



## **Analysis of Early Literacy Practices Based on Social Inclusion in Palembang**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to explore children's literacy activities at home that involve parenting in Indonesia from a social inclusion perspective.

**Design/methods/approach** – This study uses a qualitative research method. Analyzing the results of interviews conducted with four parents and teachers in Palembang, Indonesia, and using a critical theory perspective as the basis for the analysis.

**Findings** – In the setting of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), literacy practices are not only carried out at school but also in the home and community. Based on the findings that we conducted on four parents and teachers in Palembang, the practice of early literacy at home is very diverse. The practice of early literacy at home is also still experiencing problems, especially in the provision of media that supports children's literacy interests, especially in the fields of reading and numeracy.

**Research implications/limitations** – From an early age, it is important to synergize the roles of families, institutions, and the government in an effort to support the practice of early literacy based on social inclusion.

**Practical implications** – This study has deep implications for realizing the interest in children's literacy in this country.

**Originality/value** – his study contributes in the form of understanding literacy practices in early childhood education.

**Keywords** Early literacy, Social inclusion, Early childhood education

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country known for its diversity in various aspects. However, instead of implementing *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, these differences often create contentious gaps. As cannot be separated from the spotlight in the world of education, the issue that is currently being discussed is literacy. One of the issues, as reported by the OECD (2019), is that Indonesia was ranked 74th out of 79 countries in the PISA results organized by the OECD. Of course, this is not a pleasant achievement. Literacy is not only about reading but also about math and science. The lack of interest in literacy in Indonesia, which tends to remain unchanged, should be a big question mark for all parties. Many things are rumored to be the cause of low literacy, such as the habit of being more comfortable with oral culture, so that reading interest, which is part of literacy, has not become a habit. On the other hand, there are also factors of access and willingness to use media to support literacy practices related to the socio-economic level of the family.

Families today are dealing with all the changes that are happening in the world. The development of an increasingly advanced era must require parents to be careful when raising children. Moreover, literacy is currently endemic due to various technological developments. Previous research states that parental involvement has a significant relationship to children's social-emotional behavior, motivates children's learning, and protects children from various deviant behaviors (Agustina et al., 2021; Irma et al., 2019; Retnaningtya & Paramitha, 2015). So important is the involvement of parents in early childhood education that parents also need to increase understanding through literacy.

Literacy is, of course, not just the ability to listen and understand spoken language. Furthermore, literacy includes the ability to communicate in the form of images and writing, which is formed by the experience of interacting with the social environment (Faradina, 2017). Early literacy in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) context also involves many parties, including teachers and practitioners in the school environment, parents and other adults in the family, publishers, mass media, communities, and also relevant ministries (Hammer et al., 2010; Sari, 2018). In this case, the quality and response of the home environment have a major influence on children's language and literacy skills. Through the home environment, children can cultivate language and literacy habits from an early age (Wiescholek et al., 2018). As stated by Aditomo and Hasugian (2018), there is a relationship built between preschool home literacy and children's literacy development, and besides that, he also reveals that social factors also play a role.

Research on literacy practices is currently more focused on literacy movement activities in schools. With a very limited amount of time, of course, it has little impact on the formation of literacy habits. Research on early literacy practices at home in a global context was conducted by Susperreguy et al. (2018). The results of their research stated that collaboration with home activities is needed where early childhood spends more time at home. House. Another study in a global context was also conducted by Curran & Kellogg (2016), which stated that among the inequalities in early literacy practice, it was also found that the literacy interest of boys tended to be lower than that of girls. In the context of Indonesia, literature research on reading literacy and gender aspects has been discussed by Lestari & Yulindrasari (2020), who state in their discussion that there is a need for equality in access to media literacy for boys and girls to dismantle reading myths. Disparity between boys and girls then research from Laksono & Retnaningdyah (2018) shows that in early literacy practice at school, children can observe something or conduct experiments on what the teacher has read. Meanwhile, research on literacy practices at home from the perspective of social inclusion has not been widely discussed and is important to do.

