



Unlocking Imagination through Living Books: A Case Study on Deep Literacy Engagement in Early Childhood within a Charlotte Mason Community in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of parents adhering to the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy regarding the use of living books in fostering children's literacy engagement. A total of 119 Indonesian parents who actively engaged in the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy and had experience in reading living books aloud to their children participated in this study. Employing a quantitative descriptive research design, data was collected through a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of 38 items categorized into four dimensions: perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud for children, reasons for encouraging children to retell stories, rationale for selecting living books, and methods of reading living books. The results indicated that most participants have positive perceptions across four key dimensions. About 73 % of the respondents strongly agreed that reading living books aloud enhances children's literacy by fostering a love for reading, boosting self-expression, and supporting cognitive, emotional, and social development. In addition, requesting children to retell stories was widely perceived as beneficial for vocabulary growth, imagination, confidence, and moral reasoning, with 85% of responses falling under strongly agree. Furthermore, the respondents selected living books primarily for their literary quality, narrative richness, meaningful content, and respect for children's intellectual capacity. Finally, most respondents consistently applied recommended reading practices, such as encouraging narration and fostering daily storytelling routines, with about 55% to 68% practicing them daily. These results underscore a substantial commitment of the respondents to structured, intentional, and literature-rich home literacy environments that support holistic child development. The findings provide significant insights for educators, parents, and policymakers in designing effective literacy programs that integrate living books as an essential pedagogical tool and resource.

Keywords: *living books; literacy engagement; early childhood education; parent perceptions; Charlotte Mason*



A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Charlotte Mason's philosophy of using living books plays a significant role in fostering deep literacy engagement in early childhood education. According to this educational philosophy, reading living books is believed able to provide a unique and special experience because it emphasizes the use of rich, narrative literature that aims to cultivate a love for knowledge and lifelong learning in children. This experience helps children to recognize word, grasp the contextual meanings and improve their reading eloquence (Mason, 2018; Ramos et al., 2022). Children are considered as individuals with a natural desire to know, which can be satisfied through education centered around great books and narrative methods. The utilization of living books will foster children for a love for reading, because it sharpens children's innate curiosity and encourages self-motivation and independent exploration. During this reading exploration, children are engaging and filled with rich narratives that are intended to arouse their curiosity and helping them become real readers and lifelong learner (Cooper, 2023).

When children experience the feeling of curiosity, joy and engagement in reading, it can stimulate their interest in books and enhance their overall literacy skills. Teachers who employ living books within their curriculum often report increased opportunities for promoting critical thinking and creativity through corresponding discussions and activities related to the stories, leading to rich, engaging classroom experiences. This aligns with findings that indicate effective storytelling strategies can improve listening comprehension skills in preschool children. Furthermore, living books operate as a bridge, connecting children's own lives and experiences to the narratives they encounter, promoting not only reading skills but also emotional and cognitive growth (Kasten et al., 2004).

Moreover, the use of living books has an essential role in cognitive and language development. Charlotte Mason's living books approach promotes a more immersive and engaging learning experience by using rich, narrative content that respects the child's natural curiosity, integrates various subjects, encourages reflection and critical thinking, and allows for flexibility and personalization. Exposure to diverse genres enhances children's listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in a context that feels natural and relatable. Living books significantly enhance the development of deep literacy skills in early childhood education by fostering engagement, imagination, and meaningful connections to personal experiences. These books serve as a bridge between children's lives and the stories they encounter, promoting not only reading skills but also emotional and cognitive growth (Ewing et al., 2016; Halperin-Olson, 2023; Kasten et al., 2004; Park et al., 2022).

Shared reading experiences of living book nurture an environment conducive to language acquisition and emergent literacy. Additionally, the narratives presented in living books often touch on emotions and relationships, enabling children to make connections with characters and reflect on their own experiences, which is crucial for fostering empathy and social understanding as the key components of holistic development in early childhood ((Rudiyati et al., 2021)

Previous studies has shed light on the significant of living book for the development of deep literacy skills in early childhood education (Mason, 2018; Ramos et al., 2022). However, the lack of empirical studies examining how living books are utilized specifically within parents in Indonesian context that align with Charlotte Mason's pedagogical principles that involves the cultural relevance of living books. The applicability of Western literature may not resonate as effectively within Indonesian contexts, where local narratives often serve as more relatable and motivating sources for children. Although the literature highlights multiple aspects of literacy engagement and the significance of interactive reading practices, the particular emphasis on living books within the Indonesian context is yet little examined (Anugrahbputri & Nasyiithoh, 2019; Cooper, 2023; Nugroho, 2012). This gap signifies an opportunity for future study to explore the distinctive function of living books in promoting literacy experiences that align with the Indonesian sociocultural context and current educational requirements. Thus, this study aims to examine the perceptions of parents adhering to the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy regarding the use of living books in fostering children's literacy engagement in Indonesian sociocultural context.

