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Examining the relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and home literacy environment

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Abstract

A positive home environment created by parents effectively fosters the development of children's literacy skills. The beliefs of parents play a crucial role in shaping the activities they engage in with their children, the home environment they create, and the resources they provide. There is a need to clarify the extent to which parents' reading beliefs play a role in the home literacy environment. This study aims to examine the relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and the home early literacy environment they provide for their children. The participants consist of 121 caregivers of preschool children (108 mothers and 13 fathers). Data for this correlational study were gathered using the Parent Reading Belief Inventory and the Home Early Literacy Environment Scale. The analysis focused on the self-reports provided by the parents. Findings showed that parents have a moderate level of beliefs about reading. In addition, parents typically create a medium to high-quality home literacy environment for their preschoolers. Significant relationships were identified between parents' beliefs about reading and the early literacy environment they create at home for their children. The sub-dimensions of "affect," "participation," "knowledge," and "resources" were found to have positive and significant relationships—ranging from low to moderate levels—with both children's print interest and the frequency of book reading. Findings confirmed the significance of parents' positive beliefs about reading in creating a quality home literacy environment that enhances children's literacy skills.

Keywords: Literacy environment, early childhood, reading beliefs, parental beliefs.

Introduction

The home environment is the primary setting where children's literacy skills develop (Van Vechten, 2013). Families play a significant role in fostering children's early literacy skills (Hume et al., 2012; Uluay & Çetinkaya, 2024). Children first encounter literacy within their home environment. A supportive home environment is crucial for effectively developing these literacy skills (Yılmaz Hıçde et al., 2020).

Today, home literacy environment (HLE) is considered a multidimensional concept. The HLE includes the resources and opportunities that parents provide to children, as well as the parenting skills and dispositions that influence how these resources and opportunities are used (Burgess et al., 2002). HLE consists of two sub-dimensions: limiting environment and literacy interface (Burgess et al., 2002). The limiting environment consists of factors such as the level of parental education, income, occupation, and attitudes towards language skills. The literacy interface covers active and passive literacy environments. The situations in which children do not

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actively participate in reading and writing activities at home are called passive HLE; the situations in which children actively participate in reading and writing activities with their parents are called active HLE (Burgess et al., 2002).

Parents should organize the home environment in an interesting way, taking into account their children's development (Aydoğan, 2006). Book reading activities that parents carry out with their children at home, reading books accompanied by adults, and parental reading contribute to the child's literacy education (Hindman et al., 2012). HLE provides children with information about literacy materials, opportunities to observe the literacy activities of different people, and the freedom to explore literacy behaviours. They also benefit from the teaching strategies used by families during the process by participating in reading and writing activities (DeBaryshe et al., 2000).

During preschool, parental support of children's experiences—such as reading, writing, and sharing books—along with modelling positive behaviours, plays a crucial role in developing literacy skills (Bus et al., 1995). Preschool children's acquisition of prerequisite skills that form the basis for reading, along with starting first grade with early literacy skills, positively affects their literacy lives (Kargın et al., 2017). The development of children's early literacy skills helps them encounter fewer difficulties when they start school (MONE, 2013).

Studies on the development of early literacy skills in children have shown that these skills vary depending on specific demographic characteristics of their parents. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2006) found that the development of children's literacy skills varies according to the parents' educational status and socio-economic status (SES). Bobalik, Toon, and Scarber (2017, as cited in Thompson et al., 2019) demonstrated that children from high SES performed better than those from low SES before the instruction. The variety and accessibility of written materials provided to their children by families with different socio-economic status differ from each other (Gonzalez et al., 2010). Interactive literacy activities initiated by children or adults, such as reading books together or playing word games, vary significantly in effectiveness. Families with low socioeconomic status tend to visit the library with their children only a few times. In contrast, families with medium and high socioeconomic status visit the library at more regular intervals (Gonzalez et al., 2010). Studies (Liu et al., 2018; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012) found that parents with lower income and education levels were less able to provide their children with literacy materials, such as books, newspapers, and blackboards, than those with higher income and education levels. Sonnenschein and Munsterman (2002) stated that the frequency of reading storybooks was more common in middle-income families than in low-income families. Özbek-Ayaz (2015) revealed that parents with a high SES read more books to their children than those with a low SES, thereby enhancing the development of children's literacy skills.

