

A Review of the Literature on the Adoption of Jolly Phonics Method by Teachers to Enhance Students' English Literacy

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to review the empirical literature available on the adoption of Jolly Phonics methods by teachers to improve their students' English language skills. Specifically, it aims to summarise and "synthesize the results of" the previous studies conducted on teachers to know their perception about the effectiveness of JP program in enhancing students' English literacy. Moreover, the researchers also endeavoured to identify research gaps and provided recommendations for future research through this study. The researchers have included 11 studies published between 2012 to 2024 in the review by following a pre-determined inclusion-exclusion criterion. The studies have been analysed in terms of their aims, methodology and the results reported by them. The results revealed that, majority of the studies reported that the participating teachers in the JP intervention found the program and JP resource material useful. They are satisfied with JP method and they believe that JP method can be successfully implemented on learners to improve their English literacy skills.

Keywords: Jolly Phonics, English Language Literacy, teachers' perceptions, training,

1. Introduction

There are different systems regarding the implementation of preschool education in general and English literacy programs in particular in each country (Giovanna Gale Nafgerin). One stage of a child's development, particularly in early life, is language development (Yulva Mayarita). Phonics is one approach that is strongly advised for teaching early literacy (Indriani et al.); and "Jolly Phonics is a child-friendly, multi-sensory program that teaches reading and writing through a system of synthetic phonics". This new synthetic education was developed by Jolly Learning Ltd. in the U.K (Shawaqfeh). This method breaks down reading by teaching 42 English letter sounds,

and “then shows children how to blend these sounds to form words, as well as how to segment words into sounds for writing. The program uses songs, stories, and actions to make learning fun and helps children develop the five core skills: letter sounds, letter formation, blending, identifying sounds, and tricky words”.

“It is noticed that majority of the studies evaluating the effect of Jolly Phonics method on improving language literacy are conducted on the learners”. However, while searching the literature on this topic, it is realised that a few studies are specifically conducted on teachers’ perceptions towards JP program and JP material. Moreover, it is also realised that the available literature is highly fragmented. The studies are found to be conducted in different geographic areas in various time periods. There seem to be methodical differences as well. Therefore, there is a need to organize the literature involving teachers and instructors teaching English to early learners. Hence, the researcher has decided to thoroughly review, organize and synthesize the literature focusing on evaluating teachers’ perceptions, experience, usefulness and satisfaction towards JP program and JP resources. The following three research questions have been attempted to be addressed by the researchers:

RQ1: What are teachers’ perceptions towards adoption of JP method? Do they really find it effective in enhancing their knowledge and in turn their students’ English literacy?

RQ2: What is the extent of adoption of JP method by the teachers?

RQ3: What are the existing research gaps in the literature on teachers’ perceptions towards JP method?

1.1 Objectives of the Study

“The main aim of this study is to review the empirical literature available on the adoption of Jolly Phonics methods by teachers to improve their knowledge and in turn their students’ English language skills”. The particular goals of the research are:

1. To summarise and synthesize the results of the previous studies focusing teachers’ perception and adoption of JP method.
2. To identify existing research gaps and to suggest future research agenda.

2. Methodology

2.1 Search Strategy

The researchers have utilized only the internet sources for searching the relevant literature. The literature was searched to 20th November 2025. The search was executed using (‘Jolly Phonics’ AND ‘teachers’) Boolean search keywords. These key terms were searched within two search

engines viz; Google Scholar and Semantic Scholar. The studies were screened using a stringent inclusion-exclusion criterion presented in the next section.

2.2 Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

The researchers carefully selected the studies to perform the review by following the below mentioned inclusion and exclusion criteria:

1. **Variables:** Only the articles and project reports involving teachers' training of JP method, their adoption and perceptions towards JP method and JP material were included in the review.
2. **Target Population:** The studies involving teachers, instructors and lower teaching staff who have been teaching English to early learners are included in the study. The studies conducted on students are excluded. However, two studies were found to be conducted on students and teachers both. These studies are included in this review; however, students' perspectives are not considered while analysing the results.
3. **Geographic context:** The review includes the studies conducted in various countries in the world are included in the study. No geographic constraints are established for this review.
4. **Time period:** The researchers reviewed the studies published between 2012 to 2024.
5. **Type of documents:** The researchers have reviewed empirical research articles and masters' level project reports. The exploratory studies, review articles, book chapters and case studies were excluded from the review.
6. **Language:** The studies written in languages other than English were excluded from the review.
7. **Access:** 10 full-length articles available in open access and one study whose only abstract was available are included in the review.

2.3 Selection of Studies

After applying the inclusion-exclusion criteria, a total of seven research articles and four masters' level project reports were finally reviewed. Table 1 provides a summary of the studies included in this review. Further, the researchers have synthesized, analysed and compared the results of the studies included in this review.