B. METHOD

1. Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design with a descriptive statistical approach. This study aimed to examine participants' perceptions regarding the practice of reading living books aloud to children, particularly among parents who adopt the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy. Descriptive statistics were employed to illustrate the distribution of participants' responses and to provide a comprehensive overview of their perceptions across the measured dimensions.

2. Participants

The study involved 119 parents in Indonesia who identified as adherents of the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy. The participants were randomly selected based on their engagement in reading living books aloud to their children. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were: (1) parents who practice the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy, (2) individuals who regularly read living books to their children, and (3) individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by providing informed consent. The exclusion criteria applied to individuals who had no experience with living books or who declined to participate in the research.

3. Research Instrument

The primary instrument used for data collection in this study was a self-developed questionnaire designed to measure participants' perceptions of various aspects related to the use of living books in children's education. The questionnaire consisted of 38 items categorized into four dimensions, specifically:

- a. Perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud to children.
- b. Perceptions of the rationale for asking children to retell and narrate the books.
- c. Perceptions of the rationale for selecting living books for children.

- d. Perceptions of techniques utilized when reading living books.

The items in the questionnaire were constructed using 5 Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and strongly Disagree) to allow participants to express their level of agreement with each statement. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms to facilitate efficient data collection and to reach a wider population of respondents.

4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted online through the dissemination of the questionnaire link using Google Forms through WhatsApp group. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The responses were automatically recorded in a digital format, which facilitated the organization and management of the collected data while ensuring the anonymity of the participants.

5. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire responses were analyzed using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 26. Prior to the main analysis, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested to ensure the quality and accuracy of the instrument. Item validity testing was conducted to confirm that each statement effectively measured the intended construct, while reliability testing was performed to assess the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Following the validation process, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe the patterns and trends in participants' perceptions. The analysis included frequency distributions of percentages for each dimension of the questionnaire. The results of the analysis provided an empirical overview of how participants perceived the practice of reading living books aloud to their children.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

Respondents' Demographic Background

The results in table 1 indicated a total of 119 respondents participated in this study. The demographic data indicated that the majority of the participants (76.5%) were resided in the western region of Indonesia, which includes areas such as Sumatra and Java. A minority of respondents (20.2%) resided in the central region of Indonesia, which includes Kalimantan and Sulawesi, while only 3.4% of the participants were from the eastern region, such as Maluku and Papua.

In terms of residential classification, the majority of the respondents (82.4%) lived in urban areas, whereas 17.6% of them resided in rural areas. This distribution reflects the trend that the Charlotte Mason educational approach and the practice of reading living books may be more prevalent and accessible among urban communities in Indonesia.

Regarding age distribution, the respondents were predominantly within the productive adult age range. Specifically, 30.3% of the participants were between 21 and 35 years of age, 42.0% were between 36 and 40 years, and the remaining 27.7% were aged between 41 and 50 years. This age profile suggests that the majority of respondents were

at an active parenting stage, aligning with the target population of parents who practice reading living books to their children.

In relation to the respondents' relationship to the child, a significant majority of the respondents (79.8%) were mothers, while only 20.2% were fathers. This finding indicates that mothers play a more dominant role in the implementation of the Charlotte Mason approach, particularly in the practice of reading living books aloud to children.

The respondents' educational background indicated a relatively high level of formal education. Most of the participants (66.4%) held a bachelor's degree, while 21.0% had completed a master's degree, and 9.2% possessed a doctoral degree. Only a small proportion (3.4%) reported their highest level of education as senior high school. This pattern suggests that the practice of reading living books may be associated with parents who have higher educational attainment.

In terms of reading habits, the majority of respondents (46.2%) reported reading books for personal enjoyment several times a week, while 26.1% read almost every day, and 21.8% read every day. Only 5.9% indicated reading less than twice a month. This data implies that the majority of participants have a strong personal interest in reading, which may positively influence their engagement in reading living books to their children.

Furthermore, respondents were requested to specify the average duration they spent reading books to their children each day. The majority (63.9%) reported reading for 15 to 30 minutes daily, while 26.9% spent 31 to 60 minutes, and 3.4% read for more than one hour per day. A small percentage (5.9%) indicated that they read to their children for less than 15 minutes per day.

