

Early Childhood Literacy Skills: The Effect of Socioeconomic Status, Home Literacy Environment, and Social Skills



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Abstract: Literacy is an important skill that must be developed by a child for the next level of education, so it must be expected that parents help their children to develop reading habits at an early age. A family has a responsibility to provide rich experiences inside and outside the home that are very important for the development of children's literacy. This study aims to investigate the socio-economic status, home literacy environment, and social skills in early childhood literacy skills. The method used in this study is survey. A number of 120 students from first grade elementary school were recruited as samples. Parents of these children filled out questionnaires in the column of education and income of parents. Home literacy environment consists of literacy facilities and parents-children activities at home, while social skills are obtained by measuring the ability to improve cooperative relationships, social sensitivity, adaptability, and communication. On the other hand, children's literacy skills are directly assessed by using tests. The research data was collected through questionnaires designed in the form of Likert scale and rating scale. The data is analyzed by using path analysis. The results of the research reveal a significant correlation between the socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, and social skills in literacy. The effect of socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, and social skills give direct positive influence on early childhood literacy skills.

Keywords: Literacy Skills, Socioeconomic Status, Home Literacy Environment, Social Skills.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is one of the basic needs of children which becomes the main key to mastering six basic literacy, namely (1) reading and writing, (2) numeracy, (3) scientific, (4) digital, (5) financial, and (6) cultural and citizenship literacy. These literacy abilities must also be balanced by developing competencies which include critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills [1]. The development of literacy that focuses on early literacy is very important as the basis in achieving literacy for the next

level [2]. Literacy is not only understood as the ability to read and to write, but it is also understood as the ability to utilize the results of reading and writing for life skills [3].

Therefore, literacy is the main skill that must be learned and started from the early ages, especially in the early stage of school known as the first grade of elementary school. Thus, literacy is very important to be examined more comprehensively. Research on literacy needs to be conducted since in the history of culture and civilization, intellectuality or ideas, and the history of language show that people, communities or nations with a strong and tough literacy habit have intellectual traditions or strong and healthy thoughts so that they become superior nations in various fields of life.

Many researchers take socio-economic status, home literacy, and social skills as their study. This is not something surprising since there are significant differences between children from high SES with better ability and children from low SES. Meanwhile, a large number of studies examining SES variables and literacy environments at home on children's literacy abilities have been carried out. Studies that investigate the effects of SES in different socio-economic structures can help build knowledge in different ways [4].

This study aims to determine the relationship between socio-economic status, home literacy environment, and social skills towards children's literacy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Early Childhood Literacy

Literacy is the ability of children to obtain basic initial literacy skills, such as knowledge of letters [5], phonological awareness, syllables and phonemes [6], and children's reading skills [7]. Then literacy is also defined as the ability to translate written symbols into spoken language sounds [8]. In the context of reading and writing, literacy includes; a) language skills that include vocabulary and comprehension of spoken language, b) phonological awareness that shows the ability to distinguish phonemes, syllables, and words, c) reading skills which include the introduction of reading rules, knowledge of letters and the sound of letters and word spelling, and finally, d) writing skills which consist of the ability to write letters, own names and words [9].

B. Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status can affect children's success and achievements both inside and outside school. There are three main indicators of SES are parental income, parental education level, and parental occupation [10].

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In addition, socio-economic status also significantly influences children's literacy skills [11]. Research suggested that socio-economic status can affect children's language skills such as vocabulary and children's reading skills.

This is closely related to children's academic learning outcomes [10]. Parents' educational level has a stronger influence on children's literacy skills compared to parents' income [12]. On the other hand, socio-economic status also predicts all literacy stages in the first step which contributes between 10% in terms of writing and 25% in terms of word recognition in variations of measurement [13]. Parents' socio-economic status has more influence on children's language skills and literacy than on their social competence [14].

C. Home Literacy Environment

The home literacy environment is very important for the first grade students. Children begin to develop the initial literacy skills they need to be successful in reading and writing now that this initial experience lays the foundation for literacy skills [15]. The literacy environment at home is a term used to describe the literacy relationships, interactions, resources, and attitudes experienced by children [16]. The literacy environment at home is broadly divided into the characteristics of home settings, namely introducing books to children through reading with parents [17] and preparing literacy skills in the form of letter knowledge, word recognition, or word decoding [18]. The literacy environment at home and the quality of linguistic interactions and learning experiences with parents have a significant direct relationship to children's cognitive and language development in emerging literacy abilities since parental involvement contributes to children's language and literacy abilities.

