Collaborative Efforts in Transitioning from Pre-School to Elementary School for Positive Educational Foundation

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Abstract

The teaching of *calistung* (reading, writing, and counting) using the drill method in early childhood schools and its use in the admission process for elementary schools present serious problems, affecting children's development and creating unhealthy competition. This study aims to describe the implementation of a fun early childhood schools to elementary schools transition movement as a solution, focusing on the roles of parents, schools, and the government, and addressing the misconception that children's success is only measured by calistung mastery. The research used qualitative methods, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the transition movement has been implemented at Semesta Bilingual School, Semarang City, Central Java despite some challenges, such as the continued use of written tests for evaluating students. Changes to the calistung test in new student admissions, a two-week period of introduction to the school environment program, and fun learning that builds six foundational skills have positively impacted students' gradual adaptation to the learning environment. Furthermore, collaboration between the government, schools, and parents through socialization, parent meetings, and active support in preparing students has been effective in enhancing student development during the transition period from early childhood schools to elementary schools, ensuring a smoother adjustment process.

Keywords: *transition from pre-school to elementary school, independent curriculum, positive educational foundation.*

Abstrak

Pengajaran *calistung* dengan metode drill di PAUD serta tes calistung dalam penerimaan siswa baru di SD merupakan masalah serius yang berdampak pada perkembangan anak dan persaingan tidak sehat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan penerapan gerakan transisi PAUD ke SD yang menyenangkan sebagai solusinya, dengan menekankan pada peran orang tua, sekolah dan pemerintah serta menghilangkan miskonsepsi bahwa keberhasilan anak hanya diukur melalui penguasaan calistung. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa gerakan transisi telah diimplementasikan di Sekolah Semesta Bilingual, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah meski masih terdapat hambatan seperti dilakukannya tes tertulis sebagai evaluasi hasil belajar siswa. Perubahan tes calistung pada penerimaan siswa baru, penerapan MPLS selama dua minggu serta penerapan pembelajaran menyenangkan yang membangun enam kemampuan fondasi, memberikan dampak positif dalam penyesuaian lingkungan dan proses belajar secara bertahap selama masa transisi. Selain itu, kolaborasi antara pemerintah, lembaga pendidikan, dan orang tua melalui sosialisasi, *parent meetings*, dan mendukung dengan mempersiapkan siswa juga berjalan semestinya dan dapat meningkatkan perkembangan siswa selama masa transisi.

Kata kunci: *transisi paud ke sd, kurikulum merdeka, pondasi pendidikan positif.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a developing country, particularly in the education sector, where the curriculum is constantly evolving over time. The education curriculum develops in response to the demands of the global era (Uzlah & Suryana, 2022). In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a prototype curriculum, which was then developed into the Merdeka Curriculum, encouraging freedom in the learning process. The concept behind the Merdeka Curriculum is Freedom to Learn, Freedom to Play, emphasizes that learning activities should provide valuable and enjoyable experiences for students, tailored to their interests and needs, with the aim of fostering innovative thinking (Shalehah, 2023).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in early childhood education and early elementary school grades focuses on developing basic skills through learning activities that are adapted to the needs and interests of young children. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), early childhood refers to children between the ages of 0-8 years (NAEYC, 2009; Schachter et al., 2021), meaning that early elementary school students still fall within this age range. Freedom to play is the core concept of the Merdeka Curriculum for early childhood, as play is essentially the true learning process for young children (GTK Secretariat, 2022; Syifauzakia, 2023).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, foundational skills for early childhood are divided into six aspects: (1) Understanding religious values and moral character, (2) Emotional maturity sufficient for activities in a learning environment, (3) Adequate social and language skills for healthy interaction with peers and others, (4) Positive attitude toward learning, (5) Development of motor skills and self-care abilities to independently participate in the school environment, and (6) Cognitive maturity for learning activities, such as basic literacy and numeracy skills (Anggriani et al., 2022).

