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Exploring the Influence of Home Numeracy Environments on Children's Mathematical Skills

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Abstract:

This systematic review investigates the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills. Through a comprehensive synthesis of existing literature, the study highlights the critical role of home numeracy experiences in shaping children's mathematical development. The review reveals a consistent pattern of evidence indicating a positive association between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical proficiency. Longitudinal studies underscore the enduring effects of early exposure to numeracy activities in the home, emphasizing the importance of early interventions to promote numeracy engagement in young children. Furthermore, parental involvement emerges as a significant mediator of this relationship, with active engagement in numeracy-related activities playing a crucial role in fostering children's mathematical skills. However, the review also uncovers socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address educational inequality and promote equitable access to numeracy resources for all children. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of fostering numeracy-rich home environments and promoting parental involvement in numeracy activities to support children's mathematical development and enhance their academic success.

Keywords: home numeracy, mathematical skills, parental involvement, socioeconomic disparities

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the factors that contribute to children's mathematical development, particularly the role of home numeracy environments. Home numeracy, encompassing various activities such as counting objects, playing number games, and engaging in mathematical conversations, has been identified as a potential predictor of children's mathematical skills (Thippana, et al., 2020). This interest stems from the recognition that children's early mathematical abilities lay the foundation for their later academic success and overall cognitive development (Duncan et al., 2007). Consequently, there is a need for comprehensive research to probe the relationship between home numeracy experiences and children's mathematical proficiency.

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of home numeracy activities in fostering children's mathematical skills. For instance, research by Huang, et al. (2017) demonstrated that parental involvement in numeracy-related activities positively correlates with children's mathematical achievement. Similarly, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) found that exposure to informal numeracy activities in the home environment significantly predicted children's mathematical abilities in later years. These findings underscore the significance of home numeracy experiences in shaping children's mathematical development.



Despite the burgeoning body of research in this area, there remains a need for a systematic review to synthesize the existing evidence and provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between home numeracy and children's mathematical skills (Abella, et al., 2024). This systematic review aims to address this gap by critically examining and synthesizing the findings of relevant studies. By doing so, it seeks to elucidate the nature of the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical proficiency, as well as identify potential moderators and mediators of this relationship.

Through a systematic review of the literature, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the mechanisms through which home numeracy experiences influence children's mathematical development. By identifying effective practices and potential areas for intervention, the findings of this study may inform educational policies and interventions aimed at promoting children's mathematical achievement.

Literature Review:

The relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills has garnered significant attention in educational research over the past few decades. Understanding how home numeracy experiences contribute to children's mathematical development is crucial for informing educational practices and interventions aimed at enhancing mathematical proficiency in young learners. This literature review provides an overview of key studies investigating the relationship between home numeracy and children's mathematical skills, highlighting the theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and potential implications for practice.

Theoretical Frameworks:

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to elucidate the mechanisms through which home numeracy experiences influence children's mathematical development. One prominent framework is the "bioecological model of human development" proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which emphasizes the importance of multiple ecological systems, including the microsystem (e.g., family), mesosystem (e.g., school-home interactions), exosystem (e.g., neighborhood resources), and macrosystem (e.g., cultural values), in shaping children's development. Within this framework, home numeracy environments are viewed as one of the microsystem influences that interact with other ecological factors to influence children's mathematical skills.

Numerous empirical studies have examined the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills, providing consistent evidence for the positive association between the two constructs. For example, Niklas and Schneider (2017) conducted a longitudinal study involving German children and found that a stimulating home numeracy environment during preschool years predicted children's numerical ability and early arithmetic skills in later years. Similarly, LeFevre et al. (2009) investigated the role of parental involvement in numeracy-related activities among Canadian and Greek families and found that children whose parents engaged in numeracy activities at home exhibited higher mathematical achievement in kindergarten.

Moreover, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) conducted a longitudinal study examining the longitudinal effects of parental involvement in literacy and numeracy activities on children's reading and mathematical skills. The results revealed that parental involvement in numeracy activities during the preschool years significantly predicted children's mathematical abilities in later years, even after controlling for other relevant factors such as socioeconomic status and parental education.

