

AN INITIAL CONDITION OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTION AND FAMILY IN PAUD INSTITUTION, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the initial conditions of family partnerships with early childhood education institutions. The study was conducted at Aryani PAUD in Cianjur Regency, West Java, Indonesia. As part of a Research and Development design, the study employed exploratory reviews and observation techniques to investigate respondent characteristics, institutional identity, and the initial analysis of partnerships to develop blended learning-based early childhood potential. Observations showed that the institution effectively educates students while fostering strong working relationships with parents. Adaptations to practices were made to align with parental needs. Nevertheless, partnerships formed by early childhood schools did not fully align with agreements made with families and teachers, impacting early childhood learning outcomes. To address these issues, the study proposes a partnership model rooted in blended learning, combining face-to-face and online learning through digital tools and networking. This model enhances cooperation between families and educational institutions, bridging gaps in partnership agreements and aligning shared goals. The research underscores the potential for improved early childhood education through blended learning-based partnerships, enhancing education quality for young children through effective family-institution cooperation.

Keywords: Preliminary Study, Initial Condition, Partnership, Early Childhood Education, Family, Pre-School.

INTRODUCTION

The number of Indonesian children who can now receive early childhood education programs or Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) remains low (Widodo, 2020). According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, the gross enrolment rate for early childhood education in 2020 is just 37.52%. There are still various health issues that provide challenges. The proportion of stunted toddlers among them remains high, at 30.8%. They comprise 11.5% extremely short toddlers and 19.3% short toddlers.

With limited finances and the severity of the difficulties, there is no other option than to enhance stakeholder alliances (Waty et al., 2024). According to the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 60 of 2013, Holistic Integrative Early Childhood Development is an early childhood development effort carried out to meet the essential needs of diverse and interrelated children simultaneously, systematically, and integrated. Education, health, nutrition, care, protection, and welfare services are provided. By incorporating associated parties from government agencies, community organisations, professional organisations, community leaders, and parents, this service has become an early childhood development policy (Choerul, 2021; Ligina et al., 2022; Rumiaty, 2020). However, existing early childhood education service programs have not been fully linked to the diverse essential needs of early childhood, including nutrition care, protection, and educational stimulation (Aulia et al., 2022; Dini, 2022; Lina et al., 2019).

The above explanation is detailed enough to pressure the parties concerned, particularly the family. The foundation or initial institution that offers educational services to children is the family, which is the first place for children (Uno, 2022). Early infancy and its golden years need the proper stimulation to ensure healthy growth and development (Safitri, 2022). If growth is tied to the physical, then development is related to the child's physical and socio-emotional progress (Condello et al., 2021). Early childhood development leads to the potential of children at a young age, which must constantly be simulated or stimulated for optimum growth. Early Childhood Education Activities must focus on children's learning abilities, which include: a) linguistic abilities, b) mathematical logic abilities, c) spatial visual abilities, d) musical abilities, e) kinesthetic abilities, f) naturalist abilities, g) interpersonal skills, h) intrapersonal abilities, and i) spiritual intelligence (Thambu et al., 2021). Of the nine abilities, six aspects of development are operationally simplified: a) moral development and religious values, b) physical, c) language, d) cognitive, e) social-emotional, and f) artistic development (Sakinah, 2020).

Among the various potentials that must be formed in early infancy, parents, teachers, and the community may provide stimulation that allows this potential to grow in accordance with the age and developmental tasks (Putri et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2020). This is consistent with Brown et al.'s (2015) discovery that families and early childhood education institutions are institutions of early prevention of issues associated with the possible development of early childhood. Furthermore, what is taught in an early childhood education institution is consistent with or can be done by parents. This situation necessitates that parents and early childhood education institutions cooperate or partner in delivering and receiving information about the child.