D. Social Skills

An important aspect of early childhood education is social skill and teacher-students (children) interaction related to children's cognitive skills [19]. According to Piker and Rex, interaction with peers in primary schools can improve children's social, cognitive and language skills [20]. Meanwhile Torres argues that positive experiences with peers in preschool can also increase children's emotional knowledge through more opportunities to communicate their emotions with peers. Justice also found that peers influence children's language progress which is closely related to language ability and media understanding. Thus, it can be said that language development and children's literacy can be formed through socializing skills with peers.

Positive interactions, communication skills, and vocabulary enhancement contribute to children's ability to communicate, to regulate feelings and behavior, and also to develop empathy. The interaction between children and parents when reading a book together is a proximal dyadic process, in which the information from parents has an influence on children's language, social cognitive and social development [21]. Social skills remain a significant mediator for self-regulation and children's literacy progress [22].

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aimed to test the data on the influence among the variables as follow:

1. To analyse the direct effect of socioeconomic status on children's literacy.
2. To analyse the direct effect of home literacy environment on children's literacy.
3. To analyse the direct effect of social skills on children's literacy.
4. To analyse the direct effect of socioeconomic status on social skills.
5. To analyse the direct effect of home literacy environment on social skills.
6. To analyse the direct effect of socioeconomic status on home literacy environment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A.1 Research Design

The method used in this study is quantitative with a survey approach. The research purpose is to investigate the socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, and social skills in early childhood literacy skills. The data collection for the research is taken from samples since it is likely in less possible to reach a large enough population of the research. The data obtained from the sample can describe each variable of the research, so it is to know the influence of exogenous variables (socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, social skills) towards endogenous variable (children's literacy)

A.2.Types and Sources of Data

The data used in this study are the primary and the secondary data. Primary data was taken from students' parents as respondents through questionnaires while the secondary data was obtained through interviews and document of studies. The research data collection technique uses a questionnaire in the form of Likert scale within intervals of 1-5 which begin with choices: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. This questionnaire is used to collect data on socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, and social skills filled by students' parents. On the other hand, the data collected on children's literacy skills is obtained through tests.

A.3. Population and Sample

The research population was first grade students in East Java Province, Indonesia. The sample consisted of 120 children involving their parents. Sample was determined by using multistage cluster random sampling through 4 stages. All students who became participants were first-year students. On average, students entering first grade are between 7-8 years old. The data was taken in the second semester of the school year.

Collecting data was conducted in second semester of academic year in consideration that children have mastered literacy because the first semester is the period of introduction and mastering the literacy. So, the skills of our study participants primarily reflected the state of their knowledge. Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework model of this research

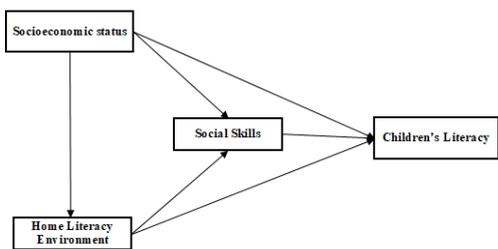


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The endogenous variables are early childhood literacy skills (Y) and the exogenous variables are socioeconomic status (X1), home literacy environment (X2), and social skills (X3).

B.1. Determining the Number of Correlations Among the Variables

Calculation of the relationship among variables using formula of Pearson Product Moment Correlation shows the following results:

Table 1. Coefficient of Correlation Among Variables

Variables	X1	X2	X3	Y
X1	1,000	0.295	0.446	0.432
X2	0.295	1,000	0.330	0.381
X3	0.446	0.330	1,000	0.411
Y	0.432	0.381	0.411	1,000

The table 1 shows that the score of correlation coefficient between the variables of socioeconomic status and early childhood literacy is 0.432, between variable socioeconomic status and social skills is 0.446, between variables of home literacy environment and early childhood literacy is 0,381, among variables of home literacy environment and social skills is 0.330, and between variables of social skills and early childhood literacy is 0.411.

Based on the calculation of correlation coefficient from the table above $t_{table} (\alpha = 0.01)$ is smaller than t_{count} , so it can be concluded that all correlation coefficients are significant.

B.2. Determining Magnitude Effect Between Variabel and Equal Paths

The regression analysis image through an application program SPSS 21.0 and the Lisrel program, the scores are as follows: The path coefficient between variables of socioeconomic status and the early childhood literacy is 0.267. The path coefficient between variables of home literacy environment and early childhood literacy is 0.231. The path coefficient between variables of social skills and early childhood literacy is 0.216. The path coefficient between variable socioeconomic and variable of social skills is 0.382. The path coefficient between variables of home literacy environment and variable of social skills is 0.217, and the path coefficient between variables of socioeconomic status and variable of home literacy environment comes to 0.295.

