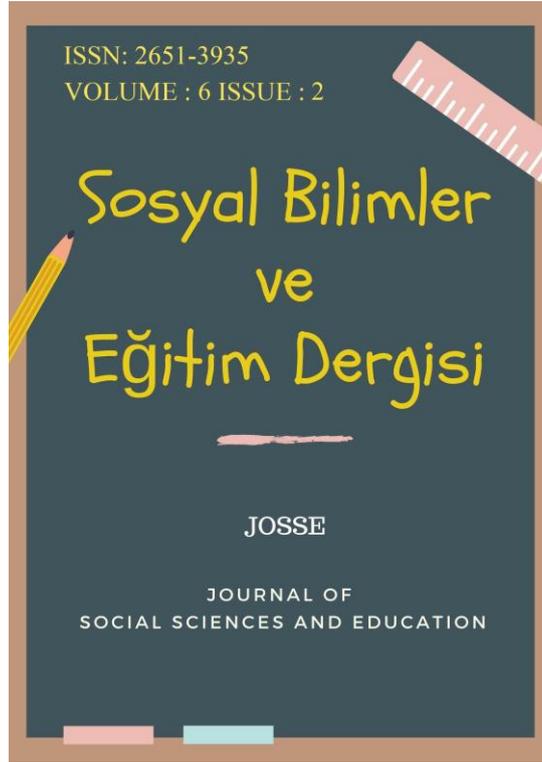


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**A Review of Postgraduate Studies on Home Literacy Environment**

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### **Abstract**

The environment in which children grow up, the experiences they have here, the literacy support and the variety of resources they have in their home environment affect children's spontaneous literacy skills processes. The aim of this study is to examine graduate theses on home literacy environment according to years, universities, types, supervisor titles, languages, research models, population and samples. Eight graduate theses registered in the national thesis center of YÖK on the subject were identified and constituted the subject of the study. Document analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used to analyze the theses. The data were analyzed by content analysis method. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the first study on home literacy environments at the graduate level was conducted in 2013, 62.5% of the supervisors were faculty members, students and families were taken together as the population and sample in 50% of the studies, quantitative research model was used in 62.5% of the studies, 87.5% of the studies were conducted in Turkish, the most studies were conducted at Hacettepe University, six studies were at master's level, two studies were at doctoral level, and the studies were conducted on different subjects. It was concluded that the postgraduate studies on literacy environments contributed to the studies on literacy environments in Turkey. Based on the results obtained, suggestions for graduate studies on literacy environments for researchers and other stakeholders who want to work in the field are included.

**Keywords:** Home literacy environment, graduate thesis, review

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## Introduction

Human beings are social beings who affect and are affected by the environment in which they live. Human beings start to learn both verbal and written language skills from the moment they are born. Home environments are the first environments where children acquire literacy-related knowledge and skills. Because the first opportunities that families offer to their children to develop literacy skills and the first experiences of children in this regard begin in the home environment. These first opportunities and experiences form the basis of early literacy skills.

Early literacy skills support the child's language skills and cognitive development and affect their academic success in the following years. Differences in children's prior knowledge and skills related to literacy are the basis of the fact that some children are successful in reading skills while others are unsuccessful in primary school. Early literacy skills consist of some components. These components can be classified as writing and print awareness, phonological awareness, alphabet and letter knowledge, vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. (Cuningham & Zibulsky, 2011).

In the development of children's early literacy skills, it is important for family members to read interactive books with their children, prepare shopping lists together, teach and repeat rhyming songs (Foy & Mann, 2003). Children's communication with family members in daily life develops their language skills. Therefore, the family has a critical role in the development of children's early literacy and language skills (Korth & Marshall, 2009).

The term home literacy environment is used to describe children's literacy-related interactions, resources, and attitudes at home (Hamilton, Hayiou-Thomas, Hulme, & Snowling, 2016). Gonzales et al. (2011) define the home literacy environment as both the social environment, including the responsibilities of the family, and the physical environment, including the materials and facilities available to the child.

Home literacy environment is defined by many researchers in different aspects (Zucker & Grant, 2007). Examining the home literacy environment in terms of many dimensions rather than a single dimension is very important for researchers to reveal the contribution of each dimension to children's spontaneous literacy skills (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2005). The assessment of the home literacy environment enables the determination of which aspects of the home environment are important in supporting emergent literacy skills.

Families' views and knowledge about literacy affect literacy practices in the home environment. Families' literacy-related behaviors are revealed by the environment they provide for their children (Zucker & Grant, 2007).

