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PROMOTION OF LIBRARY IN THE FAMILY IN PRIMARY CLASS STUDENTS IS A CHALLENGING PROBLEM

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ABSTRACT

The promotion of reading and library use among primary class students within the family context presents significant challenges. Despite the acknowledged importance of early reading habits in the development of literacy and cognitive skills, fostering a culture of reading at home faces numerous barriers, including socio-economic factors, parental involvement, and access to resources. This article explores these challenges and proposes strategies to overcome them, aiming to enhance the role of family libraries in the educational development of young children.

KEYWORDS

Early literacy development, family library promotion, primary class, students, parental involvement, socio-economic barriers, digital distraction, cultural factors in reading, home reading environment, reading habits.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of a child's educational journey is laid in the early years, where reading emerges as a pivotal skill that influences not only language development but also cognitive abilities, imagination, and critical thinking. Primary class students, typically aged

between 6 to 10 years, are at a crucial stage where developing a habit of reading can significantly impact their academic success and lifelong learning potential. The role of the family in this developmental process is paramount, as the home environment often

determines the extent to which children are exposed to and engaged with books outside of the formal school setting.

Despite the clear benefits of early reading, promoting the use of libraries within the family context is a challenging endeavor. Families vary widely in their access to resources, literacy levels, and cultural attitudes toward reading, all of which can either facilitate or hinder the development of a reading culture at home. In many cases, socio-economic barriers prevent families from building home libraries or accessing public libraries, leaving children with limited opportunities to explore the world of books. Additionally, the increasing prevalence of digital entertainment poses a significant distraction, making it harder for parents to encourage reading as a preferred activity.

Moreover, the role of parents in fostering reading habits is complex and influenced by their own literacy levels, time availability, and cultural practices. In households where reading is not a common activity, children may not see it as an enjoyable or valuable pursuit. Cultural differences also play a role, as some families may prioritize oral storytelling or other forms of communication over reading.

This article aims to explore the multifaceted challenges associated with promoting library use in the family setting for primary class students. By examining the

socio-economic, technological, cultural, and educational factors involved, this study seeks to identify effective strategies that can help overcome these barriers and foster a love for reading among young children within the home. The ultimate goal is to underscore the importance of early reading habits and provide actionable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to support the development of literacy in the family context.

Literature Review

The promotion of library use and reading habits among primary class students has been a focal point of educational research for decades. The importance of early exposure to reading and its impact on cognitive and language development is well-documented. This literature review examines the key studies and theories that address the role of the family in fostering reading habits, the challenges faced in promoting libraries within the home, and the strategies that have been proposed to overcome these challenges.

Research consistently highlights the family as a critical environment for early literacy development. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, learning is a socially mediated process, and the family plays a pivotal role in the initial stages of a child's literacy development (Vygotsky, 1978). Studies by Snow et al. (1991) and Sénéchal & LeFevre (2002) have shown that children who are read to regularly at home develop stronger

language skills and have a more extensive vocabulary by the time they start school.

Parental involvement in reading activities is also linked to higher academic achievement. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that children whose parents engage them in literacy activities, such as reading aloud, storytelling, and visiting libraries, tend to perform better in school. However, the extent of parental involvement is often influenced by factors such as parental education levels, socio-economic status, and cultural attitudes toward reading (Baker & Scher, 2002).

Despite the recognized benefits, promoting library use within the family context faces significant obstacles. Socio-economic factors are among the most significant barriers. Neuman and Celano (2001) found that children from low-income families have less access to books and other reading materials, which limits their opportunities to develop reading habits at home. Furthermore, the digital divide exacerbates these disparities, as access to e-books and online reading resources is uneven across different socio-economic groups (Rideout & Katz, 2016).

Parental literacy levels also impact the promotion of reading at home. A study by van Steensel et al. (2011) revealed that parents with lower literacy skills are less likely to engage in reading activities with their children, which in turn affects the child's reading development.

Time constraints and the demands of daily life further reduce the likelihood of regular reading sessions in many households (Hindman et al., 2012).

Cultural factors present additional challenges. In some cultures, oral traditions and storytelling are more prevalent than reading books, leading to less emphasis on building a home library (Heath, 1983). Moreover, the availability of culturally relevant and multilingual reading materials is often limited, making it difficult for children from diverse backgrounds to find books that reflect their experiences and language (Kenner, 2004).

