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MOTHERS' VIEWS AND HOME LITERACY PRACTICES ON CHILDREN LITERACY SKILLS ACQUISITION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Abstract: This study aimed to explore mother's views and home literacy practices for their children on literacy skills acquisition. In the study carried out in 2020, twenty-five mothers of children aged 6 years were assessed by means of a semi-structured qualitative interview. Two mother views were identified; (1) family is responsible (FR) and (2) teacher is responsible (TR) on children's literacy skills acquisition. An examination of the literacy practices offered by mothers revealed that there are similarities and differences between the practices. The obtained results indicated that mothers who consider that family is responsible for children's literacy acquisition implemented more versatile and greater number of activities for their children. On the contrary, mothers who consider that teachers are responsible for children's literacy acquisition preferred mostly activities that support writing skills rather than reading skills. Some recommendations were also made in this paper to promote the emergent literacy skills of preschoolers.

Keywords: Emergent literacy skills, home literacy practices, mother views, preschoolers.

Introduction

The word literacy in the traditional sense means being able to read and write directly. However, with the concept of developing literacy, literacy skills refer to the informal processes that start from birth and continue until the beginning of traditional education. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are considered the developmental premises of traditional literacy (National Research Council, 2001: 186). Similarly, while literacy skills are considered related to literacy that children acquire before formal literacy education according to Sulzby and Teale (1991), Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) defined them as skills that contain the developmental premises necessary for learning traditional literacy.

From the emergent literacy perspective, literacy acquisition is not a spontaneous process starting with school, but a developmental process that emerges from the first years (Sandvik, van Daal, & Ade`r, 2014). According to many scholars, waiting until children start primary school is not necessary to gain experiences in literacy. This means children could be supported in terms of literacy skills during the preschool period (Irwin, Moore, Tornatore, & Fowler, 2012; Justice & Ezell, 2001; Van Steensel, 2006).

Literacy skills, which are discussed in categories of oral language, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and phonological sensitivity in the preschool period are important predictors of

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children's reading success and development in later periods (Hammill, 2004; Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman, & Nelson, 2010). Alphabet knowledge requires recognition of letters in the alphabet; print awareness is understanding written materials; oral language ability requires knowing the meaning of words; and phonological awareness requires skills to recognize the sounds in words (Dynia, Lawton, Logan, & Justice, 2014). It is stated that the children who lacks these skills, fall behind their peers in terms of both social competence and academic success when they start primary school. This is because learning to read and write is related to children's past experiences; when children encounter a limited number of stimulants in an inadequate environment, their literacy skills are negatively affected in the long term (Lawhon & Cobb, 2002).

Considering literacy skills separately from the sociocultural context is not a correct approach since these skills are based on a social understanding (Gee, 2001; Pellegrini, 2001; Wasik, Dobbins & Herrmann, 2001). Emergent literacy refers to the emergence of literacy-related behaviors as a result of both social interaction and direct education. According to this view, the first priority is given to the social interaction for the emergence of literacy (OECD, 2006). Children's socializing experiences with their immediate surroundings directly affect how they learn literacy and spoken language (Pellegrini, 2001). Mothers and other caregivers play an important role in literacy development in infancy. Therefore, parents and caregivers should support their children's literacy development from the earliest years using appropriate means (Bus & Van Ljzendoorn, 1997).

Many elements in the home environment such as child-adult relationships, availability of learning materials as well as physical conditions of the home affect the literacy development in children (Gonzalez & Uhing, 2008). The home literacy environment in particular has an important impact on children's early literacy development (Buhs, Welch, Burt & Knoche, 2011; Piasta, McGinty & Kaderavek, 2012). Home literacy environment refers to an environment that parents create for their children at home, which is probably the most important contributor to preschool children's literacy learning (Manolitsis, Georgiou & Tziraki, 2013; Niklas & Schneider, 2013).

Home literacy environment promotes preschoolers' emergent literacy skills and their interest in literacy activities in two ways. The first one refers to the active participation of the mother or caregiver in literacy activities with the child. In the second scenario, the mother or caregiver becomes a role model for the child in literacy practices. For the second case, although the child is not actively participating in literacy activities, an environment where literacy is valuable and forefront is created by the mother or caregiver. Thus, in both cases, the mother or caregiver supports the literacy skill development of the child (Baroody & Diamond, 2012). To put it simply, children's both observing and participating in home activities have a positive effect on their literacy development (Bennett, Weigel & Martin, 2002; Leseman & DeJong, 1998). In line with these findings, Teale and Sulzby (1986) defined three sources of home literacy environment that can contribute to preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. These are activities in which children interact with adults in writing and reading, independently explore writing, and gain experiences by observing an adult model who displays literacy behaviors (Stainthrop & Hughes, 2000).

