

Understanding Home Literacy Environments: Parents' Perceptions and Practices in Government Primary Schools of Dhaka, Bangladesh

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This thesis is submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership and School Improvement.

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. This thesis is my original work and has been completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my degree at BRAC University.
2. This thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by another author, except where proper acknowledgment and full citation have been provided.
3. This thesis has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other degree or diploma at any university or institution.
4. All sources of assistance and support have been fully acknowledged

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Ethics Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the MEd Research Ethics Committee of the BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from each participating school. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and written or verbal consent was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

Abstract

Interconnectivity between effects of parents on children in home literacy environment (HLE) is still an under explored area in Bangladesh. The aim of this study is to find relationship between parents and children from government primary schools in order to understand and support home literacy. The study took place in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Analyzing interviews and observation data from eight families, I looked for parents' involvement with everyday literacy practices and hurdles they face in the process. Home provides a significant factor for parents to learn. Moreover, mental support plays more pivotal role than books or planned activities to support literacy. It underscores the point that literacy support is interconnected and embedded in caregiving routine, notably by mothers, who also manage household activities. Parents practice their own strategies and techniques. However, they deal with problems of limited resources. By resources, they indicate difficulties with learning, digital distractions, and blame scarcity of school guidance. This study shows importance of home literacy as a contextually grounded practice rooted in environment and emphasizes the need for schools to provide help that fits with the family's daily lives in government primary schools.

Keywords - Home Literacy Environment; Parental Perceptions; Literacy Practices; Government Primary Schools; Maternal Teaching; Bangladesh

Dedication

I want to use this chance to acknowledge me and my hard work for this thesis. I want to dedicate this thesis to me and my dear parents for their continued encouragement throughout my academic journey.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Literacy is an important part of a child's education that affects both their academic success and their future possibilities. Even though schools are very important for teaching reading and writing, what children do at home is often linked to how they experience and develop early literacy. A lot of study shows that both the amount and quality of reading and writing time spent at home are important. Reading together, sharing stories, and talking about books with your child can help build their vocabulary, understanding, and desire to read (Bus et al., 1995; Fletcher & Reese, 2005). These less structured, more purpose-driven activities often work better than mundane routines (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). Meta-analytic data also shows that shared reading time and the availability of books are two of the most important factors in a child's home literacy environment (HLE) that affects how well they learn language (Liu & Li, 2022). Some studies illustrated discussion between individuals help offset the shortage of printed materials (Zuilkowski et al., 2019).

Parents find writing is crucially important along with routines. According to Wu and Hindman (2024), parents receiving as fund and element of growth, often promote better literacy environments for children. In contrast, perceiving reading and writing as mostly schoolwork confines kids' capabilities at home. Thus, home literacy practice is strongly connected to parents' beliefs. Furthermore, both practice and beliefs are connected to literacy development and reading progress of children (Wu & Hindman, 2024).

Several cultural and social factors establishes parents feeling about reading and writing in Asia, especially in Bangladesh. As Mehnaz (2013) showed that although mothers in Bangladesh think play helps children learn to read and write, many parents still prefer formal practice over creative

or discussion-based reading activities. The underline thinking is reading only school-related books enforces preparation for tests than learning reading and writing in general. There is a gap between believing in the importance of reading and doing it at home, according to the few studies that have been done. Researchers in Bangladesh have found a link between factors in the home setting and outcomes in early childhood. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data from rural Bangladesh, kids who have guardians read books or tell stories are much more likely to be on track with their reading and math skills (Rahman et al., 2023). These findings suggest that everyday home activities may influence a child's development.

However, there are still gaps to fill. The conducted researches so far have focused mainly on rural or slum areas, pre-school at most. Although most of the children in Bangladeshi education system opt government primary school, very few information is available regarding their learnings, received in home environment. We lack qualitative information about how parents see literacy, their activities in this manner, and problems they need to solve. As a result, I gained my interest to obtain insight and fill up the gaps in this unfocused area. The study emphasizes on the above-mentioned components and their parents' method to help and hinder literacy.

The study's effectiveness lies in looking home literacy environments through a neutral lens and in an uninvestigated area. Getting real information about how parents of kids in early primary classes 2-3 think about and practice HLE in their homes. In addition, this study generates context-specific insights that may inform future literacy support programs and parent-focused initiatives. It adds nuance to the qualitative evidence by centering parents' voices alongside existing research.

1.2 Research topic & title

This study investigated how parents of Dhaka government schoolchildren engage with literacy related activities at home and how they think about and describe home literacy environment. The

study gives us a better idea of how home literacy works in the context of government primary education in Dhaka, Bangladesh, by looking at what parents have been through and how they see things. The study titled as *“Understanding Home Literacy Environments: Parents’ Perceptions and Practices in Government Primary Schools of Dhaka, Bangladesh.”*

1.3 Problem Statement

School instruction and the quality of the home literacy environment (HLE) influence children’s early literacy development (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). Research from the West shows that parents' perspectives about literacy affect how they interact with their kids at home, and that both beliefs and actions of parents help kids learn to read (Weigel et al., 2006). Sharing reading, telling stories, and having access to books at home is consistently associated with vocabulary, comprehension, and later academic outcomes across countries (Bus et al., 1995; Niklas & Schneider, 2017; OECD, 2018). In many low- and middle-income countries, kids' home literacy settings are often limited by poverty, parents who don't have much education, and school systems that focus on tests (Nag et al., 2019; Zuilkowski et al., 2019). Under these circumstances, in spite of wanting to read and write, parents do not possess tools, knowledge or courage to help them with stuffs other than schoolwork. Hence, it is important to know how parents think about HLE and its effects at home.

These problems are visible in Bangladesh, especially in public elementary schools run by the government. Children’s socioeconomic class and their literacy environment at home are prominent predictors, according to a study conducted in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Between Grades 3 and 5, reading skills got worse because of weak roots in early years (Leer et al., 2017). Again, The World

Bank (2024) states that portion of children who do not meet the minimum bar of reading is about fifty percent. A lot of parents, even well-educated city parents, think that reading and writing skills are mostly important for doing well in school and on tests. According to Mehnaz (2013) and Rahman (2023), this means that reading and talking together at home don't happen very often. These data show how parents feel about their kids' reading and writing experiences and shape the kind and level of those experiences. Bangladesh lacks study to establish connection between primary government school going kids and their guardians. Being the largest group in the education system, they are overlooked, while current research focuses on low-income families in rural, slum or towns with myriad educated persons. We really don't know how the kids are assisted, taught and monitored by their parents. Moreover, both father and mothers' feelings regarding this issue is unknown as well. If we want to build better relationship between parents and these schools, we do not have any option but to seek for these answers.

To address this issue, this study focused on parents of children in Classes 2 and 3, a very important time in their growth called the "transition to fluency" (Inoue et al., 2018). At this point, regular help from home is very important for building reading comprehension, motivation, and long-term reading skills. Also, kids this age respond very well to parental help and doing reading and writing tasks together (Snow et al., 1998). Also, it's important to keep in mind that most HLE theories and empirical studies are based on Western settings. This means that we don't fully understand how HLE works in Asian settings that are very different in terms of culture, language, and socioeconomic status (Cheung et al., 2021). There is limited insight into how parents' beliefs and perceptions translate into everyday literacy practices at home. Exploring this relationship in the Bangladeshi context is necessary to build a more context-sensitive and inclusive understanding of home literacy environments.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do parents of government primary school children perceive the home literacy environment in Bangladesh?
2. How do parents engage in home literacy practices with children in government primary schools in Bangladesh?
3. What are the challenges they face in supporting the literacy environment at home?