A family-school partnership collaborates with early childhood education institutions and families to maximise student learning outcomes (Firmanto et al., 2020; Nengsih et al., 2024). Parental participation in schools significantly impacts student success by increasing and supplementing current program possibilities for staff renewal and organisational innovation, as well as providing political support (Majir, 2020). Parental participation in education benefits children, the community, teachers, and schools alike. Parental involvement in education benefits parents in the following ways: (1) parents will try to increase interaction and discussion with their children and become more responsive and sensitive to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual development needs (Braune-Krickau et al., 2021); (2) parents will increasingly trust themselves in caring for their children (Page et al., 2020); and (3) parents will gain knowledge and understanding of their children's development so that they will be better able to provide love (Hyun et al., 2020).

Following the identification of the problem, the primary emphasis of this research is placed on the partnership that exists between the e PAUD institution and the family. In this scenario, the root of the problem is the assessment of early childhood development or students at institutions who are Undeveloped and Beginning to Develop. Both of these groups of people are considered to be in the "Beginning to Develop" stage. This reasoning encourages academics to build partnerships that engage parents and institutions in developing children's potential in line with their ages. These partnerships are planned after conducting a literature study.

Based on the description above, it appears that research that discusses the initial conditions of early childhood education institution partnerships with families in order to provide an overview of how to develop a partnership model that is capable of improving the quality of achieving early childhood potential will be able to provide an overview in the future. As a result, this research aims to give a theoretical description that can be conceptualised to establish a valid early childhood education partnership model that can be used to test the components conceptualised in the model. As a result, the purpose of this study is to characterise the beginning circumstances of family partnerships with early childhood education facilities in establishing blended learning-based early childhood potential in Aryani PAUD in Cianjur Regency, West Java.

METHODOLOGY

This research is part of the Research and Development design, which consists of several cycles (Sa'adah, 2021). In this study, the researchers focus on directing exploratory reviews, which were expected to be able to plan problems and supporting assets identified with mixed realisation so that the focus point of the review can be felt using interview (Powney & Watts, 2018), Observation (Simpson & Tuson, 2003), and data from the institution (Daas & Arends-Tóth, 2012). This research was conducted at the Aryani PAUD Institute, Mande District, Cianjur Regency, West Java Province. The research subjects appointed were parents, managers and teachers of early childhood education based on their mastery of information and data or competence to answer several questions from researchers. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The researchers interviewed leader of early childhood education institutions and found that his institution prioritizes parent agreements for collaboration, which has a greater impact on student development. Next, the data was gathered from the paperwork that was assembled after the interviews that were done.

Furthermore, the researchers used observation techniques to understand the initial conditions of family partnerships with early childhood education institutions in developing blended learning-based early childhood potential in early childhood education. The observation procedures used in this review included obtaining data about the condition of research subjects and locations, for example, classroom conditions, use of time, media and facilities in online and offline activities. The things observed from the institution include the ownership status of the institution, buildings, facilities infrastructure, etc. Observation was carried out by paying attention, listening and, in any case, feeling what the partnership participants were capable of experiencing. The aspects studied were the characteristics of the respondents, the identity of the institution, and the description of the initial analysis of partnerships between early childhood education institutions and families in developing the potential of early childhood. The researchers identified information related to the capacity of Early Childhood Education institutions, teacher meetings with parents, and parental involvement with education in these institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students, parents, teachers, other members of the education staff, members of the community, employers, and partner organisations in the education sector are all involved in the collaboration, which encompasses a wide network (Putri et al., 2023). This partnership operating model was built collaboratively using all the potential

resources of early childhood education units, families, and communities (Brown et al., 2019). Since the partnership goals have been established, it is possible for all of the components involved to work effectively together.