3. Summary of Literature Review

The researchers have extracted the details including author name(s), year of publication, country where the study is conducted, document type, research title, main aim of the study, methodology and key results”. The screened literature is summarised in Table 1.

Sr. No.	Author, year	Country	Document Type	Title	Main Aim	Methodology	Results
1	Ni Putu Pebri “Ariati et. al, 2018”	Indonesia	Research Article	“Jolly Phonics: Effective Strategy for Enhancing Children English Literacy”	“To share the techniques of how to implement Jolly Phonics strategy for teaching and developing children’s English literacy”.	Observation & Interview Method	“The teachers had successfully and effectively implemented the five-skills mentioned in Jolly phonics on their students”
2	Lucía Serna Crisol, 2024	Spain	Project Report	“How to Enhance Primary Students' Literacy Thanks to the Use of the Jolly Phonics Method”	“To improve English literacy and language skills using the Jolly Phonics method”.	Pre-Post Interventional Design	“The aim of improving English language skills in students using the Jolly Phonics method was achieved”

3	Ojur Joseph, 2023	Uganda	Project Report	“Phonics Programmes and Early Literacy Development Among Preschool Children: A Case Study of Kinderkare Pre-Schools, Kampala”	“To investigate the effect of phonics programmes on early literacy development in preschool children of Kinderkare Pre-Schools, Kampala”	Causal Research Design	“Jolly phonics programs positively affect early child literacy development in preschool children”
4	Millicent Mawufemor Gbetey, 2024	Ghana	Project Report	“Influence of Jolly Phonics Approach in Literacy Development Among Kindergarten Learners in the Ningo-Prampram District”	“To examine the influence of jolly phonics on literacy learning outcomes among kindergarten learners”	Thematic Analysis	“The findings showed that the JP method considerably influenced different dimensions of literacy development”.
5	Okoroafor et. al, 2024	Nigeria	Research Article	“Effects of Jolly Phonics Strategy on Pupils’	“To investigate the effectiveness of	Survey Method	“Jolly Phonics method had significant effect on the

				Reading Achievement and Attitudes in Lagos State Lower Basic Schools”	implementing the Jolly Phonics strategy on pupils’ reading achievement and attitude within the context of lower basic schools”		academic achievement in reading of basic 1 pupil and their attitude”.
6	Emad Ahmed Albaaly, 2015	Egypt	Research Article	“A ‘Jolly Phonics’-Based Training Program for EFL Teachers of Young Learners”	“To develop a program based on JP method for training EFL teachers of young learners”.	Pre-Post Interventional Design	“The teachers’ knowledge of JP was improved after attending JP training. The teachers also expressed their satisfaction about the practical benefits of the JP method”.
7	Ali Derakhshan et. al, 2016	Iran	Research Article	“An Empirical Evaluation of Jolly	“To find out whether JP teaching	Survey Method	“Teachers believe that Jolly Phonics series and

				Phonics Series Being Taught in Iran's Baby College Institutes”	material follows the essential objectives for teaching English as a foreign language to children or not”.		the teaching method can stand as a capable and trustable material for young EFL learners”.
8	Femi Funmilayo OLADEJI, 2023	Nigeria	Research Article	“The Use of Jolly Phonics in Teaching of English Language at the Lower Classes in Secondary Schools In Ogbomosho South LGA, Oyo State”	“To examine the use of Jolly phonics in teaching of English Language at the lower classes in secondary schools”	Survey Method	“The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between systematic teaching of the alphabetic code (performance sound correspondence) and students’ performance at lower basic classes”.
9	Mustapha & Bostanci, 2019	Nigeria	Research Article	“Synthetic Phonics: An Evaluation	“To evaluate the impact of a three-	Pre-Post Interventional Design	“The JP intervention helped the teachers in

				of Pilot Training for Jolly Phonic Instructors in Nigeria”	day Jolly Phonics program for the instructors”.		teaching English language with passion and purpose. The teachers also believe that the JP program can be successfully implemented in primary schools for teaching literacy skills to struggling learners”
10	Nabhani, 2023	Oman	Project Report	“Integrating Interactive Whiteboard in Teaching Literacy Skills to Grade Two Omani Basic Education Cycle 1 Learners with Jolly Phonics”	“To investigate integrating interactive whiteboards in teaching literacy skills to grade two young learners in Cycle-1 Basic Education Schools using Jolly	Focus Group Interview	“Teachers are still hesitant of integrating IWBs using synthetic Jolly Phonics in teaching EFL”

					Phonics method”.		
11	S Campbell, 2012	Australia	Research Article	“Ants, apples and the ABCs: The use of commercial phonics programmes in prior-to-school children’s services”	“To know the extent to which JP and Letterland methods are being used in prior-to-school settings, and the reasons behind decisions to use them”.	Survey Method	“JP program was used in 36% of the early childhood settings. Teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience are more likely to use JP program”.

