

# Parental Involvement in Indonesia:

## A study on two Public Schools in Makassar

St. Syamsudduha

UIN Alauddin Makassar

st.syamsudduha@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Dion Ginanto

Michigan State University

ginantod@msu.edu

**Abstract**—The Studies have indicated consistent findings that parental involvement has a significant factor that predicted student achievement. While there have been a lot of researches conducted on parental involvement, in Indonesian context however, the studies on this notion is still lacking. This paper therefore, examines the role of parental involvement in two public schools in Makassar utilizing Epstein's parental involvement framework. We conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) over school principals, teachers, and parents for both SMP Berjaya and MTSSukses. We also conducted observations towards parental involvement activities in both schools. We found that the parental involvement in Makassar is still low. Parental involvement in the school was so limited to the parents' contribution on school financial issue.

**Keywords**—parental involvement, Indonesia, parental involvement framework

### I. INTRODUCTION

A child's education is influenced by three factors; they are parents, school, and society. Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that "family is the first and principal school" The family is one of three centre of education -family, institution, and youth movement area-" (Ki Hajar Dewantara:1977). Parents act as the first educator who instills the value of life through habituation and exemplary. School provides education related to life material; living in society, and strengthen the child's knowledge on the meaning of life. Society presents learning and reinforcement as a means of what the children have achieved in their home and school. The interaction of these three factors will color children's life.

The involvement of these three factors has always been an actual thing to discuss. The factor of parental involvement in children's education in school is one of the examples. Some recent events such as the case of father and son who hit a teacher at a school in Makassar (BBC Indonesia August 11, 2016), and other similar cases resuscitate the society on the importance of parental involvement in children's education at school. This incident is caused by parents' ignorance about the learning patterns that their child passes in school. The next question is how the form of parent involvement in school.

[5] mentioned some kinds of parental involvement in education; personal involvement, pedagogic and communication with the school. According to the results of his research, these three engagements greatly affect students' motivation.

Another form of involvement showed by [6] that schools should involve parents in the form of:

1. Visiting family at the beginning of the semester to find out family support, family conditions, psychological conditions and student intelligence;
2. Delivering newsletters to parents in order to inform the success rate of learning;
3. Conducting parenting workshops, by inviting parents to school so that teachers / schools can explain learning programs and teachers/schools can help parents to understand how to support learning;
4. Conveying positive news to the home by phone to generate positive support and increase the possibility of behaving positively.

Based on the above explanations, it can be discerned that the involvement of parents in the school will determine the success of children in education. In Indonesia, there are some regulations that require schools to involve parents in children's education at school. As Permendikbud No. 23 year 2015 article 3 about the growth of manners, for example, which states that one of the parties that must be involved in the growth of student' character is parent. This involvement is expected to generate support in various forms. However, there are many schools that have not involved parents optimally. Some schools are areas that tend to be closed to the involvement of outsiders, and some are already programmed, but find many obstacles in its implementation.

To find out the description on how the parental involvement is implemented in school, this study, using six types of parental involvement, which is proposed by Eipstein as a theoretical reference.

### II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Forms of parental involvement

Unlike [3] who classify parental involvement in six forms, [4] divide the parental involvement in child's education into two components; involvement at home and contribution at school. Parents' involvement at home according to [4] comprise all the parents' activities which are done to support their children's at home. It is similar with [3], that home and school must build effective cooperation in creating a conducive atmosphere at home. [4] classify two categories of parent involvement at home: (1) discussing school activities, and (2) monitoring child's activities after school. Discussion of school activities includes all activities related to the students' activities at

school, such as homework, extracurricular activities, and other activities. Parents play an important role as a teacher at home when their children are in their midst. Father and mother can be an active listener to story or complaints about what their children had done when they were in school. Parents can also read books, listen to students reading books, or just ask homework. When parents do not have a lot of time, they can call a mentor or private course at home. This is necessary so that students have somebody to ask if they find difficulties on subjects or homework.

The next task is to monitor the activities of children after school. Monitoring is not interpreted as an excessive parental action in curbing children to play, but rather provides protection against activities that have a negative effect on the child's personality and academic. Monitoring is important, but children also need time to play and socialize with their friends and do activities that are not related to academics, such as sports, playing music, artwork, etc.