Studies have shown that children's early literacy skills are influenced not only by the demographic characteristics of the parents but also by the activities carried out at home. Çelenk (2003) suggests that children who have positive and rich literacy tools (books, magazines, etc.) at home and who engage in literacy activities (auditory and visual perception development, picture completion, picture books) with their parents develop literacy skills more. Parents help children realize the association between written language and speech through shared book reading. Demir-Lira et al. (2019) highlight that children who read more books at an early age tend to achieve greater success in language and literacy skills later in life. Interaction during reading—

such as asking the child questions and providing explanations—plays a crucial role in this process. In addition, it has been found that children's regular reading with their parents contributes to the development of print awareness, oral language skills, letter recognition and naming, and word reading skills (Frijters et al., 2000).

Songs, poems, and tongue twisters sung by parents with their children, along with games based on syllables and phonemes, are effective for literacy skills (Erdoğan et al., 2013). For example, Harper (2011) found in an experimental study that the rhyme and phoneme awareness skills of children who were taught nursery rhymes were significantly higher than those of their peers. Children who read books, play word games and do alphabet studies with their parents are more successful than children who do not do such activities at home (OECD, 2012). It has been emphasized that parents who provide their children with written products (such as newspapers, refrigerator letters, posters) and talk to their children about writing can help improve their children's literacy skills (Ezell & Justice, 2005). When parents read books themselves and read to their children, they become good reader models for their children (Tanju, 2010). Van Steensel (2006) found in a study conducted with Dutch children that reading books with parents and older siblings served as a model for them, leading to success on vocabulary tests.

Based on the information above, certain characteristics of families influence the early literacy environment they create for their children at home. Demographic factors and home learning activities contribute to variations in the HLE. At that point, it is intriguing to consider how families' beliefs about reading impact the quality of the early literacy environment they provide for their children.

Beliefs have a determining role in personal life by affecting behaviour. Beliefs are representatives of the decisions an individual makes in their life (Pajares, 1992). Parents' reading beliefs encompass their thoughts on the activities and strategies they employ to foster the development of their children's literacy skills (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994). Parental beliefs and parental behaviours affect each other (Pajares, 1992). Parents' beliefs effectively shape the activities they conduct with their children, the home environment, and the resources they provide. Akyüz (2016) determined that parents' speech patterns, attitudes and behaviours, and emotional support effectively influence their children's reading and learning skills. Literacy activities performed by parents in the home environment positively affect children's interest in alphabet knowledge (Kuşçul, 1993). The child's home environment and the family members' interest in literacy, vocabulary, speaking styles and habits are also of great importance in children's literacy development (Nergis, 2008). Weigel, Martin, and Bennet (2005) stated that parents' income levels, literacy beliefs and parent-child interaction in literacy activities affect the improvement of their children's literacy and language skills.

Parents' reading beliefs may be addressed in terms of affect, participation, resources, efficacy, knowledge, environment and reading instruction. When parents evaluate reading as an enjoyable and valuable activity, they are more supportive of their children's language and literacy development. Sonnenschein, Stites and Dowling (2021) found that parents viewed reading activities as important and tried to make them enjoyable. Moreover, participation involves children actively asking and answering questions. Parents' perception of the importance of their children's participation contributes to richer reading activities at home (Şimşek Çetin & Bay, 2019). The resources or reading materials available at home can also influence the reading