Burgess, Hecht, and Lonigan (2002) emphasized the importance of the socioeconomic structure and education level of the family in home literacy environments. Socioeconomic level plays a decisive role in the development of children's natural literacy skills by affecting the quality of the home literacy environment (Akyüz & Doğan, 2017). While the socioeconomic level of families provides the opportunity to create a quality learning environment for children's development, it also shapes children's literacy skills.

Shared book reading, which is one of the literacy activities that families do with their children, enables children to understand the relationship between written language and spoken language (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011).

Studies show that children of parents who model literacy behaviors to their children have higher alphabet knowledge, knowledge of writing concepts and interest in reading (Akyüz, 2016; Altun, 2013).

Studies on the home literacy environment show that the socio-economic level of the family, the family's views on literacy, reading activities with the child, the family's literacy habits and the home environment affect children's literacy skills (Akyüz & Doğan, 2017).

For this reason, in this study, it was aimed to examine the postgraduate theses on home literacy environment according to years, universities, types, supervisor titles, languages in which they were written, research models, population and samples. Studies examining postgraduate studies help researchers to determine the topics and orientations of their studies. In the researches conducted, no study similar to the subject of this article was found. It is thought that this study will contribute to the literature, guide researchers in their studies, and therefore the study is important. It is thought that this study is important because it will contribute to the literature and guide researchers in their studies. In this direction, the importance of this study is understood when it is considered that early literacy skills form the basis and support for children's literacy activities.

## **Method**

In this section; information about the research design, population and sample, data collection and analysis are given.

## **Research Design**

In this study, by using the document review technique, one of the qualitative research methods, postgraduate theses on home literacy environment in Turkey were classified and their subject contents were presented. Qualitative research methods use qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis. In qualitative research, perceptions and events are handled in a realistic and holistic manner in their natural environment, enabling understanding and interpretation of the whole events (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

Document analysis is a scientific research method that can be defined as collecting, reviewing, questioning and analyzing various documents as the primary source of research data (Sak, Şahin Sak, Öneren Şendil, & Nas, 2021). Document analysis allows researchers to have more control over the source materials and plays an important role in terms of the reliability of the research. According to Merriam (2009), document analysis can be done in four main stages: (1) finding appropriate documents, (2) checking the authenticity of the documents, (3) establishing a systematic coding and cataloging procedure, and (4) conducting data analysis (content analysis).

## **Population and Sample**

The population of the study consisted of postgraduate studies on home literacy environments, which included permitted master's and doctoral theses conducted in the relevant institutes and departments of universities in the database of the Higher Education Institution. Since all of the theses were open to access, no sample was selected from among them.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

As a result of the search made by typing "Home literacy environments" into the database search engine at the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/> on 25.08.2023, 8 postgraduate theses, 6 master's theses and 2 doctoral theses, were examined within the scope of the research topic. The postgraduate studies examined in the research are given in Table 1 in order from present to past.

**Table 1**

*Information on the Examined Postgraduate Studies*

<b>Author Name Surname</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Name of Thesis</b>	<b>Type of Thesis</b>
Gülşah Gürevin	2023	Examining the relationship between working memory, natural language and home early literacy environment with narrative skills of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds	Master's Degree
Çağla Duran	2022	Examining the relationship between children's self-regulation skills and home early literacy environment and reading together	Master's Degree
Ela Sümeyye Seçim	2022	The relationship between home literacy environment and parental reading beliefs and children's reading motivation	PhD
Nursel Şahin	2022	Evaluating primary school students' attitudes towards reading and writing in the context of home literacy environment: A mixed method study	Master's Degree
Tuğçe Kesim Çelik	2022	Investigating children's home early literacy environment and mothers' self-efficacy	Master's Degree
Emine Songül Vural	2021	Family involvement interactive book reading program for 5-6 year old children's early the effect on literacy skills and home early literacy environment	Master's Degree
Elif Akyüz	2016	Development of preschool children's emergent literacy skills and its relationship with home literacy environment	PhD
Dilek Altun	2013	An investigation of the relationship between preschoolers' reading attitudes and home literacy environment	Master's Degree

The data obtained were analyzed and interpreted by content analysis. According to Karasar (2011), the content analysis technique is used in qualitative research and is a scanning made with the aim of determining certain features of a certain text, book, document by digitizing it. In content analysis, it is possible to code the data, categorize them, find themes, organize, describe and interpret the data according to these categories and themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The distribution of the theses according to years, universities, institutes, departments, names of science branches, type of thesis, supervisor titles, languages in which they were written, subjects, the way their aims were expressed, research models, universe and sample of theses, and data collection tools were examined. The distribution of the grouped information was presented and interpreted in tables and graphs.