These questions guided this research in understanding parental perceptions of HLE and their practices. With these, this study aims to better understand parents' perceptions and practices, which may inform thinking about home–school communication and support.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the home literacy environments (HLEs) of children attending government primary schools in Bangladesh by understanding both parents' perceptions about literacy and their actual everyday practices at home. It aims to understand how parents perceive the concept HLE and their role supporting literacy and how these perceptions are reflected in the way they engage with their children, as well as the barriers parents face in creating supportive literacy environments at home. By linking parents' perceptions with their practices, this study seeks to gain insights into the social and relational aspects of learning that occur outside the classroom. Offering contextual insights that may be useful for educators, programs, or future research focused on supporting families' literacy efforts to strengthen parental involvement in children's literacy development. In that way, this study helps in exploring both the HLE situation of parents and children in the learning process.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant because the role of parents in shaping home literacy environments (HLEs) within government primary school contexts in Bangladesh remains underexplored. While a substantial body of research has focused on formal schooling, curriculum design, and policy-level reforms, the everyday literacy-related practices that take place in homes, as well as parents' own understandings of literacy, have received comparatively limited attention. Finding parents' involvement in HLE is helpful because it gives parents of kids in Dhaka who go to government primary schools a detailed look at how they help their kids learn to read and write at home. The study doesn't look at effects, how well something works, or any kind of statistics. Instead, it talks to parents to find out what they think about reading and how they try to support it in their daily lives. There are a lot of different kinds of families in the government primary school system, but they aren't usually part of home literacy system.

The study also adds to what's already been written by linking what parents say they do daily with how they think about literacy. Fewer studies have looked at how parents' ideas about reading and writing affect the things they do with their kids every day. A wider range of family involvement has been looked at in more studies. We can pay more attention to the mental and social parts of literary support that happen outside of school once we understand this link (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Jeynes, 2005).

To improve collaboration between home and school, the findings of this research can help teachers, school officials, and parent-school programs may offer insights that can be considered when designing parent-focused interventions. For example, it can help create programs that give parents useful tips on how to improve their child's reading, get them involved in learning activities, and get rid of common problems parents have when they try to help their kids read at home. Previous

studies assert that parents' role and home contexts are more important than curriculum and resources alone, for literacy outcomes (Rahman, 2023). It may help understand parents' realities and identify areas where families may need support. Policymakers and NGOs may use the research's findings to help them make programs that support parents' involvement in their children's education ensuring sustainability of the program. The study fills in a significant gap in Bangladeshi HLE research and adds to what is known about parents' participation in reading and writing around the world. By shedding light on situated understanding of HLE, it may improve children's literacy learning situation and may lead to better school and home partnership for government school children.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter shows research that has already been done on HLE, its effects, and its use in different parts of the world. There are five main themes organized together in literature.

2.1 Understanding the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and Its Components

The home literacy environment (HLE) is made up of the reading- and writing-related activities, materials, and interactions that kids have every day that help them learn language, print, and literacy from a young age (Bus et al., 1995; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Fletcher & Reese, 2005). Researchers see the HLE as a multidimensional term that includes having access to print materials, parents being involved in literacy activities, and the quality of language and text-related interactions between parents and children (Altıparmak, 2010; Romero-González et al., 2023). It shows that kids' literacy growth is affected by more than just going to school or having books or other learning tools around. Instead, it depends on how families normally work together and what they do every day, as well as how parents use these tools and how they help their kids with reading and writing. For this reason, the HLE see that home is suitable option to learn and get better at reading and writing.

Parents' ideas about early literacy affect the choice of discussion, building vocabulary and structured teaching (Altıparmak, 2010). Furthermore, reading together is the most productive when people opt for conversation and creating connection with each other (Fletcher and Reese, 2005). Parents often value reading and writing, even when money is tight, according to other studies. Sawyer et al. (2018) said that home chores and routines are ways that low-income mothers try to help their kids learn. But these ways can only be used for short periods of time and with simple items. Again, Romero-González et al. (2023) said that parents' expectations and mental support are very important for making the home a good place to read and write. These studies show that the HLE covers things like what parents do, what they believe, and the tools they can use. Kids learn to read and write in different ways because of these things. All these things impact how children learn to read and write.

2.2 Effects of HLE on Children's Literacy Development

Many research has shown that the home reading environment (HLE) is a key part of how a child learns. Bus et al. (1995) say that reading books with own child enhance learning better later on. If one reads with children and ask them questions, discuss about the story, and ask them to share their thoughts instead of just listening, these benefits are greater (Baker et al., 2001). Evidences claim that HLE is connected to events that can happen after early childhood and during school. Niklas and Schneider (2017) also say that learning at home early on is linked to later reading and writing as well as future success.

HLE connects formal and informal learning by building motivation, curiosity, and the basic reading and writing skills kids need before and during elementary school. The procedure highlights encouragement for reading and writing in both official and informal settings (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). Teaching letters or reading words are examples of formal literacy tasks that can help one get better at skills. Informal activities like singing, telling stories, reading out loud, and playing with text boost imagination and understanding of language (Dong et al., 2020; Inoue et al., 2018). The parents might read aloud, tell stories, do their kids' homework, or talk about words and what they mean. These exchanges have big effects on how kids feel and what they know about reading and writing. Reading and writing skills learned at school and those practice at home. This proves that practicing literacy at home and learning at school contain strong connection.

Meta-analytic study shows that HLE is a great way to get better at reading and writing. Several studies have found a link between a child's home literacy setting and how well they understand what they read. This points out that kids' reading skills are still affected by home-based help as they get older (Dong et al., 2020). It is important to remember that HLE has a lot to do with how people feel and how confident they are. Some parents don't know how to help their kids learn

besides helping them with their homework, even though a lot of them care about reading. The fact that parents have good views but the HLE doesn't always follow through with them may make it harder for the HLE to help kids learn to read and write. This shows how important it is to know how both parents see things and what they've seen happen.

2.3 Global Perspectives on Home Literacy Practices and Parental Perceptions

Practices of HLE has changed lot around the world, but they all follow the same basic rules. Research from around the world shows that families' literacy practices are affected by how parents think about reading and writing and by their culture and society (Altıparmak, 2010; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Saçkes et al., 2016). Studies also stress that most parents rely on child-centered and interactive literacy practices that focus on enjoyment, exploration, and conversational engagement between parents and children (Fletcher & Reese, 2005; Romero-González et al., 2023). These methods support the idea that literacy is a socially mediated process shared by play, conversation, and making sense of things together (Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, there is an effect on the kinds of practices parents do with their kids. No matter the family's income, studies constantly show that reading books together is a good way to predict early literacy success and language development (Bus et al., 1995; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Programs like dialogic reading encourage students to ask questions, talk about the text, and be actively involved. These activities assist students understand the contents better and are more likely to want to read (Castro et al., 2015).

Parents who the idea that kids want to read are more likely to do literacy activities with them. Some of them include joint reading, discussions, and hands-on activities (Saçkes et al., 2016). Also, Romero-González et al. (2023) highlighted that parents' expectations about learning affect both the number and quality of literacy exchanges. The justified that literacy support is not only

about teaching, but also about building relationships. But a family's socioeconomic position affects their ability to get books, their parents' time, and chances to read and talk with others. This can make it harder for families who don't have as many resources (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Studies from low- and middle-income families with few printed materials, however, show that parental communication and interaction is still important for their reading and writing development (Zuilkowski et al., 2019; Mwanza-Kabaghe, 2022).

In South and East Asia, HLE practices are formed by cultural values that stress getting kids ready for school, doing well in school, and parents being responsible for their kids' formal learning. These cultural norms and ideals also affect how reading and writing are done at home. Emphasizing on letter practice, memorization and watching kids do schoolwork is common in Asian countries like Japan, China and India (Cheung et al., 2021; Zuilkowski et al., 2019). This focus fits with test-based educational traditions that see reading the principle path to do well in school (Yamamoto & Brinton, 2010; Luo et al., 2013). These habits results inability to think creatively or involve in conversational reading tasks.

