



## READING WITH MOM: READING HABITS AMONG RURAL READERS IN SARAWAK



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### ABSTRACT

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The role of the mother in the literacy development of a child has been well studied, but only a few have linked this development with reading habits practiced amongst nonnative English-speaking mothers. The current study investigates the choices of English language reading materials for at home reading activities for the mother and child in addition to the motivation that influences this reading habit. Results from the 31 participants from a rural area of Sarawak have shown a significant pattern in favor of fiction genre materials compared to nonfiction reading materials for at home reading activities. This suggests that the variety of information from the fiction-based materials draws more interest and motivation for these mothers to read with their children. Other factors which determine the choices of materials are the proficiency levels of these nonnative English-speaking mothers and the age of the child involved. The findings are significant because this population is often overlooked and thus this study supplements the perspectives of nonnative English-speaking mothers toward literacy activities in the home.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study is one of very few studies that have investigated the role of the mother on a child's reading development within the context of rural Sarawak, Malaysia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement in a child's literacy development is paramount for the academic success of the child. Studies have shown that parents' active involvement positively impacts their children's academic achievement (Topor *et al.*, 2010). In general, parental involvement, which is usually associated with the parents partaking in various activities both in school and at home, may significantly improve the child's literacy development (Domina, 2005; Dearing *et al.*, 2006; Michael, 2010) as in most cases parents are the first teachers of their children (Britto *et al.*, 2006) thus it is pertinent to acknowledge parental roles when discussing the literacy achievement of children.

Examining parental roles in literacy development is not a new topic. A study from Malaysia shows that mothers deemed frequently reading to their children as a beneficial activity in supporting their children's education (Fauzilah *et al.*, 2011) while a study from Japan illuminated that parents are regarded as partners in children's education (Moorehead, 2007; Jabar, 2010). In light of determining the parental role in literacy development,