### **Ethics Committee Authorization Certificate**

This article is in the category of articles that do not require ethics committee permission since no data were obtained from any living creature in any way during the research process.

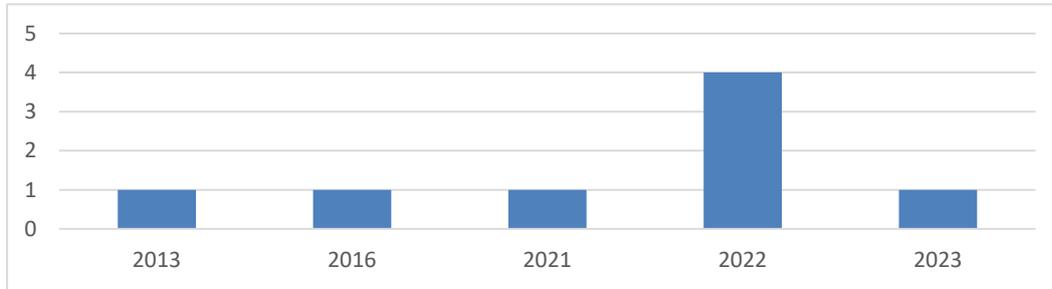
## Findings

In this part of the study, findings and interpretations obtained from the analysis of postgraduate studies on home literacy environment are presented. The data obtained from 8 permitted theses registered in the YÖK Thesis Center system were transformed into tables and interpreted, and the tables were supported with figures.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study according to years is given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Distribution of Theses by Years*

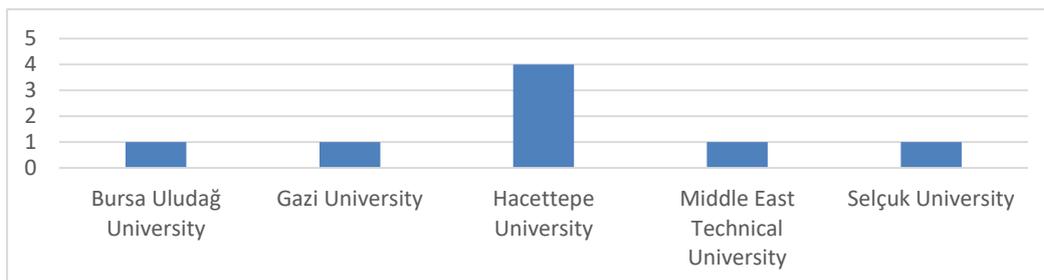


When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that the first postgraduate study on home literacy environment was conducted in 2013; one study was conducted in 2013, 2016, 2021 and 2023; and four studies were conducted in 2022.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study according to the university where they were conducted is given in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Distribution of Theses According to Universities*

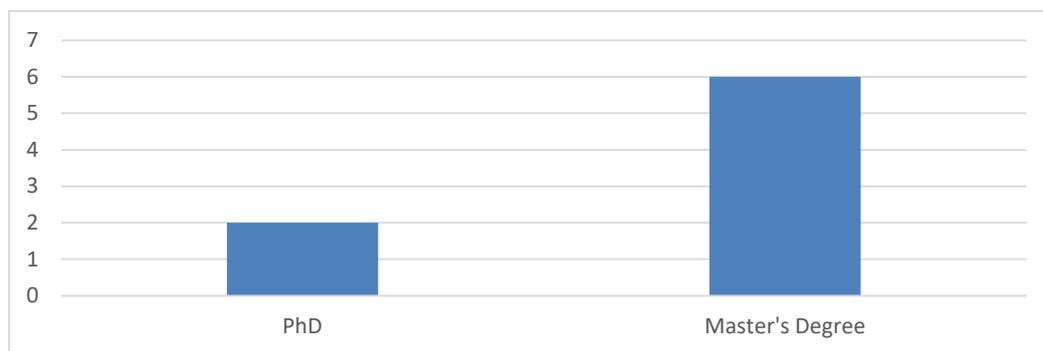


When Figure 2 is examined, it is seen that postgraduate studies on home literacy environment were conducted in five different universities; the highest number of studies was conducted in Hacettepe University with four theses, and one thesis was written in each of the other four universities.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study by type is given in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Distribution of Theses According to Thesis Type*

