et al.	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
6	Zare et al.	2023	QL	/	/	/	/	/	4/5
7	Tabernero Sala et al.	2022	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
8	Mahasneh et al.	2021	QN-NR	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
9	Mushtaq et al.	2021	QN-DC	/	/	/	X	/	4/5
10	Gul et al.	2020	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
11	Altun et al.	2022	QN-DC	/	C	/	/	/	4/5
12	Wang et al.	2021	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
13	Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa	2021	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
14	Santrić et al.	2019	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
15	Ramírez et al.	2020	MX	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
16	Romero-González et al.	2023	MX	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
17	Xu et al.	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	C	/	4/5
18	Arnaud & Gutman	2022	QL	/	/	/	C	/	4/5
19	Pérez et al.	2021	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
20	Roux	2024	QL	/	/	/	X	X	3/5
21	Ulvinen et al.	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
22	Claes et al.	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
23	Spann & Wagner	2023	QN-DC	/	/	/	X	/	4/5
24	Wirth et al.	2020	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
25	Clavel & Mediavilla	2020	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5

Table 4. (Continued)

No.	Authors	Year	Research design	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Total QA score
26	Day et al.	2024	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
27	Stangeland et al.	2023	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
28	Nurmahanani	2024	QN-NR	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
29	Lenkewitz	2023	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
30	Mat Roni & Merga	2019	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
31	Tura et al.	2023	QN-NR	/	/	/	X	/	4/5
32	Nailer et al.	2023	QL	/	/	/	C	/	4/5
33	Cekiso	2024	QL	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
34	Hugo & Bachisi	2024	QL	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
35	Sun et al.	2023	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
36	Wirth et al.	2022	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
37	Madjdi et al.	2024	QL	/	/	/	/	/	5/5
38	Cochrane et al.	2022	QN-DC	/	/	/	/	/	5/5

Notes. QA = Quality assessment; QL = Qualitative; QN-DC = Qualitative descriptive; QN-NR = Quantitative non-randomised; MX = Mixed methods; / = Yes (Criterion clearly met); X = No (Criterion not met); C = Can't tell (insufficient information); Total score represents the number of criteria met out of five

Data Extraction and Analysis Summary

Data were manually extracted based on predefined inclusion criteria that aligned with the research question. A structured matrix-based extraction form was developed using Microsoft Excel to capture key information from the 38 selected articles. The form included fields such as article title, author(s), publication year, country, study design, sample characteristics, and findings related to the family's role in shaping students' reading habits.

The extracted data were analysed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method for identifying, organising, and interpreting patterns across data (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). This approach was selected for its flexibility and its capacity to organize complex findings into coherent themes (Labra et al., 2020). The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, beginning with repeated readings of the full-text articles to build familiarity. Inductive coding was used to capture recurring patterns and ideas relevant to the review focus.

Codes were grouped into initial themes, which were refined iteratively to ensure internal consistency and conceptual clarity. Final themes were clearly defined and named to reflect their core meanings. A narrative synthesis was then developed, supported by illustrative data excerpts.

Thematic analysis yielded four major themes and eight subthemes. Coding procedures were cross-checked collaboratively to ensure interrater reliability and minimize interpretive bias (Thompson, 2022). Thematic analysis is considered well-suited for systematic reviews, especially in synthesising qualitative evidence and uncovering conceptual, behavioural, and contextual patterns (Kuckartz, 2019; Thomas & Harden, 2008). This approach also enabled deeper interpretive engagement with the literature, extending beyond surface-level descriptions to provide meaningful insights into the influence of family on students' reading development.

RESULTS

Background of the Selected Studies

This systematic review has comprised 38 empirical studies from varied geographical areas, research designs, and publication years, providing a thorough understanding of the roles of family in cultivating students' reading habits. Mapping the background of these studies is critical for situating the review findings within larger educational, cultural, and chronological settings.