4. Analysis of Review

The studies are analysed in terms of their aims, methodology, and the results reported in it. From the review of the literature presented in Table 1, it is revealed that all the studies are conducted abroad. No study is conducted on assessing teachers’ perceptions of JP method in Indian context. It is also observed that three studies are conducted in Nigeria only; and one study each is conducted in Indonesia, Spain, Uganda, Ghana, Egypt, Iran, Oman and Australia respectively. As mentioned earlier, majority of such studies are conducted in Nigeria. “The reason may be attributed to the low literacy rates and dearth of quality education in Nigeria. It might have given a cause to implement such interventional program on teachers to improve literacy skills of the learners”. Six studies out of 11 studies included in the review are conducted in the recent times i.e. a span of five years ranging from 2020 to 2024. Only five studies were conducted between 2012 to 2019. Majority i.e. seven studies are single authored and only four studies are authored by multiple authors.

As far as the main objectives of these studies are concerned, majority of them aimed to improve teachers’ knowledge of JP method and in turn improve the effectiveness of English language

literacy of learners. Similarly, a few studies aimed to evaluate the impact JP intervention program on teachers' knowledge and satisfaction. Moreover, a few studies attempted to evaluate the teachers' perceptions towards JP material. And, one study determined the extent of adoption of JP program by the teachers.

In terms of the methodology followed by the previous researchers, the previous researchers have pre-dominantly used six research methods viz; experimental design, survey method, observation, interview, focused group method and thematic analysis to know teachers' perceptions of JP method. As far as experimentation method is concerned, pre-post design is followed by three studies and causal design is followed in only one study. Three studies were conducted by survey method. And, focused group interview, observation and thematic analysis method was followed by one study each. In the three interventional studies the researchers evaluated the perceptions of teachers before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the JP intervention to evaluate its effect.

The results of the studies indicate that the teachers have successfully and effectively implemented the JP program on their students after attending the intervention program. The aim of the JP intervention program to improve learners' language skills through teachers' training was found to be successfully achieved. The findings also indicate that the JP method considerably influenced different dimensions of literacy development of learners. The reason may be attributed to the successful implementation of JP intervention on teachers. Importantly, teachers' knowledge of JP was improved after participating in JP training. The educators also conveyed their satisfaction with the useful advantages of the JP approach. Furthermore, educators think that the JP series and the teaching approach can serve as competent and reliable resources for young EFL students. Furthermore, the JP intervention helped teachers in teaching "English language with passion and purpose". Additionally, the teachers think that the JP program can be successfully used in elementary schools to educate difficult students literacy skills. 36 percent of early childhood settings employed the JP program. Compared to staff without university degrees and staff employed by for-profit organizations, employees with early childhood university degrees and those employed by non-profit service types were less likely to utilize a commercial phonics program. The JP program was also more frequently used by employees with fewer than ten years of experience. However, only one study reported that teachers are still hesitant of integrating IWBs using synthetic Jolly Phonics in teaching EFL.

6. Research Gaps

After extensively reviewing the literature, the researcher has identified the following research gaps:

1. Not much of the work is done so far in the context of determining teachers' perceptions of JP methods effectiveness in enhancing their own knowledge and its usefulness for their students.
2. Importantly, no study assessing teachers' perceptions of JP method is conducted in Indian context yet.
3. The sample sizes of the participating teachers are found to be conservative.
4. It is also realised that the more advance review techniques like systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis and meta-analysis are not leverage yet with regard to this topic by the previous researchers.

6. Scope for Future Research

1. Future studies may involve teachers teaching language skills at different levels.
2. Future studies may be conducted in several other geographic locations. Such study must be conducted in Indian context.
3. Future studies may involve a larger sample of teachers so as get more precise results.
4. Future studies may involve more variables to gather participating teachers' feedback of JP training involving their experiences, importance of JP method in regular teaching, their perception about various elements of JP method, its relevance to them, their confidence in adopting this method, its usefulness to them, their perceptions about JP resource material, etc.
5. Future studies may be conducted on studying the challenges and impediments faced by teachers while adopting JP method at their school teaching-learning environment.
6. Future studies may conduct systematic review, bibliometric and meta-analysis on this topic.

7. Conclusion

The study aimed to review the empirical literature available on the adoption of Jolly Phonics methods by teachers to improve their students' English language skills. Moreover, this study aimed to summarise the results of the previous studies conducted on teachers to know their perception about the effectiveness of JP program in enhancing students' English literacy. The researcher has reviewed 11 closely relevant studies conducted between 2012 to 2024 by the researchers in several countries. It is being realised that experimental and survey methods are most popularly utilised to conduct such studies. The results revealed that, majority of the studies reported that the participating teachers in the JP intervention found the program and JP resource material useful.

They are satisfied with JP method and they believe that JP method can be successfully implemented on learners to improve their “English literacy skills”.

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