Byun et al. (2012) argued that children's learning chances are affected by how cultural capital and educational systems work together. Whereas Malik and Courtney (2010) talked about how empowering women in education can help kids learn and suggested that gender roles affect who in a family helps a child with reading and writing. Castro et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis confirmed that parental involvement is usually linked to academic success, though the type and level of involvement vary from situation to situation. On the other hand, cross national studies show that socioeconomic standing (SES) affects both the resources and the beliefs that make up the HLE and stress that parents' attitudes toward school and their time spent on it are affected by their family's socioeconomic status (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Niklas and Schneider (2017) also found that the

level of education of the parents can be used to predict both the number of books a child has and how much time they spend reading and spelling. Both of these things help kids learn to read and spell overtime. It's important to note that views about literacy affect how people read and write in every culture. For example, parents who see reading as fun and social are more likely to get their kids involved, while parents who see it as only academic focus on lessons and tests (Dong et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2021).

In short, data proves that HLE practices are mainly shaped by local factors. Conversation, curiosity and independence are highlighted in Western models. Whereas South Asian models focuses on duty, discipline, and being ready for school. In one point of view, both are sure of family's importance in learning. Obtaining these differences, we can observe parental beliefs, cultural expectations and material facts. Lastly, we can decide how well HLEs work, whether they are interactive or instruction based. So, the different HLE practices around the world don't show a list of better or worse methods. Rather a range of approaches that are shaped by the educational values and social situations in each society (Cheung et al., 2021; Nag et al., 2019; Zuilkowski et al., 2019).

2.4 Home Literacy Environment in the Context of Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, literacy is seen as an academic skill related to schoolwork and tests, rather than as a process of growth or connection (Mehnaz, 2013; Rahman, 2023). Most of the research on home reading environments in Bangladesh have conducted on preschool-aged kids and early childhood programs, which are usually run by NGOs or in casual settings. Parents whose kids go to government primary schools, which is most of the student body, haven't gotten as much attention (World Bank, 2024; Leer et al., 2017). Hence, the gap is our knowledge of helping kids learn to read and write after they start school, by their families.

Existing studies show that parents' participation in teaching literacy at home during the elementary school years is usually very limited and focused on school. Parents usually help their kids learn to read and write by keeping an eye on their homework, making sure they go to school, and studying for tests. However, interactive activities like shared reading or sharing stories happen less often (Mehnaz, 2013; Ullah, 2021). A lot of people think that schools, not families, should oversee teaching, reading and writing. This pattern shows that view. Parents want the best for their kids' education, but many of them feel limited by lack of time, funding, and support from schools, as well as a lack of confidence in their reading and writing skills. Therefore, parents often don't do literacy activities besides helping their kids with homework because they're afraid of messing up or getting in the way of school teaching (Rahman, 2023).

Research from both rural and urban Bangladesh demonstrates there are dissimilarities between parents' good educational goals and their ability to keep up literacy practices at home. Basic activities at home like reading aloud and telling stories can help kids grow early on. However, many families don't have access to books or adult supervision. Unfortunately, this results literacy gaps persist (Rahman et al., 2023). Similar results from urban areas with low incomes show that parents depend heavily on schools to teach literacy, even when concerns about school learning outcomes have been reported (Rahman, 2023) cited financial hardship and a lack of resources.

Reading skills like fluency, comprehension, and academic success become more important as kids move up to Grades 2 and 3. By taking a closer look, I found the research that has been directed until now doesn't show much about how parents see their role during this stage of formal learning. It's still not clear whether parents think that teaching reading at home is an ongoing duty or if they think that schools should oversee it once the kids are in school. People often talk about socioeconomic factors. However, how they affect parents' views and daily decisions has not been

investigated in detail in Bangladesh's government primary school system. There have been a few research on how core elements of school and traditional expectations affect parents acting, although not in Bangladesh (Kalia & Reese, 2009; Nag et al., 2024).

Since most children in Bangladesh go to government primary schools and literacy levels at this level are still low (Leer et al., 2017), more study is needed to investigate how parents feel, what they do, and the problems they face during the primary school years. Studies indicate that parents who perceive literacy as integral to comprehensive child development are more inclined to maintain involvement; however, formal educational frameworks typically offer direction on how parents can facilitate literacy at home, and home literacy environment (HLE)-related content is predominantly lacking in teacher training and parent-school interactions (Ullah, 2021; Rahman, 2023). Getting rid of this gap is directly related to the research questions of this study helps us understand better how parents can help their children learn to read and write in Bangladeshi government primary schools.

Chapter 3 Methodology of the study

This chapter goes into great depth about the research methodology including data collection and analyzation process to assist the study.

3.1 Research Approach

A qualitative approach was used to explore how parents of children in government primary schools in Dhaka perceive and engage in HLE practices at home. This approach was appropriate because the study focuses on parents' subjective views, real-life experiences, beliefs and meanings related to home literacy that cannot be expressed through numbers (Creswell, 2018; Hatch, 2002). The study does not test hypotheses or aim to represent statistical data; instead, it aims to develop an analytical understanding of parents' experiences and perspectives. An inductive, interpretive orientation was used to support an in-depth exploration of practices, attitudes, and experiences (Hatch, 2002). This research focused on the perspectives of parents, as well as an in-depth understanding of the factors shaping home literacy environments in their home. Along with that, it shed light on the practices of HLE by parents and the obstacles they face in practicing at their home, all this is connected to their relationships, interactions, and involvement with their children. Overall, qualitative inquiry was suitable because it allows close attention to perceptions, relationships, and everyday interactions that are difficult to understand through numbers alone.

3.2 Research Site

This study was conducted in two government primary schools in Dhaka, located in the Gulshan and Dhanmondi zones. These schools are in two major areas of the city, and each has large student population, nearly 1,500. Their big number of students and teachers includes children and families from various backgrounds, which makes them good for learning varied parental attitudes and home literacy practices. The schools were selected using convenient sampling. Students at these schools

come from a mixed socioeconomic background. It raises the possibility to look at a variety of family experiences with helping their kids with literacy activities. The study focuses on displaying contextual insights from these settings, not representation of all Govt. primary schools in Bangladesh. These schools were selected because they share characteristics common to many large government primary schools in Dhaka, such as high enrolment and diverse student backgrounds. This study only looks at the perspectives of parents whose children go to government primary schools in Dhaka.

Confidentiality was carefully maintained throughout the study. The real names of them are not in the dataset to ensure security. Pseudonyms such as School A and School B dominate in the place of real name. No information that could identify the schools or the participants was included in the study. All information shared by parents was treated with care and used only for research purposes.

3.3 Research Participants

Eight parents of children in Grades 2 and 3 are the primary focus of this study. They were chosen to represent transitional or fluency development phase of literacy, where children shift from learning to read to reading to learn (Inoue et al., 2018). At this early literacy stage, children typically move toward fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary expansion. Therefore, the primary participants are the parents of children enrolled in Grades 2 and 3 at selected government primary schools in Dhaka. As parents and caregivers, they can describe how they see and understand home literacy, what kinds of literacy practices they do at home, and the challenges they face while doing so. The shape of HLE can be understood by their perspectives, over the years.

To choose parents, I applied “Convenience Sampling”. Gender diversity was ensured. All personal identifiable information remains anonymous. Parents' real names were not used in the

study. Instead, participants' answers were written under pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The focus was on their experiences and thoughts.

3.4 Research Sampling Procedure

A total of eight parents from eight different families were selected for this study. The interviews were conducted individually. Moreover, four parents were chosen from School A and four from School B. The sample included parents of children from Grades 2 and 3. This approach helped to capture a balanced understanding of parental perceptions and literacy practices across different households.