From 38 articles analysed, three studies each were conducted in Australia (Day et al., 2024; Mat Roni & Merga, 2019; Nailer et al., 2023), Spain (Pérez et al., 2021; Romero-González et al., 2023; Tabernero Sala et al., 2022), Germany (Lenkewitz, 2023; Wirth et al., 2020; 2022), and China (Narentuya & Mengchen, 2024; Wang et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2024). Two studies each were focused in Pakistan (Gul et al., 2020; Mushtaq et al., 2021), Indonesia (Madjdi et al., 2024; Nurmahanani, 2024), Canada (Dunn et al., 2023; Zare et al., 2023), Singapore (Loh et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2023), South Africa (Cekiso, 2024; Roux, 2024), and the US (Arnaud & Gutman, 2022; Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa, 2021). Thirteen studies were conducted in each of the following countries including Iraq (Yildiz, 2020), India (Rishidev et al., 2024), United Kingdom (Tura et al., 2023), Jordan (Mahasneh et al., 2021), Turkiye (Altun et al., 2022), Croatia (Santrić et al., 2019), Finland (Ulvinen et al., 2024), Belgium (Claes et al., 2024), Chile, Poland, and Portugal (Ramírez et al., 2020), Austria (Spann & Wagner, 2023), Norway (Stangeland et al., 2023), Zimbabwe (Hugo & Bachisi, 2024), and Qatar (Cochrane et al., 2022). The remaining studies had international coverage that focusing on five countries which are Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, and Portugal (Clavel & Mediavilla, 2020).

In terms of research design, a total of 28 studies used quantitative approaches, primarily descriptive and non-randomised. Three studies were evaluated utilising mixed-methods approaches, which combine qualitative and quantitative data to produce more comprehensive interpretations. Seven studies use qualitative methodologies to study the living experiences of readers. In terms of publication year, two articles were published in 2019, six studies in 2020, five studies in 2021 and 2022, nine studies in 2023 and 11 articles in 2024.

The Established Themes

Thematic analysis of the 38 selected articles resulted in the development of four themes and eight subthemes, aligned with the research objective.

Four themes were developed including:

1. The Influence of the Parents as Reading Models (FPI).

2. The Availability of Reading Materials at Home (FRM).

3. The Role of the Family Interaction in Reading Activities (FIA).

4. The Role of the Parents in Digital Literacy and Interactive Reading (FDL).

These themes expand into another eight subthemes, which are: Parents show interest in reading at home (FPR), Discussion and reflection with children about reading materials (FPD), Variety of reading materials at home (FRV), Provision of a conducive reading space for children (FRS), Reading together with family (FIT), Family support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest (FIS), The use of reading applications that is suitable for the age of children (FDA), and Parental monitoring in the use of digital reading materials (FDM). The themes and subthemes are summarised in Table 5.

Across the 38 studies, FRV (variety of reading materials at home) was the most frequently reported subtheme with 27 studies, followed by FIT (reading together with family) with 20 studies and FPR (Parents show interest in reading at home) with 19 studies. In contrast, FPD (discussion and reflection with children about reading materials), FIS (family support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest), and FDA (the use of reading applications that is suitable for the age of children) discovered in three articles each. FDM (parental monitoring in the use of digital reading materials) is supported by 11 articles and FRS (provision of a conducive reading space for children) have been found in one article. The categorisation of themes and subthemes for each of the 38 articles is clearly presented in Table 6 to enhance clarity and organisation of the findings.

Table 5. Themes and subthemes

Themes		Subthemes	
The Influence of the Parents as Reading Models	FPI	Parents show interest in reading at home	FPR
		Discussion and reflection with children about reading materials	FPD
The Availability of Reading Materials at Home	FRM	Variety of reading materials at home	FRV
		Provision of a conducive reading space for children	FRS
The Role of the Family Interaction in Reading Activities	FIA	Reading together with family	FIT
		Family support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest	FIS
The Role of the Parents in Digital Literacy and Interactive Reading	FDL	The use of reading applications that is suitable for the age of children	FDA
		Parental monitoring in the use of digital reading materials	FDM

Notes. FPR = Parents show interest in reading at home; FPD = Discussion and reflection with children about reading materials; FRV = Variety of reading materials at home; FRS = Provision of a conducive reading space for children; FIT = Reading together with family; FIS = Family support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest; FDA = The use of reading applications that is suitable for the age of children; FDM = Parental monitoring in the use of digital reading materials.