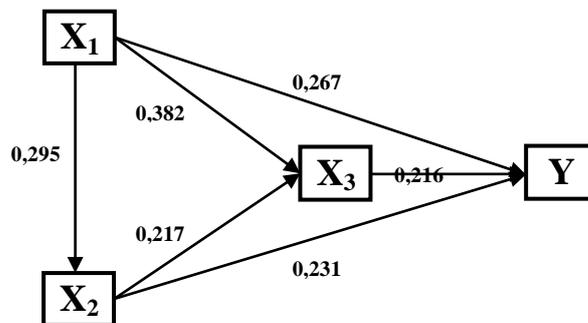


Figure 2. Line coefficient among the variables

B3. Significance Test Strip

All correlation coefficients show a positive correlation on the relationship of all variables, namely socioeconomic status variables, literacy environment at home, social skills and literacy abilities. The calculation is performed by carrying out together and the product of the first structural equation is as follows:

Table 2. Equation Structure Model 1

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	51.900	2.969		17.482	.000
	X1	.142	.047	.267	3.014	.003
	X2	.068	.025	.231	2.751	.007
	X3	.072	.030	.216	2.409	.018

Table 2 shows:

P41 path coefficient = 0.267 and t = 3.014

P42 path coefficient = 0.231 and t = 2.751

P43 path coefficient = 0.216 and t = 2.409

The second structural equation is between variable of socioeconomic status and variable of home literacy environment.

Table 3. Equation Structure Model 2

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	34.091	8.649		3.942	.000
	(X1)	.611	.135	.382	4.537	.000
	(X2)	.193	.075	.217	2.573	.011

Table 3 shows:

P31 path coefficient = 0.382 and t = 4.537

P32 path coefficient = 0.217 and t = 2.573

The third structural equation is variable socioeconomic status

Table 4. Equation Structure Model 3

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	56.704	9.267		6.119	.000
	(X1)	.531	.158	.295	3.355	.001

Provisions to ensure the significance of the path coefficients are conducted by comparing the value of the probability of t, if the value of the probability of $t_{count} \leq t_{table}$ at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, then Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected, it means that the value is insignificant. If the probability value of $t_{count} > t_{table}$ at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, then Ho is rejected and Ha accepted, it means that the value is significant.

Based on the result of calculations on the substructure 3, path coefficient P21 is 0,295 and $t_{count} = 3,355$, with $t_{table} (0,05:118) = 1,98$.

If the value of the probability of $t_{count} > t_{table}$, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, it means that the value is significant. Therefore, there is a significant positive direct effect of variable X_1 on variable X_2 .

B.4. Hypothesis 1: There is a positive and significant influence on socioeconomic status and early childhood literacy skills

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : socioeconomic status is not positive and shows significant effect on early childhood literacy skills.

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : socioeconomic status and significant shows positive effect on early childhood literacy skills.

Table 2 shows that the score of the path coefficient between the variables of the effect of socioeconomic status is 0,267, $t_{count} = 3,014$, and at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was obtained t_{table} 1,98. Because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($3,014 > 1,98$), or H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

B.5. Hypothesis 2: There is a positive and significant influence on home literacy environment and early childhood literacy skills.

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : home literacy environment is not positive and shows significant effect on early childhood literacy skills.

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : home literacy environment is positive and shows significant effect on early childhood literacy skills.

Table 3 shows that a score of the path coefficient home literacy environment with early childhood literacy skills is 0.231 and $t_{count} = 2,751$ and at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was obtained t_{table} is 1,98. Because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($2,751 > 1,98$), then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

B.6. Hypothesis 3: There is a positive and significant influence on social skills and early childhood literacy skills

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : social skills is not positive and shows significant impact on early childhood literacy skills

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : social skills is positive and shows significant effect on early childhood literacy skills.

Based on the calculation above, the score of the path coefficient between social skills and early childhood literacy skills is 0,216 and t_{count} 2,409 and the level of significance (α) is 0.05 or t_{table} is 1,98. Because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ (or $2,409 > 1,98$), then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

B.7. Hypothesis 4: There is a positive and significant influence on socioeconomic status and social skills.

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : socioeconomic status is not positive and shows significant impact on social skills.

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : socioeconomic status and shows positive significant effect on social skills.

