FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS OF INDONESIAN FAMILIES ENGAGED IN POSTGRADUATE STUDY

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Abstract: In Indonesian students studying in Australia sometimes bring their family members, such as their children. Because of that, they play double roles, as a student and as a parent. The role will be more complex when they also send their children to Australian schools as they are expected to build a partnership with their children's school. Building family-school partnerships with families from culturally and linguistically diverse can be challenging. Therefore, the aim of this study was to understand the perspectives of Indonesian families on partnerships with the school for the purpose of their children's education. This study specifically focused on Indonesian postgraduate students' families whose child or children is or are enrolled in early childhood education centers. This research was based on an exploratory case study. It involved semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The data was analyzed using an inductive strategy and thematic analysis. Findings showed parents had different concern about their children. There was discrepancy between participants' perspectives on authentic partnerships and the practice. Parents viewed partnerships as a collaboration only when they had concerns to children. Lack of open communication emerged as the challenge because of participants' role as a student. Parents felt hesitant also to ask about school's program because of the lack of communication from the teacher. Indonesian families playing dual roles, as students as well as parents, and Australian teachers of students from those parents could rethink what kind of partnerships that is effective for the benefit of children's learning.

Keywords: Australia, CALD children, family-school partnerships, Indonesia

KEMITRAAN SEKOLAH-KELUARGA PADA KELUARGA INDONESIA YG MENGIKUTI STUDI PASCASARJANA

Abstrak: *Mahasiswa Indonesia yang belajar di Australia terkadang membawa serta anggota keluarga, salah satunya adalah anak. Oleh karena itu, mereka memiliki peran ganda, sebagai mahasiswa dan sebagai orang tua. Peran tersebut menjadi lebih rumit jika anak mereka juga sekolah di Australia karena mereka diharapkan juga membangun kemitraan dengan sekolah anaknya. Membangun kemitraan antara sekolah dan orang tua dari negara yang berbeda bahasa dan budaya memiliki tantanganan tersendiri. Oleh karena itu, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah memahami perspektif keluarga Indonesia tentang konsep kemitraan antara keluarga dan sekolah. Penelitian ini berfokus pada keluarga Indonesia yang sedang melanjutkan studi S2 di Australia dan mempunyai anak yang bersekolah di pendidikan anak usia dini. Penelitian ini berbentuk studi kasus eksploratori. Pengambilan data melalui wawancara semi-struktural dengan menggunakan pertanyaan terbuka. Analisis data menggunakan strategi induktif dan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan orangtua memiliki kekhawatiran yang berbeda terkait anaknya di sekolah. Ada ketidaksesuaian*

antara perspektif partisipan terkait konsep kemitraan dengan praktek di lapangan. Orangtua menganggap kemitraan sebagai kolaborasi hanya jika ada permasalahan pada anak. Kurangnya komunikasi menjadi tantangan kemitraan akibat peran orang tua sebagai mahasiswa. Orangtua ragu untuk bertanya terkait program sekolah karena kurangnya komunikasi dari guru dan juga faktor kultural. Maka dari itu, keluarga Indonesia yang memiliki peran ganda, sebagai mahasiswa dan orangtua, serta guru PAUD di Australia yang memiliki siswa dengan orang tua yang juga pelajar di Australia dapat meninjau ulang kemitraan yang efektif untuk mendukung pembelajaran anak.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Australia, anak CALD, kemitraan orang tua-sekolah, Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

Australia has become the destination for study not only because geographically Australia is close from Indonesia but also its reputable and qualified universities. The Department of Home Affairs, Australia, reported that Indonesian migrant population is the 20th largest in Australia and is equivalent to 0.3 % of the Australian population (Department of Home Affairs, 2020). There are approximately 8.500 Indonesian students studying in Australian universities every year (Australia Awards Indonesia, 2021).

Indonesian students studying in Australia sometimes bring their family members, such as their children. Because of that, they play double roles, as a student and as a parent. The role will be more complex when they also send their children to Australian schools.