Basic literacy and numeracy are two of the foundational skills that early learners need to have. It is undeniable that literacy and numeracy are indicators that need to be achieved in cognitive learning in the minimum competency assessment in the national assessment (Banawi et al., 2022). In the 21st century, the ability to read and write is not entirely a reference for one's success in mastering literacy skills, but literacy is also related to the ability to speak, count, think critically, creatively, collaborate, and solve problems in everyday life (Ellysa et al., 2021; Nuryati et al., 2024). According to Clay (2001), literacy skills include the ability to listen, understand spoken language, communication through images, and oral media formed through experiences of interaction with the environment (Nuryati et al., 2024). Meanwhile, numeracy involves recognizing number symbols, comparing quantities, counting, object recognition, and relationships between patterns that are useful for solving everyday problems (Geary, 2006; Jordan et al., 2007; Gelman and Gallistel, 2986; Lyncha et al., 2023; Nurhayati et al., 2024).

Many people in Indonesia still believe that the learning achievements of early learners are limited to reading, writing, and counting (*calistung*) (Mardiani, 2024). This misconception is exacerbated by a number of elementary school institutions that apply the calistung test as a condition of new student admission. This is because early childhood education is required to focus more on children's cognitive abilities; namely, by teaching calistung, parents hope that when entering elementary school children will be able to master it (Wulansuci, 2021). In fact, child development must occur holistically and integratively (Mu'mala & Nadlifah, 2019). If this misconception continues, it can create unhealthy competition and will have an impact on children who do not have the opportunity to attend early childhood education (Musfita, 2019). Not all children in Indonesia have access to early childhood education, meaning many do not receive the support needed to prepare for school at an early age. This is in line with Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that early childhood education is not yet a mandatory part of basic education.

According to the 2021 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), the School Readiness Rate (AKS) was recorded at 74.69%. The Central Statistics Agency also reported that in 2023, only 36.36% of children in Indonesia attended early childhood education. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of elemetary school students who did not attend early childhood education increased. This situation highlights that schools cannot uniformly assess the learning achievements of every child when entering elementary school. Moreover, children naturally exhibit differences in development, cognitive abilities, and psychological readiness.

Research by Wijaya (2023) revealed that each child has a unique psychological state, which can be influenced by various factors, including different learning opportunities. As a result, children who do not attend early childhood education may struggle and feel left behind compared to their peers, potentially leading to psychological issues such as feelings of inferiority and stress. Additionally, regulations prohibiting the use of reading, writing, and arithmetic (calistung) tests as part of the elementary school admissions process are outlined in Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010, and Ministerial Regulation No. 14 of 2018.

Teaching basic literacy and numeracy to early learners is permissible in principle but must be tailored to each child's developmental level (Julianingsih & Isnaini, 2022; Mardiani et al., 2024). In practice, however, calistung instruction is often not aligned with the

developmental stages of young children, which can lead to negative effects such as stress, psychological and physiological disorders, poor cognitive responses, and disruptive behavior (Wulansuci, 2021). These impacts may not manifest immediately but can emerge later in the child's development.

The transition movement from early childhood education to elementary school, designed to be enjoyable, aims to provide awareness to all parties that mastering calistung is not the sole indicator of success in early childhood education (Mardiani, 2024). This movement is supported by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1980), which emphasizes that each child has different characteristics and talents, shaped by their individual learning preferences (Gardner & Moran, 2006; Fasco, 2001; Al-Qatawneh et al., 2021). Gardner identified eight types of multiple intelligences: (1) verbal/linguistic, (2) visual/spatial, (3) musical, (4) logical/mathematical, (5) interpersonal, (6) intrapersonal, (7) bodily/kinesthetic, and (8) naturalistic (Wijanarko et al., 2023).

Based on *literature review*, previous research by Susilahati et al. (2023) revealed that SD Lab School FIP UMJ had implemented a pleasant early childhood education to elementary school transition movement, but the study only provided an overview of the school's role in implementing the transition movement without discussing an in-depth study of the role of other supporting parties, such as parents, and the government. Another study by Kusuma and Martati (2024) highlighted an overview of the transition process, teacher and parent interactions, and strategies used in implementing the transition movement but did not discuss the collaborative role of the government in supporting and facilitating this transition policy. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the implementation of the transition movement in another school, SD Semesta Bilingual Semarang. In addition, this research will also explore the inter-party roles involving parents, schools, and government and the importance of their collaboration to the success of the enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition movement.