Parents need to keep an eye on negative activities that might be performed by the students such as smoking, drinking, wild races, including internet contents which are not properly accessed by school children.

The second form of parenting stated by [4] is the parental involvement in school. Parental involvement in the school is divided into two: (1) Maintain good communication with the school, and (2) help school activities voluntarily. The responsibility for binding effective communication between parents and school is in all stakeholders, including teachers, principals, students, and parents.

Effective communication should come from two parties; home-school and school-home [3] it means that one party should not have a greater role than the other. In other words, both home and school must be pro-active in building communication. Another form of parental involvement in the school is the participation of parents in volunteering at school.

Schools should ensure that parents with all backgrounds have equal roles and access to participate in school activities. Parents can volunteer to help academic activities by helping teachers in the classroom, or non-academic such as helping schools in extracurricular activities. However, not all parents can become volunteers at school, hence schools should respect the parents who cannot participate at school's events and school should develop a program that can stimulate the parents to take part in school.

## 2. *Six forms of parental involvement Epstein model*

After conducting several studies at high school level, junior high school and elementary school, Epstein (2009) concluded that there are six forms of parental involvement in helping the success of children. They are;

### a. Parenting

[4] defines parenting as school effort in helping parents to establish a conducive home environment in order to support learners. A simple example of parenting expressed

by [2] is that parents understand their role in ensuring the readiness of sons to come to school. For instance, students are coming to school not hungry, tired, sick, or late (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). There are some activities that schools can commit to help parents to take part in "parenting" such as visiting home; creating instructional brochures about creating a conducive home environment for parents, training in nutrition and healthy living, and training on parents' duties at home.

### b. Communication

Communication with the family according to [2] can help in improving student attendance and exam scores. Communication is meant to be a two-way communication between parents and school. The main foundation in a partnership is communication, if parents and schools can communicate well, they can surely overcome all the existing problems [2]. [3] suggests the school and parents to create activities that can improve effective communication such as performing formal and informal activities between parents and schools, reporting the school's notification both orally and written to parents, creating a forum of communication through social media or Mailing list, engaging parents in celebration of local, national, or religious day, and creating an intimate atmosphere when parents visit school and vice versa.

### c. Parents Volunteering

An indication that parents care about the quality of education at school is they willing to succeed the school's activities voluntarily (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). [2] provides an example of the Southland School. This school established a schools parenting forums whose job is to offer a chance to parents to supervise students during breaks and during the teaching and learning process to ensure that all students follow the learning process. Then, schools play an essential role to recruit and organize these activities [3]. Furthermore, [3] proposes parents and schools to find out parents' activities and skills thus they can assist school activities according to their interests and talents. Besides, Schools are also obliged to provide opportunity for parents to meet and communicate with each other.

### d. Learning at home

Helping students to study at home, in this model, is defined as the schools' effort to present as much information as possible to parents hence they understand their role in helping students to continue their school activities when they are at home. Michigan Department of Education (2014) defines learning at home as a comprehensive effort of parents in assisting student learning at home. [2] argue students will usually have a good performance in school if their parents are active at home. [3] wrote if parents help students in doing homework or other activities related to school curriculum, or anything else related to school activities, it will improve students' motivation to learn at home. Therefore, schools should be able to be proactive to

campaign for parenting programs to assist student to learn at home. For example by sending students academic reports on a regular basis, sending parent policies about homework or curriculum, creating interactive homework between students and parents, and helping parents to create enjoyable academic activities at home.

#### e. Decision Making

Michigan Departments of Education (2014) emphasizes that parents are the principal partner of the school in deciding any students-related policies. Then, the school is required to be more transparent in involving parents in decision-making [3]. If the school involves parents in deciding school policy, it will be assured that the decision will benefit both parties.

Moreover, schools should provide the unrestricted access for parents from all backgrounds in order to make them participate actively in deciding school policy. [3] suggests several activities: homeroom teacher and parents meetings, teacher and parents meeting about the curriculum, inviting parents to school meetings, and creating teacher and homeroom teacher forums.