Table 6. Findings

Authors/ Theme	FPI		FRM		FIA		FDL	
Subthemes	FPR	FPD	FRV	FRS	FIT	FIS	FDA	FDM
Dunn et al. (2023)	/		/		/			
Loh et al. (2020)	/							
Narentuya & Mengchen (2024)			/	/				
Yildiz (2020)	/		/		/			
Rishidev et al. (2024)	/							
Zare et al. (2023)					/			
Tabernero Sala et al. (2022)	/		/					
Mahasneh et al. (2021)			/					
Mushtaq et al. (2021)	/							
Gul et al. (2020)			/					
Altun et al. (2022)	/		/		/		/	

Table 6. (Continued)

Authors/ Theme	FPI		FRM		FIA		FDL	
Subthemes	FPR	FPD	FRV	FRS	FIT	FIS	FDA	FDM
Wang et al. (2022)			/			/		
Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa (2021)	/		/		/			
Santrić et al. (2019)			/		/			
Ramírez et al. (2020)			/					
Romero-González et al. (2023)	/				/	/		/
Xu et al. (2024)			/		/			/
Arnaud & Gutman (2022)			/		/			
Pérez et al. (2021)	/		/		/			/
Roux (2024)			/		/			
Ulvinen et al. (2024)			/		/			
Claes et al. (2024)	/		/		/			/
Spann & Wagner (2023)	/		/					
Wirth et al. (2020)	/	/	/		/			
Clavel & Mediavilla (2020)	/	/						
Day et al. (2024)			/		/			/
Stangeland et al. (2023)	/		/		/			/
Nurmahanani (2024)								/
Lenkewitz (2023)			/					
Mat Roni & Merga (2019)	/				/	/		
Tura et al. (2023)			/		/			/
Nailer et al. (2023)	/							
Cekiso (2024)	/							
Hugo & Bachisi (2024)							/	/
Sun et al. (2023)			/				/	/
Wirth et al. (2022)			/		/			/
Madjdi et al. (2024)			/					
Cochrane et al. (2022)	/	/	/		/			

Notes. FPR = Parents show interest in reading at home; FPD = Discussion and reflection with children about reading materials; FRV = Variety of reading materials at home; FRS = Provision of a conducive reading space for children; FIT = Reading together with family; FIS = Family support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest; FDA = The use of reading applications that is suitable for the age of children; FDM = Parental monitoring in the use of digital reading materials.

DISCUSSION

The discussion in this section includes the themes and subthemes established from the analysis of 38 selected articles in this systematic review. This section aims to interpret the key findings, identify recurring patterns, and relate the results to prior studies, while also highlighting their implications in cultivating students' reading habits. Therefore, all citations used in this section refer to the set of studies included in the final corpus of this review.

The Influence of the Parents as Reading Models (FPI)

The first theme focuses on parents as primary reading role models who significantly influence the development of children's reading habits through indirect socialisation. Two subthemes were identified: Parents show interest in reading at home (FPR) and discussion and reflection with children about reading materials (FPD). The first subtheme, FPR reported in 19 out of 38 articles, highlights that parents who regularly engage in reading demonstrate that reading is a valued and enjoyable activity, which can shape their children's attitudes toward reading. For instance, Dunn et al. (2023) mention that the frequency of reading for enjoyment is a significant predictor of children's reading skills. This is supported by other studies showing that parents who read for pleasure tend to raise children with stronger reading motivation and performance (Clavel & Mediavilla, 2020; Stangeland et al., 2023). Children are more likely to adopt reading habits when they observe enthusiasm and consistency in their parents' reading behaviour (Claes et al., 2024; Mat Roni & Merga, 2019; Romero-González et al., 2023; Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa, 2021). These findings emphasise that parental reading modelling promotes literacy development and fosters intrinsic motivation in children through indirect socialisation.

The second subtheme, FPD, although only identified in three articles, suggests that interactive reading conversations at home can enhance children's engagement with texts. Parents who show interest in reading, such as by actively discussing books, asking questions, and reflecting on content, help deepen comprehension and build emotional connections to literature (Cochrane et al., 2022; Wirth et al., 2020). Clavel and Mediavilla (2020) also argue that parents contribute to reading development not only by modelling reading behavior but also by encouraging open conversations that express curiosity and enjoyment. The findings support the view that parent-child discussions and reflections are key factors in cultivating critical thinking and reinforcing positive attitudes toward reading. However, some studies also caution that when parental modelling shifts into pressure or control, children's intrinsic motivation may decline (Xu et al., 2024) . Therefore, it will lead to resistance rather than engagement.