Some studies in English-speaking countries found that children from culturally and linguistically diverse, later called CALD, experience less disadvantages compared to mainstream children (Hadley, 2014). These disadvantages can be seen in the process of transition from home to school. Due to the mismatch between the school and home context, CALD children can have a more stressful experience and be vulnerable in their transition to school. This condition may negatively influence their participation in learning (Sims & Hutchins, 2001). The differences in the language used between home and at school often cause a challenge for CALD children to build communication with adults and their peers (Sims & Hutchins, 2001).

Family-school partnerships are suggested as one of the solutions to the problem happening to CALD children in some research conducted either outside Australia (see for example, Colombo, 2006; Lahman & Park, 2004; Tam & Heng, 2005) or in Australia (see for example, Docket & Perry, 2005; Hadley,2014; Sims & Hutchins, 2001). However, Tam and Heng (2005) argue that building family-school partnerships with CALD families can be challenging. The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children reported that CALD families were less involved in school programs compared to English-speaking families (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011). Moreover, Hachfeld, Anders, Kueger, and Smidt (2015) argue that compared with mainstream parents, the mismatch between the theory and the practice of family-school partnerships with CALD parents might be wider. Therefore, the aim of this study was to understand the perspectives of Indonesian families on partnerships with the school for the purpose of their children's education.

This study specifically focused on Indonesian postgraduate students' families whose child or children is or are enrolled in early childhood education centers. In the literature, partnerships between schools and families from Indonesia in the context of Australia was not explored sufficiently as explained in the next session.

The Gap in the Literature

Most studies about Indonesian students in Australia focus on their role as a student, such as their challenges and experiences in academic, cultural or social aspect (see for example, Novera, 2004; Nguyen, 2011). There were few studies done about the role of Indonesian students playing dual roles, as a parent and as a student, specifically that focus on how they build partnerships with their children's school.

Moreover, in the literature, partnerships with families from Indonesia also have not been explored. For example, a study conducted by Hadley (2014) focused on the perceptions of nine CALD families from China, the Philippines, France, Bangladesh, Greece, Iran, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam and how this had an impact on partnerships in four early childhood schools in Sydney. Another study involving CALD families was done by Sanagavarapu and Perry (2005). Their participants were Bangladeshi families living in Sydney. This research can fill the gap in the literature. It expands some knowledge of partnerships from other CALD families in Australia, in this case, families from Indonesia.

Drawn from the purpose of this study, the research question of this project was "How do Indonesian postgraduate students' families studying at a Victoria-based university, view partnerships for their children's education in Australian preschools?" To answer the research question, a case study was chosen as the design of this research as it "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2014, p. 16), and the phenomenon

is explained by the people who are involved directly in the experience.

The Significance of this Study

This small- scale project offered some significant insights. For Indonesian families studying in Australia, especially for the participants, this research provided an opportunity for them to articulate their views about partnerships. In this project, they were not positioned as postgraduate students who are required to provide their academic experience. Instead, they shared parental perspectives in partnerships with early childhood education settings in Australia.

For Australian preschool teachers, this research may help them to understand the perspectives of Indonesia CALD families, so they can potentially build more effective partnerships with them. Gillanders, McKinney and Ritchie (2012) argue that schools usually design partnerships based on the culture of the majority group in the society. There was a limited research that explained whether partnerships with mainstream families also suitable for CALD families (Vasquez-Nuttall, Li & Kaplan, 2006).

For other researchers, the findings of this research provided alternative perspective of partnerships from the non-Western context, especially from Indonesia. In the literature, the notion of building partnerships with schools was usually defined from the Western perspectives (Whitmarsh, 2011).

Family-School Partnerships in Early Childhood Education, Australia

Partnerships with families and communities are identified as the sixth quality area in the National Quality Standard in Australia (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017). Accordingly, partnerships with family are also stated in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) as one of the five principles to maximize the learning outcomes of children (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation, 2009).

Nevertheless, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children found that the number of CALD families who enrolled their children in the early childhood education setting was not significant compared to the English-speaking families. They were also less involved in school programs (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011).