activities parents organize. While having reading materials at home has a positive impact on children's literacy skills (Bracken & Fischel, 2008), families with limited resources can also continue to engage in reading activities with their children (Coşkun, 2023). Efficacy refers to whether parents consider themselves competent in organizing reading activities for their children or in teaching their children reading skills. Sonnenschein et al. (2021) found that even in families with higher education levels, many parents were not confident enough to support their children's reading development. Furthermore, knowledge refers to parents' beliefs about whether children acquire moral values or practical knowledge from books. Neuman and Kaefer (2018) showed that sharing books based on reading helps children gain new concepts and knowledge. In addition, parental beliefs about the extent to which the environment is important for children's literacy skills are determinants of how children are supported. Coşkun (2023) found that mothers with higher education believed that children's language development was affected by environmental input. Parents' beliefs about which skills should be prioritized can also shape the support they provide to their children. Gök and Öztürk (2023) found that when parents had low beliefs about reading instruction, they were more likely to engage in activities such as teaching their children letters rather than sounds.

Recently, researchers have examined the significance of the home environment in children's literacy skills. However, previous studies are limited in explaining how the children's HLE vary from one another. Children gain their first experiences with literacy in the home environment. The positive home environment that families provide for their children is effective in developing literacy skills (Yılmaz Hiğde et al., 2020). The home environment where children are located and parents' beliefs about literacy are of great significance in children's development in this area. That's why, it is important to provide a suitable environment for children. In a recent study that considered parents' reading beliefs and HLE together, Karaahmetoğlu and Turan (2020) compared the reading beliefs of parents of children with developmental disabilities with the reading beliefs of parents of typically developing children, focusing on the early literacy environment at home. They found that parents of typically developing children created a more supportive literacy environment and held more positive beliefs about reading. However, the research has not clearly established whether parental beliefs influence the literacy environment they provide. With the current study, it is planned to contribute to the literature by exploring the links between parents' beliefs about reading and home literacy environment of preschoolers.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and the home early literacy environment they provide for their children. In line with this purpose, the following research questions are addressed.

1. What is the level of the parents' belief about reading?
2. What is the level of the home literacy environment parents provide for their children?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and the home early literacy environment they provide for their children?

Method

This study was designed using the correlational research method. Correlational studies are studies in which the relationship between two or more variables is examined without any intervention on these variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012). This study explores the relationship between parental beliefs about reading and the home early literacy environment that they provide for their young children.

Participants

This research was conducted during the 2022-2023 academic year with parents of children enrolled in preschools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the Çiğli and Karşıyaka districts of İzmir. The schools were selected using the convenience sampling method, which offers advantages in terms of time, labour, and cost (Balci, 2016). A total of 121 caregivers participated in the study, consisting of 108 mothers and 13 fathers. Detailed demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Category	f	%		
Gender of the Child	Female	63	52,1		
	Male	58	47,9		
Mother's education level	Primary school	6	5,0		
	Middle school	5	4,1		
	High school	41	33,9		
	Undergraduate	60	49,6		
	Master's degree/Doctorate	8	6,6		
Father's education level	Primary school	4	3,3		
	Middle school	6	5,0		
	High school	39	32,2		
	Undergraduate	62	51,2		
	Master's degree/Doctorate	7	5,8		
Mother's employment status	Unemployed	73	60,3		
	Employed	47	38,8		
Father's employment status	Unemployed	4	3,3		
	Employed	115	95,0		
Monthly family income (TL)	Less than 8,506	7	5,8		
	8,506 - 17,012	38	31,4		
	17,013 - 25,518	34	28,1		
	25,519 - 34,024	20	16,5		
	34,025 - 42,500	11	9,1		
	42,501 - 51,000	3	2,5		
	More than 51,000	3	2,5		
Child's birth order	First	70	57,9		
	Second	46	38,0		
	Third	5	4,1		
Number of children	One	49	40,5		
	Two	61	50,4		
	Three	8	6,6		
	Five	1	0,8		
	More than five	2	1,7		
Duration of preschool attendance	Less than one year	21	17,4		
	One year	49	40,5		
	Two years	40	33,1		
	More than two years	10	8,3		
Primary caregiver before preschool enrollment	Mother	82	67,8		
	Grandmother	26	21,5		
	Mother and father	10	8,3		
	Babysitter	3	2,5		
Age of	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Children (months)	121	52	81	66,96	7,58

Mothers (years)	121	24	48	36,62	4,80
Fathers (years)	121	27	53	39,39	4,84

Data collection tools

Demographic information form

A demographic information form was used to collect data on the participants' backgrounds. The form included questions regarding their age, educational background, total monthly income, and number of children. It also asked about the children's age, gender, and length of time in school.