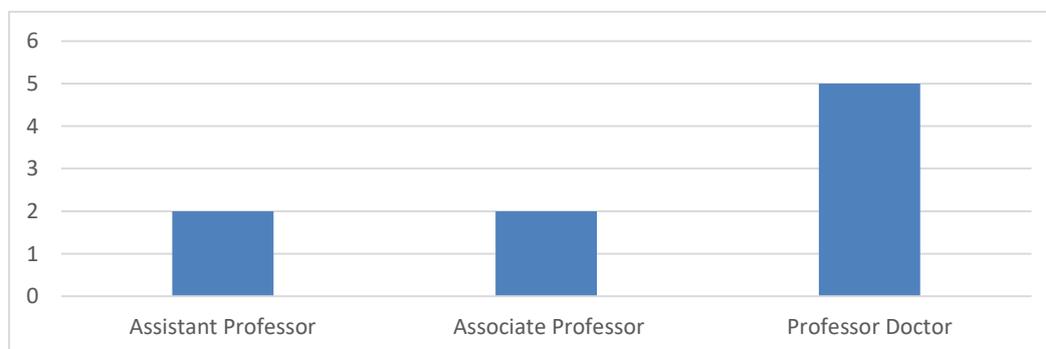


When Figure 3 is examined, it is seen that 6 of the postgraduate studies on home literacy environment are at master's level and 2 of them are at doctoral level.

The distribution of the theses examined in the study according to the title of thesis advisors is given in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Distribution of the theses according to the Title of Thesis Advisors*

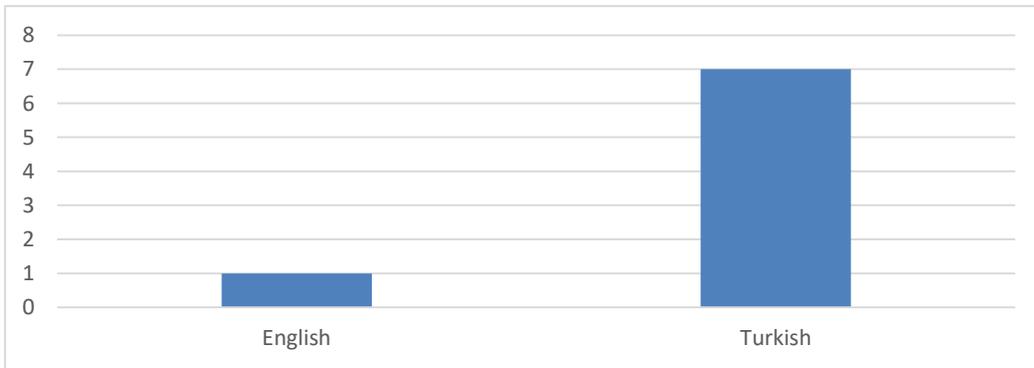


When Figure 4 is examined, it is seen that in 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment, professors advised five theses, associate professors advised two theses, and advisors with the title of assistant professor advised two theses each. It was determined that one study was conducted with a double advisor.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study according to the languages in which they were written is given in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Distribution of Theses According to the Languages in which They were Written*

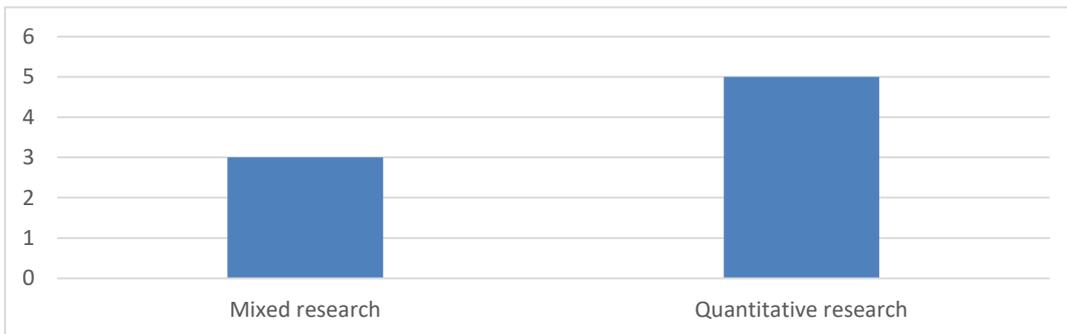


When Figure 5 is examined, it is seen that 7 of the postgraduate studies on home literacy environment were written in Turkish and 1 in English.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study according to research models is given in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**