The analysis of the history profile of PAUD Aryani showed that the West Java Early Childhood Education Government Institution attempted to assemble a Partnership Model for Early Childhood Education Units with the Association of Parents in 2017. This concept is implemented in three early childhood education institutions. These institutions are the Kober Pelangi City Cirebon Non-Formal Early Childhood Education Unit and the State Kindergarten Pembina Tanjungsari Kab. Sumedang, and the State Kindergarten Pembina Citarip Bandung City. Parent class programmes, inspiration courses, and art performances are all examples of activities that are carried out as part of the partnership. The partnership that was carried out at the three early childhood education institutions concluded that the problems that occur in education units and the problems faced by parents are one of them and that in order to implement family education in early childhood education units properly, one must pay attention to the conditions of each educational unit (Jusoh et al., 2023; Tannoubi et al., 2023). In addition, parents are aware that the community, as well as themselves and their children's educational institutions, have a portion of the responsibility for their children's academic success. According to the description provided above, the aspect of this study that sets it apart from others is incorporating partnership activities into health courses, psychology classes, parenting classes, and religious studies programs (Epstein, 2018). In the context of this study, partnership activities are carried out via the use of blended learning, which may be of assistance to both families and institutions while carrying out partnership activities.

The implementation of collaboration between families and early childhood education institutions was also carried out by agreement based on the conditions of parents and the local community or in Aryani's PAUD environment, according to preliminary information discovered based on preliminary studies conducted on early childhood education. Education begins in infancy, or PAUD Aryani Cianjur has established family ties with organisations dedicated to young children's education. The kind of family being discussed here is one who places their child in an establishment that provides Aryan-centered PAUD. In order to carry out consultations and sharing, parents must first agree on a time, location, and the themes that will be addressed concerning the possible development of early childhood. This is done so that every parent may participate and have a sense of the significance of sharing and conversation in the process of learning and instructing children with the intention of maximising the potential growth that each child has (Agusniatih & Manopa, 2019; Setiawati & Handrianto, 2023). It is clear, based on the structure that is followed by both the parents and the Aryani PAUD institution, that the activities are carried out in a highly flexible manner and respond to the needs of the parents.

In accordance with the conditions mentioned above, it is clear that partnerships that families carry out and early childhood education institutions carry the principles of democracy. This indicates that the activities carried out are based on the needs and conditions of parents, which are agreed upon jointly with early childhood education institutions free from coercion and pressure from any party (Meha & Roshonah, 2014; Sofyan, 2014; Suryana, 2021). In addition, the activities carried out are based on the fact that early childhood education institutions partner with families (Brown et al., 2019; Epstein, 2018; Frimanto et al., 2020). It is anticipated that the community will be able

to carry out educational tasks in a more democratic way if they participate in this activity (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019).

It is one of the early childhood education institutions that is in high demand among parents to register their children there, and it is situated in Cianjur. The Aryani PAUD institution is one example of this. The Cianjur district is home to this early childhood education establishment, which serves as a non-formal early childhood education unit. Students consistently rise at the beginning of each new school year. The confidence that has been earned from the parents of the institution's students is evidence that the institution has been successful in both the provision of education to the institution's students and in the establishment of excellent working relationships with the parents, as well as in the adaptation of its practises to the circumstances and requirements of the parents.

The information was obtained through a preliminary study that the researcher carried out through an interview with the leaders of early childhood education institutions. The institution he leads implements collaboration by prioritising agreements from parents of students. He also says that activities like this have more of an impact on the development potential of students in their institutions, something that was discovered through the findings of this preliminary study. This is because the activities at this school are carried out based on the students' and their parents' requirements, wants, and advantages (Epstein, 2018; Firmanto et al., 2020).

Families and institutions play an important role in helping the children they care for in terms of their growth, development, and potential through engaging in various activities and routines (Jayadi, 2022). Even though parents come from various backgrounds, including a wide range of occupations, educational levels, and social statuses, they can still work together and cooperate with institutions to pay attention to and assist in their children's growth, development, and potential. This is achieved by several activities that the parents have mutually decided upon, and each action that is carried out also creates commitment between the parents in order for it to function well (Crescenza et al., 2021). Other activities that parents and teachers carry out include spiritual activities with parents, visits and recreation to tourist and cultural attractions and other activities in which the time and procedures are agreed upon by fellow parents and teachers (Ishimaru, 2019). One of the activities that parents and teachers carry out is meeting parents with teachers in the complex or environment where parents live (Dayal & Tiko, 2020; Szente, 2020).