Parent reading belief inventory

To assess parents' beliefs about reading, we used the Parent Reading Belief Inventory (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994), which was adapted into Turkish by Şimşek Çetin et al. (2014). This scale includes seven sub-dimensions: affect (positive effect), participation (verbal participation), resources, efficacy (teaching effectiveness), knowledge (source of information), environment (environmental effect), reading instruction, comprising a total of 40 items. The factors in parentheses represent the names of the factors in the Turkish version, and scores on the scale range from 40 to 160. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Turkish version of the scale is .79. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the total score was calculated to be .89 in this study.

Home Early Literacy Environment Scale (HELE)

The Home Early Literacy Environment Scale (HELE), developed by Karaahmetoğlu and Turan (2022), was used to measure the early literacy environment. The scale comprises four sub-dimensions and 11 items. For this analysis, three sub-dimensions—interest in print interest, frequency of reading books, and literacy teaching—were included, totalling eight items. These items utilize a 4-point Likert scale, with ratings ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The first sub-dimension, families' literacy beliefs, was excluded from the analysis due to its different structure. The scale is designed for parents to assess the early literacy environments of children aged 36 to 72 months. Cut-off points for total scores were established: scores between 8 and 15 are classified as low, scores between 16 and 23 as medium, and scores between 24 and 32 as high. The internal consistency for the three sub-dimensions ranged from .73 to .88, while the overall scale's Cronbach's alpha was .72. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale was calculated to be .76.

Data collection and analysis

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Social Sciences at Izmir Democracy University (Protocol number 2023/01-11, 03/01/2023). Necessary approvals were also secured for data collection in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Subsequently, the preschools selected for the study were identified, and the school principals and teachers were informed about the study's purpose and data collection process.

The Demographic information form, Parent Reading Belief Inventory, and Home Early Literacy Environment Scale were distributed to families through their children's teachers. Parents were informed about the study and asked to complete an informed consent form to indicate their willingness to participate. After the forms were filled out, the instruments were collected from the parents. The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical analysis software.

Before deciding on the statistical analysis tests to be applied, the assumption of normality was

checked. The skewness and kurtosis values for the sub-dimensions of the Parent Reading Beliefs Inventory were found to be -0.35 and -0.969 for teaching effectiveness; -0.323 and -0.745 for positive affect; -0.421 and -0.543 for verbal participation; -0.017 and -0.275 for reading instruction; -0.511 and -0.268 for source of information; -1.353 and 2.420 for resources; -0.640 and 1.143 for environmental effect; and -0.527 and -0.463 for total, respectively. The skewness and kurtosis values for the sub-dimensions of the home environment early literacy scale were found to be -0.481 and -0.514 for print interest; -0.717 and 0.201 for book reading frequency; 0.722 and 0.735 for literacy instruction; and -0.228 and -0.699 for the total scale, respectively. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted on the sub-dimensions of the Parental Reading Beliefs Inventory and the Home Early Literacy Environment Scale. The results indicated that values with a p-value less than 0.05 ($p = 0.00$) did not follow a normal distribution. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient to test the relationship between the variables.