In the context of Indonesia, a study conducted by Hariawan, et al., (2019) in two early childhood education centers in Indonesia found that Indonesian families believe that schools have the main responsibility to ensure the academic success of their children. Parents' responsibility was paying the educational costs (Hariawan et al., 2019). This condition made this research project necessary to find out whether Indonesian postgraduate students' families whose child or children is/are enrolled in early childhood education centers in Australia, also

shared different or similar view about the roles between parents and teachers.

Theoretical Frameworks

There are two theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. The first theory is Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory. It sees child's development as an interplay of many contexts in which the development occurs and each context influences each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). All contexts and how they connected can be seen in the figure adopted from Vasquez-Nuttall, Li, and Kaplan (2006).
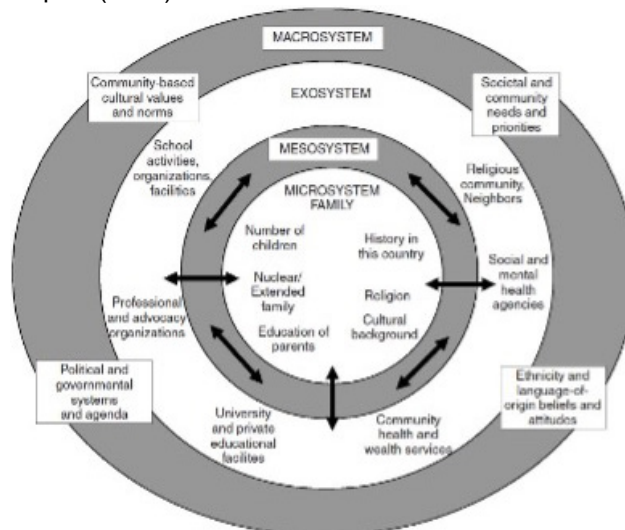

Figure 1. Ecomap

From the figure, all contexts are helpful to understand family-school partnership. However, the study only used macrosystem because it played a crucial role to deal with CALD families (Vasquez-Nuttall, Li, and Kaplan, 2006). In family-school partnerships, "the macrosystem includes political and governmental systems and agendas, community-based cultural values and norms, societal and community needs and priorities, ethnicity, language of origin, beliefs and attitudes" (Vasquez-Nuttall, Li, and Kaplan, 2006, p. 87).

The second theory used is constructivism. Piaget (1970) as cited in Wang and Ha (2012) explains constructivism as the way people construct and interpret knowledge that will be influenced by their previous experience. This framework was used by allowing participants to interpret family-school partnerships according to their own experience. Allowing participants to define their own idea about partnership helped the researcher to understand their view and what their belief about family-school partnership. Parents can define and interpret partnerships differently from teachers. This affects how they expect from partnerships

(Verdon, Wong and McLeod, 2016) especially when they are from different cultural background as culture influences how people interpreted something (Swidler, 2016 as cited in Verdon, Wong and McLeod, 2016).

RESEACH DESIGN

Qualitative research in the form of exploratory case study was chosen to answer the research question; How do Indonesian postgraduate students' families undertaking postgraduate study at a Victoria-based Australia University, view partnerships for their children's education in Australian preschools? Yin (2014, p.238) defines an exploratory case study as "a case study whose purpose is to identify the research questions or procedures to be used in a subsequent research study, which might or might not be a case study". This preliminary, small scale study is intended to be a primer from which the findings can provide information for the researcher to undertake a larger scale study using the same issue in the future.

Participants of the Study

Participants in the study were three Indonesian parents. They were two mothers and one father studying in a Victoria-based Australia University and have a child/children enrolled in Australia preschools.

Data Collection Method

Participants were recruited through a Victoria-based Indonesian Community WhatsApp Group after getting the approval from the Victoria-based Australia University Human Research Ethics Committee. The researcher provided explanation about this study and what was asked from the families. After the prospective participants agreed, the researcher emailed the consent form, the explanatory statement, and the interview questions to the email address provided by participants.

