



Early Childhood Literacy Development in Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the development of early childhood literacy at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City, covering the school's literacy environment and policy, the role of teachers, children's literacy attainment, instructional methods and media, and parental involvement and evaluation. Early literacy is a crucial foundation for children's reading and writing readiness and for their academic success at subsequent levels. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through a 40-item questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale completed by eight purposively selected informants, namely the school principal, group B teachers, and parents/guardians, and were complemented by documentary study. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, mean scores, and achievement levels, and were then interpreted using five interpretive categories. The findings show that children's literacy development is in the very good category, with a mean score of 4.25 (84.9%). The aspect of children's literacy attainment obtained the highest score (4.42), whereas the aspect of instructional methods and media obtained the lowest score (3.98), although it remained in the good category. This study contributes an empirical portrait of contextual, Islamic-value-based literacy practices in an early childhood education unit that may serve as a reference for developing comparable literacy programs.

Keywords: Early Childhood Literacy; Literacy Development; Kindergarten; Read-Aloud; Islamic-Value-Based Education

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis perkembangan literasi anak usia dini di TK Islam Muslimat Kota Jambi, mencakup lingkungan dan kebijakan literasi sekolah, peran guru, capaian perkembangan literasi anak, metode dan media pembelajaran, serta keterlibatan orang tua dan evaluasi. Literasi pada usia dini merupakan fondasi penting bagi kesiapan membaca dan menulis serta keberhasilan akademik anak pada jenjang berikutnya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket berisi 40 pernyataan dengan skala Likert lima poin yang diisi oleh delapan informan, yaitu kepala sekolah, guru kelompok B, dan orang tua/wali murid, yang ditetapkan secara purposif, dan dilengkapi studi dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif berupa distribusi frekuensi, skor rata-rata, dan tingkat capaian, kemudian diinterpretasikan menggunakan kriteria lima kategori. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan literasi anak berada pada kategori sangat baik dengan skor rata-rata 4,25 (84,9%). Aspek capaian perkembangan literasi anak memperoleh skor tertinggi (4,42), sedangkan aspek metode dan media pembelajaran memperoleh skor terendah (3,98) meskipun tetap berada pada kategori baik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memberikan gambaran empiris praktik literasi kontekstual berbasis nilai keislaman pada satuan PAUD yang dapat menjadi rujukan dalam pengembangan program literasi sejenis.

Kata kunci: Literasi Anak Usia Dini; Perkembangan Literasi; Taman Kanak-Kanak; Membaca Nyaring; Pendidikan Berbasis Nilai Keislaman

Introduction

Literacy is a basic competence developed from an early age because it serves as the foundation for children's learning success at subsequent levels of education. From a developmental perspective, literacy does not appear suddenly when children enter primary school, but grows gradually through language experiences and interaction with print environments from early childhood. Whitehurst and Lonigan [1] introduced the concept of *emergent literacy* which holds that the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are the precursors of reading and writing ability develop long before formal reading instruction begins. This concept divides early literacy skills into two domains, namely *outside-in* skills (oral language and conceptual knowledge) and *inside-out* skills (phonological awareness and letter knowledge), each contributing to a different stage of reading development.

The development of early childhood literacy has significant long-term implications. Various research syntheses show that shared reading experiences (*shared book reading*) contribute positively to children's vocabulary development, oral language, and reading readiness [2], [3]. The National Early Literacy Panel [4] affirms that letter knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language ability, and interest in books are strong predictors of later reading success. Indeed, book-reading experience from a very early age is related to children's vocabulary development in subsequent years [5]. Thus, the quality of literacy stimulation during the preschool years also helps determine children's academic developmental trajectory.

Early childhood is a highly decisive period in forming the foundations of literacy. During this age range children experience rapid language development, so that appropriate stimulation will have a

multiplied effect on subsequent developmental stages. Bus, van IJzendoorn, and Pellegrini [2] affirm that consistent shared-reading habits contribute to children's reading readiness through the intergenerational transmission of literacy, whereas the absence of adequate stimulation risks creating ability gaps that are difficult to close at the primary-school level. Therefore, kindergartens bear an important responsibility to ensure that every child obtains rich and meaningful literacy experiences from the outset.

The importance of early literacy is also related to the transition from the phase of learning to read (*learning to read*) to the phase of reading to learn (*reading to learn*) at the primary-school level. Children who enter primary school with a strong literacy foundation tend to be better prepared to follow learning across subjects, whereas children with a weak foundation risk experiencing continuing learning difficulties. The National Early Literacy Panel [4] underlines that early literacy skills are strong predictors of subsequent reading success, so that investment during the preschool years has strategic value for a child's entire educational trajectory.