Findings

Parents' beliefs about reading

The data collected on parents' beliefs about reading were analyzed with descriptive analysis. Table 2 presents the distribution of these beliefs.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of parents' beliefs about reading

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Efficacy (Teaching Effectiveness)	120	21	32	26,54	2,80	-0,35	-0,969
Affect (Positive Effect)	121	25	40	34,21	3,80	-0,323	-0,745
Participation (Verbal Participation)	121	20	32	27,55	3,16	-0,421	-0,543
Reading instruction	121	6	10	8,01	0,99	-0,17	-0,275
Knowledge (Source of information)	119	11	20	17,05	2,21	-0,511	-0,268
Resources	121	6	16	14,36	1,86	-1,353	2,420
Environment (Environmental Effect)	121	2	8	5,85	1,31	-0,640	1,143
Total	119	106	154	133,63	11,20	-0,527	-0,463

As shown in Table 2, parents' reading beliefs scores varied from 106 to 154, with a mean score of 133.63 and a median of 137. These values indicate that parents' beliefs about reading are at a moderate level. The Teaching Effectiveness subscale of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory had a mean score of 26.54, with scores ranging from 21 to 32 and a median of 27. This suggests that parents perceive teaching effectiveness at a moderate level. For the Positive Affect subscale, scores ranged from 25 to 40, yielding a mean score of 34.21 and a median of 34, indicating a moderate level as well. In the Verbal Participation subscale, scores ranged from 20 to 32, with a mean of 27.55 and a median of 28, reflecting a moderate level. The Reading Instruction subscale showed scores between 6 and 10, with a mean of 8.02 and a median of 8, pointing to moderate beliefs in this area. The Knowledge Source subscale scores ranged from 11 to 20, with a mean of 17.05 and a median of 17, suggesting a moderate level. Scores for the Resources subscale ranged from 6 to 16, resulting in a mean of 14.36 and a median of 15, which indicates a high belief level. Lastly, the Environmental Influence subscale scores ranged from 2 to 8, with a mean of 5.85 and a median of 6, also interpreted as a moderate level of belief.

The home early literacy environment that parents provide for their children

Total scores from the Home Early Literacy Environment Scale were analyzed using the cut-off

score ranges established by Karaahmetoğlu and Turan (2022). The distributions of home early literacy environment scores are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Distribution of home early literacy environment scores

Level	Score ranges	f	%
Low	8-15	12	10
Medium	16-23	64	53.3
High	24-32	44	36.7
	Total	121	100

Table 3 shows that 12 parents have a low level of early literacy environment, with total scores between 8 and 15. Additionally, 64 parents fall into the medium level category, with scores ranging from 16 to 23, while 44 parents are classified as having a high level, with scores between 24 and 32.

Table 4 Descriptive analysis of the sub-dimensions of the home environment early literacy scale

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Print interest	120	4	16	11,33	2,99	-0,481	-0,514
Frequency of book reading	121	2	8	6,52	1,31	-0,717	0,201
Literacy teaching	121	2	8	3,69	1,87	0,722	0,735
Total	120	12	30	21,52	4,41	-0,228	-0,699

Table 4 reveals that parents' scores on the home early literacy environment scale ranged from 12 to 30 points, with an average score of 21.52. When examining the sub-dimensions of this scale, the scores for interest in writing varied from 4 to 16, with an average of 11.33. The scores for parents' book reading frequency ranged from 2 to 8, averaging 6.52. Lastly, the scores for parents' literacy education also varied from 2 to 8, with an average score of 3.69.

The relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and the home early literacy environment

A correlational analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between parents' beliefs about reading and the early literacy environment they provide at home for their children. The relationships between the sub-dimensions of the parental beliefs about reading scale and the sub-dimensions of the home environment early literacy scale were examined. The correlation coefficients are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Bivariate correlations of the study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Parents' Reading Beliefs												
1 Efficacy	1											
2 Affect		1										
3 Participation			1									
4 Reading instruction				1								
5 Knowledge					1							
6 Resources						1						
7 Environment							1					
8 Total scores of parents' reading beliefs								1				
Home Early Literacy Environment									1			
9 Print interest										1		
10 Frequency of book reading											1	
11 Literacy teaching												1
12 Total scores of home early literacy environment												