In studies examining home literacy environments, it was stated that a number of variables related to this environment such as parents' literacy habits, natural and official literacy activities between parents and children, shared book reading activities, and parents' beliefs about their children's literacy acquisition have a significant effect on children's emergent

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literacy development (DesJardin & Ambrose, 2010; Gonzalez & Uhing, 2008; Marjanovik Umek, Podlesek, & Fekonja, 2005; McGinty & Justice 2009; Taylor, 2011).

In a study conducted by Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, and Kirby (2008), it was found that parents' beliefs about their children's literacy achievements had an effect on their teaching activities at home, and these activities contribute to children's alphabet knowledge. Similarly, Weigel, Martin, and Bennett (2006) conducted a study examining the relationship between mothers' beliefs about the literacy acquisition of their children and the actual literacy development in children. Accordingly, they determined that there are two types of parent-literacy beliefs: traditional and supportive. The mothers with supportive views stated that home literacy education was important, whereas mothers with traditional views believed that the school is responsible for literacy development. The results obtained in another study showed that the beliefs and practices of the person who provides the care for children are effective on children's language and literacy skills (Foote, Smith, & Ellis, 2004; Guimaraes & Youngman, 1995; Newland et al., 2011).

Based on the above-mentioned reports, it can be argued that a relationship exists between parents' literacy beliefs and the quality of home literacy environments (Clingenpeel & Pianta, 2007). In other words, parents' beliefs and expectations are effective on the literacy experiences they provide to their children (Sonnenschein et al., 1997). Moreover, some other studies also pointed out that rich home environments provided by parents where children can access written materials such as books and activities appropriate for their ages contribute positively to children's language and literacy skills (Raz & Bryant, 1990). Also, both home literacy activities and learning resources within the home environment promote children's language and literacy skills (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Radisic & Seva, 2013).

Overview of the present study

A literature survey revealed that many quantitative and qualitative studies were conducted examining teachers' (Lynch, 2009; Lynch, 2011; Sandvik, Van Daal & Ader, 2014; Sverdlov, Aram & Levin, 2014) and mothers' views and beliefs (Hammer, Rodriguez, Lawrence, & Miccio, 2007; Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; Newland et al., 2011; Stephenson et al., 2008; Weigel, Martin & Bennet, 2006) about literacy acquisition in children. However, only a limited number of qualitative studies have examined mothers' views and practices (Hammer & Weiss, 2000; Sormunen, Goranskaya, Kirilina, Bykachev, & Tossavainen, 2018). Therefore, more qualitative studies are needed to obtain in-depth information about parents' views and practices. Considering that the parents' literacy-related views have a significant effect on the literacy experiences they provide to their children, it is believed that the current paper will provide a valuable contribution to the preschool literature in terms of determining the mothers' views, the practices they have implemented with their children, and the materials they provided to their children. Furthermore, it is believed that the findings obtained in the present study will guide and provide valuable information to mothers of preschoolers regarding literacy practices. Also, examining mothers' views about implementing home literacy practices will help and make a valuable contribution to both early childhood educators and early childhood teacher education departments of universities.

Accordingly, the present paper aims at examining the views of mothers of preschoolers about their children's literacy acquisition, the literacy activities they implement at home, and the materials they provided. In this context, this study answered the following three research questions with a sample of Turkish mothers whose children were enrolled in a kindergarten: (1) What are the views of mothers of preschoolers about their children's acquisition of literacy

skills?; (2) What kind of literacy activities do mothers implement for their children?; (3) What kind of literacy materials do mothers provide to their children? For each of these questions, we examined similarities and differences between FR and TR group mothers.

Method

Procedures

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with mothers of six-year-old children who had attended a kindergarten. Qualitative methods were chosen because these methods are particularly relevant for research questions about subjective perceptions of individuals and since the aim of this study is to complement the findings of other quantitative studies in this field. Semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes. The main questions of the interviews are as follows: "1) Who is responsible for your child's acquisition of literacy skills, what is your opinion? Please state your reason. 2) What activities do you implement to support your child's acquisition of literacy skills? 3) What materials do you use to support your child's acquisition of literacy skills?" The demographic information was collected regarding age, maternal education, child gender, and birth order. The educational level of mothers was rated using a four-point scale (elementary school, high school, bachelor, and graduate). Data were collected in the autumn of 2020 by the author of this paper. The permission to conduct this research was granted by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Kilis 7 Aralık University. The mothers were informed about the confidentiality of their answers to avoid socially desirable answers and to protect their privacy. Due to Covid-19 measures, survey data were collected electronically through online interviews. Responses were recorded by the interviewer in written notes.