One of the most widely researched literacy strategies is dialogic reading (*dialogic reading*), namely interactive reading that encourages children's active participation through questions, responses, and the expansion of answers. The systematic review by Pillinger and Vardy [6] concludes that dialogic reading is an effective evidence-based intervention for supporting children's language and literacy skills, while the meta-analysis by Mol et al. [7] shows the added value of this approach for vocabulary development compared with ordinary reading. These findings position interactive reading as an important component of early childhood literacy programs.

Early literacy is essentially multidimensional. The National Early Literacy Panel [4] identifies a number of skills that consistently predict reading and writing success, including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid naming of letters and objects, the ability to write one's name, and phonological memory. In addition to these code-based skills, oral language abilities such as vocabulary and story comprehension also support the development of reading comprehension at later stages. Piasta [8] affirms that effective preschool classrooms balance the stimulation of code-based and meaning-based skills through activities that are meaningful to children. This framework serves as the basis for formulating the measurement aspects in this study, ranging from the literacy environment, the role of teachers, children's attainment, and methods and media, to parental involvement.

In Indonesia, the urgency of strengthening literacy from an early age has a strong policy foundation. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System [9] positions early childhood education as a developmental effort aimed at supporting children's growth and development so that they are ready to enter further education. A similar affirmation is contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 on National Standards for Early Childhood Education [10], which makes the language aspect, including early literacy, one of the developmental domains that must be stimulated. This policy positions kindergartens as a strategic space for cultivating a literacy culture from an early age.

Although the policy foundation is in place, the quality of literacy implementation at the education-unit level still varies and is not always documented systematically. Portraying literacy conditions at the institutional level becomes important so that program improvement can be carried out in

a targeted and evidence-based manner. Measurement involving diverse stakeholders, from the principal and teachers to parents, can provide a more comprehensive picture because each party observes children's development from a different but complementary point of view.

Kindergartens based on Islamic values have distinctive characteristics in developing literacy. In addition to stimulating literacy in Indonesian, these institutions generally combine literacy development with the introduction of religious values, such as recognizing hijaiyah letters, memorizing short surahs, and habituating daily prayers. Susanto [11] argues that early childhood education is essentially a holistic endeavor that integrates intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. In this context, literacy is understood not only as the technical skill of reading and writing, but also as a means of instilling character and values.

Besides the role of the institution, the family literacy environment also helps determine children's literacy development. Niklas, Wirth, Guffler, Drescher, and Ehmig [12] found that parents' attitudes toward shared reading influence children's linguistic competence through the quality of the home literacy environment. Cahoon et al. [13], through a meta-analysis of home-based interventions, also affirm the positive influence of family involvement on the literacy attainment of preschool-age children. Thus, the success of early childhood literacy development rests on the synergy between school and family.

A number of studies in Indonesia have examined early childhood literacy development from various perspectives. Basyiroh [14] designed a program to develop early childhood literacy skills through structured reading habituation, while Hadiani et al. [15] highlighted the optimization of kindergarten library use as a literacy environment that fosters children's reading interest. In a more recent domain, Mauluddia and Yulindrasari [16] reviewed

the role of digital literacy in supporting early childhood development through the use of technology. These studies demonstrate the richness of literacy-development strategies in ECE units.

In the regional context, strengthening literacy from an early age is important for equalizing educational quality. Islamic-based kindergartens such as TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City occupy a distinctive position because they combine early literacy development with the instilling of religious values in children's daily lives. A comprehensive understanding of how literacy practices take place in such institutions, together with their achievements and obstacles, can serve as a reference for similar institutions in designing and improving literacy programs suited to their characteristics and the values they uphold.

Nevertheless, most existing studies still focus on the effectiveness of a particular method or medium in general, and few have comprehensively portrayed literacy development in a single Islamic-based ECE unit holistically, from the school environment, the role of teachers, children's attainment, and methods and media, to parental involvement. There is also a research gap in combining the perceptions of three stakeholders at once, namely the principal, teachers, and parents, within a single measurement framework. It is this gap that the present study seeks to address.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the development of early childhood literacy at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City. Specifically, this study seeks to describe the condition of five literacy aspects, namely the school's literacy environment and policy, the role of teachers, children's literacy attainment, instructional methods and media, and parental involvement and evaluation, while also comparing the perceptions of educators and parents regarding these aspects. The novelty of the study lies in the empirical presentation of contextual literacy practices

that combine early literacy stimulation with the instilling of Islamic values in an ECE institution, so that it is expected to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of literacy models relevant to the characteristics of similar education units.

Research Method

This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to portray the condition of early childhood literacy development factually based on stakeholders' perceptions, without applying any treatment to the variables [17], [18]. The quantitative data from the questionnaire are complemented by documentary data as support for interpretation.