An in-depth interview was chosen to collect the data because of its relevance to the aim of this project. Yin (2014) argues that the interview is "one of the most important sources of case study evidence" (p. 110). Participants decided the time and place for the interview. After signing the consent, participants were interviewed for about 45 minutes. The language used in the interview was Bahasa Indonesia to allow participants to give their answers more easily and comfortably. Participants were informed that they were not identified to ensure their confidentiality.

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used as it is the most suitable for a case study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Using a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask some questions that have been prepared as a guideline, but at the same time provide flexibility to ask more detail questions based on the answer from participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). A semi- structured interview also provides opportunity for participants to express their perspectives freely about the issues asked (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The interview was audio-taped with the participants' permission. Participants were informed that a short report about the findings of the project would be emailed to them. The data were transcribed for the next process, analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was done inductively. Yin (2014: p. 136) calls this strategy "working your data from the "ground up". The researcher also used 6 phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase was getting familiar with the data by transcribing the interview and read several times in order to get the sense of them. The second phase was coding the data manually by using colored pens. The third phase was to look for the themes by sorting codes into potential themes and identifying data that support each theme. The fourth phase was rechecking themes. The researcher reviewed whether some themes were supported by enough data or whether one theme was overlapped or different with another theme. The fifth phase was to define and give a name for themes. The final phase was writing the report based on the research question and supported by the literature. The process of doing the six phases of thematic analysis was undertaken in a recursive way, by moving back and forth throughout the phases. Four themes emerged in the process of analyzing the data were parents' concerns to CALD children, communication between family and the school, parents' perspectives on partnerships, benefits and challenges in partnerships.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness for the findings, member checking was used. It was done by giving the transcript of the interview to participants by email and asking whether they would like to provide any comment and amendment. A short report about the findings was also given. The report was written in everyday language (Indonesian and English versions) and participants were invited to check the accuracy of interpretation of the data as suggested by Creswell (2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings are divided into four themes. The four themes are Indonesian parents' concerns about their children, communication between family and the school, parents' perspectives on partnerships, and benefits and challenges in partnerships.

Indonesian Parents' Concerns About Their Children

Participants of this study expressed their concerns about children. The following extracts were the example of the concerns. All names used was a pseudonym. The letter P was referred to participants while letter R is for the researcher. The first participant (P1) was a father. The second participant (P2) was a mother who sent her child to a different preschool from the other participants. The third participant (P3) was a mother whose child was in the same school and class with the first participant (P1).

Indonesian's family major concern was their children's lack proficiency of English. This affected their children's confidence and became the barrier for them to develop communication with their peers and their teacher.

> P2: Adam's lack of confidence is because of the language barrier. He is unfamiliar with English. Adam (pseudonym) said, "Why do my friends and I speak a different language?"

The finding above was also mentioned by Sims and Hutchins (2001). They said that differences in the language used between home and at school can create a challenge for CALD children to interact with adults and their peers. Another similar finding found in the study conducted by Sanagavarapu and Perry (2005) to CALD families from Bangladesh. All ten Bangladeshi parents concerned about their children's lack of ability in English. They afraid the language barrier will influence their children's adjusting to the school, academic performance, and relationships with teachers and peers.

Another concern mentioned by the parent (P3) was her child's bad eating habit. She believed that Australian schools pay attention to healthy food consumed by children so she expected that the school could help her changing her child's meal's preferences.

> P3: Eddy (pseudonym), please drink only a little milk as your teacher said. His teacher's name is Jane (pseudonym). Jane said no sweet. But, when he said, only a little, mom! I just gave in. At school, the role of the teacher is to fix something (laugh) that cannot be fixed at home.

Children experiencing similar treatment at home and school are likely to show more progress. Conversely, when there is a discontinuity of treatment between home and school, the progress will not be significant (Pianta and Walsh, 1996 as cited in Vasquez-Nuttall, Li, and Kaplan, 2006). Teacher's willingness to reduce the amount of sweet food eaten by the child did not seem effective because the parent had a different treatment. The parent relied on the school to 'fix something that cannot be fixed at home'.

Participants were also asked who will be responsible when they have concern toward their children. All participants answered that parents should be responsible.

