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# Kolab-Trans Conceptual Model: Collaboration Between Early Childhood Committees and Parents in A Joyful Transition to Primary School

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**Abstract**
The transition from early childhood education to primary school requires continuity between children's learning experiences at school and at home. This study examines the collaborative mechanisms among the early childhood centre leader, teachers, the school committee, and parents, and synthesises them into the KOLAB-TRANS Conceptual Model. A qualitative, model-building single-case study was conducted at PAUD Riyadlusshibyan, West Lombok. Participants were the centre leader, two teachers, the committee chair, and three parents. Data were generated through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The analysis combined initial, axial, and integrative selective coding, supported by source and method triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail. Five interrelated processes were identified: collaborative leadership, collaborative communication as the core mechanism, the committee as a bridging actor, parents' transformation into educational partners, and continuity of child support across home and school. These processes supported learning oriented towards six foundational capacities rather than a narrow emphasis on early reading, writing, and arithmetic. The KOLAB-TRANS model depicts a cyclical pathway linking leadership, communication, mediation, partnership, child support, joint evaluation, and programme refinement. The study contributes by conceptualising collaborative communication as the integrating mechanism and the early childhood committee as a partnership mediator. As a context-bound conceptual model, KOLAB-TRANS requires validation across diverse settings before claims of effectiveness can be made.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The transition from early childhood education (PAUD) to elementary school (SD/MI) is an ecological change that introduces children to new environments, routines, social relationships, and learning expectations. The success of the transition is not solely determined by initial academic abilities, but also by the child's readiness to interact, manage emotions, communicate, care for themselves, participate in learning activities, and positively interpret school. An ecological perspective positions the quality of relationships between families, early childhood education units, and elementary schools as the primary pillars of a child's developmental continuity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). Longitudinal evidence also suggests that transition practices that connect

preschool, family, and school are associated with better skill development in children in the first year of school (Ahtola, 2017; Ahtola et al., 2011).

International attention to transitions increasingly emphasizes professional, pedagogical, and developmental continuity. The OECD (OECD, 2017) emphasizes that quality transitions require preparation, child-centeredness, and management through cross-institutional collaboration. Meaningful interactions between children, educators, families, and the environment are also central to the quality of early childhood education processes (OECD, 2021). UNESCO and UNICEF global reports (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2024) reinforce the urgency of building the foundations of inclusive and quality early childhood education, while NAEYC (for the Education of Young Children, 2020) places reciprocal partnerships with families as part of developmentally appropriate practices.

In Indonesia, the Enjoyable Early Childhood Education to Elementary School Transition Movement corrects the narrowing of school readiness to tests or exercises in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This policy encourages the elimination of reading, writing, and arithmetic tests in new student admissions, an introductory period that supports adaptation, and learning that gradually builds six foundational skills in early childhood education and the early grades of elementary school (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). These six skills include religious values and morals, social and language skills, emotional maturity, cognitive maturity, motor skills and self-care, and positive meanings of learning.

However, policy changes do not automatically translate into changes in practice. Research in Indonesia shows that parents may continue to view school readiness primarily through academic ability, while their engagement is influenced by knowledge, beliefs about their role, opportunities for participation, and the quality of communication with the school (Hanifah, 2019). Internationally, families' experiences during transition are also influenced by the clarity of information, relationships with teachers, and available support (Morawska et al., 2026). Therefore, the issue of implementation is not simply whether schools have transition programs, but how shared understanding and continuity of support are built.

Effective family engagement is not synonymous with attendance at school events. Engagement becomes meaningful when families are given space to engage in dialogue, support learning at home, share knowledge about their children, and participate in relevant decisions (Dempsey et al., 2005). School readiness interventions also demonstrate that the quality of caregiver-teacher relationships and learning support at home can be strengthened through purposefully designed transition strategies (Hoffman et al., 2020) (Sheridan et al., 2014).