Finally, the quantity of living books possessed by respondents was analyzed. The majority (65.5%) reported having a collection of more than 30 living books in their household. Meanwhile, 16.8% of respondents owned 21 to 30 books, 16.0% had 11 to 20 books, and only 1.7% owned between 6 and 10 books. This result illustrates that most participants are highly invested in building a substantial collection of living books to support their children's reading experiences.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Background (N=119)

| Background Variable | | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Region of residence | West Indonesia | 91 | 76.5 |
| | Central Indonesia | 24 | 20.2 |
| | East Indonesia | 4 | 3.4 |
| Residential Category | Urban | 98 | 82.4 |
| | Rural | 21 | 17.6 |
| Age | Age 21–35 years | 36 | 30.3 |
| | Age 36–40 years | 50 | 42.0 |
| | Age 41–50 years | 33 | 27.7 |
| Relationship to Child | Father | 24 | 20.2 |
| Relationship to Child | Mother | 95 | 79.8 |
| Educational Level | Senior High School | 4 | 3.4 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 79 | 66.4 |
| | Master's Degree | 25 | 21.0 |
| | Doctoral Degree | 11 | 9.2 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|----|------|
| Reading frequency/week | Several times a week | 55 | 46.2 |
| | Almost every day | 31 | 26.1 |
| | Less than twice a month | 7 | 5.9 |
| | Every day | 26 | 21.8 |
| Reading Time/Day | < 15 minutes | 7 | 5.9 |
| | 15–30 minutes | 76 | 63.9 |
| | 31–60 minutes | 32 | 26.9 |
| | > 60 minutes | 4 | 3.4 |
| Number of Living Books Collection | 6–10 books | 2 | 1.7 |
| | 11–20 books | 19 | 16.0 |
| | 21–30 books | 20 | 16.8 |
| | >30 books | 78 | 65.5 |

The results in figure 1 illustrate respondents’ perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud to children, based on 17 statements rated using 5-Likert scale; (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree. The data reveals a strong consensus in favor of this practice, with the majority of participants selecting “Strongly Agree” for nearly all items. The highest levels of agreement were observed for statements such as helping children develop a lifelong love for reading (Q9) and boosting their confidence in reading and retelling stories (Q10). These responses highlight the belief that reading living books aloud has a lasting impact on children’s literacy and self-expression. Cognitive benefits, such as language development, intellectual growth, and creative thinking (Q1–Q5), also received substantial support, indicating that parents and caregivers view this activity as a meaningful educational tool. Furthermore, emotional and social aspects—like strengthening parent-child bonds, nurturing empathy, and creating joyful shared experiences (Q7, Q12, Q14–Q15)—were equally valued. Although responses to statements related to relaxation and providing downtime (Q13 and Q17) showed slightly lower levels of strong agreement, they were still positively rated. Overall, the chart reflects a widely shared belief that reading living books aloud is a powerful and multifaceted tool for promoting both cognitive and emotional development in children.

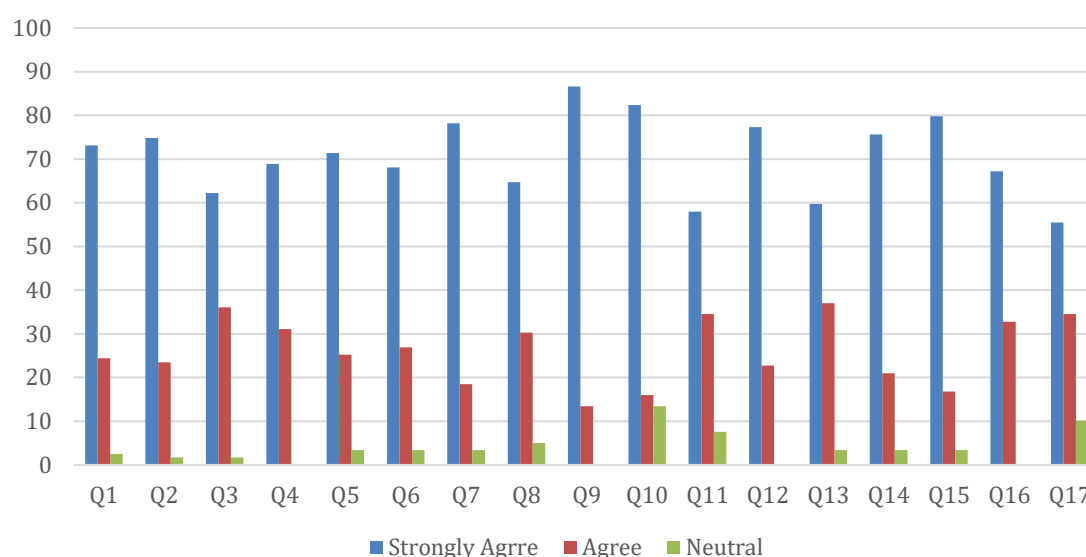


Figure 1. Respondents' perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud to children (in percent)

