

Enhancing Parent-Child Relationships through Innovative Reading Strategies: A Study of Migrant Worker Families in Guangzhou

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Abstract. The effects of children's books on parent-child relationships have been studied with families of migrant workers in Guangzhou, China. The study looks into the challenges of book selection and ways ineffective reading methods impact the population. In our survey during volunteer work at Guangzhou STARS Welfare libraries we noted that parents did not participate in the reading activity with their children. We later employed a mixed-method approach using both quantitative surveys (n=126) and qualitative interviews (n=5) to gather data on reading habits, book preferences and how an online library would impact them from the same people surveyed earlier. Results showed that parents preferred illustrated books (66.9%) and science books (37.1%) more than any other type, for reasons such as gaining knowledge (35%), building relationships with others (33.8%), or improving their reading skills (30.4%). To overcome these challenges identified we suggest two strategies: organizing offline activities in STARS welfare libraries; creating an online library platform on WeChat through which parents can access audiobooks, videos plus other reading resources available. The exploration of unconventional reading strategies helps to explore the bond between parent and child and at the same time nurtures a child during his early childhood which can be used in places where there are not many resources, like migrant worker families. The online library described was welcomed by those interviewed and may likely serve as a handy resource for enhancing parent-child reading experiences.

Keywords: parent-child relationships, early childhood development, migrant families, reading strategies, online resources.

1. Introduction

The study takes a look at the impact of children's books on parent-child relationships [1, 2]. It is designed to investigate this particular aspect with reference to migrant worker families in Guangzhou, China. In terms of fostering such relationships, these families have a situation where time and resources are usually restricted for many other types of parent-child interactional activities including reading.

The examination is designed to touch two major points: the difficulty of choosing a proper children's picture book that parents often encounter and typical reading inefficiencies that happen during reading time with children. As we probe these impediments and alternative ways, we aspire to having played our part in the facilitation of improved methods meant for fostering parent-child reading primarily — but not limited to — low-resource communities.

The research has two main goals: to establish the problems of unavailability of suitable children's picture books, an issue that parents face with a great deal of difficulty, and low quality reading methods usually applied in parent-child reading sessions. If we manage to address these challenges and find the respective solutions, we can ensure creation of more effective approaches to promoting parent-child reading. This should be focused on especially within resource-constrained communities.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to overcome these difficulties. We will look into new methods and come up with them that can foster a culture of reading between the children and their parents in

Guangzhou migrant worker families. We plan to introduce an internet-based resource center while complementing it with physical activities so as to make the solutions available, easy and at hand, which can improve both the value and amount of parent-child reading engagements.

Studies have revealed a number of advantages of parent-child reading picture books. It discovered that the relationship between parent and child can be greatly enhanced through such shared reading experiences [3]. This finding is important in situations where parents might not have enough time for activities such as those related to education because of work — creating opportunities for emotional connections and shared experiences is what happens when they read together. Yusof *et. al.* underscored the significance of parental companionship during reading sessions [4]. He said that it helped to foster a cozy, warm and harmonious environment for children which is important in creating a positive place of relaxation, learning and at the same time promoting stronger family bonds.

The objective of this research is to tackle these problems in finding innovative ways to support the interaction of parent-child reading, especially among families of migrant workers in Guangzhou. We propose the integration of physical meetings with an internet-based resource center so as to come up with readily available strategies that can boost both the standard and occurrence of parent-child reading.

Nonetheless, the literature brings to light obstacles faced by parents while seeking to optimize gains from shared reading. Tian *et. al.* brought out two main issues: parents are usually unable to choose appropriate picture books for their children, and many use ineffective methods in reading with their children [5]. Such challenges can constrain the possible favorable effects of parent-child reading activities.

The goal of this research is to look at new ways that can help solve these problems and ensure better parent-child reading, especially among migrant worker families in Guangzhou. We plan to integrate physical meetings with an internet-based resource center so as to reach out with feasible options that can boost the level and number of interactions during parent-child reading. The research intends to find solutions for these problems and in a few innovative ways that would promote reading between parents and children, notably within migrant worker families in Guangzhou. The fusion of physical events with the online resource platform means we hope to come up with reachable answers which can improve both the amount and excellence of parent-child reading times.

3. Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to investigate how children's books can shape parent-child relationships, particularly in the context of migrant worker families in Guangzhou.

3.1. Participants

The study involved two main groups of participants:

- Survey respondents: A total of 126 individuals participated in an online survey. Participants included parents, children, and individuals of various ages who had experience reading with children.
- Interview participants: Five parents were selected for in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted at the Guangzhou library.

3.2. Data Collection

3.2.1. Survey

A thorough survey was put together and distributed online to obtain quantitative data. The survey was divided into two parts because we had different sections for adults and children due to the difference in their experiences, thus perspectives regarding children's literature.

The survey drew information on:

- Kinds of children's books chosen for reading
- How often parent-child reading sessions took place
- The reasons motivating the act of reading with children
- Approaches inculcated during parent-child reading sessions
- Satisfaction levels towards the reading experience

3.2.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five parents at the Guangzhou library. These interviews aimed to gather more detailed, qualitative insights into:

- Parents' experiences with selecting and reading children's books
- Challenges faced during parent-child reading sessions
- Perceptions of the impact of reading on their relationship with their children
- Feedback on the feasibility of creating an online library resource

3.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, calculating percentages for various response categories. This analysis provided an overview of trends in book preferences, reading habits, and motivations among the participants.

Qualitative data from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis. Key themes and patterns were identified from the interview transcripts, providing deeper insights into parents' experiences, challenges, and needs regarding children's books and parent-child reading.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

This research has been carefully conducted with attention to ethical considerations particularly given that children and families were involved. The following ethical issues have been addressed:

- **Informed Consent:** All adult participants, which include the parents or other adults taking part in the survey and interviews, were informed in detail about the aim of the study, its procedures, and the potential risks plus benefits it bore. Written consent was obtained from all adults prior to their participation in the study. Parental consent was required for child participants in the survey. An age-appropriate process was used to obtain assent from children so that they understood what their participation entailed and that they could opt out at any time.
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection:** Anonymized data for secure participants' identity protection was used. Responses from surveys were collected without personal identifiers, and interview transcripts were de-identified. Securely stored on password-protected devices that only the research team could access.
- **Voluntary Participation:** The participation of all those involved was said to be entirely voluntary with no negative repercussions if they chose not to take part even after having agreed.
- **Low Risk:** Questions were framed in such a way that they would not create undue stress to participants and thus contribute towards a study of low risk. Information about general reading habits and experiences was sought without touching upon sensitive or potentially distressing areas.
- **Cultural Relevance:** A specific population of migrant worker families in Guangzhou was under study, meaning that extra efforts were made to provide culturally appropriate research materials and interactions that took into consideration the unique circumstances of this group.

The ethical considerations were addressed in this research. The primary goal was the protection and respect for all those involved, but also at the same time ensuring that it did not compromise the validity of the study.

3.5. Limitations

The study's limitations include the relatively small sample size for the interviews and the potential for self-selection bias in the survey responses. Additionally, the focus on Guangzhou may limit the generalizability of findings to other contexts.

4. Results and Discussion

Our mixed-methods study yielded insights into parent-child reading habits, book preferences, and the potential impact of an online library resource. We present these findings along with their implications and connections to existing literature.