> R: In your opinion, who is responsible if there are some concerns related to your child, for example as you said earlier your child's ability in English and his bad eating habit?
> P3: I think parents should be responsible. R: Why can you say that?
> P3: Because children spend most of their time with parents.

However, participants also acknowledged the important role of teachers. All participants explained that teachers could be the person for parents to discuss their concerns about children, and asked for their suggestions. One participant (P1) mentioned that teachers should also be concerned with children because it was a part of their job description and they had been paid for that.

> R: If you said that the parent should be the one that is responsible, so what is the role of the teacher?
> P1: Yes. The teacher is also responsible. She has been paid, hasn't she? So, she has a job, job description.

This finding showed a contrast with the study from Hariawan et al. (2019) who found that Indonesian families believe that schools are responsible of their children's learning instead of shared responsibility between families and schools. The difference in findings can be due to the different level of education of the parents. Parents in this study were postgraduate students while parents in Hariawan et al. (2019) have lower educational level or not undergraduate. When parents have a higher level, they tend to help their children's learning at home (Hariawan et al., 2019). From this statement, it can be argued that a higher-level education parents shared responsibility with the

school toward their children's academic achievement compared with parents from lower-level education.

Communication between Family and School

Communication between teachers and participants was initially built in the process of enrolment of their children in preschools. After that, the drop off and pick up time were mentioned as a moment to develop communication with the teacher.

R: How do you build communication with Hatcher, Adam's teacher?

P2: When I pick up and drop him off. We just chatted informally. How's Adam at school? Oh, today he is fine, but he does not want to play with his friends.

Despite being brief, one participant (P1) considered that kind of communication was effective. However, he emphasized that would be effective as long as it was done intensively and the parent should be more proactive to start the communication.

R: So far, is there any communication?

P1: Yes, intensively. Communication will work if we are proactive. It started from us. R: When does it happen?

P1: In a pickup and drop off time at preschool.

Contrast to this participant (P1), another participant (P2) stated that the teacher also should be proactive in building communication with parents. She described further that when the teacher was not proactive, it affected her relationship with the teacher. She felt uncomfortable to ask about her child's progress.

P2: I prefer Adam's previous teacher. I do not feel comfortable with his teacher now. R: Why do you not feel comfortable?

P2: Because his teacher now is less proactive than the previous one. When I picked up Adam, his teacher seldom talked to me so I just said goodbye.

Drop off and pick up time were not the only moments in which participants and teachers established communication. Communication by phone was also used by two participants (P2 and P3) but it happened occasionally only when they had concerned toward their children.

P3: Usually by phone, but not frequently.

R: What do you communicate on the phone?

P3: Ehm,…for example, if my child's stuff was missing or left at school or when Eddy got hit at school.

Special events, such as parent-teacher meetings were mentioned as another occasion to develop communication. However, this participant (P2) thought it was not effective due to the short duration.

P2: Lack of consultation. We were only given 10-15 minutes with many parents queued. It was not comfortable compared to the school in Indonesia in which we were given a specific schedule. Then we could discuss everything. This is Adam's progress. What was expected from me at home. What he will learn in the next semester. We were informed what they taught. This did not happen here. We were only given a written progress. Is there any question? Just like that.

Findings from a study conducted by Chu (2014) found that family-school partnerships required two-way communication in which parents and teachers actively share information about home and school. From this statement, effective communication will occur when both teachers and parents are proactive. Lack of communication between parents and teacher expressed by participants can create a discontinuity treatment for children at home and school (De Gioia, 2013).

Parents' Perspectives on Partnerships

All participants had a similar perspective of partnerships. They defined partnerships as the collaboration between parents and the school when they have a concern related to children. Parents did their part at home while the teacher should also put in an effort at school. Then, they communicated to each other their treatment of children. Partnerships should also show an outcome for children.

P1: So, the teacher and I have a concern about my child. We try to solve that concern together. We do our part at home. Jane does her part at school as her capacity as a teacher. We discuss and give feedback to each other. Both of us were happy with our effort and the outcome showed.

R: Outcome for who?

P1: Outcome for Ana.