In addition, the results in figure 2 shows that respondents hold highly positive perceptions toward the reasons for asking children to retell the books they read. The majority of responses across all items (Q18–Q27) replies under the “Strongly Agree” category, with percentages ranging from 73% to 85%, indicating a strong consensus and agreement about the benefits and advantages of this practice. Additionally, the “Agree” responses appear consistently as the second-highest category, implying some moderate support of respondents. Reflecting a very small number of respondents who are unsure or disagree with the assertions, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree replies are few or nearly non-existent. Notably, Q21 (related to improving pragmatic skills) and Q27 (practicing public speaking) show slightly higher proportions in the “Agree” category compared to others, which may imply a more varied perception in these areas. Furthermore, only Q25 (developing creative and innovative thinking) reveals a slight occurrence of “Neutral” replies. These findings suggest that most respondents believe asking children to retell books is highly beneficial in enriching vocabulary, improving semantic and syntactic development, fostering imagination and creative thinking, building self-confidence, nurturing moral reasoning, and strengthening public speaking skills.

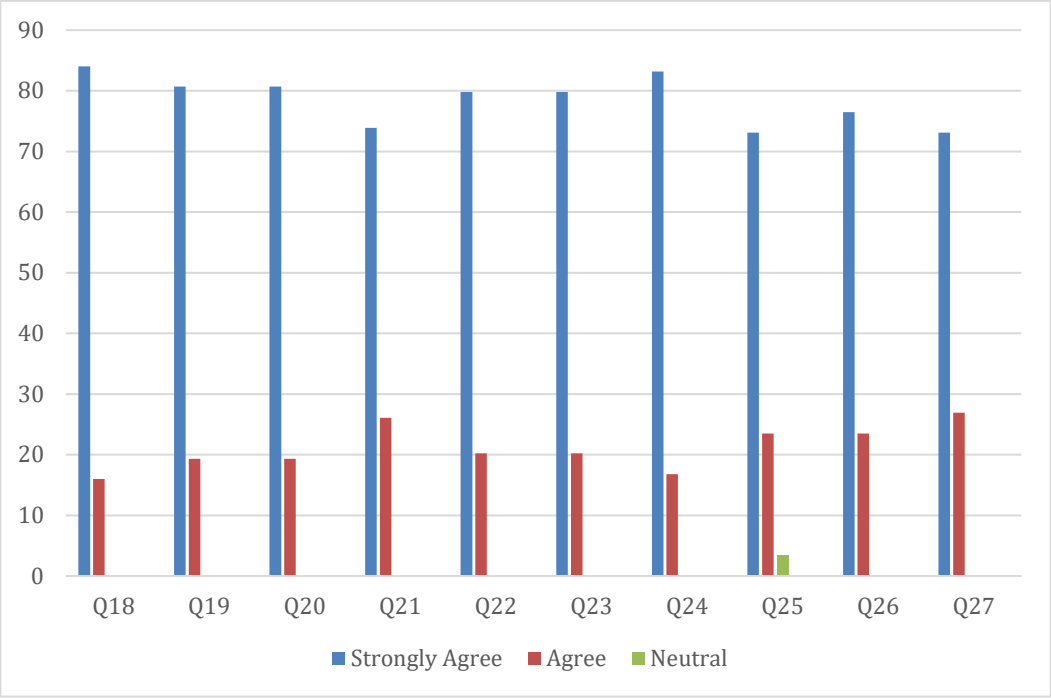


Figure 2. Respondents' perceptions toward the reasons for asking children to retell the books they read (in percent)

Furthermore, the results in figure 3 presented the rationale for choosing living books for children indicates a predominantly positive perception among respondents. Across all items (Q28–Q34), the majority of responses are categorized into the Strongly Agree category, with percentages ranging from approximately 73% to 83%. This indicates a strong belief among respondents that living books facilitated children's cognitive and emotional development and growth. The Agree category consistently appears as the second highest, with percentages between 15% to 27%, signifying that a significant portion of respondents affirm these reasons, although with less intensity. Neutral, disagree and disagree responses have not appeared in all items, suggesting that almost all respondents have a clear and positive stance toward the statements. Particularly, items Q31 and Q34, which refer to the narrative or stories being well-told and memorable, as well as the books' respect for the reader's intelligence, show the highest proportion of “Strongly Agree” responses. Overall, the findings indicated that respondents highly value living books because of their rich literary quality, meaningful language, memorable storytelling, artistic illustrations, profound ideas, and the ability to stimulate thoughtful engagement without underestimating the child’s intelligence.