The Availability of Reading Materials at Home (FRM)

The second theme highlights the importance of enriching the home environment with diverse and accessible reading materials, which significantly contributes to cultivating children's reading habits and supporting language development. Two subthemes support this theme: variety of reading materials at home (FRV) and provision of a conducive reading space (FRS). FRV appeared in 27 out of 38 articles, focuses on the significance of having a wide range of reading resources at home. Numerous studies affirm that access to a larger number of books supports literacy development and fosters regular reading behavior (Dunn et al., 2023; Narentuya & Mengchen, 2024). Some studies found that children develop stronger reading attitudes and comprehension when homes are equipped with various reading materials (Altun et al., 2022; Claes et al., 2024). Sun et al. (2023) and Ulvinen et al. (2024) suggest that the availability of books, comics, magazines, and multilingual texts across genres increases reading motivation and language exposure. In contrast, limited access to reading materials, particularly in low-income households, poses challenges in cultivating reading engagement (Arnaud & Gutman, 2022; Tura et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2024). These findings show that the diversity of material is not only an issue of quantity, but also an issue of equality of access across socio-economic backgrounds. Most studies on FRV came from high-income contexts with resource abundance, whereas research in developing countries revealed structural barriers such as limited access and financial constraints (Hugo & Bachisi, 2024). This highlights that the availability of materials cannot be generalised equally across regions.

The subtheme of provision of conducive reading space for children (FRS) was identified in only one study, suggests that this aspect remains underexplored in the literature. FRS underscores the importance of having a quiet, dedicated, and comfortable space for reading at home. Narentuya and Mengchen (2024) note that supportive reading environments, including appropriate furniture, good lighting, and digital tools, are essential to encourage reading. A well-prepared reading space provides physical comfort and signals that reading is a valued activity within the home. This arrangement helps children to develop reading habits through both material and environmental support provided by the home literacy setting. Although this finding provides important perspectives on the reading environment, they are still indicative and require more research in diverse contexts, particularly in developing countries.

The Role of the Family Interaction in Reading Activities (FIA)

In contrast to FPI, the third theme, FIA emphasises direct socialisation through shared literacy experiences. Family plays a foundational role in nurturing children's reading habits through shared literacy experiences and support in selecting appropriate materials. Two subthemes are discussed: reading together with family (FIT) and family

support in choosing reading materials that suit the child's interest (FIS). There are 20 articles highlight FIT, discussing on the positive impact of shared reading and home-based literacy practices on language development, reading motivation, and socioemotional growth. Home learning activities during school closures, for example, significantly predicted students' word reading performance (Dunn et al., 2023). Other studies emphasised that bedtime reading and active engagement fostered enjoyment and sustained interest in reading (Altun et al., 2022; Yildiz, 2020; Zare et al., 2023). Shared reading also enhanced vocabulary, comprehension, and family bonding (Claes et al., 2024; Wirth et al., 2020; 2022; Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa, 2021), including peer and sibling interaction (Arnaud & Gutman, 2022; Roux, 2024). However, Day et al. (2024) noted a decline in shared reading frequency post-pandemic, highlighting the need for renewed parental support. Collectively, these findings affirm that sustained, high-quality family interactions are essential to fostering both linguistic and affective dimensions of reading. However, while shared reading is often reported as bedtime stories in Western contexts, studies in Asian and Middle Eastern families suggest that literacy support may be embedded in broader family routines rather than limited to parent-child dyads (Narentuya & Mengchen, 2024; Wang et al., 2022). This indicates cultural variation in how family support is practised.

At least three articles mentioned about FIS, discusses the need for parental assistance in selecting reading materials appropriate to children's interests and proficiency. Wang et al. (2022) note the role of families in developing reading strategies, while Romero-González et al. (2023) emphasise how narrative texts selected by families can maintain children's reading enjoyment. Continued parental encouragement, particularly through personalised choices, helps prevent disengagement and strengthens children's belief in the value of reading (Mat Roni & Merga, 2019). Even though the evidence is still limited, this subtheme emphasises the importance of family guidance in maintaining children's motivation to continue reading.