This study is expected to serve as a reference to enrich information on the field execution of an enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition, aiming to improve school readiness among early elementary school students, particularly in educational settings that have not yet implemented the transition movement. The research may provide insights into the importance of the environment's role in school readiness for early elementary students, thereby raising awareness among relevant stakeholders to provide mutual support.

METHODS

This research is based on the selection of descriptive qualitative research methods that focus on in-depth case studies that will be revealed through depictions and descriptions of the implementation of the early childhood education to elementary school transition movement in SD Semesta Bilingual Semarang and the importance of collaboration between the roles of parents, schools, and government in the transition movement.

The research instruments used in this study included interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted 30-45 minutes per informant. The questions in the interviews referred to an interview guide containing 14 questions based on the theory of the role of each party towards the Ministry of Education and

Culture's (2022) enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition movement (Anggriani et al., 2022), as well as a voice recorder to document the informants' answers. Informants were selected by purposive sampling, including the head of early childhood education to elementary school curriculum development at Semarang City Education Office, principals of Semesta kindergarten and elementary school, group B kindergarten teachers, first grade elementary school teachers, and parents.

Observation was conducted in a participatory manner by the researcher for nine full days. Observations were based on an observation sheet that included observations of all MPLS activities and classroom learning as well as interactions between students, teachers, and parents based on official government (MoEC) guidelines on strategies to build a learning environment that supports the early childhood education to elementary school transition. During the observation, the researcher used field notes to record the interactions and activities resulting from the observation. Documentation data in the form of lesson plans and questionnaire sheets was interviewed by the school and parents of new students to collect data relevant to the research through these documents.

The data that has been collected is analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (Susilahati et al., 2023) with the initial stage of collecting the required data, then the data is reduced to avoid discussions that are too broad. In the next stage, the researcher connected the findings with the points in the policy guidelines for a fun early childhood education to elementary school transition movement and took the essence of the data that had been presented. In ensuring the validity of the data, the researcher compared the information that had been obtained with the results of data collection through source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Implementing a Fun Transition from Pre-School to Elementary School

The early childhood education to elementary school transition movement is crucial in supporting the fulfillment of early learners' rights to foundational skills development, regardless of their educational background. This is supported by Lestari's (2023) research, which indicates that children's rights to grow, develop, and be valued by their surroundings can be supported through the implementation of transition programs. The enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition serves as a bridge in the adaptation process for children, moving from their role as early childhood education students to elementary school students in a gradual and continuous manner. Research results show that the implementation of the enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition at Semesta Bilingual has been successful. This is evidenced by the application of three main missions of the transition program, which include the following points:

1. **Using Trial Classes Instead of Literacy and Numeracy Tests**

    In the implementation of the first mission, Semesta Bilingual does not use literacy and numeracy tests as part of the new student admission process. Instead, they conduct a trial class, which is the second stage in the new student admission process at Semesta Bilingual. This was stated by the Principal of Semesta Bilingual Elementary School.

"For registration, parents will fill out a link that includes fields for personal data, birth certificates, and other documents, as well as an assessment sheet. We ask parents to have their children complete tasks such as coloring, solving mazes, and pattern sequencing. It's not a test per se, but we want to see what the children are like. Parents fill this out at home first, and then we schedule a trial class" (Interview, SI, July 17, 2024).

In this stage, each prospective new student will be invited to the school for an assessment of their initial abilities. During the trial class, teachers will observe each prospective student through engaging activities. The design of these activities is aligned with the indicators covering the six foundational abilities for early childhood. In agreement with the Principal's explanation, HM, the first-grade teacher, also elaborated on the activities conducted during the trial class.

"We also have materials for interviewing the children. In addition to paper-based assessments, we ask the children to walk a line, dribble a ball, throw and catch a ball, dance, fold, cut, stack blocks, and string beads" (Interview, HM, July 12, 2024).

During the trial class, the school also conducts observations of the parents of prospective new students through interviews with the school staff. The purpose of these interviews was explained during a session with the Principal of Semesta Bilingual Elementary School.