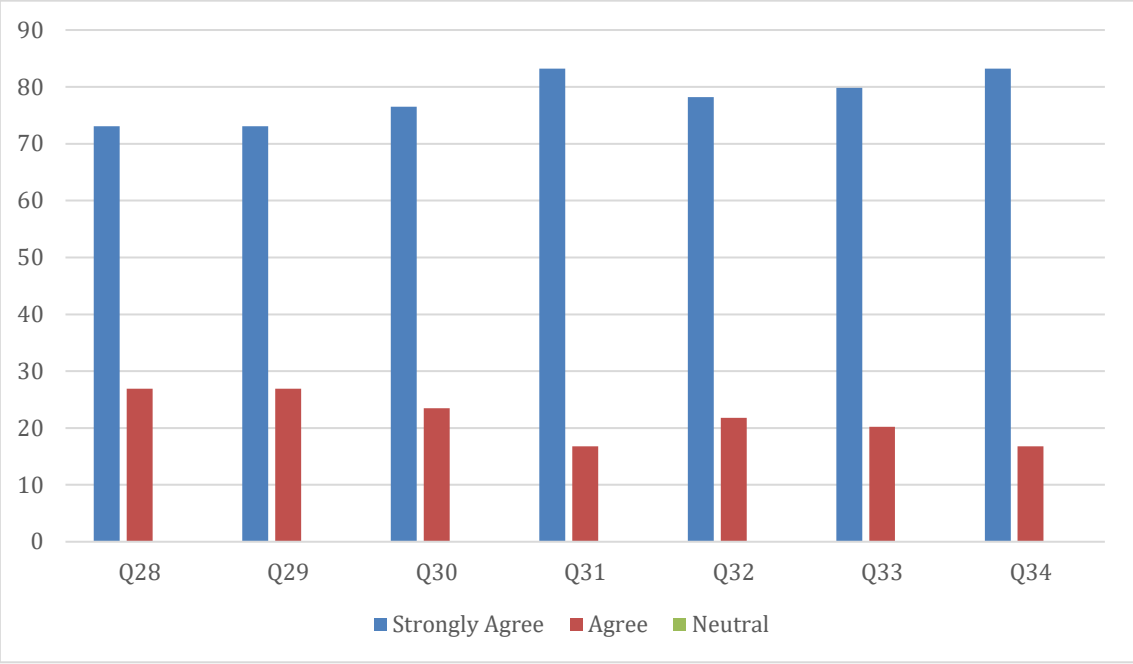


Figure 3. Respondents' perceptions toward the rationale for choosing living books for children

Meanwhile, the results in figure 4 focused on respondents' methods to reading living book and narration reveals a predominantly consistent and frequent application of recommended practices. For all four items (Q35–Q38), the Everyday category shows the highest percentage of responses, ranging from approximately 55% to 68%, indicating that the majority of respondents regularly implement these reading strategies in their daily routine. The Often category ranks as the second highest, particularly in Q36 (reading slowly) and Q35 (reading once to train and enhance listening focus), indicating that a significant number of respondents engage in these practices frequently, though not necessarily every day. The Occasionally and Never categories manifest in very small proportions, showing that very few respondents rarely or never adopt these approaches. In Q38 (asking the child to retell the story without interference), the Everyday response ranks the highest percentage, reflecting a strong and consistent effort to encourage children's narration and independent recall. Overall, the data demonstrates that respondents are highly committed to fostering attentive listening, gradual reading, and narrative skills in children through regular, consistent, organized and structured reading sessions.