The study was conducted at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City, an early childhood education institution that delivers learning based on Islamic values. The research subjects consisted of eight informants, namely one principal, two group B teachers, and five parents/guardians. Informants were determined purposively, namely by selecting informants with knowledge, experience, and direct involvement relevant to the focus of the study [19]. The informant profile is presented in Table 1.

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of 40 statements grouped into five aspects, namely (A) the school's literacy environment and policy, (B) the role of teachers in literacy development, (C) children's literacy attainment, (D) instructional methods and media, and (E) parental involvement and evaluation. Each statement was measured using a five-point Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree (SA) valued at 5, Agree (A) at 4, Sometimes (S) at 3, Disagree (D) at 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) at 1. The content validity of the instrument was examined based on the alignment of items with indicators of early childhood literacy as referenced from the literature and child-

development standards. The distribution of items across aspects is presented in Table 2.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis stages included calculating the frequency distribution of each answer option, calculating mean scores at the item, aspect, and overall levels, and calculating the achievement level using a percentage formula, namely the mean score divided by the maximum score (5) multiplied by 100%. The results were then interpreted using five interpretive categories as presented in Table 3. It should be noted that item number 40 is negative in nature (measuring the presence of obstacles), so this item was not included in the calculation of the overall positive literacy index and was analyzed separately.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Code	Name	Role	Length of Involvement	Class
R1	Safetiana Thalia	Parent/Guardian	1 year	Group B
R2	Wibisono	Parent/Guardian	2 years	Group B
R3	Benny	Class Teacher	15 years	Group B
R4	M. Fauz Aldar	Parent/Guardian	2 years	Group B
R5	Muhammad	Principal	20 years	Group B
R6	Prii Ramona Nuning	Class Teacher	10 years	Group B
R7	Evi Nurhayati	Parent/Guardian	1 year	Group B
R8	Arni Yulianti	Parent/Guardian	2 years	Group B

Source: primary data (questionnaire), 2026

Table 2. Research Instrument Blueprint

Aspect	Indicator	Item Numbers	Total
A	School literacy environment and policy (program, reading corner, book collection, print-rich environment, access, library rules)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	8
B	Teacher role (reading aloud, picture media, retelling, story play, reinforcement, training)	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	8
C	Children's literacy attainment (reading interest, letter recognition, vocabulary, pre-writing, understanding print meaning)	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	10
D	Instructional methods and media (storytelling, audiovisual, internet-based, theme links, age variability)	27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32	6
E	Parental involvement and evaluation (involvement, communication, home facilitation, recording, obstacles)	33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40	8

Note: item 40 is negative in nature (measuring the presence of obstacles)

Table 3. Interpretation Criteria for Mean Scores and Achievement Levels

Mean Score Interval	Achievement Level	Category
4.21 - 5.00	84.1% - 100%	Very Good
3.41 - 4.20	68.1% - 84.0%	Good
2.61 - 3.40	52.1% - 68.0%	Fair
1.81 - 2.60	36.1% - 52.0%	Poor
1.01 - 1.80	20.0% - 36.0%	Very Poor

Source: adapted from the conversion of a five-point Likert scale

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of processing the questionnaires collected from eight informants indicate that the development of early childhood literacy at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City generally falls into the very good category. This finding reflects that the literacy development programs and practices implemented at this institution have been running effectively and are in line with the expected standards for early childhood education, supporting children's foundational language and literacy skills well.

Overall, the positive literacy index covering items 1 to 39 achieved a mean score of 4.25, corresponding to an achievement level of 84.9%. Detailed descriptions of the achievement levels for each assessed aspect, along with the distribution of responses provided by the informants, are presented in the next section, with further data and illustrations provided in Tables 4 through 7 and Figures 1 through 4.

Table 4. Distribution of Answers and Mean Scores per Statement Item (n = 8)

