

Parental Involvement in Their Children's Writing Skills

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Abstract

The study used phenomenological research design through unstructured guide questions for interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) to gather qualitative data on the parental involvement factors that influence the writing skills development of Grade 1 learners. The participants of the study were seven (7) selected parents of Grade 1 pupils who were identified having difficulty in writing after giving them writing exercises. Based on the findings, it appears that inconsistent contact time with children was the major theme that influenced parents' involvement in their children's writing skills. Regarding the challenges and difficulties that parents faced in developing Grade 1 pupils' writing skills, the study identified three major themes with nine subthemes. The major theme, attention problems, highlights the difficulties children face in getting started on writing exercises, maintaining focus during writing tasks, and experiencing mental fatigue while writing. The subthemes within this major theme indicate that children may require more support in staying focused and motivated during writing activities. The second major theme, spatial ordering problems, highlights issues with children's handwriting and spacing between letters, which can lead to misspelled words. This theme indicates that parents may need to provide more support in helping their children develop proper letter formation while writing. Lastly, the last major theme, sequential ordering problem, highlights issues related to letter formation, transposed letters and spelling omissions, and a lack of transition. In general, findings highlighted the importance of consistent parental involvement in supporting their children's writing skills.

Keywords: *Parental Involvement, Children's Writing Skills, Parent's Lived Experiences, Learners*

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Introduction

Children do better in school, exhibit more positive personality qualities, and connect better with their peers when they know their parents care about their academic lives and assist them when needed (Bhamani et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Klein (2021), the basis for children's writing success was ideally laid at home, with all the support of parents acting as facilitators of the writing activity. For example, in some literature, writing-related activities in the house, such as parents' explicit instruction of writing skills and children's autonomous practice of writing their names and words, are beneficial to children (Hindman & Morrison, 2012; Puranik et al., 2018). However, this was not the case as the researcher discovered in her class that Grade 1 pupils did not know how to write properly on their papers during writing exercises. Unfortunately, most of the outputs had this messy handwriting because they were having difficulty with the transcription, such as (1) forming letters, (2) placing letters and words on paper, (3) making letters and words the correct size, (4) holding and controlling a pencil, and (5) writing in a straight line.

Parental participation seems to be one-factor affecting students' academic performance, most notably in their children's literacy development, such as reading and writing abilities (Jabar, 2020). In fact, according to Tatel-Suatengco & Florida (2018), literacy practices at home that focus on parent-child interaction can help children learn to read and write by letting them share information.

Consequently, this may be visible in affluent homes with a moderate or higher income, though most of them did not have time to support their children's basic literacy skills, but they had the money to pay tutors to compensate for their absences. However, this might be unrealistic for low-income families since their parents are more concerned with their daily sustenance, forcing them to rely on their children's academic achievement and the learning experiences they may acquire from school and their teachers. As a result, the researcher desired to investigate whether this may be one of the reasons why some pupils were still unable to write their names on the paper correctly.

Apparently, this inspired the researcher to undertake this study to explore parents' involvement in the success of their child's writing skills development and to determine their coping mechanisms for addressing the challenges encountered.

Methodology

The researcher should use the phenomenological research design based on the idea that people use a universal structure or essence to make sense of their experiences. In this study, the goal of phenomenological research design was to figure out what a phenomenon is like for everyone by looking at how people who have experienced it see it. This method was often used to study real-life experiences, learn more about how people think, and gain more information about a phenomenon (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

This research design must be chosen because the researcher wanted to explore the phenomenon that most of her Grade 1 pupils did not know how to write correctly on their papers. Therefore, this phenomenon may be better comprehended if the lived experiences of Grade 1 parents are explored to understand the causes and the factors concerning parental involvement that influence the writing skills development of learners. Hence, phenomenological research methodology might be relevant in this study for parents as well as teachers to develop outputs and programs that are advantageous for Grade 1 learners' writing skills development based on how they would embrace and perceive them. Above all, before conducting phenomenological research design, the researcher should consider the Epoche and bracketing (Moustakas, 1994) to avoid bias.

Findings

To understand the lived experiences of parents' involvement with their children concerning basic literacy skills in writing. The study revealed one (1) generated major theme with three (3) subthemes that emerged during several interviews and focus group discussions (FCD) with the research participants. The Inconsistency of Contact Time with Children was considered the first major theme that emerged with three (3) subthemes: (a) parents or guardians nature of work, (b) children's playful behavior, and (c) responsibilities dependency on relatives.

Regarding the challenges and difficulties that the Grade 1 selected parents faced concerning the development of Grade 1 pupils' basic literacy in writing, the study findings revealed that three (3) major theme emerged with nine (9) subthemes. These themes were generated from study's participants' significant statements during the several interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). The Attention Problem was the first major theme that emerged with three (3) subthemes: (a) difficulty getting started on writing exercises, (b) easy distractibility during writing tasks, (c) mental fatigue or tiredness while writing. Next, the Spatial Ordering

Problems were the second major theme that emerged with three (3) subthemes: (a) poor use of lines on the paper, (b) uneven spacing between letters, (c) many misspelled words. Lastly, the Sequential Ordering Problem was the third major theme that emerged with three (3) subthemes: (a) poor letter formation, (b) transposed letters and spelling omissions, (c) lack of transition.

In terms of the coping mechanisms of Grade 1 selected parents concerning with their child's basic literacy skills in writing, the results showed that there was one (1) major theme that emerged and three (3) subthemes taken from the significant statements of the research participants during the several interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). The Family Literacy Program was the generated major theme that emerged, and the subthemes are as follows: (a) developed improvised writing materials, (b) utilize ready-made contextualized materials, (c) provided writing materials and activity sheets.

In terms of the study's proposed intervention in the future, the researcher called this a Fun-Filled Family Literacy Program in which the participants are the family members to help their non-literate members to liberate themselves to learn the basic literacy skills not just only for writing, but as well as for reading and numeracy.

Conclusion

The primary focus of this research was basic literacy skills in writing, and parental engagement was crucial. However, due to circumstances or factors that affect the contact time of parents to their children in educating or improving their child's writing skills, such as the nature of parents' and guardians' work, children's playfulness, and the dependency of obligations to some relatives, the role of parents has been absent from teaching the basic literacy skills in writing. As a result, their children are now suffering or having problems with their writing abilities.

Parents had seen a variety of issues with their Grade 1 pupils' writing abilities. These were related to their attention issues, such as their inability to start quickly since they were easily distracted by their surroundings. In terms of children's writing skills, environmental distractions were associated to their playmates, a crowded place, and a location where everyone was busy going in and out of the little village. Next, children's writing abilities in spatial and sequential ordering problems were observed due to poor use of lines resulting in the uneven spacing of letters, which could lead to a lack of transition and poor letter formation in writing the words, which was difficult to read and understand.

The identified emergent tool was a family literacy program in which all family members were engaged, and not only the parents were involved in shaping the fundamental literacy skills of non-literate family members, particularly in writing.

The suggested soon-to-be-implemented, enhanced fun-filled family literacy program catered to parents, family members, and non-literate individuals to design a program that would encourage or divert the attention of non-numerate to spend quality time with their families in fun and enjoyable manner. Similarly, the soon-to-be-implemented program should be utilized at the school, district, and division levels to share the study's major findings.

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