However, the literature often places teachers and parents as the primary actors. The role of the PAUD committee as a bridge between schools and families is rarely conceptualized analytically. In practice, the committee has the potential to connect information, aspirations, beliefs, and resources. This function aligns with collaborative governance, a cross-actor arrangement that requires communication, trust, shared understanding, and the capacity to act collectively (Emerson et al., 2012).

This research addresses three gaps. First, previous research has largely described parental involvement, school communication, or transition practices separately. Second, the role of early childhood education committees as mediating actors has not received adequate attention. Third, there are still limited conceptual models based on field data that explain how leadership, communication, mediation, partnerships, and child support are interconnected within the context of Indonesia's transition policy.

Based on this, this study proposes the KOLAB-TRANS Conceptual Model. The model is not intended as a claim of universal effectiveness, but rather as a contextual explanation

of the collaboration mechanisms found in one information-rich case. The research questions are: (1) how does collaboration between the PAUD principal, teachers, committee, and parents take place in the implementation of the transition program; (2) how do communication and the committee's mediation function influence parent involvement; and (3) how can these findings be synthesized into a conceptual model that can be further tested?

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research design and context

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design with a model-development orientation. This case study was chosen because the focus of the study was on collaborative mechanisms within a specific institutional context, rather than on testing causal relationships or statistical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018) (Ananda et al., 2019). A stepwise coding procedure was used as an analytical tool to construct conceptual explanations from the data, but this study does not claim to be a full-fledged grounded theory.

The research case is the implementation of the Enjoyable Early Childhood Education to Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Transition Program at Riyadlusshibyan Early Childhood Education, Lendang Re Hamlet, Lembah Sari Village, Batu Layar District, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The location was chosen purposively because it has integrated foundational skills strengthening into learning, organized parenting, has regular communication with families, and involves the committee in school programs. These characteristics make the location an information-rich case to explore the formation of school-family partnerships.

### 2.2 Participants

Participants were selected purposively based on direct involvement, at least one year of experience in the institution, and willingness to provide information. Seven adult participants were involved: the PAUD principal, two teachers, the committee chair, and three parents. Children were not interviewed; their activities were only observed within the context of routine learning. Codes were used to protect participants' identities.

**Table 1. Participant characteristics**

| Code | Role | Data contribution |
|---|---|---|
| KP | Head of PAUD | Program policy, coordination, and evaluation |
| G1 | Group A Teacher | Learning and communication with family |
| G2 | Group B Teacher | Transition assistance and developmental assessment |
| KM | Committee Chair | School-parent mediation and participation facilitation |
| OT1-OT3 | Three old men | Parenting and support experience at home |

### 2.3 Data collection

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on play-based learning practices, teacher-child interactions, teacher-parent communication, committee involvement, parenting activities,

and forms of mentoring related to foundational skills. Field notes were taken immediately after the activities.

Interviews addressed program understanding, communication patterns, committee roles, changes in parental involvement, supporting factors, barriers, and expectations for the program. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Documents included work programs, meeting minutes, parenting materials, liaison books, program communications, activity documentation, and child development reports.

The three data sources were used in a complementary manner. Interviews provided meaning and participant experiences; observations examined actual practices; and documents corroborated chronology, program consistency, and administrative evidence.

**Table 2. Data sources and analytical functions**

| Source | Focus | Analytical functions |
|---|---|---|
| Observation | Interaction, learning, and collaborative activities | Examining practices and contexts |
| Interview | Perceptions, experiences, role changes, and barriers | Exploring meaning and mechanisms |
| Document | Programs, meetings, parenting, communication, child development | Triangulation and process tracing |

### 2.4 Data analysis

Analysis proceeded iteratively from data collection. First, initial coding (open coding) broke the data into meaningful units, including shared perceptions, parenting, WhatsApp groups, contact books, parental aspirations, committee coordination, home support, joint evaluation, and changes in orientation from reading, writing, and arithmetic. Second, axial coding grouped codes into relationship categories: leadership, collaborative communication, committee mediation, parental involvement, child support, supporting conditions, and challenges. Third, selective integration identified collaborative communication as the core category connecting the other categories. This procedure followed the principles of systematic and transparent qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2020).