#### f. Collaborating

In this model, collaboration is defined as an effort to identify and integrate resources and community assistance to strengthen school programs, family activities, and teaching and learning activities [3]. [2]underlined that collaboration among communities around schools means involving all components of society including administration staff, families, everyone in surrounding communities, government, and business entities. The main idea of cooperation with the surrounding community is schools cannot be alone in educating students in schools; in other words if all elements are involved in educating the disciples, everything will work easier and more expeditious [2]. Epstein offered several examples in working with communities such as providing parents with information about the community at school that can collaborate with parents, involving the surrounding community in school activities, performing community service, doing charity activities with the neighboring community, and forming alumni forum.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive research. The aim of this study is to find out the illustration of parent involvement form in schools steered by the school. This research was conducted at two public schools located in downtown Makassar. The school consists of 1 SMPN and 1 MTsN, which we then called as SMP Berjaya and MTS Sukses (pseudonym).

This research used two techniques of collecting data; they are interviews and observation. Guided interviews were conducted on principals, teachers, and parents. Interviews

used an interview guidance instrument based on the six types of parental involvement in the school as proposed by Epstein; Parenting, communication, parents volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating. Furthermore, these six types are spelled out in questions list form adapted to the status of the informant. Non-participant observations were performed to obtain data on the form of parental involvement in schools with reference to 6 types developed by Epstein.

The collected data is then were analyzed qualitatively, and the data validity test is done by using source triangulation.

### IV. RESEARCH AND RESULT

The results of this study will be explained by following the Epstein pattern, as follows:

#### 1. Parenting

There are three things to be discussed in terms of parenting. The first is school perceptions on parenting responsibilities, home visit programs for parenting, and school programs concern on parenting (health, nutrition, and other programs).

The results of interview indicate that all school administrators agree that beside parents at home, schools are also responsible for parenting. According to a principal "all learners are our children at school, thus it is our responsibility to guide them in school". This statement is supported by the statements of teachers and counseling teacher of both schools. It shows that awareness of the importance of developing aspects of education in schools outside the academic aspects has been felt by the schools' citizens. Similarly, the results of a poll completed by Kompas media on 22-24 April 2015 showed that majority of public aware of the importance of the parents' role in children education in school [8].

In association with home visit activities, both of studied schools only undertake when learners are in problems. For instance, when a learner often truant during school hours, or when the learners have problems at school such as illness and get involved in fights. In essence, according to the interviews' results with teachers and principals, home visits are performed when there are extraordinary events or there are problems with the students and these activities have not been scheduled. It is justified by the parents who asserted that they have never received a visit from a teacher or principal at their home.

A further issue to consider is school programs related to programs that assist parents in health, nutrition and other programs. Both schools mention there is no special program. It is mentioned by one of that schools that the activities carried out by the Madrasah Assembly (another name of the committee on this MtsN) to serve the needs of nutrition and health are procurement of cooperatives and a healthy canteen. Whereas, SMPN mentioned that to maintain the students' health, one of the activities undertaken by schools is preserve health environment in form of collaboration with the Janitorial service department of Makassar, residents

around the school, and private parties. This activity is called junk bank activity.

Based on the data above, it can be understood that in terms of parenting in schools has not been optimally performed by these 2 schools.

## 2. Communication

Communication meant in this research is the intensity, the pattern, the content of communication and the challenges in communicating with parents.

The intensity of communication between the school and parents is illustrated by the principal of the SMPN who argued that the parent's meeting is executed by involving all parents at the end of each semester while taking a report on their child's learning outcomes. However, in fact, there are many parents who hand over their responsibility to other family members for reasons of work. Things that are communicated are related to the learning outcomes of children based on students' learning outcomes reports. Communication is done in two forms began with the delivery of general information by the principal. Information presented in this activity includes activities and achievements that have been obtained by the school. Then, it continued with face to face communication between students and the homeroom teacher. Another thing that becomes a communication material is a school program that requires the support of parental involvement. One example of SMPN is the junk bank program. In this program there are parents who are involved as trainer on how to sort waste training.