Potential Implications for Practice:

The findings from research on home numeracy environments have several implications for educational practice and intervention. Firstly, educators and policymakers can promote parental involvement in numeracy activities by providing resources and support to families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bagacina, et al., 2024). Interventions targeting home numeracy environments may include parent education programs, home visitation programs, and the provision of educational materials and resources for families.

Secondly, schools can foster collaboration between home and school environments to reinforce children's mathematical learning. For example, teachers can provide parents with information about numeracy activities that can be incorporated into daily routines at home, such as counting objects during mealtime or playing number games together (Cordova Jr, et al., 2024). Additionally, schools can organize family math nights or workshops to engage parents in hands-on activities that support children's mathematical development.

Furthermore, interventions aimed at enhancing home numeracy environments should consider cultural and contextual factors that may influence families' engagement in numeracy activities. Tailoring interventions to the specific needs and preferences of diverse families can enhance their effectiveness and promote equitable access to resources and support for all children.



The literature review highlights the importance of home numeracy environments in shaping children's mathematical skills and provides evidence for the positive association between home numeracy experiences and children's mathematical development. Theoretical frameworks such as the bioecological model of human development offer a valuable lens through which to understand the complex interplay of factors influencing children's mathematical learning. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate the beneficial effects of parental involvement in numeracy activities on children's mathematical achievement, underscoring the potential of interventions targeting home numeracy environments to support children's mathematical development (Igcasama, et al., 2023). Moving forward, future research should continue to explore the mechanisms underlying the relationship between home numeracy and children's mathematical skills and develop innovative interventions to promote numeracy engagement in diverse family contexts.

Methodology:

This study employed a systematic review methodology to synthesize existing literature on the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills. A comprehensive search of relevant literature was conducted using electronic databases, including Google Scholar, PsycINFO, ERIC, and PubMed. The search strategy included keywords such as "home numeracy," "mathematical skills," "parental involvement," and "children." The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published in English-language journals.

Studies were included in the review if they met the following criteria: (1) focused on the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills, (2) included empirical data on parental involvement in numeracy activities or home numeracy practices, (3) targeted children from preschool to primary school age, and (4) provided quantitative or qualitative data relevant to the research question.

Studies were excluded if they were not peer-reviewed (e.g., conference abstracts, dissertations), did not include relevant data on home numeracy or children's mathematical skills, or were not available in full-text format. Two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of retrieved articles to identify potentially relevant studies. Full-text articles were then reviewed to assess eligibility based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The methodological quality of included studies was assessed using established criteria appropriate to the study design (e.g., Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for cohort studies, Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Checklist for cross-sectional studies). Studies were rated on criteria such as sample representativeness, measurement validity, and statistical analysis. Data synthesis involved summarizing key findings from included studies and identifying patterns or trends across the literature. Meta-analysis was considered if feasible, but due to heterogeneity in study designs and outcome measures, a narrative synthesis approach was utilized to integrate findings from diverse studies.

Findings and Discussion:

Positive Association between Home Numeracy and Mathematical Proficiency:

The systematic review unveiled robust evidence underscoring the positive correlation between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical proficiency. A multitude of studies have consistently demonstrated that exposure to enriching numeracy activities within the home setting is associated with enhanced mathematical skills in children. For instance, research by Niklas and Schneider (2017) emphasized the pivotal role of home numeracy environments in fostering children's numerical abilities and early arithmetic skills. Similarly, LeFevre et al. (2009) found that children whose parents engaged in numeracy-related activities at home exhibited superior mathematical achievement in kindergarten, highlighting the significant impact of home numeracy experiences on children's mathematical development.

Moreover, longitudinal studies included in the review provided compelling evidence for the enduring effects of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical proficiency. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) conducted a longitudinal investigation and revealed that parental involvement in numeracy activities during the preschool years significantly predicted children's mathematical abilities in later years. This longitudinal evidence underscores the sustained influence of early exposure to numeracy-rich environments within the home context on children's mathematical skills over time (Valle, et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the review identified parental involvement as a critical mediator of the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical proficiency. Studies consistently highlighted the importance of parental engagement in numeracy-related activities, such as counting games, reading math-related books, and incorporating mathematical concepts into daily routines, in fostering children's mathematical development (Niklas & Schneider, 2017; LeFevre et al., 2009). This finding underscores the pivotal role of parents as facilitators of children's mathematical learning within the home environment.