4.1. Book Preferences and Selection from Parents

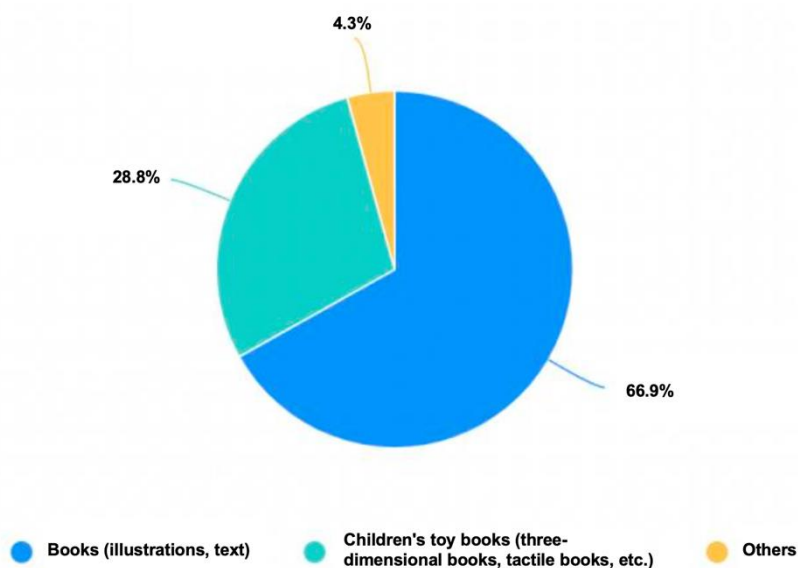


Figure 1. The selection of children's books.

A parental survey has brought forth a considerable favor of illustrated picture books amongst parents when reading with their children, which was preferred by 66.9% of respondents, as shown in Figure 1. This large majority accentuates the lasting charm and worth placed upon traditional picture books as a tool for parent-child reading. It seems the infusion of visual components along with textual content manages to strike this equilibrium — between entertainment and educational value — that appeals most to parents in involving their children within the activity of reading: striking a balance between fun and learning for their little ones.

On the other hand, a preference for toy books (including 3-D and tactile books) was reported by 28.8% of parents. Although this is a smaller percentage, it still shows considerable interest in interactive and multisensory reading experiences. Such books might be more attractive for little children or those with more hands-on learning benefits as it could entail other materials to be used as well along with the book content. Other types of books were selected by 4.3% of parents — different from what was mentioned above — thus revealing diversity in preferences and needs that do not fall under major categories indicated earlier.

The bias toward illustrated books actually reflects the study that underscores an importance of children's books, particularly picture books, in early childhood education and development— visually appealing components these books can have to catch children's attention, drive their imagination and help them understand the text [6]. The dual presentation of visual and textual information is noted to be effective support for cognitive growth as well as the development of literacy in young children.

The high demand for storybooks by parents hints a realization of their benefits that come from many different angles. Apart from just keeping the child entertained, it seems like parents find these books valuable in fostering connections between them and their children as well as creating learning opportunities. This was noted in findings on relationship benefits from shared reading experiences [7]; having read the same book helps in creating a common point of focus that brings people together while the materials in the stories might be talked about to introduce new ideas or even topics into their lives. The dual nature of storybooks — acting both as a tool for building relationships and source of education — must be playing a major role in making them widely liked among parents.

Another point that can be extracted from the above discussion is that parents may understand their children's needs and ways of learning, as preferring illustrated books is also common. Picture books can help children make a connection between visual representation and verbal description, which in turn helps them transit from concrete to abstract thinking. This development of such cognitive skills through picture books would therefore be highly valuable during early stages of language development and cognitive growth.

4.2. Types of Books of Parents' Choices to Read with Children

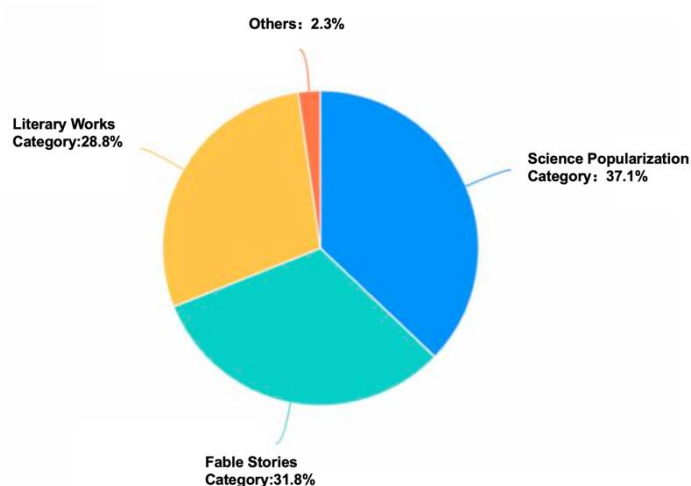


Figure 2. The types of books of parents' choices to read with children.