In contrast to the collaborative activities carried out by other early childhood education institutions, which are carried out during school days and hours, the collaborative activities carried out by Ariyani's PAUD also take place outside of the school days and hours. This is done to adapt to the situation of parents who have varying intensities of activities but can still join with other parents and teachers to find out how to teach, guide, and develop their children's potential while at home. This condition is consistent with the explanation provided by Muradi et al. (2021), which states that the implementation of the family education function is also a form of realisation of the educational function and the responsibilities that the family must bear because the family is the first and main institution for children, to be able to educate and build independent character and personality and foster motives for children. This condition also aligns with the fact that a family education function is a form of the educational function that the family must bear. Therefore, the goals of early childhood education,

which include assisting in expanding and developing children's potential, can be implemented when families and institutions work together to carry out educational activities.

Aryani PAUD's partnerships, which are based on agreements with families or the community as actors of partnership activities, are still incompatible with the implementation of partnerships with agreements made with families and teachers. These findings are based on observations made in the field. Aryani PAUD's partnerships have been carried out. This may be observed from the summary of reports on partnership activities that the institution carried out, which are as follows:

Table 1: Presence of parents in partnership activities for the 2021/2022 academic year

No	Month	Partnership Form (Parent Class, Health, Psychologist, Religion)	Total Attendance of Parents	
			Present	Absent
1.	July	Medical examination by the health centre	35	0
2.	August	Provision of additional food by posyandu cadres	35	0
3.	September	Joint study meeting	34	1
4.	October	Parent and Institution Friendly Gathering	34	1
5.	November	Mutual Cooperation Activities	35	0
6.	December	Inspiration Class	35	0

Source: Data on PAUD Aryani Institution Academic Year. 2021/2022

It can be seen from the table that was just presented that approximately 97% of the families that were present attended a series of partnership activities that were carried out. These activities were carried out in accordance with the principles of Community-Based Learning or by implementing partnerships based on agreements with the community, which in this case are the families.

This can be deduced from the fact that these principles and agreements were carried out. The parents seemed excited to take part in the partnership activity since it was based on a mutual agreement on the time, venue, and compatibility of the parents' circumstances. The parents' conditions were taken into consideration while planning the activity.

A different view was seen at the Aryani PAUD institution during the COVID-19 pandemic. The difference was seen in the declining level of parental participation. The following table, which may be viewed below, provides more information:

Table 2: Presence of parents in partnership activities in 2022

No	Month	Partnership Form (Parent Class, Health, Psychologist, Religion)	Total Attendance of Parents	
			Present	Absent
1.	January	Medical examination by the health centre	30	5
2.	February	Provision of additional food by posyandu cadres	32	3
3.	March	Joint study meeting	17	18
4.	April	Parent and Institution Friendly Gathering	10	25
5.	May	Mutual Cooperation Activities	7	28
6.	June	Inspiration Class	5	30

Source: Data on PAUD Aryani Institution Academic Year. 2021/2022

It is clear from the data shown in the table that there has been a decline in the number of family members participating in the activities coordinated by the partnership. Compared to activities that took place before the pandemic, the participation of parents has significantly dropped. This disease can significantly impede both the process and the anticipated outcomes of partnerships that have been planned and organised to maximise the potential of early childhood. A lack of parental involvement in partnership activities may be attributed to a number of issues, including the following: - an increase in the number of instances of COVID-19

- Do not engage in gathering activities (Delima, 2022; Niswatin, 2022; Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022).
- The fact that parents have less free time because they work from home - The fact that parents engage in activities with their children that they can do from home (Dini, 2022)
- The challenge of coordinating schedules among many parties, including parents, partners, and institutions, so that face-to-face partnership activities may be carried out (Chen & Rivera-Vernazza, 2022; Trinova et al., 2022).