Two parents were purposively selected from the interview participants (one from each school) for home observations. They were visited twice, and in total, there were four observations. Observation selection considered,

- Self-reported active involvement in child's literacy related learning activities at home.
- Parents' willingness to participate in extended observations
- Parents who were available for two observations

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study implements two kinds of data collection methods. They are semi-structured interviews and home observations. Through these techniques, the study provides complementary perspectives and supports a contextual understanding of parents' reported perceptions and home-based practices.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The data collection for this study was designed to align with the research questions. Castillo-Montoya, 2016) suggests that interview questions should be derived directly from the research

questions. The research questions were developed through a review of existing literature on home literacy environments, with a focus on parents' beliefs, attitudes, and everyday literacy practices. The interviews were semi-structure. This means the researcher prepared some questions first. Afterwards, they also asked follow-up questions when parents shared relevant ideas. Each interview lasted about 25 to 30 minutes. Each parent was informed of the purpose of the study before the interview. Afterwards, their consents were taken. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed in word-for-word. This helped the researcher capture parents' real experiences, thoughts, and challenges related to supporting their children's literacy at home.

3.5.2 Non-Participant Observation

To understand parents' perceptions regarding HLE, home observations were carried out. The researcher did not participate in the activities to make sure of non-participant observation. This approach allowed the researcher to observe parent-child interactions as they unfolded during the observation sessions in the home setting.

A total of four home observations were carried out, and each observation lasted approximately two hours. Two observations were conducted in each home after a brief period of a few days. During these sessions, the researcher focused on common literacy activities such as reading together, talking about schoolwork, day, discussing the day or event, helping with homework, and other language-related interactions. The aim of observation was to get a deeper and practical understanding and view of literacy practices that occurred naturally in daily family routines. As well as to notice their connections, engagements, bonds with the children, behavior, emotional responses, etc. Interview and observation data were used together to situate parents' accounts within everyday home routines and to support richer interpretation of HLE practices.

3.6 Data Collection Process

After obtaining permission from the relevant authorities and upon signing consent forms, the researcher contacted participants and scheduled both interviews and observations at their convenience and did not interfere with their daily responsibilities. Before beginning the interviews, the researcher took time to build rapport so that participants would feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Interviews were conducted in a relaxed, conversational manner to encourage open and honest responses. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.

Home observations were conducted separately with a gap of a few days to capture natural literacy-related interactions between parents and children in their everyday home settings. The researcher observed without interrupting or directing activities, allowing routines to unfold naturally for the duration of 2 hours, with each house visited two times. All data collected from interviews and observations were stored securely.

3.7 Data Analysis Process

The data for this study were analyzed using thematic analysis. Both interview transcripts and observation notes were reviewed carefully and repeatedly to become familiar with the data and to identify key ideas and recurring patterns. An inductive approach was used so that themes emerge from the data rather than being decided in advance. Interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed alongside each other to develop a more contextual interpretation to understand parents' self-reported perceptions and practices. Observation and interview transcripts were read and coded closely to ascertain major ideas and trends. Collapsed codes' categories were converted into themes and sub-themes. Varying data were cross-checked to identify similarities, differences, and contextual details that informed theme development. Once themes are developed, they are

refined and clearly defined. The final themes were linked to the research questions and discussed in relation to existing literature to interpret the findings and contextualized understanding.

3.8 Data Validation and Trustworthiness

Several steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative study. Information from the interviews and observation notes were taken together to understand and contextualize understanding parents' literacy practices in real-life settings. Instead of strengthening the interview findings through data triangulation, it contributed to a more nuanced and situated data interpretation. The researcher also practiced reflexivity throughout the study. This involved regularly reflecting on personal experiences, assumptions, and beliefs, and considering how these might influence the interpretation of participants' responses. This process helped the researcher remain aware and careful during data analysis.

In addition, member checking was used to support accuracy by allowing participants to clarify or confirm key points. This helped ensure that their experiences and perspectives were represented as faithfully as possible. Following the same interview process with all participants further supported the credibility and dependability of the study.

3.9 Role as a researcher

As an education student and a former TFB fellow teacher, my personal classroom experiences with children's learning shape how I understand home literacy practices. I value reading, parental involvement in the learning process, and hands-on learning. Throughout my journey, I observed that students are experiencing a significant learning gap affecting their achievement of grade-level competency. These lived experiences may define how I interpret the responses of the parents in this study. To maintain fairness and reflexive interpretation, I tried to be aware of my assumptions, keep brief reflections after each interview, and remind myself that parents may have different

realities than my own. This reflection helped me to remain respectful, mindful listener towards the participants. Along with that, understand their perspectives without being judgmental. As an educational beginner researcher, this study acknowledges the bias and limitations of a researcher. As my positionality informs my perspective and lens for reflecting on possible biases, I maintained a research journal throughout the entire process, from data collection to analysis. Additionally, analytical memos were used to write and organize the research analysis process.

In addition to my role as the primary researcher, I was supported by a colleague from Teach for Bangladesh who is completing his teaching fellowship in a government primary school. Prior to the observation sessions, he was briefed on the purpose of the study, the observation criteria, and the specific aspects of the study. He assisted primarily with logistical coordination, including communicating with participants and scheduling observation sessions. During the observations, I remained actively engaged in documenting the sessions, and field notes were discussed afterward to ensure consistency and clarity. His involvement facilitated access to the participants and coordination, while the responsibility for data interpretation and analysis remained solely mine.

In this study, the researcher took both a facilitator and an analyst role. As a facilitator, the researcher created a safe and comfortable environment so that parents feel at ease sharing their honest views and experiences about home literacy. Listening with care will help parents feel that their stories are important. As an analyst, the researcher explored both interview and observation data to understand parents' view on home literacy with their everyday practices. Observing real parent-child interactions helped get a deeper view on self-reported information. By understanding both parents' perceptions and observed practices, the researcher produced nuanced and contextualized interpretations.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Throughout the study, ethical responsibility was given careful attention throughout this study to protect the rights and respect of the research participants. Before collecting any data, participants were fully aware of the goals of the study and how they can take part. They were told that taking part was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Consent was obtained from all participants before interviews and observations began. Participants' privacy was protected carefully. Real names of participants and schools were not used. Pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and reports. All audio recordings and transcripts were stored safely in encrypted digital files and secure storage. Only the researcher and the academic supervisor had access to the data. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the BRAC Institute of Educational Development. As a qualitative researcher, I also reflected on my own beliefs and experiences. In order to get rid of personal view bias, the researcher maintained a reflective journal. Together, these steps helped protect participants' rights, privacy, and trust throughout the research process.

3.11 Limitations of the study

While this study aims to provide a clear understanding of the home literacy environment, a few limitations should be acknowledged.

1. The presence of the researcher may have influenced the natural behavior of parents and children in the observation sessions.
2. The limited number and duration of observations may not fully capture the variety of literacy practices that occur at different times in daily life.
3. The study depends on parents' self-reported experiences from interviews. These responses may be influenced by social desirability or by difficulties in recalling events accurately.

4. Although observation guidelines were discussed beforehand, the involvement of an assistant in data collection may have led to slight variations in how certain details were recorded.

Despite these limitations, the use of multiple data sources, reflective practice, and careful interpretation helped mitigate their impact and supported the careful interpretation of the findings.

Chapter 4 Findings of the study

The outcomes of four observations and interviews with eight families can be broken down into three main themes. When Theme 1 looks at how parents see literacy environments at home. Theme 2 explores how parents engage with HLE practices at home. Theme 3 identifies practical barriers parents face. Together, these themes address the two research questions by revealing how parents perceive HLE and how they engage in HLE practices supporting children's literacy development, and along with that, what specific barriers they encounter in supporting HLE at home.