Referring to the problems above, this research is important to carry out an assessment of literacy practices in early childhood education to meet the needs of the times. What's more, in relation to social inclusion in Indonesia, especially in the Palembang area, it has experienced difficulties in introducing literacy from an early age. Therefore, this study analyzes literacy practices in early childhood education with social inclusion that occur in Palembang, Indonesia.

## 2. Methods

This study was a case study that aimed to explore how the practice of early literacy is based on a social inclusion perspective in Palembang. There were four parents and teachers in Palembang. The steps to conducting the analysis of early literacy practices based on a social inclusion perspective are: *first*, Study literature; *second*, Interviews with parents and teachers; *third*, analysis; and *fourth*, making a conclusion.

## 3. Result

### 3. 1. Early Literacy at Home

Literacy practices in Indonesia are carried out in many ways. In most societies, storytelling is one of the ways used to spread norms, values, attitudes, and also culture to children. In addition to storytelling, other early literacy practices can also be done through a variety of letter and number games, playing writing in the sand, listening or watching storytelling, role playing, and also whole language on many objects that children encounter every day at home (Lestari, 2020).

If it is associated with the concept of the children's education trilogy instilled by *Ki Hajar Dewantara*, this literacy practice involves synergy between schools, families and communities. So, if ECEC is considered important and even glorified as a golden period that should not be missed by each layer of its development, then what needs to be emphasized is not only activities in formal and non-formal institutions such as schools, but also at the level of informal institutions such as families and communities who also play an important role in this matter. Unfortunately, the community's perspective on early childhood education which constructs the importance of investing in this golden age makes the paradigm of the emergence of programs, both formal, non-formal and informal, which are not cheap, considered reasonable. Structures built within the framework of equalization often burden many layers who are indeed from different regions, economic classes, and so on (Jahng, 2013).

Table. 1. the transcript of the interview

Teacher/Parent	Description
Mrs. Z (Parent)	<i>At home, we introduce letters with posters that are available in the market, capital letters in one poster</i>
Mrs. P(Parent)	<i>My father and I bought several sets of letter cards at Gramedia, and even since we were little, we have given them pillow book</i>
Mrs. Y (Teacher)	<i>Many of our students take reading and numeracy courses at course institutions on the initiative of their parents.</i>
Mrs.U (Teacher)	<i>Schools use literacy media, for example, to play letters and numbers from materials that are easily available from the home and school environment.</i>

In the transcript of the interview dialogue above, we see an expansion of early literacy practices at home. The practices carried out by one family are different from those carried out by other families, although the aim is to introduce literacy from an early age. The media used are also of different materials and quality. We do not mean to compare, but without realizing it there are neoliberalism practices that occur subtly here, such as marketization and privatization in the world of education (Adriany, 2018; Lestari et al., 2021), such as the media market. literacy whose price is increasing day by day.

Furthermore, we also find good news that is not as bad as the issue of the low literacy rating of Indonesian children according to PISA results. Such as the awareness of literacy practices at home and the environment around children. Even literacy activities at home have also been carried out not only with parents, siblings as adults have a supporting role in literacy activities, the same thing was also expressed by Napoli & Purpura (2018), also in counting play activities and children's daily social interactions. -day in the home environment (Finn & Vandermaas-Peeler, 2013).

The partnership between parents and schools plays a role in the development of children's literacy interests. The existence of a strong influence from the home environment in children's literacy and numeracy activities here is considered an effort for school readiness (Melhuish et al., 2008). The relationship between the home and family environment in active participation in early childhood literacy activities can be developed through a variety of practices and games designed to foster children's literacy interest from an early age (Blevins-Knabe & Austin, 2016).

Early literacy practices carried out at home tend to be done in the form of fun games, not exercises. As stated by Lehl et al. (2016) and Lukie et al. (2014), that literacy activities at home are presented in various forms of games with children's interests and collaborative parental involvement in them will have an effect on the quality of children's literacy skills development from an early age. This negotiation of literacy practices at home gives a broader view that in reality it is very diverse. Neoliberalism is also strengthened in early childhood education through interventions carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD promotes the human capital discourse through its emphasis on the knowledge economy. It adopts a technical approach that values 'objectivity, universality, predictability and what can be measured' (Moss, 2017). So that the literacy activities they do become activities they love to become a fun habit.