No	Statement	SA	A	S	D	SD	Mean	Category
1	School has a special IEB literacy development program	5	2	0	1	0	4.38	Very Good
2	A reading corner / library area is available in the classroom	5	0	0	0	1	4.00	Good
3	The number of available children's storybooks is felt to be sufficient	5	0	1	0	1	3.88	Good
4	The school routinely adds to its children's reading collection	5	0	0	0	1	4.13	Good
5	Pre-read classroom environment includes letter posters, word cards	4	0	0	0	0	4.25	Very Good
6	School has a special schedule for shared reading activities	5	1	1	0	1	4.13	Good
7	Library's reading area easily accessible to children	2	0	0	0	1	3.88	Good
8	School routinely includes nature to literacy activities	5	1	0	0	0	4.00	Very Good
9	Teacher reads stories to children every day	2	0	2	1	0	3.75	Good
10	Teacher uses picture media when introducing letters and words	4	0	1	0	0	4.25	Very Good
11	Teacher gives children the chance to retell story content	2	0	1	0	0	4.13	Good
12	Teacher introduces letters through play activities	5	0	0	1	0	4.38	Very Good
13	Teacher encourages children to recognize their name in writing	5	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
14	Teacher uses word cards so children do not get bored	5	0	1	0	0	4.38	Very Good
15	Teacher gives children a chance to share reading material	4	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
16	Teacher attends training on ICT literacy training	4	0	1	0	0	4.38	Very Good
17	Child shows interest in books and reading activities	2	0	2	0	0	4.00	Good
18	Child can recognize word letters of the alphabet	4	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
19	Child can state the initial letter of their name	5	2	0	0	0	4.63	Very Good
20	Child begins to recognize content, respond to story words	5	0	0	0	0	4.63	Very Good
21	Child can read story content to their own words	3	0	1	0	0	4.25	Very Good
22	Child can hold a book and turn pages correctly	5	0	0	0	0	4.63	Very Good
23	Child shows outstanding writing ability as early writing	5	0	0	0	0	4.63	Very Good
24	Child understands that print carries meaning	2	0	2	0	0	4.00	Good
25	Child shows age-appropriate vocabulary development	5	0	0	0	0	4.63	Very Good
26	Child can follow simple oral instructions well	5	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
27	Storytelling method is used frequently in class	2	0	2	1	0	3.75	Good
28	Instructional media (audiovisual) is used to support literacy	2	0	2	1	0	3.75	Good
29	Letter-based card games used in learning	2	0	1	1	0	3.88	Good
30	Literacy activities linked to the daily learning theme	3	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
31	Children attend to the literacy activities outside the classroom	1	0	1	0	0	3.75	Good
32	Instructional media used to children's developmental stage	4	0	1	0	0	4.38	Very Good
33	Parents involved in supporting children's literacy at home	4	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
34	School gives parents information on literacy	5	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
35	Regular teacher-parent communication on child development	5	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
36	Child is used to being read to by parents at home	2	0	2	0	0	4.00	Good
37	Children's literacy development is evaluated/recorded periodically	1	0	1	0	0	3.88	Good
38	Educational media used to improve learning	3	0	1	0	0	4.25	Very Good
39	Overall, the school's literacy program runs effectively	2	0	0	0	0	4.38	Very Good
40	There is a main obstacle hindering literacy development (*)	2	1	2	1	1	3.25	Fair

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, S=Sometimes, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. (*) item 40 is negative in nature (obstacle). Source: primary data, 2026

Table 4 shows that the majority of statement items are in the very good and good categories. Items related to the involvement of Islamic values in literacy activities and to recognizing the initial letter of a child's name received very high support, as seen from the dominance of Strongly Agree responses. Conversely, items in the instructional methods and media aspect, particularly those related to the use of audiovisual media and letter/word card games, obtained relatively lower scores than other items, indicating room for improvement in the availability and variety of instructional media.

Table 5. Recapitulation of Mean Scores and Achievement Levels per Aspect

Aspect	Description	Item Count	Mean	Category
A	School Literacy Environment & Policy	8	4.22 (84.4%)	Very Good
B	Teacher Role in Literacy Development	8	4.27 (85.3%)	Very Good
C	Children's Literacy Attainment	19	4.42 (88.5%)	Very Good
D	Instructional Methods & Media	6	3.98 (79.6%)	Good
E	Parental Involvement & Evaluation	7	4.23 (84.6%)	Very Good
Overall positive literacy index (Items 1-39)		39	4.25 (84.9%)	Very Good

Note: aspect E is calculated from items 33–39; item 40 (obstacle) is analyzed separately. Source: primary data, 2026

As shown in Table 5 and Figure 1, all five literacy aspects fall within a high score range. The aspect of children's literacy attainment (C) obtained the highest score, namely 4.42 (88.5%), followed by the role of teachers (B) at 4.27, parental involvement and evaluation (E) at 4.23, and the school's literacy environment and policy (A) at 4.22. The instructional methods and media aspect (D) obtained the lowest score, namely 3.98 (79.6%), but still falls within the good category. This pattern shows that children's developmental attainment is already good, while support from instructional methods and media can still be improved.