Based on the calculation above, the score of the path coefficient between the socioeconomic status and social skills is 0,382 and t_{count} 4,537 and the level of significance (α) is 0.05 or t_{table} is 1,98. Because $t_{count} < t_{table}$ (or $4,537 < 1,98$), then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected, it shows that

socioeconomic status is not positive and shows significant impact on social skills.

B.8. Hypothesis 5: There is a positive and significant influence for home literacy environment and social skills

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : home literacy environment is not positive and significant impact on social skills.

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : home literacy environment positive and significant impact on social skills.

Based on the calculation above, the path coefficient score between home literacy environment and social skills is 0.217 and t_{count} 2,573 and the level of significance (α) is 0.05 or t_{table} is 1,98. Because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ (or $2,573 > 1,98$), then H_0 is rejected and H_a accepted.

B.9. Hypothesis 6: There is a positive and significant influence of home literacy environment and socioeconomic status

The null hypothesis is:

H_0 : socioeconomic status is not positive and shows significant impact on home literacy environment.

The alternative hypothesis is:

H_a : socioeconomic status and shows significant positive effect on home literacy environment.

Based on the above calculation, the score of the path coefficient between the socioeconomic status and the home literacy environment is 0,295 and 3,355 and the level of significance (α) is 0.05 or t_{table} is 1,98. Because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ (or $3,355 > 1,98$), then H_0 is rejected and H_a accepted. The test results throughout the research hypothesis proposed as stated above can be summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Calculations and Coefficient Test Strip

Direct effect	Path Coeffisien	t_{count}	t_{table}	Decision
X_1 to Y	0,267	3,014	1,98	Significant
X_2 to Y	0,231	2,751	1,98	Significant
X_3 to Y	0,216	2,409	1,98	Significant
X_1 to X_3	0,382	4,537	1,98	Significant
X_2 to X_3	0,217	2,573	1,98	Significant
X_1 to X_2	0,295	3,355	1,98	Significant

Based on the above hypotheses test results, it can be stated as follow:

1. Variable of socioeconomic status is positive and shows significant positive direct influence on early childhood literacy skills.
2. Variable of home literacy environment is positive and shows significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills.
3. Variable of social skills is positive and shows significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills.
4. Variable of socioeconomic status is positive and shows significant direct influence on social skills.
5. Variable of home literacy environment is positive and shows significant direct influence on social skills.
6. Variable of socioeconomic status is positive and shows significant positive direct influence on home literacy environment.



The results show that the testing hypotheses about the influence between variables based on hypothesis have further direct and indirect influence. The influence and massive total contribution of each variable and epsilon or the influence of other variables are listed as follow (Table 6):

Table 6. Effect of Direct and Indirect Through Other Variable, and Total Effect

Variables	Causal Effect				Total
	Direct	Indirect			
		Through X2	Through X3	Through X2 & X3	
X ₁ to Y	0,267	0,068	0,083	0,018	0,436
X ₂ to Y	0,231	-	0,047	-	0,278
X ₃ to Y	0,216	-	-	-	0,216
X ₁ to X ₃	0,382	0,083	-	-	0,465
X ₂ to X ₃	0,217	-	-	-	0,217
X ₁ to X ₂	0,295	-	-	-	0,295

Influence between variabel either directly or indirectly, influence and massive total contribution of each variable, and epsilon or the influence of other variables as the table above can be explained in detail as follow (see Table 7):

Table 7 shows the detail as follows:

1. Variable of socioeconomic status has a positive and significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills indicated by the path coefficient score at 0,267.
2. Variable of home literacy environment has a positive and significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills indicated by path coefficient scores at 0,231.
3. Variable of social skills has a positive and significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills indicated by path coefficient score at 0,216.
4. Variable of socioeconomic status has a positive and significant direct influence on social skills which is indicated by the path coefficient score at 0,382.
5. Variable of home literacy environment has a positive and significant direct influence on social skills indicated by the path coefficient score at 0,217.
6. Variable of socioeconomic status has a positive and significant direct influence on the variables of home literacy environment as indicated by the path coefficient score at 0,295.
7. Variable socioeconomic status has a positive and significant indirect influence on early childhood literacy skills through social skills indicated by path coefficient score at 0,083.
8. Variable home literacy environment has a positive and significant indirect influence on early childhood literacy skills through social skills indicated by path coefficient score at 0,047.
9. Variable of socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, and social skills all together have a positive and significant direct influence on early childhood literacy skills as indicated by path coefficient scores at 0,436.