The Role of the Parents in Digital Literacy and Interactive Reading (FDL)

The fourth theme focuses on the role of parents in supporting children's literacy development through digital reading practices. Two subthemes are established: the use of age-appropriate reading applications (FDA) and parental monitoring of digital reading materials (FDM). FDA appeared in three articles, highlights the importance of exposing children to suitable digital platforms. Studies show increasing engagement with reading apps and digital storybooks at home (Altun et al., 2022; Hugo & Bachisi, 2024). Platforms such as Wattpad demonstrate how digital tools can align with student preferences when used appropriately. Digital reading now complements traditional print material as a regular component of home literacy (Sun et al., 2023; Yeomans-Maldonado & Mesa, 2021). However, the long-term effectiveness of using reading apps is still unclear as these findings are only supported by a small number of studies indicating that this aspect is still underexplored in the literature.

FDM, which is more prominent with eleven articles, emphasises the need for parental guidance in managing digital reading behaviours. While digital formats offer accessibility, unsupervised use may reduce reading effectiveness or lead to screen overuse (Day et al., 2024; Stangeland et al., 2023). Rather than imposing strict control, reflective supervision, and open discussions on accessible content are recommended (Romero-González et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2024). Such involvement ensures that digital reading remains meaningful and supports comprehension and motivation. These findings emphasise that the role of parents in balancing freedom and guidance is important for digital reading to truly support children's understanding and motivation. Although digital tools can support literacy, some studies also highlight risks of distraction and overuse when parental control is either too weak or too strict.

Taken together, these findings confirm the value of parental involvement but also indicate that its effects are not uniform. In some cases, overinvolvement may undermine autonomy, while contextual differences, such as rural versus urban settings or disparities between Global North and South, shape how families can support literacy. These variations suggest that the Home Literacy Environment framework must be interpreted flexibly, accounting for both cultural practices and socio-economic realities.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review affirms that family involvement plays an important role in shaping and sustaining students' reading habits. From modelling positive reading behaviours to curating supportive home environments and guiding digital literacy, families serve as consistent agents of motivation and engagement. The findings indicate that family support enhances not only reading frequency and enjoyment but also long-term literacy outcomes. However, these conclusions should be interpreted with caution given the methodological and sample limitations of the reviewed studies.

The review is bounded by three main constraints. First, the database coverage was limited to Scopus, WoS, and ERIC, which may have excluded relevant studies from other sources. Second, the heterogeneity of study designs and contexts makes it difficult to generalise findings across populations. Third, a strong reliance on self-report measures raises questions of validity, particularly in cross-cultural comparisons where parental perceptions may not reflect actual literacy practices.

In light of these findings, educational policies should prioritise initiatives that empower families as partners in literacy development, especially in early and middle childhood. Schools and local education authorities are encouraged to provide accessible resources, parent training programmes, and culturally responsive strategies that help families foster a reading culture at home.

For future research, more rigorous methodological approaches are needed. Longitudinal designs could clarify the sustained impact of parental involvement from early childhood into adolescence, while mixed-method studies may capture the nuances of family literacy practices beyond self-report. Comparative studies across rural-urban contexts and Global North-South settings could advance theoretical refinement of the Home Literacy Environment framework, ensuring it accounts for cultural and socio-economic variation. In addition, intervention studies that evaluate effectiveness of digital literacy guidance in low-resource settings would provide practical evidence to inform policy and classroom practice.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors affirm that there are no personal, financial, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have inappropriately influenced the conduct of this research, the interpretation of the results, or the preparation of this manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY

No new data were created or analysed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTHORS

Nur Hazirah Md Zaini: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualisation, Writing – original draft preparation.

Muhammad Zuhair Zainal: Supervision, Methodology, Writing – review and editing, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Resources.

Hasmidar Hassan: Methodology, Writing – review and editing.

STATEMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE

ChatGPT version 5.0 was employed as an assistive tool to support the quality appraisal process using the Mixed Method Appraisal Tools by clarifying methodological criteria and ensuring consistency in interpretation. It was also used to assist in developing preliminary thematic ideas derived from researcher-identified codes and to refine the linguistic clarity and structural coherence of the manuscript. Its use was strictly limited to these functions under the researchers' direct supervision, with all judgements and revisions independently verified to maintain academic rigour and integrity.

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