"Our goal in conducting interviews with parents is to understand their views and educational vision because, compared to TK (kindergarten) or SMP (junior high school), SD (elementary school) involves a longer period. We must ensure alignment with the parents. We want to see what the parents' expectations are, what kind of educational approach they hope for, and whether it aligns with the school's vision and mission" (Interview, SI, July 17, 2024).

With this interview activity, it is hoped that the school and parents can align their perceptions regarding expectations and the school's vision, thereby preventing future gaps between the school and parents. The questions posed to the parents focus on the growth and development history of the prospective students and the parents' expectations when choosing Semesta Bilingual School.

2. **Enjoyable First Two Weeks of the Introduction to the School Environment**

MPLS (Introduction to the School Environment) is the second mission in the implementation of the enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition. The orientation period is necessary to identify the potential of new students, support their adaptation to the school environment, enhance enthusiasm, motivation, and effective learning methods, create positive interactions between new students and school members, and increase self-awareness (Widayanti et al., 2023). The MPLS at Semesta Bilingual takes place over two weeks. The Principal of Semesta Bilingual Elementary School also elaborated on the objectives of conducting MPLS activities for two weeks, both for teachers and new students.

"By extending the MPLS period, we have more time to observe the children more thoroughly, and the children adapt better to routines than if they were immediately given lessons. We don't require them to know reading and writing right away. During this time, we screen their reading and writing abilities, as well as their social-emotional skills. Since we have a full-day program, we also observe their ability to eat independently. Our hope is that during these two weeks, the children will get used to the rhythm and routines of the school" (Interview, SI, July 17, 2024).

In general, during the implementation, new students are introduced to various routines or rules followed at the school, from arrival until departure. The orientation period is designed through activities that stimulate the foundational abilities of the students. The activities are divided into the following stages (Table 1).

Table 1. MPLS Activity

Stages	Activities
Stages 1: Opening	Students lead the prayer before starting lessons in front of the class. The teacher greets, asks about well-being, and introduces themselves along with the students. This is followed by ice-breaking activities, such as dancing or singing together, to boost students' enthusiasm and concentration.
Stages 2: Core Activities	Introduction to school activities, a tour around the school, Qiroati Mapping, practicing wudu and prayer, toilet training, health checks, delivering educational materials, and other enjoyable activities such as drawing, coloring, watching videos, cutting and pasting, finger painting, cooking classes, and playing in the playground.
Stages 3: Closing	Each day of MPLS concludes with lunch and a group Dhuhr prayer. The teacher reviews the day's activities and asks the students about their feelings. The teacher also gives students the opportunity to lead the closing prayer before leaving.

The introduction activities designed should be positive, educational, innovative, and enjoyable for students (Fegueira in Susilahati et al., 2023). This aims to support new students in gradually adapting from their learning experiences in early childhood education to elementary school, allowing them time to understand their new environment. One factor in the success of the learning process is the support from various parties. Initial cooperation between the school and parents is built through parents' meetings, which include a series of school introduction activities. The parents' meetings are conducted with the expectation that parents can align their perceptions regarding the learning process at Semesta Bilingual School, thereby minimizing potential miscommunication between parties.

Teachers use observation and assessment of students' work as initial assessments during the MPLS activities to gauge students' achievements. The results are then used to design classroom learning activities. These two techniques are employed to enrich the

initial assessment outcomes for each student, thereby aiding teachers in tailoring learning activities to match the foundational skills that students already possess.

3. Teaching Six Foundational Skills with Fun Activities

Initial assessments are conducted in line with the learning activities after understanding the achievements of the new students. According to the Merdeka Curriculum, there are six foundational skills that need to be developed in early learners. Based on the observations conducted, the following describes the activities carried out to strengthen these six foundational skills at Semesta Bilingual School.

First, the foundational skill of Understanding Religious Values and Morals. The application of this foundational skill is carried out through subjects such as religion, Pancasila education, and habituation. Good practices implemented are in accordance with the Standard Level of Child Development Achievement (STPPA) for this aspect, which includes recognizing the religion practiced, reciting prayers before and after activities, understanding good and bad behavior, reinforcing good behavior, greeting and responding to greetings, and imitating the movements of prayer (Mumtazah and Sutama, 2021), such as performing duha and dzuhur prayers together as an introduction to the simplest forms of worship, so children develop the perception that worship is not burdensome. Moral or ethical development at Semesta Bilingual is carried out through the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program, which stimulates students' attitudes in building good relationships with others.