4.1 Parental Perceptions of Home Literacy Environments

4.1.1 Home Literacy Environments as Sitting Together, Control, and Emotional Safety

Parents' understanding of HLE is centered on three elements: maternal teaching time, mother's direct control over learning, and emotional safety for children to ask questions. One respondent says,

"To me, it means I can give my child as much time as I want. If I sent her to coaching, I wouldn't see what she is doing or how much she is learning." (S1, R2)

Another parent echoed,

"It means sitting at home, studying, sitting together. There should be pressure [focus] at home. I don't know much about education, yet I sit with my daughter as much as I can. So, everyone at home should look after [the children] a bit." (S1, R3)

Another mother expressed that HLE feels like taking control over the learning process of children,

"To me, it feels like a lot and I've taught him myself from the beginning; I didn't give him any [private] teacher or anything outside." (S1, R1)

Similarly, another female participant said,

"Home Literacy Environment" means trying my best to teach him and sit with him. Creating a learning environment is important, such as having a specific place for reading and a proper study table." (S2, R5).

It reaches another dimension when a participant shares his view,

"A home learning environment means my daughter feels free with us. If she does not understand something or feels curious, she shares it with us, and we try to help her." (S2, R8)

This statement introduces an emotional dimension of a child being able to ask questions without fear. Together, these reflections provide parents' conceptualization of HLE. It exists in various forms, and being unaware of the term, they understood its nature. During the home observation, most of the literacy events that took place at home in normal, everyday settings. Parents were seen reading to their kids and helping them with their homework while sitting next to them with their schoolbooks. There was no formality or classroom feel to these meetings; instead, participants often just talked around. When kids were learning, their parents would ask them about their day at school and talk about what they learned. Sometimes, they used to share family stories or light gossip. When kids asked questions, parents answered them by breaking down words, fixing their mistakes, or encouraging them to try again. Even though most of the tasks were based on textbooks and no other readings were used, the practice of sitting together, talking, and learning side by side was consistently observed.

4.1.2 The Educational Paradox: Expanding Parental Roles in Children's Learning

Parents described taking on extensive teaching responsibilities in their home. One parent explained that she delayed her son's enrollment because she was already teaching him,

"I enrolled him late, that's another thing. I enrolled him in 2023... until then, I taught him. Even now, I teach him." (S1, R1)

Her involvement continued after school began,

“I actually taught both my children myself up to this level. Just recently, I’ve put him in coaching. And since I’m a bit sick now, I can’t quite grasp or manage things as well, but still, I sit with him at night with as much as I can [give].” (S1, R1)

Another parent described teaching her daughter in ways that allowed the child to advance beyond her age group

“When I put her in the government school, I skipped Nursery. I taught her ‘Play’ in a private school, then I taught her at home. Based on that, she is ahead of her age in class.” (S1, R2)

She emphasized that she relied primarily on her own teaching rather than private tutors,

“The thing is, Madam, I haven’t kept any tutor for her yet. She is learning from me, and I teach my son too. I spend all my time on them; I don’t do anything else.” (S1, R2)

Another father described HLE as essential for maintaining children’s engagement with learning,

“I see that the way I’m helping him is making his writing better, and his interest in studies is growing. If I gave up (hal chera ditam), he wouldn’t pay any attention to studies.” (S1, R4)

Within households, teaching responsibilities were often described as gendered,

“He doesn’t sit at all. My daughter has been studying for four years, but he doesn’t even know if she needs a pencil or a notebook. His logic is: ‘I am working and earning for you. Tell me if you need money. After that, you handle everything.’” (S1, R2)

Differences also emerged between parents’ formal education levels and available time. A mother with higher education described difficulty balancing multiple responsibilities,

“Lack of time is the biggest challenge. I am doing my Master’s degree, working part-time, and managing household responsibilities, so I do not get enough time to support my child.” (S2, R5)

In contrast, mothers with lower levels of formal education described,

“Yes, I understand. It’s that my own education is less. Of course, I don’t let him realize that; I teach him that way anyway.” (S1, R1)

Similar concerns about time and self-perceived limitations were shared by another parent,

“Due to being busy, I cannot always give enough time. Also, because my own education level is limited, I sometimes feel I cannot give my best.” (S2, R7)

Together, these shared experiences illustrate the central role of family members, especially mothers, are to a child's daily learning, alongside the financial and time demands associated with schooling. In observed homes, it was seen that mothers were always present during study time, sitting next to their kids, helping them with reading and writing, answering questions, and doing managing housework at the same time.

4.1.3 Emotional Dimensions: Anxiety, Aspiration, and Parental Obligation

After understanding home literacy environments this section presents parents’ accounts of the emotional experiences surrounding their children’s education. One mother explained her daughter’s resulted poor score.

“Look at her result card, she got 61 in the first term, but in the second term, she got 33. I was so hurt; I felt like I failed as a mother.” (S1, R2)

This sense of responsibility was reinforced through interactions with school authorities. The same mother shared,

“I talked to the Headmistress, and she told me, ‘You didn’t teach her Math well from a young age.’ Hearing that hurt so much. I told her to give me a teacher; I will teach her Math extra.” (S1, R2)

The emotional strain of these experiences affected her physical well-being,

“I face many problems. Sometimes I get very angry at myself. I can’t take it anymore. I’m so young, but I’m already having eye and head problems. I get no rest.” (S1, R2)

In contrast, fathers described their educational limitations without emotional self-blame,

“Regarding ‘confidence’, my own education isn’t much. So, I can’t be hundred percent confident. I studied many years ago. I’m not an expert (paka) in English either.” (S1, R4)

Alongside anxiety, parents expressed strong hope and aspiration for their children’s futures,

“She has an interest in studying [poralekhai interest ache]. I hope she will become something [manush hobe].” (S1, R3)

Another parent expressed similar hope,

“We are hopeful that if Farzana continues her education properly, she will be able to do something good in life.” (S2, R8)

Parents also expressed pride in their children’s everyday learning behaviors,

“I see other children who don’t want to read with parents, don’t listen, or you have to hear complaints from outside teachers. I haven’t had to face anything like that with them. That’s why I feel proud of them, it feels good. But I don’t let them realize it; I don’t praise him to his face.” (S1, R1)

Fathers described a strong sense of obligation despite long working hours,

“I see that the way I’m helping him is making his writing better, and his interest in studies is growing. If I gave up (hal chera ditam), he wouldn’t pay any attention to studies.” (S1, R4)

Mothers, however, described obligation as extending beyond education to all aspects of caregiving.

“Managing two kids, their studies, the house, and a husband is very hard for a woman. I even have to comb her long hair. I do everything.” (S1, R2)

Overall, these accounts reflect parents’ strong emotional investment in their children’s education.

Feelings of anxiety, hope, pride, and obligation shape how parents particularly mothers experience and carry out their role in supporting learning and literacy at home. During observations mothers

remained closely present during their children's study time, while managing household tasks simultaneously. This constant physical and emotional presence reflects not only practical involvement, but also it supports a deep sense of responsibility and obligation toward their children's learning.

4.2 Home Literacy Practices: How Parents Engage and How Children Respond

4.2.1 Structured Daily Routine

Parents create strict daily schedules with fixed times for learning. In addition, this structured approach is common among families regardless of parents' education level or work schedule. One parent describes,

"Yes, there is a routine, so I sit him down according to that routine. He goes to read Arabic; after coming back from Arabic, he sits to read the Quran. After that, I sit him down for Bengali reading. Then he watches a little TV and plays." (S1, R1)

Even fathers working long hours maintain teaching schedules,

"I come home from work and sit with her from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. When I sit with her, she sits to read with me." (S1, R3)

For mothers not working outside the home, teaching routines consume most of the day.