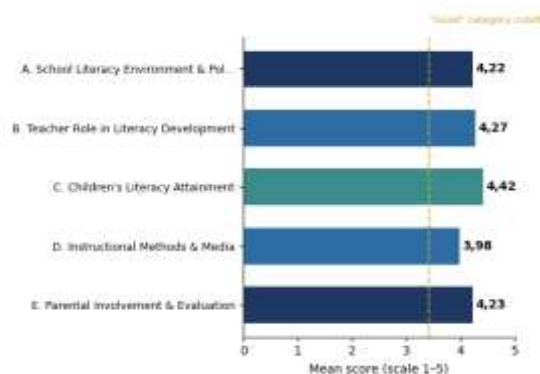


Figure 1. Mean literacy scores per aspect (scale 1–5)

The distribution of informants' answers on each aspect is presented in Figure 2. Overall, Strongly Agree and Agree responses dominate all aspects, while Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses appear in small proportions. The proportion of Sometimes responses is relatively larger in the instructional methods and media aspect, consistent with that aspect's lowest

mean score. This finding reinforces the indication that the variety of methods and the availability of media are points that need attention.

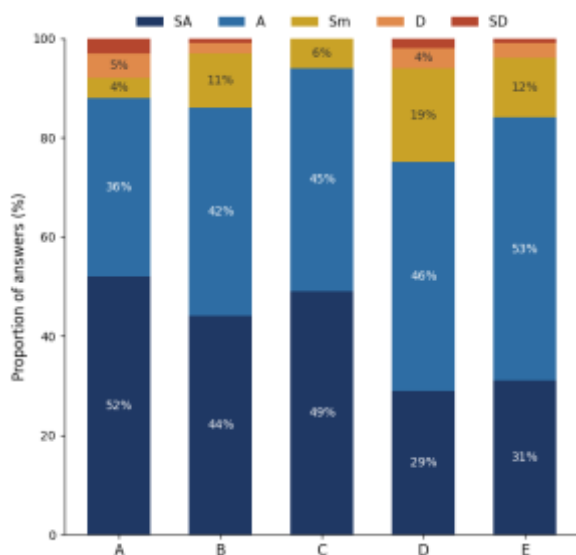


Figure 2. Distribution of informants' answers per aspect (%)

To clarify the picture of each aspect, the condition of each aspect is described below based on the mean score and the pattern of informants' answers.

First, the school's literacy environment and policy aspect (A) obtained a mean score of 4.22 (84.4%) and is classified as very good. The item related to the involvement of Islamic values in literacy activities received the strongest support in this aspect, while the item on the adequacy of the number of storybooks obtained a relatively lower score. This shows that policy commitment and the school's literacy atmosphere are well established, but the availability of reading collections still needs to be increased.

Second, the role of teachers aspect (B) obtained a mean score of 4.27 (85.3%). The practices of reading stories aloud, using picture media when introducing letters, giving children the opportunity to retell, and providing reinforcement to children interested in reading were judged to be working well. The score on this aspect affirms the teacher's position as the main driver of literacy activities in the classroom.

Third, the children's literacy attainment aspect (C) obtained the highest score, namely 4.42 (88.5%). Children were judged to show interest in books, to be able to recognize letters and state the initial letter of their name, to begin recognizing simple words, and to understand that print carries meaning. This attainment indicates that the literacy stimulation provided has had a real impact on children's early literacy development.

Fourth, the instructional methods and media aspect (D) obtained the lowest score, namely 3.98 (79.6%), although it is still in the good category. The items on the use of audiovisual media and letter/word card games obtained a larger proportion of Sometimes responses than other aspects. This finding directs attention to the need to increase the variety and frequency of instructional media use.

Fifth, the parental involvement and evaluation aspect (E) obtained a mean score of 4.23 (84.6%). The involvement of parents in supporting literacy at home, teacher-parent communication, and the recording and use of evaluation results were judged to be working well. This aspect shows synergy between school and family in supporting children's literacy development.

Overall, the distribution of scores across items shows a consistent pattern, namely that items measuring direct attainment in children and the role of teachers tend to receive stronger support than items measuring the availability of supporting resources. This pattern indicates that the strength of the program lies in the quality of interaction among teachers, children, and parents, while the dimension of facilities and the variety of media is the point most in need of strengthening. The practical implication is that improvement need not wait for the addition of large-scale facilities, but can begin with optimizing the use of simple media managed creatively by teachers.

Table 6. Total Score and Achievement Level of Each Informant

Code	Name	Role	Total Score	Mean	Achievement
RI	Safitri Thalia	Parent/Guardian	171	4.28	85.5%
RII	Wahyuni	Parent/Guardian	134	3.35	67.0%
RII	Betty	Class Teacher	159	3.98	79.5%
RII	St. Yusi Akbar	Parent/Guardian	180	4.00	80.0%
RII	Idhar	Principal	181	4.53	90.6%
RII	Pria Pratiwi Pratiwi	Class Teacher	154	3.85	77.0%
RII	Rizki Nurhasanah	Parent/Guardian	189	3.73	74.6%
RII	Arisi Tuhani	Parent/Guardian	179	3.58	71.6%

Note: the total score covers all 40 items (maximum 200). Source: primary data, 2026

Table 6 shows variation in perceptions among informants. Most informants gave ratings in the very good category, with one informant giving the maximum rating on all items. Nevertheless, there were also informants who gave lower ratings, falling within the fair category. This variation shows that experiences and perceptions of the literacy program's implementation are not uniform, so it is important for the school to continually maintain the consistency of literacy service quality for all children and families.