Figure 1. Activities to Stimulate Understanding of Religious Values and Morals

Second, the foundational ability in Emotional Maturity adequate for engaging in a learning environment. Emotions are experiences that involve changes in a person's mental and physical state, affecting their behavior (Sukatin et al., 2020). Emotional maturity refers to a child's ability to effectively manage their emotions. Strengthening students' emotional management is done through programs related to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), such as Value Based Education (VBE), Leadership Camp, Boys and Girls Talk, Meet Up, and Buddy Up, which focus on personality traits like sincerity, responsibility, and courtesy. Additionally, in One-on-One sessions, the homeroom teacher calls students individually to share about anything so that students feel more comfortable and open. Practices that stimulate students' discipline skills are also effectively applied, such as lining up for handwashing, going to the bathroom, and storing their belongings in their own lockers.

Figure 2. Activities to Stimulate Emotional Maturity for Learning Environments

Third, the foundational ability in Social and Language Skills adequate for interacting with peers and others. Social skills can be described as a person's ability to respond positively to their surrounding environment (Hasanah, 2019; Susanti et al., 2020; Diswantika, 2022). These social skills are developed through examples of small behaviors, such as being able to say "please," "sorry," and "excuse me" in appropriate situations and helping friends. A rolling system is also applied, with seating arrangements adjusted by teachers based on students' leadership qualities and activity levels to support interactions among students and foster friendships with anyone. The establishment of Harmony Goals or class agreements is done collaboratively. Teachers and students discuss the reasons and consequences of the agreements made. According to research, these activities aim to cultivate a sense of responsibility, an understanding of the consequences of one's actions, and discipline among students.

Figure 3. Activities to Stimulate Adequate Social and Language Skills for Interacting with Peers and Others

Fourth, the foundational ability to cultivate a positive attitude towards learning. Observations indicate that a positive and enjoyable school environment supports children in feeling happy while at school, as evidenced by students' enthusiasm when greeted by teachers at the school gate in the morning. During the learning process, teachers consistently use engaging strategies to capture children's attention, such as creating simple clapping games, asking questions that pique students' interest and encourage them to share their questions and arguments, and accepting students' work according to their imagination without labeling. Semesta Bilingual Elementary School also implements a reward system called "Semesta Stars" for students who adhere to class agreements and participate well in learning activities. This initiative is intended to motivate students to maintain their attention in class during lessons.

Figure 4. Activities to Stimulate Positive Attitudes Towards Learning

Fifth, the foundational ability of developing adequate motor skills and self-care to participate independently in the school environment. Research by Dapp et al. (2021) demonstrates that, in addition to stimulating physical development, motor skills are also said to enhance cognitive and social development (Gashaj et al., 2019; Lubans et al., 2010), boost self-confidence (Ericsson and Karlsson, 2011), and support psychosocial adjustment as well as academic achievement (Bart et al., 2007). Gross motor skills are stimulated through weekly Physical Education (PE) classes. Fine motor skills are developed through various activities designed in the learning process, such as writing, cutting, coloring, squeezing paper, and other Self-care skills are fostered by encouraging students to prepare and store their own belongings in their lockers and eat their own packed meals. After eating, students are habituated to drinking water, washing their hands, and cleaning their eating utensils. To encourage toilet training, teachers present material on toilet training through PowerPoint presentations and videos, delivered in an engaging manner.related activities.

The sixth foundational ability is cognitive maturity sufficient for engaging in learning activities, such as basic literacy, numeracy, and a fundamental understanding of how the world works. Skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic are also introduced in first grade, tailored to students' developmental age through activities like using illustrated print books, tracing letters and numbers, coloring by number, and drawing lines between images and number symbols. Semesta Bilingual does not aim for early-grade students to master basic literacy and numeracy (calistung) as the school recognizes that other aspects of development are equally important.