Table note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 reveals a moderately significant positive relationship between affect, a sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale, and book reading frequency from the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.360$; $p < 0.01$). Moreover, there is a low-level, significantly positive relationship between participation, another sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale, and print interest from the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.256$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, a low-level, significant positive relationship exists between participation and book reading frequency ($r = 0.188$; $p < 0.05$). A significant positive relationship was identified between participation, a sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale, and literacy teaching, a sub-dimension of the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.223$; $p < 0.05$). Additionally, a significant positive relationship was found between the knowledge, another sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale, and print interest, a sub-dimension of the home environment scale ($r = 0.294$; $p < 0.01$). A positive and low-level significant relationship was found between the knowledge, a sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale, and book reading frequency, a sub-dimension of the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.189$; $p < 0.05$). Moreover, a positive and low-level significant relationship was observed between sources, another sub-dimension of the parents' beliefs about reading scale, and print interest, a sub-dimension of the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.210$; $p < 0.05$). A moderately significant relationship was identified between sources and book reading frequency ($r = 0.324$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, a positive and low-level significant relationship was found between the sum of the sub-dimensions of the parents' reading beliefs scale and the sum of the sub-dimensions of the home early literacy environment scale ($r = 0.283$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

This study aims to examine the relationship between the beliefs of parents of preschool children regarding reading and the early literacy environment they create at home. Significant information has been gathered in children's early literacy environment. First, an evaluation of parents' beliefs revealed that they hold a moderate view of reading. Providing a quality literacy environment at home positively impacts children's literacy development (Wang, 2014). The moderate level of parents' beliefs suggests potential for improving how they support their children. Parents' positive attitudes and strong emphasis on reading play a crucial role in supporting their children's reading development (Ozturk et al., 2016). When parents view reading skills as important, see themselves as capable of teaching these skills, and believe that their environment positively impacts their children's reading development, they are more likely to offer greater support (Ratka-Pauler, Birnbaum, & Kröner, 2024).

Secondly, when examining the early literacy environment that parents provide at home, it is found that parents of preschool children typically create a medium to high-quality environment. With the appropriate knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, parents can effectively support their children's literacy development by offering proper guidance (Weigel et al., 2005). Writing routines and materials play a crucial role in both preschool classrooms and home settings in fostering children's early writing skills (Gerde et al., 2012). In the current study, parents' moderately high level of home literacy environment may positively affect children's literacy skills. Research by Neuman et al. (2014) and Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014) indicates that reading with children not only enriches their vocabulary but also fosters language development and cultivates positive attitudes toward books.

Third, significant relationships were identified between parents' beliefs about reading and the early literacy environment they create at home for their children. A moderately significant relationship was found when examining the affect sub-dimension of the parents' reading beliefs scale and the book reading frequency sub-dimension of the home early literacy environment scale. This finding indicates that parents who have positive feelings about reading are more likely to read to their children frequently. It is natural for parents to engage in activities they enjoy with their children; thus, those who enjoy reading may incorporate more book reading into their daily routines. Research indicates that parents' positive beliefs and attitudes toward reading increase the likelihood of engaging in reading activities with their children (Berkule et al., 2007; DeBaryshe, 1995). For instance, mothers of children as young as six months old who have a positive attitude toward reading tend to allocate more time to reading with their children than those who do not (Berkule et al., 2007).

This study identified a low-level, significant relationship between the participation aspect of the parental reading belief scale and the print interest component of the home environment early literacy scale. Specifically, it was found that children's verbal engagement during reading activities is linked to their interest in how words are written and pronounced. Children's interest in print was assessed based on how frequently they inquired about the reading and writing of words. Benli, Demir and Bay (2022) revealed that children's interest in print increased due to writing activities and the books their parents read to them at home, as well as those read by teachers at school. Additionally, Cabell et al. (2010) concluded that shared reading activities conducted with preschool children at least four times a week significantly enhance their print awareness skills.

Findings indicate a positive, low-level, significant relationship between the participation sub-dimension of the parental reading belief scale and the book reading frequency sub-dimension of the home environment early literacy scale. Specifically, children's frequent verbal participation during book reading correlates with increased reading frequency at home. Tercanlı Metin and Gökçay (2014) suggest a cyclical relationship: a child's active involvement in the reading process encourages parents to engage in book reading more often. In this cycle, children's feedback about the books they read motivates parents to read more. Moreover, children who are read to frequently may experience improvements in their verbal language skills and participate more actively in reading. Research by Romatowski and Trepanier (1977) concludes that children whose parents read to them 4 to 7 times a week develop a more positive attitude toward reading and achieve greater success.