Numerous strategies have been proposed to address the challenges of promoting library use in the family. Community-based interventions, such as mobile libraries and book exchanges, have shown promise in increasing access to reading materials in underserved areas (Elley, 1992). Additionally, school-community partnerships can provide support to families through programs that encourage reading at home, such as family literacy nights and take-home book programs (St. Clair, 2012).

Technology offers both challenges and opportunities in promoting reading. While digital distractions are a concern, e-books and reading apps can also serve as tools to engage children in reading, particularly in households where physical books are scarce (Zucker et al., 2009). However, it is crucial that these digital

resources are used in ways that complement, rather than replace, traditional reading (Chiong et al., 2012).

Cultural adaptation of reading materials is another important strategy. Studies by Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003) suggest that providing books that reflect the cultural backgrounds of students can help bridge the gap between home and school literacy practices. Multilingual books and culturally relevant stories can foster a stronger connection to reading for children from diverse backgrounds.

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the strategies for promoting reading in the family. Ecological systems theory, as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), emphasizes the influence of various environmental systems, including the family, on a child's development. This theory supports the idea that interventions should not only focus on the child but also involve the family and community to create a supportive reading environment.

Another relevant framework is the concept of literacy as a social practice, which views reading not just as a cognitive skill but as a socially and culturally situated activity (Street, 1984). This perspective highlights the importance of considering the cultural and social contexts in which reading occurs, particularly in diverse family settings.

Challenges in Promoting Library Use in the Family

1. Socio-Economic Barriers:

- o Many families, especially those from low-income backgrounds, may not have the resources to build a home library. The cost of books and other reading materials can be prohibitive, leading to a lack of exposure to literature at an early age.
- o Limited access to public libraries in certain areas further exacerbates the problem, making it difficult for children to develop a reading habit outside of school.

2. Parental Involvement and Literacy Levels:

- o The level of parental involvement in a child's education is a significant factor in promoting reading at home. Parents who are themselves not engaged in reading or who have low literacy levels may find it challenging to instill a love for books in their children.
- o The time constraints faced by working parents also limit the opportunities for reading activities at home.

3. Digital Distraction:

- o The proliferation of digital devices and entertainment options often diverts children's attention away from reading. The allure of television, video games, and social media can overshadow the quieter, more reflective activity of reading.

o While digital books and reading apps offer new avenues for engaging children in reading, they also introduce potential distractions and reduce the tactile experience of handling physical books.

4. Cultural Factors:

o In some cultures, reading may not be prioritized as a recreational activity. Instead, oral storytelling or other forms of entertainment may be more common, which can limit the emphasis placed on reading within the family.

o The lack of culturally relevant or multilingual reading materials can also pose a barrier, particularly in households where the primary language spoken is not the dominant language of the available books.

Strategies for Overcoming the Challenges

1. Community and School Partnerships:

o Schools and community organizations can collaborate to provide access to books through programs such as book exchanges, mobile libraries, and reading clubs. These initiatives can help bridge the gap for families with limited resources.

o Schools can also offer workshops and resources to parents, educating them on the importance of reading and providing practical strategies for integrating reading into daily routines.

2. Leveraging Technology Wisely:

o Digital tools should be used to complement, rather than replace, traditional reading. E-books and educational apps can be beneficial when they are used to encourage reading rather than serve as mere entertainment.

o Parents can be guided on how to use these tools effectively, ensuring that screen time is balanced with time spent reading physical books.

3. Cultural Adaptation of Reading Materials:

o Publishers and educators should work towards producing and promoting reading materials that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Multilingual books and stories that resonate with children's experiences can help foster a connection to reading.

o Encouraging parents to share their own stories or incorporate cultural traditions into reading activities can also enhance the appeal of reading at home.

4. Parental Education and Involvement:

o Schools and community centers can offer literacy programs for parents, empowering them to become active participants in their children's reading journey.

o Parents can be encouraged to model reading behavior by setting aside time for family reading

sessions, where both adults and children read together.

CONCLUSION

Promoting the use of a family library among primary class students is a complex challenge that requires a multifaceted approach. Socio-economic barriers, parental involvement, digital distractions, and cultural factors all play a role in shaping a child's reading habits. By addressing these challenges through community support, technological integration, cultural adaptation, and parental education, it is possible to foster a culture of reading within the home, thereby supporting the educational and cognitive development of young children.

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