The results of evaluations of early childhood learning opportunities provided by institutions are directly influenced by the inability of partnerships between institutions and families to function effectively (Chen & Rivera-Vernazza, 2022; Delima, 2022; Dini, 2022; Niswatin, 2022; Trinova et al., 2022; Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022). The grading process is essential to the whole educational experience (Mustafa & Dwiyoogo, 2020). The purpose of the evaluation process in early childhood education is to determine whether or not certain learning outcomes have been attained by the children, which in turn affects how they develop (Agusniatih & Manopa, 2019). Based on the notes and the findings of preliminary studies conducted via interviews and documentation, it was observed that in the monthly reports from early childhood education instructors, Aryani indicated that there were still a lot of areas of development that children had not yet accomplished. This information was gleaned from the interviews that were conducted and the paperwork that was compiled. Most students participating in Aryani PAUD are classified as either "Undeveloped" or "Still Developing" according to the potential development indicators established by the Ministry of Education and Culture and included in the 2014 Child Development Achievement Level Standards. The growth rate of students is still relatively low if these values are taken into consideration.

On a different level, the researchers were also conscious of the fact that we are now living in the 21st century, which is characterised by the age of globalisation, which indicates that there are no borders to distance or time. The use of information technology, which is presently extremely developed, also assists people in carrying out all activities from all sectors, such as economic, social, religious, cultural, political, and educational. This is because information technology lets people communicate with one another more effectively (Balaji et al., 2019). This has the potential to be a solution to the problems voiced in connection with institutional collaborations with families. A blended learning model was developed via networks and information technology to facilitate the implementation of family partnerships with establishments that provide early childhood education.

As a means of responding to this occurrence, it is vital to build a partnership model that is capable of ensuring that activities involving partnerships operate as smoothly as is reasonably foreseeable (Ritchhart & Church, 2020). Blended learning is the partnership model designed in the context of implementing a partnership that is in accordance with the partnership's goals (Ilyashenko et al., 2019).

Blended learning is where the partnership pattern combines face-to-face online learning via video conferencing, social media (WhatsApp group), and mentoring conventional institutions (Nurwakhidah & Suganda, 2022). Reflecting on the current conditions, the partnership model was designed to implement a partnership that is in accordance with the goals of the partnership itself.

The circumstances of education and how it is carried out are being increasingly and swiftly impacted by the fast development of technology. Blended learning is one kind of partnership model that uses technology but does not exclude tasks that need face-to-face interaction between partners.

Other challenges that families face include a disparity in their knowledge of partnerships and the process of putting partnerships into action, a lack of motivation for being physically active, an inability to guarantee attendance, an inability to master the instructions that are provided in connection with partnerships, an inability to master the use of technology and the applications that can be used on smartphones (Lisapaly, 2022).

The majority of parents do not possess electronic devices or cell phones, and those that do not have a basic understanding of how to use them. This situation may have a variety of causes. This indicates that the primary issue that arises in partnerships is the need for a model that supports the implementation of family partnerships with institutions that provide early childhood education to explore the potential of early childhood.

CONCLUSION

The study's overarching goal is to give a conceptualised theoretical description that may be used to create a reliable early childhood education partnership model for measuring the model's elements. The Aryani PAUD institution and the family work together in this study to make the most of the benefits of networking and digital tools for education. The potential of early childhood blended learning programs and the partnerships between institutions providing such programs and families was observed, as the characteristics of the respondents, the institutions involved, and the initial analysis of such programs.

It has been found that early childhood schools' implementation of partnerships with agreements made with families and teachers as actors of partnership activities is still incompatible with findings from the field. Institutional and family partnership issues directly affect the findings of early childhood learning outcome evaluations. Blended learning, in which the partnership pattern combines face-to-face online learning via video conferencing, social media, and mentoring conventional institutions, is the partnership model designed in the context of implementing a partnership that is in accordance with the partnership's goals.

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