### *3. 2. Practice of Literacy Based on Social Inclusion*

The collaborative relationship between school and home, where parents implement literacy activities at home as we discussed above have a positive impact on children's literacy interests. In practice, so far, the availability of games for literacy activities that are strived to be at home still favors media that are sold at relatively high prices in the children's media market. So often consider simple media less desirable. Mastery of early childhood literacy skills starts from the support of the literacy environment at home and school (Lestari, 2020).

Instead of comparing and blaming the availability of media, which needs to be supported by the participation of the central and local governments, we also really need to see that the literacy practices carried out by each family will be clearly different. Based on the results we found in this study, this difference is marked by the socioeconomic level of the family, although they occupy the same environment, the income and type of work of their parents are different. So that the literacy programs provided for lower income families are not the same as those carried out by middle and upper economic families.

Supporting the literacy model at home means that we are ready to provide a more complete framework/media that connects parental involvement in children's literacy activities (Susperreguy et al., 2018). Literacy instruments at home are also often used as a reference in policy making that is juxtaposed with the national literacy movement. Where parents are educated for knowledge of literacy games, literacy activities at home, and numeracy and literacy attitudes and expectations for children's performance before entering elementary school (D. Lore et al., 2016; Susilo, Jimat & Wahyuni, 2016). The literacy success rating in a country is also measured by comparisons, judged by numbers, which one is better which one is still lacking, through the PISA test from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019). Through the OECD, the international testing system is documented with numerical data which then compares it between one country and another, and ranks them in order. In a global context, this method is believed to be the best and perhaps the most correct way to help a country improve its current and future education programs (Moss, 2017).

Instead of constantly comparing the two sides from the point of view of objectivity, this study offers that early literacy practices with a social inclusion perspective have been and will continue to be implemented if we look at existing literacy practices from their subjectivity. We realize that providing media and literacy activities is not easy, for some people from the middle to upper economic class it is not a problem. However, for families from the lower middle economic class, this is a struggle. When their economy is only at a sufficient level. Where the salary earned is only enough to buy basic and primary needs for the family, then where can they buy literacy media for at home. They can provide books and games for their children, but quietly they have to hold back the sides of their main needs. In this context, we can help each other, from the upper family can share media with the lower family, the community can organize more open reading rooms and free fairy tales in the field, the government can help provide media such as books and others to schools, libraries village level, and perhaps even assistance for each low-income family. This synergy is needed, all parties have a shared responsibility, especially the government to ensure equitable access to education, such as the distribution of media in all circles, both at the institutional level to the family level. So, that early literacy practices can have an optimal impact on children's literacy interests from an early age.

## 4. Conclusion

In the discussion of this article, it is concluded that when we make children's literacy an important element of education today, then all elements need to be involved to achieve it. Including a collaborative parenting style that involves the role of parents, adults around the child, and the home environment as a place where children spend most of their time every day. This negotiation of literacy practices at home gives a broader view of how, in reality, they are very diverse. However, current literacy practices and issues related to early literacy are still inseparable from the various practices of neoliberalism. For example, the success of a country in literacy is still only seen in the PISA ranking carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This OECD contains a practice where something is only valued in terms of 'objectivity, universality, predictability, and all that is related to things that can be measured. Since 2015, the United Nations has launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which in point number four focus on eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity and equality for all. However, to ensure that each country has succeeded in achieving this goal, it needs to provide data presented in figures to show it. However, efforts to provide more flexible social inclusion media and literacy game tools are needed so that children are familiar with loving literacy activities from an early age, regardless of their background.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

Euis Kurniati the presented idea. Maya Lestari was data taker. Maya Lestari developed the theory of literacy and early childhood education. Euis Kurniati was the analysis method. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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### Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### Declaration of interests statement


The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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