Table 7. Comparison of Educator and Parent Group Perceptions per Aspect

Aspect	Educators (n=3)	Parents (n=3)	Difference
A. School Literacy Environment & Policy	4.29	4.37	+0.12
B. Teacher Role in Literacy Development	4.17	4.33	+0.16
C. Children's Literacy Attainment	4.13	4.60	+0.47
D. Instructional Methods & Media	3.89	4.03	+0.14
E. Parental Involvement & Evaluation	4.10	4.31	+0.21
Overall (Items 1-39)	4.13	4.32	+0.19

Source: primary data, 2026

The comparison of perceptions between the educator group (teachers and principal) and parents is presented in Table 7 and Figure 3. Overall, the parent group gave a slightly higher rating (4.32) than the educator group (4.13). The most prominent difference is in the children's literacy attainment aspect, with parents rating it higher. Conversely, the educator group tended to give a more reflective rating on the instructional methods and media aspect. This difference is understandable given that educators have direct access to the learning process in the classroom, whereas parents assess based on the development observed in their children at home.

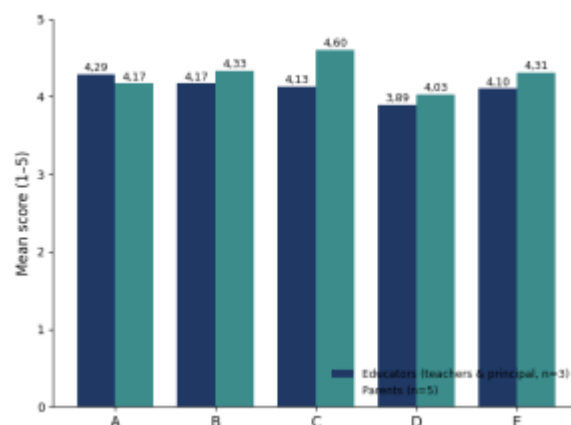


Figure 3. Comparison of educator and parent perceptions per aspect

In addition to these positive aspects, item number 40, which measures the presence of a main obstacle in literacy development, obtained a mean score of 3.25, falling within the fair category. This score shows that some informants are aware of remaining obstacles in implementing the literacy program. Based on the pattern of answers in the previous aspects, these obstacles are mainly related to the limited variety and number of instructional media and the variety of methods, as reflected in the methods and media aspect, which obtained the lowest score.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce a number of theories and prior research results on the development of early childhood literacy. The very good level of children's literacy attainment shows that the stimulation of oral language, letter recognition, and awareness of the function of print has proceeded in a balanced manner. This pattern is consistent with the *emergent literacy* framework proposed by Whitehurst and Lonigan [1], which emphasizes the simultaneous development of *outside-in* and *inside-out* skills. The high attainment in the child-development aspect indicates that both skill domains are well facilitated in learning activities.

The high score on the role of teachers aspect affirms the central position of teachers in literacy development. This is

consistent with Piasta's [8] conclusion that the quality of literacy instruction in preschool classrooms is largely determined by the curriculum, best practices, and teachers' professional development. Weadman, Serry, and Snow [20] also found that teachers' willingness to support children's oral language and literacy needs to be accompanied by knowledge strengthening so that learning opportunities are not missed. In this context, reading stories aloud, using picture media, and providing reinforcement to children who show interest in reading are practices that support literacy attainment.

Furthermore, the sustainability of literacy quality depends heavily on strengthening teacher capacity. Weadman, Serry, and Snow [20] underline that teachers' high willingness needs to be supported by adequate conceptual knowledge of language development and early literacy so that learning opportunities are not missed. In the context of TK Islam Muslimat, periodic training that combines interactive reading strategies with an understanding of children's developmental stages has the potential to strengthen practices already underway, consistent with Piasta's [8] finding that the quality of preschool classrooms is strongly influenced by the competence of their educators.

The instructional methods and media aspect, which obtained the lowest score although still in the good category, signals the need to strengthen the variety of methods and the availability of media. This finding is relevant to the literature's emphasis on the importance of interactive reading. The meta-analysis by Mol et al. [7] and the systematic review by Pillinger and Vardy [6] show that the dialogic reading approach adds value to children's vocabulary development and engagement. Therefore, enriching media such as picture storybooks, letter and word cards, and age-appropriate audiovisual media can increase the effectiveness of literacy activities.