There are three challenges faced by schools in communicating with parents. The first is the readiness of parents' time to communicate with the school. The next defiance is parental awareness of children's education. There are some parents who assume that the school is responsible for a child's academic education. The third challenge is the number of students that is not balanced with the number of teachers. The average number of students in one study group is 40 students.

Based on the data, it can be concluded that communication between parents and school is held formally, and the material discussed is generally related to academic achievement and slightly about other aspects such as child health and behavior, except for children who have special records from counseling teachers or troubled children. Especially for troubled children, communication takes place intensely either by phone or face to face with parents.

## 3. Parents Voluntering

In this aspect, the focus of the research is the activities that are conducted by schools in order to involve parents, such as inviting parents to help teachers in class activities and assist teachers in teaching activities, and providing facilities for activities involving parents.

Regarding to the parents volunteering, the two schools that became the object of this research have not involved

parents in class activities or assist teachers in teaching activities. Some interviewed teachers stated that "parents do not need to interfere in classroom learning". Indeed, in one of two schools, parents are not allowed entering school, unless there is a call from school or there is an urgent need.

Both of schools do not prepare a special room for parents to do activities in order to help the school. There are only public meeting room and the school committee room at SMPN and the assembly room on MTsN.

Based on that data, it can be concluded that parental involvement in learning process in the classroom is least.

## 4. Learning at Home

This section is aim to describe a program created by the school to assist parents in home learning assistance. The data obtained shows that the school has conducted several activities to monitor students' learning activities at home. For example, through control books held by students, and through learning contracts at the beginning of the meeting that asks the students to tell their parents about homework or the tasks to be done. Moreover, according to one teacher, sometimes, there are parents who call him ask how to do the students' homework. In one hand on that, one of the students' parents stated that he always checks his child's homework and accompany his child in doing homework, and if having difficulty in answering, then parents will try to help finding the answers via internet. Then, he will call his son's teacher to ask how to complete his child's homework.

The data mentioned above shows that in the aspect of home studying assistance, parents have been adequately involved through several activities undertaken by teachers and schools.

## 5. Decision Making

This aspect includes parental involvement in decision-making, the existence of parental organization, the implementation of transparency and accountability principles by school and parental involvement in financial terms.

Both of the studied schools have established parent association. At the SMPN, it is not only the school committee, but since 2016 a parent organization has been developed by school called the community class. While, at MTsN the parents' club is defined as Madrasah assembly. This school committee and the madrasah council are mediator who links the schools, parents and the community. Class associations are set up to support schools in identifying problems that could involve parental assistance. The community class is a new organization, and its members are not yet fully aware of its duties.

With regard to decision-making, parents are involved in fund-raising matters or creating work programs concerned on school development such as procurement of learning support facilities and extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, these two schools have never submitted their financial reports to parents or parent groups, except for budgets from parental donations.



### 6. Collaborating

This section illustrates the forms of parent and school collaboration in improving the quality of education in schools. The cooperation are in form of health communication program, cultural tourism, social activities, social support or other public service activities, or providing information on parents' skills relevant to students' skills and talents, including the involvement of alumni.

Parent and school partnership conducted by the two schools that are the subject of this research has not reached the health aspect. Collaboration activities that have been performed by both of schools are in the form of social activities such as social service and visits to orphanages. The information on parents' skills which suit to skills learning is not yet available in detail. There is only data on parents' job. In addition, the involvement of alumni in improving school quality has been done in the form of feast day celebration and training on extra-curricular activities.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous explanation, there are some conclusions made as follows;

1. All parties are aware of the importance of coaching and nurturing in schools with the involvement of parents. However, because of the limitations of teachers and schools, the activities related to the mentoring have not been performed optimally. Activities are still focused on academic activities.
2. Parents have been engaged in school activities related on child learning assistance at home and implementation of activities requiring parental support. Nonetheless, in classroom learning activities, parents are not involved.
3. Communication is formally held at least once in one semester executed in time with the distribution of students' study report, in which the school delivers information about school activities that require parental participation and issues of child learning outcomes. Health problems, talents, behaviors and other aspects are discussed only for the child who has problems with or notes from the counseling teacher.

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