Additionally, Indonesian literacy is introduced through reading books provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, while English literacy is supported through the Raz-Plus app, which offers various books with difficulty levels matched to the students' proficiency. Research by Turel and Ozer Sanal (2018) found that technology-assisted learning can facilitate access to resources anywhere, thereby enhancing achievement, motivation, and reducing learning stress (Triwahyuningtyas et al., 2022). Observations indicate that the average first-grade student at SD Semesta Bilingual is already able to recognize letters, numbers, and number symbols, read various words and short sentences, and write their own name.

Figure 6. Activities to Stimulate Adequate Cognitive Maturity for Understanding Basic Literacy, Numeracy, and How the World Works

The implementation of learning activities must be complemented by assessment processes. The foundation for conducting assessments is the understanding that each student has unique characteristics and developmental stages. The purpose of assessment is to determine students' progress in foundational aspects, identify their interests, and evaluate the learning progress they have achieved. The results of assessments are then used as a basis for teachers to evaluate the attainment of learning objectives (Pan et al., 2021; Xiaoming et al., 2021; Simanjuntak et al., 2019; Dewi et al., 2021). At SD Semesta Bilingual, assessment activities are carried out through daily observations to monitor students' engagement and collaboration with peers, as well as individual and group projects.

Unfortunately, SD Semesta Bilingual still uses written tests as a routine assessment every semester to measure students' learning outcomes, which are then analyzed and included in the final test report. According to the transition guidebook for an enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition, written assessments are not recommended for early-grade elementary education because they can lead to labeling phenomena based solely on test scores (Kemendikbud, 2020). According to Lestari and Huda (2021), labeling can have psychological effects, such as stress, insecurity, loss of self-confidence, and withdrawal from the environment, as labeling is a significant factor in the development of self-concept in children (Landon et al., 2011; Lomas et al., 2016; Palmer & Begum, 2006; Yahin & Steedman, 2018; Safrizal et al., 2023).

Building Collaboration Between Schools, Parents, and Government for a Fun Pre-school to Elementary School Transition

The importance of support and good communication between parents and teachers is emphasized, especially during the transition period to ensure optimal adjustment for children (DeMeo Cook and Levine-Coley, 2017, Tobin et al., 2022). In addition to parents and teachers, the government also plays a role in preparing resources related to the transition movement. The fun early childhood education to elementary school transition movement is actually a joint movement in realizing the fulfillment of children's rights, namely having the foundational ability to take education in elementary school.

1. **Building Coordination and Collaboration Among Parents, Schools, and Local Government**

The Ministry of Education and Culture's (Kemendikbud, 2022) guidelines on strengthening the early childhood education to elementary school transition serve as a framework for enhancing coordination and collaboration among parents, schools, and local governments. Collaboration involves two or more parties actively working together to achieve shared goals (Marmoah et al., 2022). The aim of role collaboration is to facilitate joint actions, encourage information exchange, support collective decision-making, and improve the learning process (Bahadorestani et al., 2020; Eriksson et al., 2017; Fuentes, 2019; Kaewhanam et al., 2023), as stakeholders are expected to complement each other's strengths and address each other's weaknesses. In this regard, the Principal of Semesta Bilingual Elementary School highlights the "Three pillars of education" involved in achieving educational success: parents, the school, and students.

Role collaboration is supported by Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (1979), which posits that a child's development occurs within three environmental systems: (1) microsystems such as home, peers, school, and family; (2) ecosystems which involve less visible but influential interactions affecting development; and (3) macrosystems including religion, culture, law, state ideology, and government (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Mujahidah, 2015; Shalih, 2019; Kurniati et al., 2022). Therefore, the environment within which a child grows and develops will significantly impact their development.

The Principal of Semesta Bilingual Elementary School considers parents as partners, meaning they collaborate to fulfill their responsibilities and achieve common goals. Effective communication between the school and parents can enhance both academic and non-academic education. Moreover, when students observe a strong partnership between their teachers and parents, they feel more comfortable and secure at school. This is supported by research findings from Siregar (2018), which show that effective public relations management positively impacts achieving school goals (Siregar, 2018; Ekawati & Iriani, 2021).