The outcomes of the study pointed out that science books were highly preferred by parents which had 37.1% choosing it as their top choice for reading together with their children (see in Figure 2). This discovery is quite interesting because it indicates a change towards more informative and engaging shared reading activity. Typically, scientific publications are able to introduce interesting phenomena in simple ways since they evoke curiosity— thus promoting exploration even without direct learning encouragement.

A little below science books in the list were fable stories at 31.8% and literature at 28.8%. These varied choices suggest that different genres are equally appreciated by parents during reading times with their children. Fables, typically centered around moral lessons and characters that are animals with human qualities, can be good teaching moments for kids — apart from fostering creativity. Imbuing culture could involve injecting local story codes: which may be included within literature; hence children would learn rich language and diverse narrative structures as well as gain cultural insights.

The interest in science books matches the present directions of the educational system which attaches great importance to STEM (that is Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects starting from an early age. It is likely that parents are acknowledging the value of being scientifically literate as we live in a world that relies more and more on technology every day — hence the availability of such resources. In addition, sometimes these publications come with interactive

components or experiments. Sometimes they come with interesting questions intended not only for reading but also to be discussed during family time for deeper involvement by both parents and kids.

The strong preference for science books thus greatly endorses another articulation of the critical need for a warm and interactive ambience during reading [8]. Science inherently involves questions, explanations, and activity — making the reading environment lively. Parents can take these books to use them as tools in driving meaningful discussions that will challenge their children to think critically about their environment and ask questions beyond what they observe around them.

Parents' selection of science books could also indicate their wish to provide additional support for their children's formal education, or to bring scientific ideas into the home sphere in a comfortable and relaxed manner. This particular strategy can contribute towards removing the veil of mystery that often shrouds science from a child's understanding, making it more easily reachable and pleasurable.

Moreover, an equal share of science books, fable stories, and literature implies the desire of parents for a complete reading journey. They appear to take into account the informational value to be gained from scientific knowledge contained in the books and at the same time moral teachings plus cultural lessons that can be learnt from fables and literature. This cognitive, emotional, social multilayered choice of reading material helps in overall development for children — which forms a solid basis (a rich foundation) later for continuous education and also an understanding of different content throughout life's learning experiences.

4.3. Parents' Motivations for Reading with Children

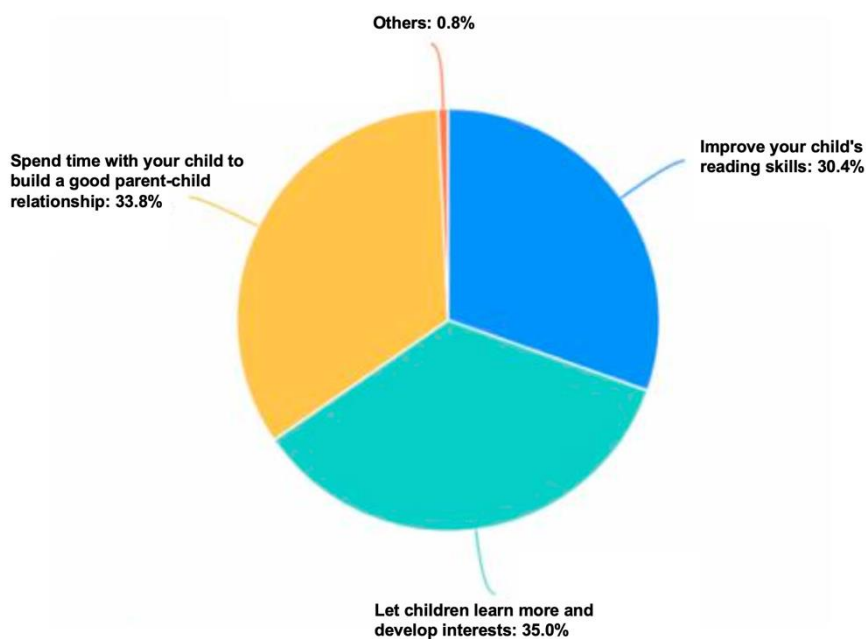


Figure 3. The parents' motivations for reading with children.