"We sit 2 or 3 times a day. I also have to look after my son, but I can't sit with them both at once. I have to sit with them separately. If they sit together, they are similar in age, so they fight and cause chaos." (S1, R2)

Similarly, another male respondent said,

"I make my nephew sit and read every day. Tanzim completes both the lessons I teach and the school lessons with me. Every day, once, I read and explain to him Bangla, Science, and Social Studies books aloud to them." (S2, R6)

However, not all parents can maintain these routines consistently. Another father who works two jobs and struggles with time expressed,

"I come home after 7 PM and then go back to that work. By the time I return, it's 11 PM or 12 AM. That's in the winter. In the summer, that particular work is less, so I can give more time. If I'm free, I give time, maybe two days a week." (S1, R4)

Parents were seen following clear, daily routines for their children's learning while the observations were going on. Usually, school-assigned homework is done first during study time. Instead of allowing the child to work alone, the parents sat next to them, watched them, and went over each step with them. One parent set aside extra time after homework was done for extra practice, like reading out loud, writing letters or words, or going over lessons that were already taught. Parents would often schedule these times around their chores around the house, going back and forth between cooking, cleaning, and spending time with their kids. They also used this time to talk to their kids about school, find out what they had learned, and answer questions.

4.2.2 Creative Teaching Methods and Homemade Materials

Parents don't just sit with children and tell them, "Do your homework." Instead, they develop sophisticated teaching methods and create their own materials,

"I help her by making separate notebooks for every subject. I create my own questions in my notebook, and she writes the answers. Look, I made questions from the reading, and she wrote the answers in her book." (S1, R2).

She also gives a reference to her work,

"See, this is my Class 2 notebook. I wrote the questions in red ink and ticked them. I find all the important questions from the reading to see if she understands. This is how I teach." (S1, R2)

Another parent breaks down complex words into manageable parts,

"I sit beside him during reading time. While reading, I help him pronounce words by breaking down complex conjunct letters (jukto borno)." (S2, R6)

Similarly, another participant echoed the same method

"If my sister cannot read a word or finds it difficult, I break the word into syllables and help her pronounce it." (S2, R8)

When children resist learning tasks, parents develop motivational strategies.

"I tell her, 'If you write, I'll give you this,' or 'I'll take you out for a walk.' I try to make her write using these promises." (S1, R2)

Parents also develop interactive teaching methods to keep children engaged,

"I always talk to him. Even when I'm working, he sits beside me. He asks, 'Ammu, do you need any help?'" (S1, R1)

Another parent describes this same technique,

"Since she was little and I was teaching her spellings and vowels, I would ask her when we went outside, 'Ammu, look what's written there? I can't read it, can you tell me?' Then she would try to spell it out and read it to me. Now she can handle Bengali, so I do the same with English. I show her something and say, 'What is the spelling or pronunciation of this? Tell me, Ammu, I don't know this word, explain it to me.' Then she explains it to me." (S1, R2)

Beyond creating materials and methods, parents provide intensive direct support during learning time,

"Whenever he writes, I always sit beside him and help. I guide him on how to write and which format he should follow." (S2, R5)

Some parents also engage children through practical daily activities,

"Suppose I'm doing some work, and my hands are busy; I need to send a message urgently or read something, but I can't see it, he immediately looks and tells me, 'Ammu, this message came from here, it said this, you reply with this.' Then he sends it." (S1, R1)

She integrates literacy into daily life, giving her son authentic purposes for reading and writing beyond school assignments. She also mentions,

"If he's told to bring something or do something, he writes it on paper so he doesn't forget. Or he asks, 'How much is this?' and calculates." (S1, R1)

So, parents come up with creative but easy ways to engage with their kids to meet their needs. During observations, parents were seen making and using their own notes, pointing to specific words, breaking syllables out loud, and fixing mistakes right away. Instead of following written instructions, parents changed their techniques based on how their kids responded, like going over things again or giving them different jobs to do.

4.2.3 Children's Enthusiasm for Reading, Resistance to Writing

There is a common pattern of loving reading but resisting writing among children. The enthusiasm children show for reading comes through clearly in parent descriptions,

"I'd say he loves reading alone even more. Yes, yes, he reads. Even when he gets new books at the start of the year, he opens them up and looks. He compares them with the old books to see what has changed, which stories are new, and he does it all." (S1, R1)

Another respondent observes similar enthusiasm in his daughter,

"She doesn't want to write at all, and that's why in exams, they take her script away before she can finish. She gets low marks because of this." Despite this writing problem, when it comes to reading, she catches our mistakes. She actually doesn't want to write, but she reads Bengali quite well." (S1, R1)

Not only this, but children's independent reading extends beyond textbooks to their environment, *"Tanzim sometimes tries to read Bangla writing on roadside billboards. However, he does not want to read academic textbooks at all."* (S2, R6)

Reinforcing this statement, another participant said,

"Nowadays she tries to read quite often. If she sees any poster on the road, she attempts to read it. She tries to read whatever written material she sees, such as roadside billboards and posters." (S2, R8)

The contrast between reading enjoyment and writing resistance becomes most dramatic when a mother expressed her concern, saying,

"Madam, she doesn't like to write, that is the most painful part. She doesn't want to write at all. Reading is a place of joy for her. She finds it fun. But writing is a struggle for her. When she sits to write, she says her hand hurts, she needs the bathroom, she makes excuses, and cries. The worst thing is she just doesn't want to write." (S1, R2)

She reinforces it by mentioning,

"She loves reading Bengali storybooks. When she gets new books, she finishes all the stories" (S1, R2)

Together, it shows that writing is the hardest part of learning than reading for their children. On a different note, reading was more fun and less stressful. The children were happy to read storybooks, signs, and well-known texts, and they often kept reading on their own. In observed homes, during writing tasks, children were seen getting restless and moving around a lot, asking to stop, or looking for reassurance. Most of the time, parents had to push them to keep going. During reading activities, they seemed calmer, read out loud with interest, and smiled. At that time, they recognized words, and looked happy when they finished a page or short story.

4.2.4 Children's Independent Literacy Practices

Beyond the structured teaching sessions parents organize, children engage in literacy independently. One parent shared a story about her daughter writing letters to friends,

"The night before the results came out, she was tearing pages from a small pad and writing. I asked, 'Ammu, what are you writing?' She said, 'Writing letters to my friends.' I read one she wrote, their names and said, 'Annie, how are you? Did you miss me during the holidays? I missed you very much.' She gave those letters to 3 or 4 friends the next day. She draws hearts and writes 'Love' on them." (S1, R2)

Another respondent expressed,

"Sometimes she tries to read by herself. She attempts to read religious books and his own Bangla books independently." (S1, R7)

Children also engage in creative literacy practices,

"Look, my whole house is filled with her drawings. She draws whenever she feels like it." (S1, R2)

Correspondingly, a father mentions,

"She really likes drawing. First, I make her do her coaching work, then I check her school work. After that, she reads poetry on her own or does drawing." (S1, R3)

Similar behavior was seen in another response,

"She reads his Bangla textbook and tries to draw the pictures shown in the book." (S2, R7)

Some children even turn literacy into competitive play. A participant described a handwriting competition with his sister,

"She often sits with me while studying, and sometimes we practice writing together. For example, we both copy the same line and then show it to our mother to see whose handwriting looks better. She enjoys this activity a lot." (S2, R8)

Overall, these findings suggest that children engage in literacy related activities like reading road signs, posters, text messages on phones, letters to friends, and labels for pictures without being asked. In observed households, children preferred doing things on their own, like drawing small pictures in their notebook's margin and writing random words. Moreover, they also liked short lines when they weren't studying. They would come back to these activities with interest. Some kids wrote and drew at the same time, while others worked their handwriting by copying words that meant something to them. These things happened along with formal study times.