Strengthening the methods and media aspect should not be understood merely as adding devices, but as improving the quality of interaction. Evidence from the meta-analysis by Mol et al. [7] and the review by Pillinger and Vardy [6] shows that dialogic reading, which positions the child as an active participant, adds value to vocabulary development and engagement, while early reading experience is related to vocabulary development at later stages [5]. Therefore, enriching quality picture books, letter and word cards, and audiovisual media relevant to learning themes needs to be accompanied by questioning and dialogue strategies that elicit children's participation, not merely the provision of devices.

The parental involvement and evaluation aspect, classified as very good, reinforces the importance of synergy between school and family. Niklas et al. [12] show that parents' attitudes toward shared reading influence children's linguistic competence through the home literacy environment, while Sénéchal and LeFevre [21] demonstrate that parental involvement contributes to the long-term development of children's reading skills. The meta-analysis by Cahoon et al. [13] on home-based interventions also confirms the positive influence of family involvement. Thus, the regular teacher-parent communication and encouragement of reading at home found in this study are well-founded practices.

The regular communication between teachers and parents and the encouragement to habituate reading at home found in this study are practices with strong theoretical and empirical foundations in the field of early childhood education. An intensive relationship between school and family enables alignment of educational goals, so that children's development can be monitored and supported continuously. Through effective communication, teachers can convey children's learning progress, offer suggestions for activities that can be done at home, and obtain information about

children's conditions and needs that may affect the learning process.

From the perspective of the ecological theory of development proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, children's development is influenced by various interacting environments, including family and school. When these two environments establish good communication, synergy is created that can optimally support children's cognitive, social, emotional, and language development. Therefore, regular communication between teachers and parents functions not only as a means of conveying information, but also as a form of collaboration in creating a consistent learning environment for children.

Encouraging reading at home is also an important part of efforts to improve children's literacy skills from an early age. Reading activities done together with parents give children the opportunity to learn new vocabulary, understand the meaning of language, and develop their thinking and imagination abilities. Regular reading habits in the family environment help reinforce the stimulation provided by teachers at school. Thus, the learning process does not stop when children return home, but continues in a supportive family environment.

The research results show that parental involvement in reading activities at home can increase children's interest in and motivation toward books and learning activities. Children who receive literacy support from their families tend to have richer learning experiences because they get the opportunity to interact with various types of reading material. In addition, shared reading also strengthens the emotional bond between parents and children, which ultimately creates a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Regular communication between teachers and parents and the habituation of reading at home can be understood as two complementary strategies in supporting

children's development. Good communication enables effective coordination between school and family, while reading activities at home reinforce the literacy stimulation children receive at school. The combination of these two practices is an important factor in creating a holistic, continuous educational environment oriented toward children's optimal development.

The synergy between school and family reflected in the parental involvement aspect can be strengthened through a more structured partnership. Referring to the findings of Niklas et al. [12] and Sénéchal and LeFevre [21] on the role of the home literacy environment, and Cahoon et al.'s [13] affirmation of the effectiveness of home-based interventions, the school can facilitate home reading guides, book-lending programs, and regular communication that gives parents concrete strategies for accompanying their children. This step is important so that the literacy attainment that is already good can be maintained and improved sustainably.

The difference in perceptions between educators and parents, with parents tending to rate children's attainment higher, can be understood from the difference in assessment perspectives. Parents assess based on the development observed in their children, whereas educators assess based on the learning process they manage directly. Educators' more reflective assessment of the methods and media aspect shows professional awareness of room for improvement, which is in fact useful as a basis for program development.

The distinctive contribution of this study lies in presenting the integration of literacy development with Islamic values. The dominance of Strongly Agree responses on items related to the involvement of Islamic values in literacy activities shows that recognizing hijaiyah letters, memorizing short surahs, and habituating prayers proceed hand in hand with literacy stimulation in Indonesian. This reinforces

Susanto's [11] view on the holistic nature of early childhood education, while also complementing the studies of Basyiroh [14] and Hadiani et al. [15], which highlight literacy habituation and the use of reading environments. The synthesis of these findings can be depicted as a contextual literacy model as presented in Figure 4, which positions the Islamic-value-integrated literacy process as the core, supported by the school environment, the role of teachers, methods and media, and parental involvement, and directed toward children's literacy attainment through continuous evaluation.