The systematic review provides compelling evidence supporting the positive association between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical proficiency. The findings underscore the importance of promoting numeracy-rich home environments and parental involvement in numeracy activities as strategies to enhance children's mathematical development.

Longitudinal Effects of Home Numeracy:

The systematic review delved into longitudinal studies to illuminate the enduring impacts of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical development. Through the synthesis of these studies, compelling evidence emerged, indicating that early exposure to numeracy activities within the home setting holds significant predictive value for children's mathematical abilities in later stages of development. This finding underscores the critical importance of early interventions aimed at fostering numeracy engagement in young children (Tañiza, et al., 2024).

One notable longitudinal study conducted by Niklas and Schneider (2017) provided compelling evidence for the long-term effects of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical proficiency. The researchers followed German children longitudinally and found that a stimulating home numeracy environment during the preschool years significantly predicted children's numerical ability and early arithmetic skills in later years. This longitudinal evidence highlights the enduring influence of early exposure to numeracy-rich environments within the home context on children's mathematical development over time.

Similarly, LeFevre et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal investigation focusing on the predictive value of home numeracy and literacy practices on the numeracy skills of kindergarten children from Greek and Canadian families. The study revealed that children who were exposed to numeracy activities at home exhibited higher levels of mathematical achievement in kindergarten, emphasizing the importance of early numeracy experiences in shaping children's mathematical skills.

Furthermore, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) conducted a longitudinal study examining parental involvement in literacy and numeracy activities and its longitudinal effects on children's reading and mathematical skills. The results of their study demonstrated that parental involvement in numeracy activities during the preschool years significantly predicted children's mathematical abilities in later years, highlighting the enduring impact of early numeracy experiences within the home environment.

These longitudinal studies collectively provide robust evidence for the lasting effects of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical development. The findings underscore the importance of early interventions aimed at promoting numeracy engagement in young children to lay a strong foundation for their mathematical learning trajectory. By emphasizing the significance of early exposure to numeracy activities within the home context, these studies highlight the potential for interventions targeting home numeracy environments to positively influence children's mathematical skills in the long term.

The synthesis of longitudinal studies within the systematic review underscores the enduring effects of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical development. The findings highlight the critical importance of early interventions aimed at fostering numeracy engagement in young children to promote their mathematical proficiency in later years.

Mediating Role of Parental Involvement:

The systematic review unearthed a significant mediator in the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills: parental involvement. This finding underscores the pivotal role that parents play in shaping their children's mathematical development through active engagement in numeracy-related activities within the home setting. The review synthesized a body of research that consistently highlighted the importance of parental involvement as a key determinant of children's mathematical proficiency.

Several studies have provided compelling evidence for the mediating role of parental involvement in home numeracy environments. For example, Sirin (2005) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement across socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings revealed that parental involvement in educational activities, including numeracy-related tasks, significantly mediated the relationship between home environment and children's academic success. This underscores the crucial role of parental engagement in fostering children's mathematical skills, particularly within the context of home numeracy environments.

Furthermore, research by Silinskas & Kikas (2019) emphasized the specific activities through which parental involvement influences children's mathematical development. The study found that parental engagement in numeracy-related activities, such as counting games, reading math-related books, and incorporating mathematical concepts into daily routines, played a crucial role in fostering children's numerical ability and early arithmetic skills.



These findings highlight the diverse ways in which parents can actively support their children's mathematical learning within the home environment.

Additionally, Davis-Kean (2005) examined the indirect role of parental expectations and the home environment in influencing children's academic achievement. The study found that parental involvement in educational activities, including numeracy tasks, mediated the relationship between parental expectations and children's academic success. This suggests that parental involvement serves as a crucial pathway through which parental expectations translate into children's mathematical proficiency, underscoring the importance of active parental engagement in promoting children's mathematical development.

Moreover, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014) investigated the continuity and change in the home literacy environment as predictors of growth in vocabulary and reading. While their study focused on literacy outcomes, the findings underscore the broader role of the home environment, including parental involvement in educational activities, in shaping children's cognitive development. This suggests that parental involvement in numeracy-related activities may contribute not only to children's mathematical skills but also to their overall cognitive development and academic success.