Participants

A representative sample of mothers in Kilis, Turkey was included in the study. Two kindergartens were randomly selected from all those in Kilis province of Turkey. A researcher visited the schools, interviewed the kindergarten teacher, then five names from the register were randomly selected. It was intended to interview fifteen mothers from each school, but reserves were selected, also at random, in case of refusal. The interviewer reached the participants via the phone and asked if they were willing to answer questions about their children. All questions were open-ended and there were opportunities for further comment at the end of the interviews. A total of 25 mothers were interviewed about their children's literacy development. Interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Data analyses

The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions were examined using content analysis to obtain a framework of categories for mothers' responses. Content analysis, as defined by Graneheim and Lundman, is a systematic analysis technique for interview data. Categories were determined based on the data rather than fitting them into a theoretical framework (Creswell, 2012). We analyzed the transcripts of the interviews and reduced the data by converting them into developmental codes. The strategy was to begin with a broad outline and revise it. The data was narrowed down, and the following five categories emerged from the analyses of mothers' answers to the second question: writing skills, oral language skills, alphabet knowledge, math skills, and phonologic awareness. The same procedure was performed for the answers to the third question. The following five distinct categories

emerged from the analyses of mothers' answers to the third question: writing materials, digital apps, reading materials, toys, and math materials.

The quotes from participants were presented in the tables. Since the participants gave more than one answer to the questions, the frequency (f) numbers in the study group and categories differ. The participants' names were coded; mothers who consider that teacher is responsible in literacy education were coded as "TR" and mothers who consider that family is responsible in literacy education were coded as "FR".

Results

The results are given by categories and codes, supported by quotations from mothers.

Participant characteristics

We interviewed a total of 25 mothers of children who enrolling randomly selected two kindergartens. Demographic information of mothers and their children, frequencies, and percentages are given in Table 1. Accordingly, 16% of the mothers participating in the study were in the age range of 20-29, 60% in the age range of 30-39, and 24% aged 40 years and older. As seen in Table 1, a majority of the participant mothers were high-school graduates.

Table 1. Demographic information of mothers and their children

Demographic information	n=25	
	f	%
Child's gender		
Female	12	48
Male	13	52
Birth order		
First child	11	44
Second child	9	36
Third and above	5	20
Mother's age		
20-29	4	16
30-39	15	60
40 and above	6	24
Mother's education		
Primary school	4	12
High-school	12	48
Bachelor	8	32
Graduate	1	4

Results obtained from the first research question on mother views

The mothers were asked, "Who is responsible for your child's acquisition of literacy skills, what is your opinion? Please state your reason." and the obtained results are presented in Table 2. As shown in the table, seven of the 25 mothers believe that "teacher is responsible in literacy education" (TR group mothers). On the other hand, the remaining eighteen mothers believe that "family is responsible in literacy education" (FR group mothers). Therefore, a majority of the mothers hold the view that the family is responsible for children's literacy acquisition.

Table 2. Findings regarding the mothers' views of literacy acquisition of their children

View	n(25)

Family is responsible	18
Teacher is responsible	7

Some quotes from mothers' answers regarding their views of literacy skills acquisition are given below:

> *"I believe that teacher is responsible. Children should receive the literacy education first at school." (TR-2)*
> *"Family is responsible because children learn new words and develop vocabulary knowledge before pre-school education." (FR-15)*
> *"Family is important because children's education starts at family, the role of the family in children's education is essential." (FR-17)*
> *"In my opinion, parents are obliged to ensure that their children receive pre-school education. And they should make pre-school activities and homework at home to support their child. However, it is not right for parents to give literacy education to their children." (TR-23)*
> *"Teacher is responsible. If we educate our children, the presence of teachers and schools would become meaningless." (TR-25)*

Results obtained from the second research question on literacy activities

The findings obtained from the second question of the study, "What kind of literacy activities do mothers implement for their children?" are shown in Table 3. Five categories were identified from the responses of the participants. These categories were as follows: Writing skills, oral language skills, alphabet knowledge, math skills, and phonologic awareness activities. Table 3 presents the categories and codes. Similarities and differences between the FR and TR group mothers were detailed for each research question.