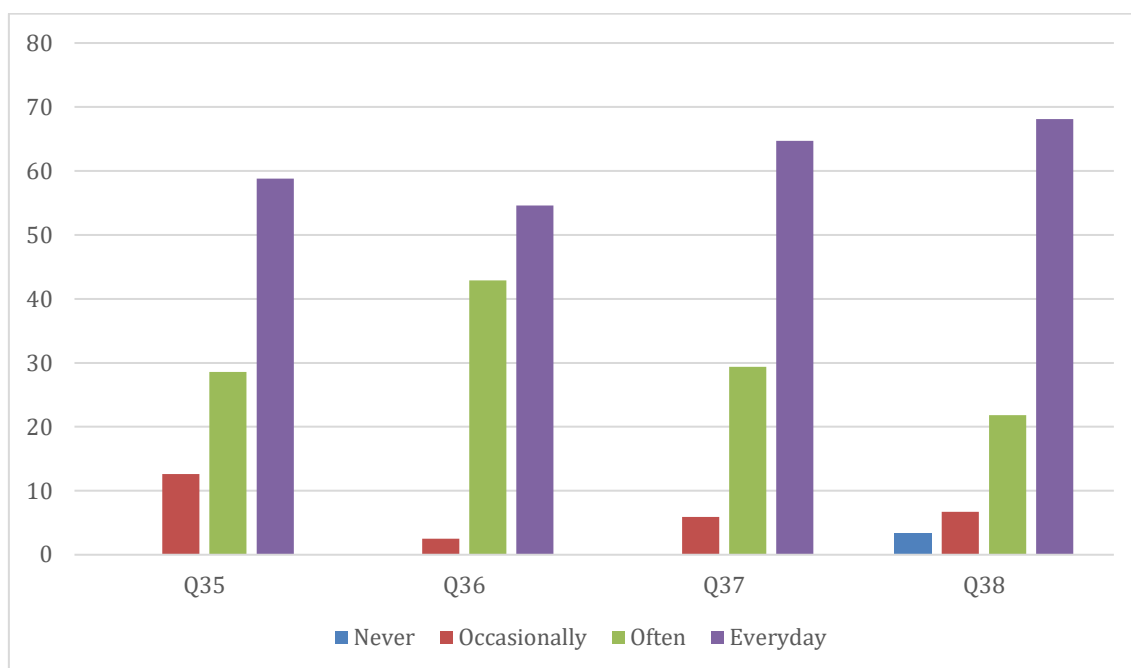


Figure 4. Respondents' perceptions methods to reading living book

2. Discussion

This study aimed to explore parents' perceptions of the use of living books in fostering early childhood literacy engagement, particularly focusing on the practice of reading living books aloud to children based on the following questions:

Question 1: What are the Respondents' perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud to children?

The data collected regarding respondents' perceptions of the benefits of reading living books aloud to children indicates a strong consensus favoring this practice. Importantly, the highest agreement was observed in the context of helping children to develop a lifelong love for reading (Q9) and boosting their confidence in reading and retelling stories (Q10). This aligns with existing research that emphasizes the role of shared reading in fostering children and reading motivation and engagement, which are crucial components in developing positive attitudes toward reading and learning overall (Mol et al., 2009; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). The notion that literature can instill a love of reading in children is supported by numerous studies that show a direct correlation between early reading experiences and later academic success (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017; Huang, 2019).

Furthermore, the majority of parents and caregivers view reading aloud as an effective educational tool that contributes significantly to cognitive development. Research by Sénéchal and Lefevre highlights how children's exposure to books at home has a supportive role in the evolution of language skills and literacy (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). In a similar vein, interactive book reading not only boosts vocabulary and language development but also enhances children critical thinking and creativity, reinforcing

findings from the gathered data that indicate substantial support for cognitive benefits of reading aloud (Q1–Q5) (Mol et al., 2009).

The emotional and social dimensions resulting from reading to children also received substantial support, particularly in terms of strengthening parent-child bonds and fostering empathy (Q7, Q12, Q14–Q15). This multifaceted impact reflects insights provided by Whitehurst and Lonigan, who note the importance of parent-child interactions in context with emergent literacy, suggesting that the nurturing environment provided during reading activities indeed has comprehensive developmental benefits. Additionally, the emotional connections formed during these shared reading experiences can nurture empathy and social understanding, serving a foundational role in children's social development (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Interestingly, while the statements regarding relaxation and downtime (Q13, Q17) elicited slightly lower levels of agreement, they still received positive ratings. This suggests that respondents do see value in the calming and restorative aspects of reading together, which can contribute to a child's overall well-being. Interrupted reading routines or busy lifestyles do present barriers to shared reading that can diminish its perceived relaxation benefits underscoring the importance of creating dedicated time for shared reading activities (Preece & Levy, 2018).

Overall, the respondents' perceptions articulate a well-recognized belief within educational and developmental psychology that reading living books aloud serves as a powerful and multifaceted tool significant not only for cognitive learning but also for fostering emotional intelligence and secure parental relationships. The consensus observed in the data clearly supports the continued promotion of such reading activities, as they hold profound implications for nurturing holistic development in children.

Question 2: What are the respondents' perceptions toward the reasons for asking children to retell the books?

The findings indicating a strong positive perception among respondents regarding living books suggest that these texts are highly regarded for their potential to enhance cognitive and emotional development in children. With the majority of responses categorized as "Strongly Agree," ranging from 73% to 83%, it is evident that living books are viewed as valuable resources in fostering a children's intellectual growth and emotional understanding. This conclusion aligns with research that underscores the influence that narrative and literary quality can have on developmental outcomes in children.

The salient relationship between reading and cognitive development has been well-documented in literature. Shigemasu et al., (2024) highlight the impact of parental reading on children's cognitive growth, noting that children exposed to reading from a young age tend to exhibit improved receptive vocabulary and comprehension skills. (Shigemasu et al., 2024). This notion is corroborated by Ferreras et al. (2023) who assert that reading comprehension positively correlates with cognitive abilities, reinforcing the idea that engaging with high-quality narratives can bolster a children's cognitive framework. The emphasis on narratives being well-told and memorable, as indicated in the data collected, aligns with these findings, suggesting that rich storytelling significantly

contributes to a children's cognitive understanding and emotional resonance (Ferrerias et al., 2023).