VI. DISCUSSION

1. Socioeconomic Status has a direct positive effect on Early Childhood Literacy

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on early childhood literacy. With a background of higher socioeconomic status, parents are more likely to use approaches by emphasizing phonological skills in helping their children learn to read [23],

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[24]. Parents with good language skills are able to provide more effective assistance to their children in learning the same language whereas children from low socioeconomic families are more likely to start school with limited reading, language, narrative, and social skills [25]. However, some children in poor circumstances are able to develop properly. Some of the factors that can affect this condition include the positive daily routine that is built by parents in the family [26].

2. Home literacy environment has a direct positive effect on early childhood literacy.

Home literacy environment has a significant influence on early childhood literacy. Home literacy environment built by parents provides support to the abilities of children [27]. This shows that access to ownership of a number of books in the home is strongly related to children's reading ability which can be seen from the ease of children accessing learning resources. Reading habits both built by parents and the achievement of high education and home environments that support literacy affect to the fluency of reading in a child. The immediate environmental context is very important to help children develop reading habits at an early age [28].

3. Social Skills Have a Positive Direct Effect on Early Childhood Literacy.

Social skills have a significant influence on early childhood literacy. Schachner et al states that strong social skills help children engage in classroom activities mainly through interactions with peers. Children's social skills begin to develop in childhood through social references such as reading emotional cues and regulating responses to parents and others [29]. The growth of complex interactions can increase positive impacts on social skills so that it is directly proportional to the enhancement in vocabulary they master[30]. Children's interactions in communication, interactive literacy activities together and socializing with peers are closely related to language skills, understanding media, language development and children's literacy. Social skills are an important factor in the process of socializing with peers so that they can improve their language skills and literacy abilities [10].

4. Socioeconomic Status has a direct positive effect on Social Skills

Socioeconomic status has a significant influence on social skills. This opinion is in line with Vygotsky's theory in Melhuish [31] which states that children learn higher psychological processes through their social environment and especially with the guidance of parents who are in the "zone of proximal child development" (stimulation in the children's comprehension) which strengthens the skills acquired by the child. Cognitive skills such as literacy skills are obtained through interactions with others who help and encourage the development of these abilities. Socioeconomic status influences social skills and behavior problems. Children from higher economic families have higher social skills [32] [33].

5. Home literacy environment has a direct positive effect on social skills

Home literacy environment has a significant influence on social skills. Parental involvement in the home literacy environment can serve as an effective way to socialize children towards better emotional social competence before entering school.

Children who experience more guided learning interactions with parents have more opportunities to practice positive emotional social behaviors such as paying attention and controlling negative emotions which tend to lead to better social outcomes [34]. Direct parental involvement in activities related to literature at home (for example, reading books together) is directly related to children's social skills [35].

6. Socioeconomic Status has a direct positive effect on the home literacy environment.

Socioeconomic status has a significant influence on the literacy home environment. A more educated parent can form a richer literacy environment at home especially stimulating parents' encouragement and involvement on children [36]. On the other hand, the level of income and education of parents influences the children's linguistic and social skills. Therefore, parental function and quality of the learning environment at home are related to children's learning outcomes .

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the research result and discussion, it can be conclude of this research as follow:

1. The higher the level of education of the parents, the higher the level of difficulty in improving children's literacy abilities. Through the higher education, parents can provide motivation and encourage children to continue to improve their literacy skills, while talking and working that can help provide a maximum source of learning, inspiration and stimulation of early childhood literacy abilities. In addition, findings show that children who come from low socioeconomic families can also have higher literacy abilities by the positive routine program that is built by families at home
2. Socioeconomic status has a very important role in meeting the needs of children both physically and non-physically, so that the need for learning media, facilities, knowledge, and parental participation can create a positive literacy environment at home.
3. Parents who can guarantee the psychological needs and safety of children will give examples of good social skills then help children to have good social skills so that they are able to actualize their social skills in social relationships and can get along with their peers.
4. Having adequate facilities equipped with parental participation in the enrichment of active literacy activities can encourage and stimulate children's literacy skills so that they have better vocabulary knowledge, the ability to express opinions and the ability to read and write well so that they are ready to face challenges at every level of education.
5. A positive literacy environment at home will shape children to have good social skills, knowledgeable, have empathy and compassion for others so that they will be able to be accepted by their peers. In addition, children will get used to high-quality patterns of interaction between parents and children.
6. Having good social skills will be easy to work with, dare to ask questions and convey ideas to the teacher without shame so that they have good literacy skills too. The ability of children to socialize leads children to easily adapt, communicate and share with peers so that the

literacy ability is easier to improve and if they have difficulty it is easy to find a solution by asking peers

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