It was interesting to find out that as parents, participants tend to build partnerships only when they had concern about their children. The similar perspective from parents also found in the study from Islahuddin, et al. (2016) which found that it was challenging for the school to build partnerships with families because parents only needed partnerships when their children experienced difficulties at school. The finding from The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children reported that CALD families were less involved in school programs compared to English-speaking families (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011).

Relation of power between teachers and parents was also asked. Regarding this question, all participants mentioned that parents and teachers had an equal power.

> R: In your opinion, how is the power of the teacher and parent?
> P2: The power should be equal. We should provide information to each other.

Participants' perspectives of partnerships could be compared with the authentic partnerships stated in The Early Years Learning Frameworks in Australia (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation, 2009). There are six criteria in developing authentic partnerships, namely respecting the knowledge of each other concerning children, acknowledging the roles and contribution of each other, building trust, establishing open and respectful communication, sharing perspectives and opinion and getting involved in decision-making concerning children. The comparison was necessary to find out whether parents' view of partnerships meets the criteria of developing authentic partnerships that expected by Australia education. This understanding will help teachers and CALD parents from Indonesia to identify the challenges in family-school partnership and how to address the problem for the benefit of children's learning and development.

Benefits and Challenges of Partnerships

This study showed that family-school partnerships benefit children. Participants mentioned that by establishing partnerships with teachers, they could overcome their concerns of their children. For example, the participant (P1) that was concerned with the self-confidence and English proficiency of his child recognized an improvement in his child.

> P1: She improves her confidence as well as her English ability. At home, she speaks English. Therefore, the outcome is positive. Based on the outcome that I can see; I can say that the partnerships are effective.

Partnerships between school and family not only benefit children but also parents. This was found during the interview with one participant. The more he built communication with the teacher, the more comfortable he became in discussing his child's education.

> P1: The more we communicate, the closer we get. So, my wife and I are close to Jane. Because we are closed, we are more open. We can discuss early childhood education, anything. The more we are close, the more we feel comfortable to communicate, don't we?

Despite the benefits, parents also experienced challenges to build effective family-school partnerships. As postgraduate students who also had to focus on their study, participants mentioned that limitation of time became the challenge. On the other hand, one participant (P3) stated that communication was the key in building partnerships.

> P3: Communication is a key to build partnerships. While, I do not spend time to communicate with the teacher because I also study. I think the challenge is limitation of time. I am not bothered with that as long as Eddy is comfortable with his school.

Parents' perspective in having equal power when building family-school partnerships was also hard to be done in practice. The statement showed the discrepancy between what they believed of partnerships and what happened in the field.

> R: You said that in building partnerships the teacher and parent should be equal. Have you seen that in the partnerships you build with Eddy's teacher?
> P3: Not yet.
> R: Why?
> P3: (Laugh) I feel the school gives more while I do not.

In contrast, another participant (P2) explained the challenge was not only from parents. Instead, it was from the teacher.

> P2: The challenge is the limitation of time. We do not have time. We do not have the opportunity to give feedback. We communicate informally in not conducive conditions. We do not sit down and talk but we talk while we stand up. Only say Hi. There are many parents who also say hi. Therefore, we cannot talk freely. I cannot talk all I want.
> R: So the challenge that you mean is a limitation of time from the teacher?
> P2: Yes.

However, there was no attempt to communicate her concern with the teacher. It was probably influenced by Indonesian culture. Indonesian people tried to avoid conflict even when they disagreed on something. They tended to accept the situation as it is instead of speaking up their problem. Criticizing was perceived as rude especially to those who are considered more knowledgeable than them (Novera, 2004).

> R: As you said previously the partnerships you build with the school are not effective, have you ever tried to communicate about that with the teacher?
> P2: Ehm, no. Maybe the school in here is like this.
> R: Can you explain further?
> P2: Because there are only two teachers that should

handle 28 children in Adam's class. For this reason, maybe they do not have time to record every child's progress. They must be tired to communicate with every parent. I think they are overwhelmed with their job. Therefore, I do not expect too much.