Moreover, Michelson (2022) asserts that children are knowledgeable agents whose narratives contribute meaning and perspective. When children engage with living books, they are not merely processing information but negotiating their understandings of complex emotional landscapes. This emotional engagement is crucial, as it develops empathy and social cognition, which are imperative for emotional intelligence (Michelson, 2022).

The finding also supports the quality of language and storytelling within living books reflects a consensus on the importance of literary richness in children's literature. This is supported by Black and Barnes (Black & Barnes, 2015), who reported that high-quality reading material positively affects both social and cognitive cognition in children. Living books, characterized by profound ideas, artistic illustrations, and meaningful language, serve to stimulate thoughtful engagement.

Furthermore, engaging narratives enhance the reading experience by helping readers develop a cognitive map of the story, which assists in comprehension and analysis. This indicates that living books do not solely serve as entertainment; rather, they facilitate essential cognitive processes that enhance a children's ability to reason, analyze, and connect ideas within text.

A particularly compelling aspect of living books, as reflected in the respondents' views, is the respect for a children's intelligence. Literature that acknowledges children's capacity for critical thought is vital. Papailia (2023) emphasizes that emerging forms of children's literature, including hypertextual narratives, can further engage children's analytical skills, providing them opportunities to navigate complex stories through various pathways. This approach mirrors constructivist educational philosophy, positing that learners develop understanding through active engagement and exploration (Papailia, 2023).

Moreover, the findings underscore that living books can stimulate engagement without undermining the child's intelligence. This aligns with broader literacy theories advocating for texts that respect the readers' cognitive and emotional capabilities, ensuring children are not just passive recipients of information but active participants in their reading journey.

In conclusion, the respondents overwhelmingly positive perceptions of living books underscore their perceived value in fostering both cognitive and emotional development, enriched by high literary quality and inherent respect for the intelligence of young readers. The findings indicate a pressing need for educators and parents to prioritize high-quality literature in children's reading experiences, as this not only cultivates literacy skills but also nurtures emotional and intellectual growth. Further research could explore the long-term effects of exposure to living books on children's overall academic and social outcomes, potentially cementing their role as fundamental resources in literature-based educational practices.

Question 3: What are the respondents' perceptions toward the rationale for choosing living books for children?

The rationale for choosing living books for children reflects a predominantly positive perception among respondents, with substantial agreement regarding their cognitive and emotional benefits. The data indicates that a significant percentage of respondents believe that living books contribute positively to children's development, a sentiment echoed widely in recent literacy scholarship.

The findings highlight the crucial role of living books in facilitating both cognitive and emotional growth. This aligns with contemporary research emphasizing the importance of narrative quality in children's literature. Living books are designed to engage young readers with well-told stories that respect their capacity for understanding complex themes. For instance, Zhai et al. (2023) support the idea that shared reading experiences, such as those provided by living books, significantly enhance children's language ability and cognitive engagement (Zhai et al., 2023). This notion is further justified by evidence that suggests children who engage with narrative texts show enhanced language acquisition and emotional recognition skills (Pennell et al., 2017).

Moreover, emotional development through reading is critical as it cultivates empathy and social understanding. Previous study indicates that inclusive representations in literature help children navigate their understanding of diverse experiences, which is essential for fostering emotional intelligence. The environment created by shared reading experiences can also enhance this emotional development, promoting important conversations that stimulate both cognitive and emotional learning (Pecukonis et al., 2025).

Particularly noteworthy are the responses to items Q31 and Q34, which pertain to the storytelling quality and the respect for intelligence embedded in the narratives of living books. Responses indicate that these aspects are appreciated and deemed essential. The significance of storytelling quality has been discussed by Ewing et al. (2016), who suggest that engaging stories provide children with the cognitive scaffolding necessary for exploring complex ideas. As such, living books, characterized by artistic illustrations and profound themes, act as catalysts for thoughtful engagement, enabling children to immerse themselves fully into narratives while reflecting on their implications (Ewing et al., 2016).

Additionally, the role of pictures and illustrations in living books plays a significant part in maintaining interest and enhancing understanding. The vibrant illustrations combined with meaningful content can evoke a children's imagination, further aiding cognitive processes while respecting their developing intelligence (Lee, 2021).

The data's indication of minimal neutral or negative responses suggests a robust general consensus on the value of living books. This is particularly pertinent in the context of educational frameworks that advocate for literature that bolsters learner engagement and motivation. Gillanders and Barak Gillanders & Barak (2022) note that textual diversity and accessibility are paramount in educational settings, reinforcing the selection of living books that resonate with children's experiences and facilitate positive engagement.

strategies Children need to feel represented in the books they read, which living books achieve effectively by offering familiar and relatable content (Gillanders & Barak, 2022).