4.3 Practical Challenges in Home Literacy Environments

4.3.1 Scarcity of Books and Learning Materials

Most families have very few books at home, often fewer than ten in total. One parent describes, *"Madam, besides class books, there are no extra books. Just two or so of those storybooks for kids, so they read those. Otherwise, there are no other books."* (S1, R1)

Similar responses were noted from another parent,

"I have about 3-4 printed books at home. Other than this, my home does not have anything. We will have only what we can afford" (S2, R7)

The highest collection comes from a home saying,

"Around 20-25 copies of story books, magazines, and religious books are there in our home." (S2, R6)

This is the most among all families so far. Most families don't have newspapers either,

"We don't take the newspaper home, but she she tries to read on the street, if she sees something on a shop calendar or a banner, she tries to read it." (S1, R2)

One parent talked about the school library program,

"In between, they used to get books from the library; they'd bring them, read, and return. Then it stopped. Yes, if there were more books, they would read." (S1, R1)

Overall, books and other learning tools scarcity made it hard for children to read regularly and for parents to help their children learn at home. During home visits, children were seen looking for words or pictures inside the same book repeatedly. There were no shelves or other places for books in some homes, and there were only one or two copies of some storybooks.

4.3.2 Children's Learning Struggles: No Guidance and Unequal Treatment

Parents talked about their children having real learning difficulties and they don't know how to fix it,

"She is a very slow writer. She doesn't want to write at all, and that's why in exams, they take her script away before she can finish. She gets low marks because of this. Also, Teacher don't tell us what to do about this." (S1, R3)

Another participant conveys concentration problem,

"Tanzim is very inattentive when it comes to writing. The child can write but does not want to write at all. Even after writing one word, the child looks around for about 10 minutes and gets distracted easily. There is a lack of concentration." (S2, R6)

He further reinforces this statement by,

"Even in the exam hall, he cannot write properly. He can answer orally but cannot express it in writing." (S2, R6)

Similarly, one mother shared her son's anxiety,

"He can actually read Bengali, reading quite well. But one problem is, he gets scared. Suppose you ask him something or try to talk to him, he doesn't want to speak. When someone asks repeatedly, then he speaks. I mean, he gets nervous all of a sudden." (S1, R1)

Parents claimed that teachers often prioritize active students and ignore shy or struggling ones,

"I see that in school, the kids who are more 'talented' I mean, apart from studies, those who are talkative, mix with teachers, do things in class without parents, most kids are like that. But my kid can't do that. He is behind in this because he doesn't dare to say, 'Sir, I need this.' Teachers stay with those who show interest." (S1, R1)

She also talked about asking teachers for help,

"I told the teacher twice, 'He gets nervous, please call on him more.' I don't know how much the teacher does, but I haven't seen any results yet." (S1, R1)

She continues to explain things in detail saying,

"If there's a competition for poetry, stories, or drawing, they rarely call him. And he can't run there himself, so he falls behind. If the sirs called him and said, 'Shahadat, do this or say this,' then he would say it or show his talent. Because they don't call, he is falling behind in this." (S1, R1)

One parent explains what she needs,

"If the school gave more guidance on how we can teach... like the Headmistress told me I didn't teach well, but if they told me how to teach better, it would be good." (S1, R2)

Together, it shows parents being unsure about their teaching practices and were afraid of making mistakes because they couldn't ask anyone for help. Parents were often seen stopping during study time, reading instructions out loud again, changing the subject in the middle of a task, or getting visibly angry when a child still didn't understand after multiple attempts in observed households.

Rather than structured direction, parents sometimes relied on guessing, repetition, or their own judgment.

4.3.3 Mobile Phone and Digital Device Distractions

One of the major barriers to children's literacy learning at home said by parents was overly engagement with mobile phone games. Parents showed concern over games and screen time,

"He used to study in Madrasah. The way he is addicted to the mobile. if I'm not home, he cares less for his mother and just plays 'Free Fire' games. I want to get this 'playing' out of his head. I want him to be 'stuck' in studies as much as possible." (S1, R4)

He also mentioned it as the reason for a lack of concentration,

"You see, kids do mobile games and all that; it ruins their concentration." (S1, R4)

Similar findings were shared by another participant,

"He does not try to read independently at all. He has to be forced to sit down to read. If no one is around, he uses mobile phones all the time." (S2, R6)

This shows an emerging situation for parents to keep their children from using cell phones. Parents feel it is ruining their focus and eagerness to try literacy activities. During observations, children were often distracted while they were studying and kept asking to use their phones when they were done with their quick activity. One child was seen rushing through his work just to get back to playing video games. Children in some homes were also sidetracked by TV during study time, which made it harder for them to focus.

Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

This study explored the overall scenario of HLE from the view of parents in Dhaka. The findings suggest that commonly used frameworks of home literacy, largely developed in contexts where schools are assumed to provide basic literacy instruction. Much of the existing literature recognizes home as a place to support and enrich school learning, by parents. (Bus et al., 1995; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Fletcher & Reese, 2005). These researchers think foundational reading and writing skills are taught in school, with families playing a complementary role. This might not be the case always. Hence, family resources sometimes become more important for students' learning (Alcott & Rose, 2017). Parents in this study described themselves as taking on a more central role in literacy learning, often reporting that they taught basic reading and writing skills from an early stage. From parents' perspectives, the home was not a supplementary learning space but the primary site where literacy learning took place.

Parents' conceptualizations of HLE differed from academic definitions. Previous research often defines home literacy environments in terms of access to books, print-rich spaces, and shared literacy activities (Altıparmak, 2010; Romero-González et al., 2023). Parents in this study rarely referred to materials or specific activities when describing HLEs. Instead, they emphasized time, efforts and defined schedule. An ideal home literacy environment points to duration of time spent with children. During observation sessions in this study, literacy-related activities were embedded within everyday household routines. Apart from that, parents were observed sitting beside children during homework, correcting mistakes, and continuing literacy support. What's more interesting is mothers did avoid household chores in the time being. For these families, literacy environments

were sustained relational and caregiving aspects rather than going through material resources alone.

These findings align with research from South Asian contexts that emphasizes learning as closely tied to family routines, supervision, and shared responsibilities (Harkness & Super, 2002; Kalia & Reese, 2009). In this study, learning literacy wasn't different from daily life. Adults were always nearby in fixed schedule while learning. (Hamadani et al., 2010). During observation sessions, informal discussions often became opportunities for children to ask questions and receive explanations. This situates engagement with home literacy practices within culturally grounded methods of caring in South Asian families. Cheung et al. (2021) argue that parents often support literacy through structured guidance, discipline, and sustained effort. While this perspective is important, parents in the present study described maintaining these practices over long periods. Because they believed their children would not progress without continued home teaching. Literacy activities were mostly focused on textbooks contents, homework, and exam preparation. Limited time was permitted for reading for enjoyment or playful literacy. It establishes cultural values around effort and discipline. These factors were closely linked to how parents understood academic expectations.

The nature of home literacy activities was strongly gendered across the findings. Similar to earlier studies (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Jeynes, 2005), mothers in this study described themselves as the most literacy-related caregiver. Additionally, mothers spoke about children's academic struggles as personal failures. Also, they described feelings of guilt, anxiety, and tiredness. Fathers, in contrast, described fewer involvement in more neutral terms. Fathers' involvement was less mainly due to long working hours. Several male participants were also difficult to interview for long periods because of time constraints, reflecting common gendered divisions of labor in South

Asian households (Kabeer, 2015). It reveals the societal roles based on the gender responsibilities of both mothers and fathers.