This research is completely in favor of what was discovered by another study on the manifold gains of parent-child reading [9]. This study underscored how co-reading situations can boost understanding of text meaning — an aim that ties with the desire to better reading skills. In addition, it brought attention to a realm where emotional experiences could be enriched via reading which underscores the drive towards stronger familial bonds.

Also, these reasons show that there has been a move towards more intentional and purposeful ways of parenting. It is not merely out of habit or duty that parents are reading to their children, but with clear objectives at the back of their minds — be it educational, relational or skill-based goals (35%, see in Figure 3). This deliberate nature of the act could result in better developed reading sessions

from various aspects: interest and effectiveness, hence possibly magnifying the gains for both kids as well as their parents.

At a close 33.8%, motivation stood as the reason to come with children and have good relations between parent and child. This observation underscores the social and emotional facets of shared reading episodes. Moments during which parents engage in shared reading activities appear not to be valued merely for their cognitive contents; but also viewed as occasions promoting unity, emotional attachment, and time value. The motivation heralds the potential of reading as a ritual in families to foster stronger family bonds and create memories that would last forever.

The fairly balanced distribution between those three primary motivational entities among parents hints that they hold an all-round perspective of the benefits to be reaped from reading. They acknowledge that it has the capacity to cater for cognitive, social and emotional development needs at a go on the child. This holistic approach towards reading is well supported by current perspectives in developmental psychology which underscores that different domains in child development are intertwined and cannot be viewed in isolation.

This outcome highly endorses the study by Krcmar & Cingel that revealed numerous advantages of parent-child reading [10]. The emphasis on shared reading experiences being able to boost reading comprehension is indeed in line with the aim of nurturing effective readers. In addition, their results brought out the issue of emotional satisfaction that can be derived from common reading which again strengthens the bond between parents and children.

It is interesting to note the almost equal distribution of these three primary motivations, which implies that parents have a more comprehensive perspective of what reading can bring. They acknowledge that it has the capacity to cater to cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions all at once — for child growth. This multi-dimensional view on reading harmonizes different spheres of a child’s development echoes what contemporary developmental psychology posits: an integration of different domains in child development where one part cannot function wholly without the others.

In addition, these reasons signify a move towards more deliberate and intentional parental practices. The act of reading is not merely being done by parents as a matter of routine or responsibility but with clear objectives that could be related to education, relationship-building or the development of specific skills. This level of intent in the action could result in more interesting and active reading occasions which in turn might escalate the advantages that both — children and parents — reap from such sessions.

4.4. Parents’ Reading Frequency with Children

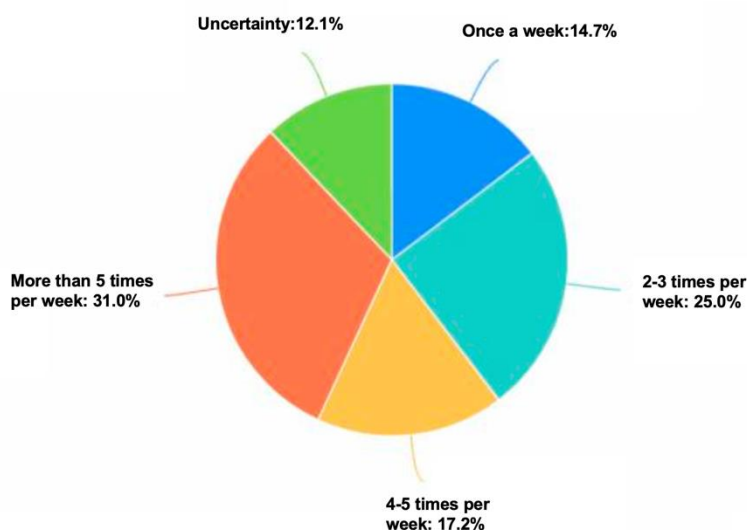


Figure 4. The parents’ reading frequency for reading with children.