Moreover, the significance of parent-child interactions around reading is highlighted, as these experiences create a cohesive approach to literacy within family contexts. Research by Luo et al. (2019) reinforces the importance of shared reading in low-income families, showcasing how meaningful literature like living books can bridge gaps and enhance literacy experiences for children from varied socio-economic backgrounds (Luo et al., 2019).

The overwhelmingly positive perception of living books among respondents underscores their critical role in children's cognitive and emotional development. The data presented shows that living books are cherished not only for their storytelling and literary quality but also for their ability to foster an engaging and respectful reading environment. Future directions might consider exploring the longitudinal impacts of consistent engagement with living books on children's overall literacy and socio-emotional skills, potentially informing best practices in early childhood education and literacy programming.

Question 4: What are the respondents' perceptions on methods to reading living books?

The findings regarding the methods of reading living books reveal a notably consistent application of recommended practices among respondents. The majority report using effective reading strategies regularly in their daily routines, which underscores the commitment to fostering cognitive and narrative skills in children. This consistency aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of structured reading sessions in early childhood education.

The data indicating that between 55% and 68% of respondents report regularly implementing effective reading strategies, particularly in the "Everyday" category for items Q35 to Q38, signifies a strong commitment to nurturing literacy. This is consonant with research indicating that regular reading practices, such as asking children to retell stories and promoting attentive listening, contribute significantly to cognitive development (Luo et al., 2019). The emphasis on reading slowly and employing strategies that enhance focus reflects a pedagogical approach that highlights pacing and attentiveness as critical for developing comprehension and engagement with texts (Niland, 2023).

Moreover, the second-highest ranking of the "Often" category responses for practices such as reading slowly (Q36) and reading to train listening focus (Q35) highlights an understanding of the necessity of reinforcing these skills regularly, even if not on a daily basis. This engagement aligns with the findings of Luo et al. (2019), which demonstrate that children who practice retelling stories show enhanced independent narrative skills. These repeated opportunities for narration support children's cognitive and emotional growth as they process and interpret stories (Luo et al., 2019).

One of the most significant findings is the high percentage of respondents who encourage children to retell stories without interference, particularly highlighting the "Everyday" response in Q38. This practice emphasizes the importance of fostering

independent recall and narration skills in young readers. Encouraging children to recount narratives allows them to construct their understanding of stories actively, contributing to their self-efficacy and communicative competence. Similar findings indicate that storytelling opportunities allow children to demonstrate their comprehension and linguistic skills, thereby reinforcing their learning (Gillanders & Barak, 2022).

Moreover, the methodology of asking children to retell stories taps into the intrinsic motivation for storytelling that is critical in early childhood development. The effectiveness of incorporating responsive feedback as a learning mechanism suggests that continuous engagement with children during reading reinforces focus and facilitates deeper learning outcomes. In this case, the interactive process of narrating can provide immediate feedback and bolster a child's confidence in their narrative abilities (Luo et al., 2019).

The overall commitment to reading practices among respondents demonstrates a significant alignment with recommended literacy development strategies. This structured approach fosters attentive listening and narrative skills and reflects an understanding of how engagement with high-quality literature can enhance children's cognitive abilities and social-emotional learning.

The minimal proportions of responses indicating "Occasionally" and "Never" adopting these reading approaches further reinforce that the majority of respondents are highly committed to implementing effective and nurturing reading practices. This aligns with research that advocates for strong and diverse literary experiences that can anchor children's development and stimulate meaningful conversations around reading (Gillanders & Barak, 2022).

In conclusion, the consistent application of effective reading strategies among respondents underscores the importance of establishing a structured approach to sharing living books with children. By prioritizing practices that foster attentive listening, gradual reading, and independent storytelling, adults play a pivotal role in enriching children's cognitive and emotional landscapes. Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of these reading practices on literacy outcomes, further elucidating how intentional engagement with living books can shape children's development in multifaceted ways.

D. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that 119 Indonesian parents practicing the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy held highly positive perceptions of the role of living books in supporting early childhood literacy, particularly in enhancing language development, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Despite the insightful findings, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size, reliance on online data collection, and the potential for perception bias inherent in self-reported responses. Nevertheless, the consistent application of recommended reading practices such as narration and interactive storytelling indicates strong parental engagement with literacy development strategies. These results underscore the relevance of living books as a tool for holistic learning and offer practical implications for parents, educators, and policymakers seeking to enrich early literacy

programs. Furthermore, the findings contribute to existing literature by reinforcing the value of literature-based approaches and by emphasizing the importance of child-centered, meaningful texts in fostering comprehensive literacy growth. Future research should expand the participant base, include educators' and children's perspectives, and explore long-term educational and social-emotional outcomes to validate and deepen these insights.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were maintained throughout the study process. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were aware of their rights, including the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. No personal identifying information was collected, and all data were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.

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