The findings also reveal the role of maternal education in children's literacy development. While previous research has shown that higher maternal education is often linked to better literacy outcomes (Magnuson, 2007; Niklas & Schneider, 2017), parents' accounts in this study suggest that time availability played a major role. Mothers with higher formal education often struggled to give consistent support because of professional commitment. On the other hand, mothers with lower formal education were able to spend long hours sitting with their children. This makes simple interpretations of Lareau's (2011) idea of concerted cultivation more complex. In this context, intensive parental involvement did not reflect advantage or enrichment. Rather the study focuses on parents' sense of responsibility to meet their children's learning needs. Even though there was difference in education level of mothers, they still maintained their household responsibilities along with sitting with their children whenever they had available time. These findings also align with research showing that time spent with children matters for learning, especially in low-resource settings (Kalil et al., 2012). Material limitations further shaped home literacy practices. Majority of the families owned very few books, which made it difficult to support regular reading at home. Although national studies show links between home environments and early development in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2023). Widely used HLE frameworks often assume access to books and learning materials that these families did not have. During observation sessions, children were often seen using the same textbooks or storybooks repeatedly or reading environmental print such as posters and signs. In response, parents described making handwritten materials and adjusting teaching methods based on their children's difficulties. These practices reflect creative and

practical responses to limited resources which are necessity-driven approaches discussed in the concept of “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992).

Children’s responses to literacy activities further highlight the importance of meaning and purpose. Consistent with sociocultural perspectives on literacy (Street, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 2000), parents described children as engaging more willingly in reading and writing when activities had personal relevance. Activities like writing letters to friends or reading messages for family members support the theme. In contrast, school-related writing tasks were often described as challenging. During observation sessions, children appeared restless during writing tasks but more relaxed and engaged during reading, drawing, or free writing, labeling in notebooks. These patterns suggest that children’s resistance was directed toward narrowly defined, evaluative tasks that parents perceived as disconnected from everyday life. Parents also expressed concern that frequent mobile phone use and gaming reduced children’s interest in literacy activities. Whereas the use of technology is being utilized to enhance their literacy engagement through watching educational or stories or practicing an activity together. In that way, this distraction turns into a nuance to their everyday practices by using digital device distractions as learning opportunities.

Finally, the findings reflect challenges in their relationships with schools as perceived by parents. While research emphasizes the importance of school–family partnerships (Pomerantz et al., 2007), parents in this study spoke about limited communication, lack of guidance. Also, they blamed system when children struggle. Previous studies in Bangladesh often describe this as limited parental involvement (Ullah, 2021; Hasnat & Kabir, 2024). Nevertheless, parents’ accounts here suggest that they were highly involved at home while feeling unsupported by schools. This aligns with broader discussions of educational inequality, where certain forms of cultural capital are more

readily recognized by institutions, while other families' efforts remain unsupported (Bourdieu, 1977).

As a result, this study provides a situated understanding of HLEs that highlights how parents actively engage with literacy practices within their everyday lives. Rather than being a fixed set of activities or resources, home literacy emerges as a process shaped by time, relationships, and daily realities in the families' social and cultural context.

5.2 Conclusion

The experience of conducting this research helped me to understand the relationship between Bangladesh's government primary school's children and their parents. Here parents talked about home literacy in terms of daily routines, shared time, close supervision, and emotional connections. Mothers were mainly responsible for supporting literacy, while fathers' participation was limited by their work schedules. Through shared time, close supervision, responding to children's queries and scheduled study routines, literacy learning was seen to be a normal part of daily life. School mandated writing assignments were often linked to stress and pressure. In contrast, children reacted better to activities that felt meaningful and self-directed. HLE practices were shaped by some challenges. Literacy-related opportunities were limited because of resources and book constraints, leading parents to rely on homemade materials and improvised strategies. Parents face difficulties supporting children with learning challenges and managing digital distractions. These challenges indicate that parents' involvement in home literacy is constrained by material and institutional conditions.

5.3 Recommendations for the Study

The study implies some useful suggestions. Schools and relevant stakeholders involved in education can improve relationships between parents and schools by giving parents clear, low-cost

advice, guidance that fits with their daily duties and routines, including managing their children's addiction to technology. Increasing access to reading materials through community or school-based programs could help with resource issues. Also, giving families easy and maintainable strategies on how to balance screen time with reading activities could make everyday problems easier for families. Parent-focused programs or initiatives made by schools, NGOs, or community groups should be culturally responsive and gender-sensitive and should avoid methods that put extra stress on families.

To a larger extent, efforts to improve children's literacy skills should consider how family roles, responsibilities, time, daily life, and more digital exposure affect their HLE at home. Rather than relying on generic models of home literacy, practices and strategies should be based made and modified on parents' real-life experiences and the situations they are in. In this way, it can help make strategies for improving literacy in government primary schools more inclusive and realistic. There could be scope for future research to see HLE with other underexplored areas and influential factors like expanded gender lens, socio-economic status etc. to understand its pattern from different angles.

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Appendix A Consent Letter for Parents

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research titled “Understanding Home Literacy Environments: Parents’ Perceptions and Practices in Government Primary Schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh” for the Master’s Program at the BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.

I acknowledge that:

- This study explores how parents support their children’s reading and writing at home and the factors that influence these practices.
- I will participate in a semi-structured interview to share my experiences and perspectives.
- My participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.
- A pseudonym will be used in all reports to protect my identity and personal information.
- The interview will be audio-recorded for accuracy. All data will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.
- If I choose to withdraw from the study, my data will be removed from the research.

By signing this form, I confirm that I understand the purpose of the study and my rights as a participant, and I agree to participate voluntarily.

Participant’s Name:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher’s Name:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B Interview Guide

Greetings! I am Naila Sultana Mim, a graduate student at BRAC University. I am conducting this interview as part of my master's research titled "Understanding Home Literacy Environments: Parents' perceptions in Government Primary Schools of Dhaka, Bangladesh." This interview will help me understand how parents support their children's reading and writing at home and what they think about literacy learning. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like to hear about your experiences. Your participation is voluntary, and your identity will be kept confidential. With your permission, I will record this interview so that I can accurately remember what you say.

A. Contextual and Demographic Information

1. What is the current class/grade of your child in primary school?
2. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
3. What is your main occupation?
4. How many children do you have in total?
5. Approximately how many printed books, excluding school textbooks, are available in your home

B. Parental Home Literacy Practices

B1. Print and Reading-Related Practices

6. How often do you read to your child? (Probing: storybooks, religious stories, newspapers, academic books, or other things)
8. How often does another adult in the family read to your child? (Probing: storybooks, religious stories, newspapers, academic books, or other things)
9. Describe what usually happens during this reading time.
10. How often does your child try to read on their own?
11. What do you do to support your child's reading?
12. What kinds of things does your child usually try to read? (Probing: textbooks, storybooks, newspapers, religious books)
13. What are the activities that you feel have helped your child improve their reading skills?
14. Share an example of a storytelling session with your child

B2. Writing and Learning Support Practices

15. How often do you help your child with writing? (Probing: story writing, copy and writing, academic works, or other things)

16. How often does another adult in the family help with writing to your child? (Probing: story writing, copy and writing, academic works, design, drawing, or other things)
17. Describe what usually happens during this writing time.
18. How often does your child try to write on their own?
19. How do you support your child with writing? (Probe: Do you explain lessons, check their work, sit beside them, or only make sure the homework is completed?)
20. What kinds of things does your child usually try to write? (Probing: story writing, copy and writing, academic works, design, drawing, or other things)
21. What are the activities that you feel have helped your child improve their writing skills?
22. Do you ever ask your child to help you with simple, daily life writing tasks? (Probing: writing a shopping list, a message, or a letter?) and how does your child respond to these activities?
23. Share an example of a writing session with your child.

C. Parents' Perceptions and Challenges

24. What does "learning at home" mean to you as a parent?
25. Besides school, how do you think your role and support are helping your child's learning?
26. How confident do you feel in helping your child with reading or writing at home? (Probe: What makes you feel confident or not confident?)
27. What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to support your child's learning at home? (Probe: For example, time, financial constraints, lack of books, personal education level, or family pressures.)
28. How do your daily routines affect your ability to help your child with literacy activities?
29. What kind of support from the school would help you better support your child's learning at home? (Probing: School's interventions, teacher's initiatives)
30. Is there anything else you would like to share about your child's literacy practices besides what we discussed?

[illegible]