*Distribution of Theses according to Research Models*

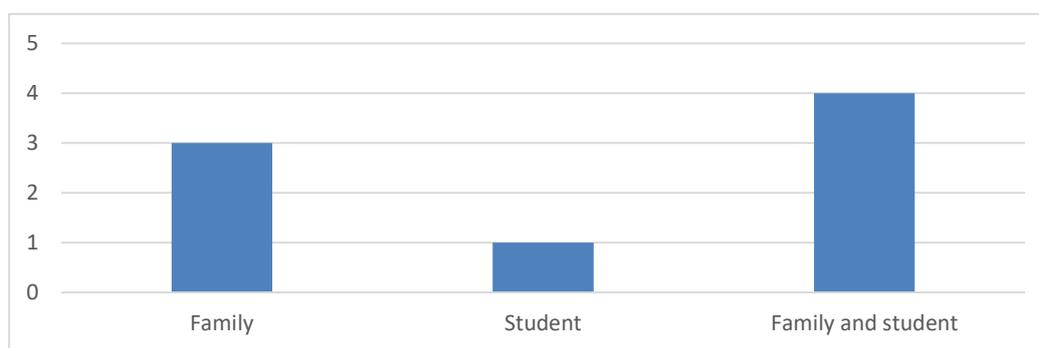


When Figure 6 is examined, it is seen that quantitative research method was used in 5 of the 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment and mixed research method was used in 3 of them.

The distribution of the theses analyzed in the study according to the population and sample is given in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Distribution of Theses according to Population and Sample*



When Figure 7 is examined, it is seen that in 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment, students were identified as the population and sample in 1 study, families in 3 studies, and families and students together in 4 studies.

## **Discussion and Results**

In studies on home literacy, it was observed that families' efforts to teach their children letter names, letter sounds, letter and word writing and word reading were examined in family teaching or shared writing (Aram & Biron, 2004; Aram & Levin, 2011).

In studies conducted by Akyüz (2016), Altun (2013) and Nergis (2008), it was stated that children of families who model literacy behaviors to their children are more successful in alphabet knowledge, knowledge of writing concepts and interest in reading.

In this section, in order to give direction to the new researches that need to be done on the subject in order to develop and support children's literacy skills, 8 postgraduate theses were examined in this study by typing "home literacy environments" into the database search engine at YÖK <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/>. The results of the study, which examined the

postgraduate theses on home literacy environments according to years, universities, types, supervisor titles, languages, research models, population and samples, are given.

When the results of the postgraduate studies on home literacy environment were examined according to the years; it was concluded that four of the studies on the subject were conducted in 2013, 2016, 2021 and 2023, and four of them were conducted in 2022.

When analyzed according to universities, it is seen that postgraduate studies on home literacy environment were conducted in five different universities; the most studies were conducted in Hacettepe University with four theses, and one thesis was written in the other four universities.

When examined according to the type, it is seen that 6 of the postgraduate studies on home literacy environment are at the master's level and 2 of them are at the doctoral level.

Considering that the knowledge and skills that preschool children have about literacy affect their future reading success (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network (NICHD, 2005)), it was determined that the start date of the postgraduate studies was late and there were few studies on the subject.

When examined according to advisor titles, it is seen that in 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment, professors advised five theses, associate professors advised two theses, and advisors with the title of doctoral faculty member advised two theses each. It was determined that one study was conducted with a double advisor. Graduate academic studies are conducted with advisors consisting of faculty members. The titles of faculty members in universities in Turkey are professor, associate professor, assistant professor, doctoral faculty member (Resmî Gazete, 2018)

When analyzed according to the language of thesis writing, it was determined that 7 of the postgraduate studies on home literacy environment were written in Turkish and 1 in English. The target audience of the academic studies on home literacy environment is academicians, teachers, students and families. The fact that all but one of the theses were written in Turkish is considered positive considering the general situation of the audience that will benefit from the results (Orhan, 2022).

It was seen that quantitative research method was used in 5 of the 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment and mixed research method was used in 3 of them.

In 8 postgraduate studies on home literacy environment, it was determined that students were determined as the population and sample in 1 study, families in 3 studies, and families and students together in 4 studies. The importance of research models in graduate

studies (Karasar, 2020) is known in terms of reliability and validity. Considering the population and samples preferred in the studies, it is evaluated that the research models are appropriate.

It is thought that there is a need for cross-sectional and longitudinal research evaluating the relationship between children's home literacy environment and home literacy environment in Turkey and indicating which dimensions of home literacy environment support children's development.

Studies can be conducted on family attitudes and behaviors on issues such as creating a home literacy environment and family shared reading hours.

Studies can be conducted on the effect of socio-economic status on both the quality and materials of the home literacy environment and on the development of children's spontaneous literacy skills.

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