The diversity of experiences identified underscores a multidimensional representation with the modern family life; where a number of factors such as work schedules, family size, availability of resources, and cultural perception on reading could influence the frequency at which parents engage their children in reading activities. This multivariate nature calls for a differentiated approach to promoting parent-child reading. There can be different strategies developed to help different families. In this situation it might involve coming up with ways through which people can establish consistent habits of reading.

The majority group — which accounts for 42.2% of those surveyed — claimed they read with their children, not too infrequently but just enough: 2-5 times a week, as shown in Figure 4. This middling frequency hints at the fact that a considerable number of parents have managed to build a semi-regular habit of reading with their young ones. Child development specialists would certainly approve of this practice because it falls in line with their belief that regular and repeated exposure to books and reading is key after all — an opinion often shared by those experts who believe that such activity should be consistently infused into family life dynamics. These are the parents who might have struck a balance between leading hectic lives on one hand and wanting to include reading as part of their familial routine on the other.

- Methods that are time-efficient for reading and that can suit busy parents
- Ways to get access to digital libraries or book-sharing programs
- Learning about the advantages of reading often
- Pointers on how to fit reading into daily routines seamlessly
- Establishing support groups or community-based programs with an emphasis on family literacy.

Nonetheless, 26.8% is a large number of parents who reported that they read less often; this is an alarming trend. There might be different reasons why people belonging to this group find it difficult to engage in regular reading — for example, not having enough time because of their job and also because they cannot get hold of appropriate reading materials or do not know how to go about effective reading strategies. The magnitude of this population emphasizes the need for programs designed at them so as to facilitate adoption of more regular reading behavior.

The change in the frequency of reading indicates that life is not a simple thing nowadays for families. The number of members that make up a family, when they work and what their occupations are, availability to materials and resources needed for reading, and the attitude people have towards reading could be some reasons why parents read with their kids more frequently than others. It is important to recognize this diversity in experiences when advocating for parent-child reading. The best ways to address such differences would involve developing programs designed specifically around helping families create steady habits regarding their own personal reading culture.

Such strategies, if applied, might have the ability to drive more families to higher levels of readership frequency which could consequently transition some from the less frequent groups into moderate or high ones. This may bring about better results in child literacy development and expanding on parent-child relationships — touching a wider range of families.

It is quite achievable by the deployment of those strategies to bring more families into regular reading: and hence pass from low to moderate or high frequency groups. This may result in better child literacy outcomes — widening that circle of families (across a broader spectrum) for whom it strengthens the ties between parents and children.

4.5. Parents' Reading Satisfaction Feelings with Children

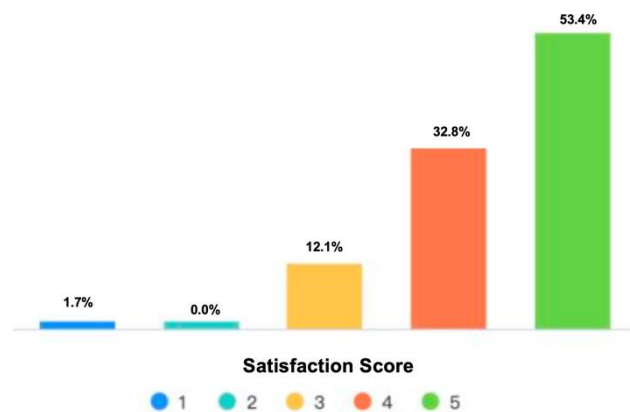


Figure 5. The parents' reading satisfaction feelings with children.

An outcome of the survey findings was the discovery that there is an absolutely favorable sentiment towards reading shared by parents with children, where 86.2% of parents reported high satisfaction levels — which is remarkable and rated their experiences as either 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, see in Figure 5. This high level of satisfaction identified in the data is indeed a notable discovery that emphasizes the worth and pleasure parents find in joint reading endeavors with their offspring.