Respectful, honest and open communication between parents and teachers will help parents to feel connected with their children's education and to develop trust with their children's school (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017). The unwillingness of parent in this study to communicate openly with the teacher may cause the opposite, feeling disconnected with her child's school. Lack of communication between parents and teacher causes distrust in the relationship built by parents and the teacher (De Gioia, 2013).

Contrast with the other two participants, one participant (P1) mentioned that the partnerships between him and the teacher were effective. He did not find any challenge in partnerships although he played dual roles, as a parent and a student. His love of his child motivated him to be proactive in building partnerships with the teacher.

> R: Do you find any challenge in building partnerships with Jane?
> P1: No, there is no challenge because we love our child. Every parent wants the best for his child. Therefore, if a parent has a concern related to his child, he will put a maximum effort to help the child. The challenge is how to focus. But before coming to Australia, all families that bring their families here have been ready for that.

Hasan and Suwarni (2012) mention that children are highly valued in Indonesian families so their families can be children's strength to support their education. CALD parents from Indonesia would be more cooperative to build partnerships with the school for their children's benefits, as expressed by this participant (P1). However, parents' love toward their child could also be the challenge to develop effective partnerships. They might be more permissive to their child as described previously in the first section about meal preferences expressed by other participants (P3).

The challenge, such as differences in the language used that commonly found in the study of family- school partnerships with CALD families (see for example in the study conducted by Lahman and Park (2004) was not mentioned by participants as a barrier of partnerships. It is possibly because the participants in this study were also postgraduate students. They already passed the English testing before getting accepted by Australia universities.

> P1: I do not think the language is the challenge in partnerships. The teacher can understand what I said even if our language is not really good.

Despite the benefit, challenges should be addressed in building family-school partnerships with Indonesian families playing dual roles as students and parents. Therefore, Indonesian parents and Australian teachers who have students that their parents also study could rethink what kind of partnerships that is effective for them for the benefit of children.

CONCLUSION

Australia is chosen by Indonesian people and their family members, such as their children as a destination country to study. However, building family-school partnerships with families from culturally and linguistically difference can be challenging. The findings from this study showed that although coming from the same country, Indonesian parents who participated in this study had different concerns in sending their children to the early childhood education settings in Australia. There were also differences of treatment between at home and school expressed by participants that can be a challenge to students' progress. The role of the teacher was to fix something that cannot be done by the parent.

Parents viewed partnerships as a collaboration between parents and school only when they had concerns related to children. There was also an inconsistency between what participants perceived as partnerships with the real practice. One of the reasons was because of participants' role as a postgraduate student instead of the language barrier. Communication emerged as a key to build family-school partnerships. However, parents felt hesitant also to ask when facing difficulty in understanding their children's school program because of the lack of communication from the teacher and the cultural factor.

Given the diversity of Australian schools, the contribution of international students from Indonesia to Australia's economy, and the potential benefits of family-school partnerships for CALD children, addressing the challenges are considered necessary. Learning outcomes are most likely being achieved when partnerships between family and school built.

Implications

Findings from this study have some implications for teachers in early childhood education in Australia. Teachers are expected to be proactive in building communication with Indonesian families to gain information, such as Indonesian culture, concern, parents and teachers' roles and expectation. Indonesian families' dual roles, as a parent and as a student, can pose a challenge for teachers how to involve them actively in family-school partnership.

However, communication cannot be built without collaboration from families. Parents can be more articulate in expressing their concerns and expectations in order to be known by teachers. Feedback from parents can help Australian preschool teachers to understand about Indonesian - Australia culture, to address the issue of discontinuity between the treatment at home and at school for children's learning and development. Education is a collaborative effort.

Limitations of this Study

The primary limitation of this study was the small number of participants who contributed to this project. The researcher only interviewed three participants due to the time limitation in finishing the project. Another limitation was the researcher only gathered the data solely through the perspectives of parents in a certain university not from both perspectives, Australia preschool teachers and Indonesian parents. Despite the limitation, the findings contribute to the redefinition of school-family partnership from the perspectives of families from Indonesia.

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