Table 3. Literacy activities implemented by mothers to support their children's literacy skills

Categories	Code	FR (n=18)	TR (n=7)
Writing skills	Painting	13	5
	Drawing	10	1
	Playing play-dough	9	-
	Line drawing	5	-
Oral language skills	Book reading	17	4
	Asking children to tell a story	4	1
	Teaching new words	3	1
	Finger games, riddle, nursery rhyme	3	2
Alphabet knowledge	Letter writing	10	4
	Word writing	8	2
Math skills	Teaching numbers	12	4
	Drawing geometric shapes	3	-
Phonologic awareness	Teaching phonics	3	-
None	-	-	2

The results indicated that the most frequently implemented activities are writing skills, oral language skills, and alphabet knowledge, respectively. As seen in Table 3, the mothers implemented a total of 13 different activities. While all of these 13 different activities were implemented by FR group mothers, TR group mothers implemented only 9 of these activities. Furthermore, while all FR group mothers conducted at least one of these activities, two TR group mothers did not implement any literacy activities for their children.

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It was found that book reading activity was implemented by twenty-one mothers (17 FR and 4 TR). Furthermore, according to the findings, the book reading activity was the most common activity performed by the mothers in both groups compared to other activities. While 3 FR group mothers implemented phonics teaching activities, none of the TR group mothers implemented these activities. Fourteen mothers (10 FR and 4 TR) implemented word teaching activities. Moreover, sixteen mothers (4 FR and 12 TR) implemented activities about teaching numbers. Accordingly, these findings imply that mothers from both groups attach importance to word teaching and number teaching activities. Among FR group mothers, 9 mothers implemented playing play-dough activity, 5 mothers implemented line drawing activity, and 3 mothers implemented teaching phonics activities. However, none of the TR group mothers implemented such activities.

Some quotes from mothers' comments regarding activities they implemented are as follows:

> *"To be honest, I couldn't implement such activities. Because I live in difficult conditions and therefore, I don't have enough time to do activities with my children and I couldn't spend time with them." (TR-3)*
> *"I did not implement activities, but I taught them to count." (TR-5)*
> *"We create various activities to spend time with my child. We sing songs, we create nursery rhymes, we constantly communicate. We buy fairy-tale books and go to the cinema." (FR-7)*
> *"In fact, I don't do many activities, but I give my kid play-dough to promote his/her finger muscles. My child plays play-dough." (FR-12)*
> *"I taught my child English and Turkish alphabets. I taught my child to hold a pencil." (FR-24)*

Results obtained from the third research question on literacy materials

The results from the third question of the study, "What kind of literacy materials do mothers provide their children?" are shown in Table 4. Five categories were identified from the answers of the participants. These categories were as follows: writing materials, digital apps, reading materials, toys, and math materials. The identified codes and corresponding categories are listed in Table 4. Similarities and differences between the FR and TR mothers were detailed for each research question.

Table 4. *Materials provided by mothers to support the literacy skills of their children*

Categories	Code	FR (n=18)	TR (n=7)
Writing materials	Coloring books	13	5
	Notebook-pencil	12	4
	Writing board	4	1
Digital apps	Smartphone apps	13	3
	Tablet apps	4	1
	Computer apps	7	-
Reading materials	Story books	17	5
	Alphabet books	5	-
Toys	Educational toys	4	2
	Intelligence toys	3	-
	Puzzles and Blocks	4	-
Math materials	Abacus and hands calculator	2	-
None	-	-	2

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The results indicated that the most frequently used literacy materials by mothers were writing materials, digital apps, and reading materials, respectively. As seen in Table 4, mothers provided a total of 12 different materials to their children. While all these 12 materials were provided by FR group mothers, TR group mothers used only 7 of 12 materials. Furthermore, all FR group mothers provided at least one of these materials whereas, two mothers in the TR group did not provide any literacy materials to their children. According to Table 4, while FR group mothers provided educational toys, intelligence toys, puzzles, and Blocks to their children, TR group mothers did not provide any of such materials to their children. Some quotes from mothers' comments regarding the materials they provided to their children are given below:

> *"In general, I couldn't give such materials to my kid, but I send my child to a private kindergarten from the age of 3. Because those environments include such materials necessary for the education of my kid." (TR-4)*
> *"We teach our kid to read correctly through computer apps." (FR-6)*
> *"I give my child a smartphone one hour per day since there is an alphabet app in that phone." (TR-8)*
> *"I give my child books with many images but little text, audiobooks, finger puppets, play dough, kinetic sand, puzzle, tangram, and coloring books." (FR-9)*
> *"We purchase the books that the teacher recommended us." (TR-11)*
> *"I prefer toys that including texts, shapes, and images." (FR-15)*
> *"Attention arousal series, storybooks, coloring books." (FR-16)*
> *"I give my child game cards about colors and animals. I also give audio toys that introducing letters and numbers." (FR-21)*

Discussion and Conclusion

This study used semi-structured interviews to explore and identify mother's views and home literacy practices about young children's acquisition of literacy skills. It was determined that mothers who participated in this study had different views regarding the literacy acquisition of their children and a majority of them held the opinion that the family is responsible for literacy acquisition of children. It can be argued that mothers consider family as the first teacher of children and have some background regarding the importance of children's literacy acquisition. Similarly, Sonnenschein et al. (1997) found that parents' beliefs regarding the literacy acquisition of their children are affected by their cultural background and past experiences.

We found that mothers who believe that family is responsible for children's literacy acquisition (FR mothers) conducted a more versatile and greater number of activities to facilitate literacy acquisition compared to other mothers (TR mothers). For example, while FR group mothers implemented playing play-dough, teaching phonics, line drawing, and drawing geometric shapes activities, none of the mothers who believe that teacher is responsible for literacy acquisition of children (TR group mothers) conducted such activities. This finding indicates that mothers' views have an impact on whether they will play an active or passive role in their children's literacy acquisition process. Consistent with our findings, DesJardin and Ambrose (2010) determined that parents who play an active role in their children's literacy acquisition conducted divergent literacy activities such as playing language games, singing songs, regular library visits, and daily reading activities. Furthermore, Weigel, Martin and Bennett (2006) found that mothers who believe that they have an important role in the literacy acquisition of their children offered a home environment rich with language and literacy activities.

The obtained results revealed that mothers from both groups focused on mostly book-reading activities. Therefore, it can be argued that mothers are aware of the importance of book reading. However, how mothers conducted this activity and the targeted literacy skill is unknown. Book reading activity includes various reading types. Previous studies pointed out that reading with attention to print promotes a child's print awareness and alphabet knowledge and accordingly, the importance of reading with attention to print was highlighted (Justice & Ezell, 2001). Therefore, although a majority of the mothers implemented book reading activities with their children, they should be informed about the benefits of shared book reading to support their children's print awareness. For example, a study conducted by Gordon Elias, Ross, and Kate (2006) showed that children of parents who participated in book reading training displayed higher emergent literacy skills. Furthermore, Frijters, Barron and Brunello (2000) found that the frequency of shared book reading activity is an important predictor of children's emergent literacy skills such as alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness.

Although a majority of the mothers conducted activities regarding oral language skills and writing skills, fewer mothers implemented phonological awareness-related activities. While three FR group mothers conducted teaching phonics activities, none of the TR group mothers implemented teaching phonics-related activities. Developing phonological awareness in preschool aged children is very essential for emergent literacy skills. To learn reading, a child should be aware that words are made up of different sounds. This skill is called phonological awareness and is a powerful predictor of children's further literacy skills. Many studies reported the significant impact of phonological awareness in children's literacy acquisition (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000; Overby et al., 2012; Pinto, Bigozzi, Gamannossi, & Vezzani, 2012). However, considering the fact that only 3 (FR) of 25 mothers conducted phonological awareness-related activities, it can be argued that most mothers do not have enough information about the activities promoting children's phonological awareness. To support the development of phonological awareness in preschool aged children, providing some training to mothers should be considered.

Furthermore, it was determined that while a majority of the mothers implemented similar activities such as book reading, teaching letters, drawing, they never conducted literacy-related unique activities. However, examining different written materials such as newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, and atlas; hanging notes on boards and refrigerators, making library visits, increasing the variety of written materials at home, and parents' reading for themselves are some of the tasks that parents should implement for their children's literacy acquisition (Stainthrop & Hughes, 2000; Weinberger, 1996). Consequently, it was determined that the mothers did not practice versatile literacy activities. This result suggests that mothers are not informed by teachers about literacy activities they can implement.