Forms of collaboration among parents, schools, and governments include organizing activities for the new academic year, such as seminars with elementary school teachers on MPLS topics held by the Education Office, parents' meetings, and internal meetings organized by the school. The Principal also mentioned other forms of collaboration with parents during the interview sessions.

"Communication with parents is extensive. One form of communication with the homeroom teacher can be through WhatsApp, SMS, phone calls, or EDUNAV. All teachers, staff, and administrators also have accounts, and so do the parents. This allows parents to see their child's learning progress" (Interview, SI, July 17, 2024).

Based on an interview with one of the parents of a new student, it was mentioned that parents feel satisfied with the school and the collaborative efforts made with the school.

"Why I chose Semesta is because, even though I had visited various other schools before coming here, I found that this school is indeed the most comfortable. This is in terms of the approach from the teachers to the children. In other schools, I noticed that the approach is

often not comprehensive. Here, it is targeted that every child should receive one-on-one attention and home visits" (Interview, A, July 18, 2024).

In essence, a child's success in learning is significantly enhanced by the support and attention provided by parents at home (Veronika et al., 2021; Maharani et al., 2022). Based on observations from parents' meetings held by the school, it is evident that the role of parents during this transition includes providing support by preparing students during the MPLS period, appreciating the child's uniqueness and achievements, no matter how small or large, to foster their confidence during the transition, and encouraging students to become more independent. Research conducted by Amin et al. (2021) also proves that there is a positive and significant influence between children's secure attachment to mothers and the independence of children aged 5-6 years (Karyanto et al., 2022).

Interviews also revealed that, in addition to their important role, parents are proactive in strengthening the foundational knowledge and skills required at elementary school from the kindergarten level. This statement is supported by one study that parental involvement at home, both in terms of quantity and quality of learning activities, plays an important role in improving school readiness in children, especially in terms of language and literacy skills (Ansari and Gershoff, 2016; Bracken and Fischel, 2008; El Nokali et al., 2010; Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Hindman and Morisson, 2011; Barnett et al., 2020). In addition, according to O'Toole et al. (2019), parental involvement in children's education can help to bridge the gap between home and school, which contributes to increased school effectiveness and improved learning outcomes and has a more significant impact on children's educational achievement than other environmental factors, such as social class, parental education level, or income (O'Toole et al., 2019; Tobin et al., 2022). This statement was made by the parents of new students.

"Since I know what is required at the elementary school level, I prepare them from a young age for entering elementary school. For example, if learning to read is needed, I introduce them to the Arabic letters. For reading and writing, I start teaching letters and numbers not from toddler age but as soon as they enter kindergarten. I also prepare toilet training from Class A, so they should be able to use the toilet on their own. Children often like to take unconventional paths, and I allow that because their age is about exploration, which is also good for their motor skills. For writing skills, for instance, helping with tasks like fetching rice can impact their writing ability. So, I don't provide structured teaching but allow them freedom in ways that will be beneficial for their future in elementary school" (Interview, A, July 18, 2024).

The number of school programs available, SD Semesta Bilingual, designs its programs not only according to the needs of children but also involves the needs of parents related to child development. According to Epstein (1995, 2010), there are six dimensions of the parental involvement framework in children's education that can be applied by schools, namely: (1) nurturing, (2) communication, (3) participation as a volunteer, (4) supporting learning at home, (5) decision-making, and (6) collaboration with the community (Yulianti et al., 2019). From these various activities, it can be concluded that the cooperation between parents and the school is generally synergistic. However, according to the Principal, a challenge is that not all parents are cooperative, particularly

those who do not acknowledge their child's weaknesses, making it difficult for the school to take action to support the child's progress. To address this issue, the school has implemented a solution by inviting parents to share sessions with the class teachers, aiming to help parents better understand the areas that need development in their child's learning process at school.

Research by Murray et al. (2015) showed that formal meetings between parents and teachers, educating parents on how to help children at home, and providing information on how to get involved at school were the most common strategies to increase parental involvement in the school environment (Yulianti et al., 2019). In addition, effective communication between teachers and parents can help both parties better understand mutual expectations regarding children's developmental needs. Informal communication is also important for building a good working relationship as it provides an opportunity for teachers and parents to understand each other's point of view (Denessen et al., 2007; Leenders et al., 2019).