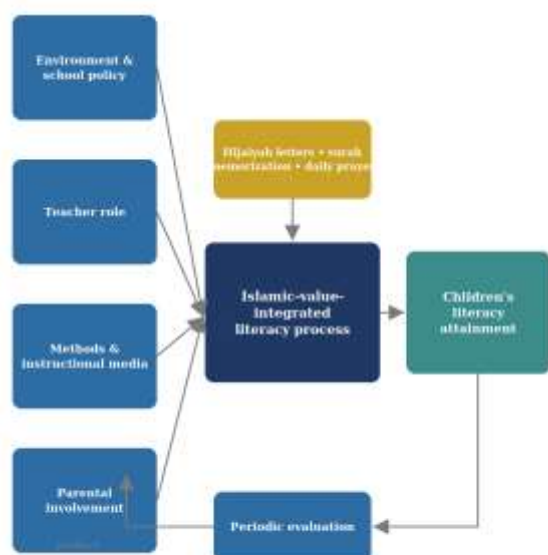


Figure 4. Contextual, Islamic-value-based literacy model at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City

The practical implications of these findings are fairly clear. Since the aspects of children's attainment, the role of teachers, the school environment, and parental involvement are already in good to very good condition, improvement priority should be directed at strengthening instructional methods and media as the aspect with the lowest score. Adding a variety of picture media, letter and word cards, and age-appropriate audiovisual media, accompanied by more regular implementation of interactive reading

activities, has the potential to raise this aspect to the very good category. In addition, the difference in perceptions among informants signals the importance of maintaining service-quality consistency so that all children and families obtain an equal literacy experience.

The evaluation aspect, classified as very good, has a strategic role as a mechanism for continuous improvement. Periodically recording children's literacy development and using evaluation results to improve learning form a feedback cycle, as depicted in the model in Figure 4. This cycle enables the school to identify aspects that are still weak, in this case methods and media, and to follow up on them in a targeted manner. Thus, evaluation functions not merely as documentation of attainment, but as a decision-making instrument for improving the quality of the literacy program.

Theoretically, the findings of this study reveal the integration of school factors and family factors in shaping children's literacy attainment. The high scores on the role of teachers and parental involvement, which go hand in hand with the high attainment of child development, support the view that literacy development is the result of interaction among the various environments in which a child grows. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Sénéchal and LeFevre [21] and Niklas et al. [12] on the contribution of the family literacy environment, and at the same time affirms that strengthening one aspect without strengthening others may limit overall attainment. Therefore, a comprehensive and integrated approach, as depicted in the contextual, Islamic-value-based literacy model, is important in developing early childhood literacy programs.

When linked to studies of value-based education management in a broader context, these findings reveal a similar pattern, namely that integrating values into the educational process strengthens the impact of character formation. At the early

childhood level, such integration takes place through concrete and repeated habituation, such as recognizing hijaiyah letters and habituating prayers, which is fused with literacy stimulation in Indonesian. This affirms that literacy in Islamic-based ECE units is not a stand-alone skill, but part of the formation of character and values as emphasized by Susanto [11].

In practical terms, this study offers a picture of literacy conditions that can serve as a basis for targeted improvement, namely strengthening instructional methods and media as a priority, amid the already very good attainment in other aspects. However, this study has several limitations. First, the number of informants is relatively small (eight people) and limited to a single institution, so the findings are contextual and not intended for generalization. Second, the data come from informants' perceptions through a questionnaire, so they may contain socially desirable response bias. Third, the study has not measured children's literacy attainment through direct assessment. Future research is recommended to increase the number and variety of informants, involve several institutions, and combine the questionnaire with direct assessment and structured observation in order to obtain a more complete picture.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the development of early childhood literacy at TK Islam Muslimat in Jambi City is generally in the very good category, with an overall positive literacy index of 4.25 (84.9%). The children's literacy attainment aspect obtained the highest score, while the instructional methods and media aspect obtained the lowest score, although it remained in the good category. Literacy development takes place contextually and is integrated with Islamic values, and is supported by the role of teachers and parental involvement. The comparison of perceptions shows that the parent group

rated slightly higher than the educator group, especially on children's developmental attainment.

Based on these findings, the school is advised to prioritize strengthening literacy instructional methods and media, among other things by enriching the variety of picture media, letter and word cards, and age-appropriate audiovisual media, and by expanding the implementation of interactive reading activities. The school is also advised to maintain the consistency of the quality of literacy services for all children and families, and to strengthen teacher capacity development in the field of literacy. For stakeholders, resource support and training are needed so that the Islamic-value-based literacy program can be sustained. Further research is expected to combine the questionnaire with direct assessment and involve a broader scope.

Finally, this study affirms that portraying literacy conditions at the education-unit level by involving various stakeholders can serve as a useful basis for targeted program improvement. A similar approach can be applied by other ECE institutions, particularly those based on Islamic values, to periodically identify the strengths and needs of their literacy programs so that service quality can be improved sustainably.

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