But we should remember that though most people said they were very satisfied there were still a few (13.8%) who rated their satisfaction as 3 or less. Even if they are not many in number, this group should not be ignored — from their experiences we could glean valuable insights on some challenges faced by families to ensure reading is a positive experience for children. Investigating areas and providing support would be useful to determine the choice of appropriate books or ways of managing children's attention as well as finding time for reading amidst busy schedules.

The outcomes strongly back up Piasta *et. al.* and their study of the positive effects of shared reading [11]. In their work, they brought to light the emotional bond parent and child can have through shared reading that leads them into situations where they can interact meaningfully; also the authors noted that it creates a favorable impression toward learning and books. This survey indicated high levels of satisfaction — thus practically affirming these theoretical contributions. It implies that indeed in their own lives, parents are realizing such positive outputs which act as an impetus for them.

The favorable reception of the programs and initiatives also confirm the value of efforts that boost parent-child reading. They hint that attempts to foster shared reading situations — a task which involves both motivating and assisting families in carrying out such an activity — are likely to be welcomed by families, with the result not only in successful educational outcomes but also improvement of ties within the family.

A notable finding is that although most people are highly satisfied, there is still a small 13.8% who rated satisfaction as 3 or below — this minority should not be disregarded. Their experiences might offer valuable insight into challenges some families face in fostering positive reading experiences. Choosing suitable books, capturing children's attention span, time management (reading in a busy schedule) are areas that would require investigation and possibly support.

Satisfaction rates demonstrate the high importance of programs supporting parent-child reading. They propose that any attempts to stimulate and backstop common reading activity will find their way to the hearts of families, appreciating such an initiative and creating a positive impact on educational outcomes as well as family ties.

In sum, the very high rates of satisfaction that parents have reported about the experiences of shared reading — summarizes everything — and these alone are strong proof that this activity is valuable. In addition to reinforcing the known research findings on benefits of parent-child reading, such a positive outlook also signals a wider encouragement for regular reading practices among families. It

highlights the significance of sustained endeavours towards fostering, bolstering, and enriching parent-child reading escapades in different localities.

4.6. Parents' Behaviors during Children's Reading

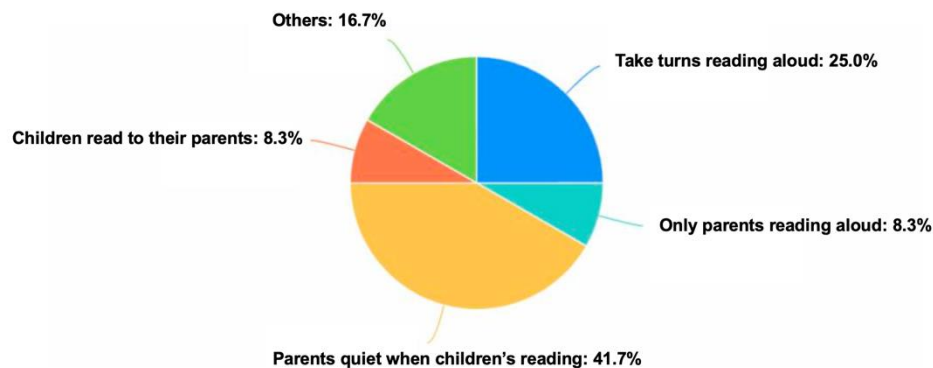


Figure 6. The parents' behaviors during children's reading.

Survey outcomes have exposed a mosaic of parent-child reading strategies, bringing out the different ways parents use when involving themselves in this significant task. This richness in approach underscores the complicated weave that is parent-child interactions and the differing shades of comprehension concerning what makes a good reader. In finality, although it is a positive development that one-fourth of parents are taking part in interactive reading there is much room for betterment. Let us reach the larger section of parents providing them with education and support as they form the population that reads without interaction; this would possibly upscale the quality of parent-child reading experiences at large scales, resulting in more successful outcomes in child literacy and fostering parent-child ties.