2. Promoting Awareness of a Fun Pre-school to Elementary School Transition Movement

The government is one of the stakeholders involved in collaborating with schools and parents to ensure the success of the enjoyable PAUD to elementary school transition movement. To raise awareness about the transition movement within educational units, the Semarang City Education Office communicates it through various informational activities. This is supported by the interview with the Head of Curriculum Development at the Semarang City Education Office, who described the types of informational activities involved.

"Yes, we do this through socialization, workshops, and technical guidance. Each sub-district also forms its own PAUD-SD transition communication forum" (Interview, RN, July 3, 2024).

The promotion of the transition movement also involves students' parents, one way being by inviting parents or school committees to participate in activities organized by the local government. The Head of Curriculum Development at the Semarang City Education Office explained the promotion of the transition movement in collaboration with parents.

"We have also communicated this at parenting meetings, calling on parents and the school committee. The goal is for parents to teach basic literacy and numeracy at home without resorting to drilling. This way, children can learn these skills in a fun and enjoyable manner without pressure. Parents become teachers at home, while the school's responsibility remains at school. This is how the data is classified, as stated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 30 of 2017 on Family Education" (Interview, RN, July 3, 2024).

The promotion of the transition movement is also supported through the Semarang City Education Office's activities, including guidance for early childhood education and elementary education units. This involves cross-checking at each school, monitoring or evaluating through sharing sessions in workshops, tracking the progress of each education unit on the transition movement via a joint WhatsApp group, receiving reports from schools on the development of the transition movement, and coordinating between the

heads of early childhood education and elementary school curriculum development regarding the progress of each education unit.

The Semarang City Education Office hopes that the emergence of this enjoyable early childhood education to elementary school transition movement will prevent early childhood education and elementary schools from blaming each other regarding children's calistung abilities. Teachers are expected to adopt modern teaching methods, moving away from drill techniques, and to continuously involve parents as teachers for students at home. This statement of hope for the transition movement was expressed by the Head of Curriculum Development at the Semarang City Education Office.

"For elementary schools, it's important not to quickly judge early childhood education (PAUD) units based on the discovery of children who are not yet proficient in basic literacy and numeracy skills. The central message is that children aged 0-8 should enjoy learning through play. If they haven't mastered these skills yet, we have advised the school principal and teachers to involve parents at home and work together to support the child's development and character-building" (Interview, RN, July 3, 2024).

Based on the interviews, we conclude that the collaboration between schools, parents, and the government has worked well as an effort to fulfill children's rights to basic skills development and to support an enjoyable transition from early childhood education to elementary school. This conclusion is reinforced by Galindo and Sheldon's (2012) research, which states that the important role of schools is to create opportunities for family involvement in children's education and build relationships with families through effective communication (Tobin et al., 2022). The education office also plays a role in ensuring changes in learning practices, serving as a liaison between related parties and encouraging coordination between early childhood education units and elementary schools (Anggriani et al., 2022). Although there are still some barriers to implementation, the relevant parties have managed to provide good solutions to overcome them.

CONCLUSION

The early childhood education to elementary school transition movement aims to address misconceptions and the negative effects of calistung tests during admissions, helping students prepare emotionally, socially, and academically. At SD Semesta Bilingual Semarang, this has been effectively implemented through trial classes, MPLS, and fun learning activities, despite some challenges like written tests for evaluation. The positive outcomes include higher student motivation, improved readiness, and the development of good habits, independence, and initiative. Collaboration between the government, schools, and parents has positively impacted student readiness by fostering motivation, supportive environments, early intervention, and parental involvement. Every party holds a significant responsibility: the government is tasked with supplying necessary resources and policies, schools function as the bridge between these policies and their implementation, and parents play a crucial role in encouraging and nurturing their children's independence. Each contributes to ensuring that the enjoyable transition movement from early childhood education to elementary school runs smoothly and effectively by supporting and addressing the unique needs of the students. To further improve, it is suggested that schools adopt more inclusive assessment methods that promote positive learning attitudes during the early stages of elementary education.

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