Mothers from both groups conducted more letter teaching activities compared to other activities. That finding indicates mothers focused on formal activities rather than natural and daily activities. Consistent with these findings, Shaw (2007), Altiparmak (2010), Kilic and Erturk Kara (2019) determined that parents implemented formal activities like teaching letters more than natural activities such as reading and playing games. However, considering the item related to the emergent literacy activities included in the Turkish 2013 Preschool Education Program saying "Teaching reading and writing are not included in the program. Also, there is no showing and printing letters", it seems that families should be informed about not implementing letter teaching activities to their children. Teachers may implement seminars or meetings about the scope and curriculums' of preschool for mothers to better understand the

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scope and goals of the preschool education. The main point in the children's literacy acquisition process is that involving them in natural literacy activities. For example, some of the daily activities that parents can do with their children to support emergent literacy development are singing rhyme songs, cutting, and pasting old catalogs, preparing birthday cards, writing on a foggy window, creating a shopping list, writing letters, and writing recipes (Makin & Whitehead, 2004; Weinberger, 1996).

Moreover, some mothers implemented math activities such as teaching numbers and geometric shapes which are not directly related to the children's literacy acquisition. Additionally, FR group mothers implemented more versatile and greater number of literacy-related activities than those in the TR group. Obviously, mothers' views are effective in their decisions regarding activities and materials provided to their children.

While all FR group mothers provided at least one literacy material, none of the TR group mothers provided literacy materials to their children. Gershoff, Aber, Raver and Lennon (2007) found that literacy materials provided to children by their parents positively affect the cognitive and language development of children. Therefore, it can be argued that if mothers are informed regarding the importance of versatile literacy materials on child development, they will provide a variety of literacy materials and attach more importance. Furthermore, it was found that mothers used appropriate materials for the age of their children. According to Hart and Risley (1992), using appropriate materials for the age of children promotes establishing a parent-child relationship. Moreover, a majority of participating mothers gave storybooks to their children as home literacy materials. Considering these findings, it can be argued that mothers attach importance to using storybooks. According to Evans, Shaw, and Bell (2000), parents have an important role in increasing the number of home reading materials by either purchasing or renting books from libraries; thus, they can promote their children's literacy development by giving them appropriate books.

Many studies indicated that the home literacy activities performed by parents have a positive impact on their children's literacy skills (Eva, Lau & Nirmala, 2011; Foy & Mann, 2003; Law, 2008; Martini & Senechal, 2012; Newland et al., 2011; Schmit, Simpson, & Friend, 2011; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2010). Therefore, parents should be informed about the home literacy activities by researchers, educators, and teachers. If parents are well-informed and develop awareness, they will implement versatile and effective activities.

Finally, preschoolers gain emergent literacy experience at home through activities before they start formal education. Parents' awareness and beliefs are effective in the selection and implementation of proper literacy practices. The obtained results in the present paper revealed that mothers who consider that family is responsible for children's literacy acquisition implemented more literacy activities and gave more versatile materials to their children compared to mothers who consider that teacher is responsible for literacy acquisition. All these results suggest that there is an important link between the views and practices of mothers.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study has some methodological limitations that require comments. First, the results are limited to mothers' self-reports of home literacy activities. Limitations due to self-report data could have contributed to the relationship between mothers' literacy views and home literacy practices. Observations of mothers' literacy activities might provide more accurate determinations about the relationship between mothers' literacy views and activities. Also, this study had some limitations of using qualitative research methods. Further studies designed

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with quantitative and mixed research methods can be carried out. The sample of this study consisted of mothers of children attending a preschool. More studies can be conducted with mothers of children of different age groups and their views and practices can be compared. Another limitation of this study is that it is not known how much time mothers engage in these activities and how often they perform these activities.

The following recommendations can be made to institutions, curriculum designers, and teachers to better support mothers with valuable information about the importance of the home literacy environment. Accordingly, parents could play a more active role in their children's literacy acquisition. First, training programs can be designed for mothers to inform them about literacy acquisition and activities; thus, mothers could provide versatile materials and a greater number of activities for their children. Mothers might be informed about activities related to daily life rather than formal ones. It was determined that participant mothers implemented more writing skills-related activities than reading-related activities. Only fewer mothers implemented phonological awareness-related activities, which is an important literacy skill. Therefore, mothers should be informed about implementing a greater number of reading activities.

In the present study, two main variables related to the home literacy environment were examined; literacy activities implemented, and literacy materials provided to children by mothers. However, some other variables related to home literacy environment such as mothers' reading habits, reading frequencies, and reading experiences were not investigated. Furthermore, this paper tried to examine mothers' views regarding their children's literacy skills. Further studies may examine mothers' own reading habits and beliefs. Additionally, further studies can be conducted to determine the relationship between different variables related to home literacy environment and parents' practices and beliefs regarding the literacy acquisition of their children.

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