The systematic review identified parental involvement as a significant mediator of the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills. The findings underscore the crucial role that parents play in fostering their children's mathematical development through active engagement in numeracy-related activities within the home setting. By highlighting the diverse ways in which parents can support their children's mathematical learning, the review provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and parents seeking to promote children's mathematical proficiency.

Socioeconomic Disparities in Home Numeracy:

This finding illuminates a critical aspect of educational inequality and underscores the potential contribution of home numeracy experiences to the persistent achievement gap in mathematical skills observed among children from varying socioeconomic strata. Numerous studies have documented the existence of socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments, with children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds facing significant barriers to accessing numeracy-rich home environments. For instance, Cooper and Stewart (2021) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis and found that children from low-income families were less likely to receive educational support and resources at home compared to their peers from higher-income families. This disparity in home learning environments is particularly pronounced in the availability of numeracy-related materials, such as math books, manipulatives, and educational games, which are often more abundant in households with higher socioeconomic status (Napoli, 2018).

Additionally, research by Cheung, et al. (2021) highlighted the role of parental education level as a key determinant of home numeracy environments. The study revealed that parents with higher levels of education were more likely to engage in numeracy-related activities with their children and provide a stimulating home environment conducive to mathematical learning. This finding underscores the intergenerational transmission of numeracy practices within families and the exacerbation of socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments.

Furthermore, socioeconomic disparities in access to early childhood education and childcare resources may further exacerbate differences in home numeracy experiences among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Research by Bustamante, et al. (2022) demonstrated that children from low-income families were less likely to attend high-quality early childhood education programs, which are known to provide enriching numeracy experiences and support mathematical development. This lack of access to quality early childhood education may perpetuate socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments and contribute to the widening achievement gap in mathematical skills observed later in childhood.

The presence of socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments underscores the need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing educational inequality and promoting equitable access to numeracy resources for all children. Interventions may include providing educational materials and resources to families from disadvantaged backgrounds, implementing parent education programs focused on promoting numeracy engagement, and increasing access to high-quality early childhood education for children from low-income families. These disparities may contribute to the persistent achievement gap in mathematical skills observed among children from different socioeconomic strata. Addressing socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments is essential for promoting educational equity and fostering mathematical development in all children.

Conclusion:

Through the synthesis of existing literature, the review has elucidated several key findings that shed light on the critical role of home numeracy experiences in shaping children's mathematical proficiency. The review revealed a



consistent pattern of evidence demonstrating a positive association between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills. Numerous studies have documented that children who are exposed to stimulating numeracy activities within the home setting exhibit higher levels of mathematical achievement compared to those with limited home numeracy experiences. This underscores the importance of fostering numeracy-rich home environments as a means of enhancing children's mathematical development.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies included in the review provided compelling evidence for the enduring effects of home numeracy environments on children's mathematical proficiency. Early exposure to numeracy activities in the home was found to predict later mathematical abilities, highlighting the importance of early interventions aimed at promoting numeracy engagement in young children.

The review also identified parental involvement as a significant mediator of the relationship between home numeracy environments and children's mathematical skills. Active engagement in numeracy-related activities, such as counting games, reading math-related books, and incorporating math into daily routines, was found to play a crucial role in fostering children's mathematical proficiency. This underscores the pivotal role that parents play in shaping their children's mathematical development through active involvement in numeracy-related activities within the home setting.

However, the review also revealed the presence of socioeconomic disparities in home numeracy environments, with children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds facing significant barriers to accessing numeracy-rich home environments compared to their peers from higher socioeconomic status families. Addressing these disparities is essential for promoting educational equity and fostering mathematical development in all children.

The findings of this systematic review underscore the importance of home numeracy environments in shaping children's mathematical development and highlight the critical role of parental involvement in fostering children's mathematical proficiency. By addressing socioeconomic disparities and promoting parental engagement in numeracy-related activities, educators, policymakers, and parents can work together to create supportive environments that facilitate children's mathematical learning and enhance their overall academic success.

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