A differing 25.0% of parents indicated engaging in interactive reading involving questions and discussions which is more in tune with current effective reading practices. These parents are likely creating a more dynamic reading space for their children where they can get involved in the story, ask questions, make connections. This act of interactivity would not only promote comprehension but also critical thinking and language development for the child. The results of the study are consistent with the 2017 research carried out by Lumapenet & Andoy that underscored additional benefits acquired from involvement while reading [12]. Their study brought to light how the practice of interactive reading can result in a better understanding of stories and improve vocabulary acquisition leading to cognitive development, apart from those discussed earlier. The twenty five percent of parents surveyed using these techniques will be likely enjoying this extra goodness.

But majority of the parents (58.3%) who read without interaction — this constitutes a considerable part of the sample — reveals that there is a need for guidance on effective reading techniques more than ever before, as shown in Figure 6. The lack of connection between actual parental behavior and research-based best practices poses a challenge but also presents an opportunity. It hints that many parents do not know about extra benefits that interactive reading can bring, or doubt their ability to develop interesting strategies during reading.

The possibility of developing programs to inform parents about the benefits of interactive reading and the techniques that can be used during reading sessions to increase engagement is available as one way in which this issue can be addressed. For example, such programs could involve:

- Workshops where interactive reading techniques can be learnt
- Guides on ways to ask open-ended questions related to stories
- Resources that help in extending the reading experience through activities related to the story
- Training on how to adapt reading styles according to age groups
- Support for parents while selecting books that encourage interaction with children

Bridging this gap might enable more parents to change the way they view reading to their children. It can help make shared reading experiences more beneficial both in terms of education and relationships. The 16.7% of parents not falling into any category could have a mixture of approaches or practices that are not regular. This group could be looked into further to understand what their specific needs and challenges are when it comes to having effective reading practices.

To summarize, even though it is an optimistic situation that a quarter of parents are engaging in interactive reading already, there is much room for enhancement. The majority of parents who read without interaction should be provided with education and support which might have significant positive effects on parent-child reading experiences at large scales leading to better results in child literacy and relationships between parent and child.

4.7. Summary

In short, the liking of illustrated books and science books highlights a chance to come up with materials that would appeal to these interests as well as encourage feedback. The different reading frequencies and behaviors point toward need of strategies which can promote regular and interesting reading practices. This information adds to the increasing amount of studies concerning parental involvement in child's reading, especially when the family does not have many resources nor time. It serves also as a basis for creating specified actions that would help such communities develop their parent-child reading practices. The choice of illustrated books and science books hints at an avenue for creating resources that would capture these interests, while also fostering engagement. The different reading frequencies and behaviors paint a picture of an audience: a need to come up with strategies that will promote steady and interactive reading culture. This discovery adds to the increasing amount of work done on parent-child reading; specifically where families have constraints such as limited time or money. It lays down ideas: the cornerstone upon which actionable plans can be drawn to support parent-child reading initiatives within such grassroots setups.

5. Conclusion

This research illuminates practices of reading between parent and child with the migrant worker families in Guangzhou, China; it uncovers difficulties as well as chances available for early childhood development. Major findings reveal that parents and children prefer illustrated books — particularly science themed ones — and that there are different motivations for reading such as acquisition of knowledge, building relationships or developing literacy skills. While many parents reported high frequency and satisfaction of reading activities, a considerable proportion did less often— hence indicating the need for more targeted support. Variations in the behavior during readings were also discovered: with many parents being passive readers which creates an opportunity for educating them on more interactive methods to use when reading with their children.

These findings carry significant weight for teachers, decision-makers, and civil society. The virtual library resource proposed to deal with issues like choosing a book and lack of time got positive reviews from parents, which hints at the capacity of technological solutions to foster parent-child reading. Identifying obstacles revealed by the study while sustaining identified pleasures within the activity is an approach towards promoting parity-based and efficient developmental learning experiences during early childhood for all children coming from all types of family backgrounds. There are two main directions in which future investigations could go: the remote effects that such practices might have on children later in life, as well as interventions supporting parent-child reading among families differing in their nature and structure.

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