The current study found a significant but low-level positive relationship between participation and literacy teaching. This suggests that parents are more likely to conduct literacy teaching when their children actively participate in book-reading activities. A national study in the USA revealed that 22% of parents read to their babies daily before they turn 12 months old, with this rate increasing to 44% and 45% when the children reach ages 1 and 2, respectively. As children develop, parents tend to read to them more frequently (Young et al., 1996). As children's developmental levels rise, there is potential for increased verbal participation, and it is likely that parents will provide more frequent literacy teaching.

In addition, a positive and low-level significant relationship was found between the knowledge sub-dimension of the parental belief scale towards reading and the print interest sub-dimension

of the home environment early literacy scale. This finding reveals a relationship between parents' belief that children can acquire information they cannot obtain in real life through reading and children's interest in print. Children can recognize words they do not encounter in daily life through books. Parents' beliefs about books as a source of information may encourage them to provide more books for their children. Evans et al. (2000) emphasized that simply providing their children with engaging books creates a significant opportunity for parents to enhance their children's literacy skills.

This study found a positive, albeit low-level, significant relationship between the knowledge sub-dimension and the book reading frequency sub-dimension. Specifically, parents who believe that books provide information not easily available in daily life are more likely to read to their children. Through reading, children can encounter new words that they may not come across in their everyday experiences. Moreover, reading books supports children's personality development and enhances their ability to express themselves in response to their emotional needs (Tanju, 2010). Parents who frequently read to their children are better equipped to monitor their children's language development and identify effective reading methods suited to their children's skills. A successful reading experience relies on both the parent's reading frequency and the child's active participation (Tercanlı Metin & Gökçay, 2014).

The findings revealed a positive, low-level, significant relationship between the resources sub-dimension of the parental reading belief scale and the print interest sub-dimension of the home early literacy environment scale. It was found that parents' beliefs in the importance of having sufficient resources to read books with their children are linked to children's interest in print. For instance, colouring books purchased for children can help foster a love for reading picture books. In addition, when parents create their own libraries, select books from those libraries, and provide a variety of books, they further support their children's reading development (Tanju, 2010).

In addition, this study revealed a positive, moderately significant relationship between the resources sub-dimension of the parental reading belief scale and the book reading frequency sub-dimension of the home environment early literacy scale. It was found that parents who believed they had sufficient resources read books to their children more often. It was observed that with sufficient resources in the home environment, parents tended to read books frequently to help their children develop the habit of reading and enhance skills such as creative thinking and imagination (Katrancı & Yetgin, 2019). Thus, they directed their children to read books.

Limitations and future directions

Despite the significant findings, this study has some limitations. First, the current study is cross-sectional, which limits our ability to draw causal inferences from our findings. Future research may consider using longitudinal data collection to establish causal relationships better. Second, the study relies on parental reports for its data. However, observational assessments of the home early literacy environment could offer additional insights into the literacy input that children receive in their daily lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significance of parental beliefs on the early literacy environments provided to children. Since the quality of these beliefs can either strengthen or weaken a child's literacy environment, interventions aimed at fostering positive reading beliefs among parents could enhance children's literacy skills. Therefore, developing programs that encourage parents to adopt positive attitudes toward reading may effectively support the development of children's literacy abilities. Parents' reading beliefs play a decisive role in the home environment they provide for their children. When parents spend quality time with their children, children's interest in learning, writing and books can increase, and they can develop their interests by learning new concepts.

Statement of researchers

Researchers' contribution rate statement

The first author contributed to conceptualization, preparing measurements, data collection, data analysis, writing and editing the manuscript. The second author contributed to conceptualization, data analysis, writing and editing the manuscript.

Conflict statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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