The model was developed by comparing categories, evidence across participants, temporal relationships, and conditions influencing the process. Components were only included in the model if they were supported by more than one data source and had consistent relationships with other categories. The model results were then compared with ecological theory, school-family partnerships, parental involvement, and collaborative governance.

### 2.5 Legality and ethics

Credibility was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking of summary findings, peer debriefing, and an audit trail documenting coding decisions and model development. Transferability was supported by a description of the model's context and boundaries. All participants received information about the purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and right to discontinue participation. Consent was obtained before observation and interviews; participants' names are anonymized.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Program implementation as cross-actor work

The transition program at Riyadlusshibyan Preschool is not implemented as a standalone activity before graduation. Transition principles are integrated into play-based learning, character development, social interaction, language development, independence, and communication. The Preschool principal directs the program; teachers translate it into activities; a committee assists with outreach and coordination; and parents continue support at home.

Program documents and observations identify five main channels: parenting activities, school-committee meetings, individual consultations, WhatsApp groups, and contact books. These channels allow for two-way communication. Schools communicate children's goals and progress, while families communicate their children's habits, challenges, and changes at home.

The head of the PAUD emphasized the program's orientation: "The goal of this program is not to make children able to read quickly, but to help them be ready to learn, ready to socialize, and ready to adapt when they enter elementary school." This quote is consistent with the observed learning, which uses more play, conversation, motor activities, independent habits, and group work than repetitive academic exercises.

**3.2 Collaborative communication as a core mechanism**

Communication was the most consistent theme across all participant groups. Communication not only conveys the agenda but also serves four functions: aligning perceptions of school readiness, coordinating activities, building trust, and aligning home-school support.

In the initial phase, parenting was used to discuss the six foundational skills and correct the notion that children must be fluent readers before entering elementary school. After that, daily communication allowed teachers and parents to connect the child's progress in the two environments. G1 explained, "If there are any developmental or developmental difficulties for the child, we immediately discuss them so that support at home aligns with that at school."

Ongoing dialogue shifts parents' roles from recipients of information to contributors of knowledge about their children. Teachers gain insight into their children's routines, emotional responses, and challenges at home; parents gain examples of simple activities they can do without turning their home into a formal classroom.

**3.3 PAUD Committee as a mediation actor**

The committee serves functions beyond administrative support. Data indicates three mediating functions: translating policies into language families can understand, gathering parental input, and facilitating participation in school activities. The committee chair stated, "The committee helps explain the program to parents to avoid any misunderstandings. If parents receive input, we also relay it to the school."

This role is crucial when messages from the school aren't immediately received, or when parents feel more comfortable raising concerns through their representatives. The committee acts as a bridging actor, reducing the social distance between the institution's administrators and families. The trust created makes parents more willing to participate in parenting sessions, discuss challenges, and accept changes in program orientation.

The mediation function does not replace the parent-teacher relationship. Instead, the committee expands communication channels and helps ensure that family aspirations are reflected in the program planning and evaluation process.

**3.4 Transforming parents into educational partners**

The most significant change occurred in how parents interpreted their children's readiness. Before socialization, the dominant questions concerned when children would start reading or how much writing practice they were given. After repeated parenting

sessions and consultations, parents began discussing independence, communication skills, emotional management, and learning interests.

OT2 said, "After participating in parenting, I understand that children don't have to be forced to learn to read, write, and count. What's important is that they are confident, independent, and enjoy learning." This transformation is also evident in practice: parents participate in activities, discuss with teachers, try suggested games or routines, and provide feedback.

The findings suggest that active engagement is not a pre-existing characteristic, but rather the result of clear invitations, communication that values the family's experiences, and the opportunity to see the benefits of mentoring. However, participation levels are not uniform. Occupation, time, access to communication, and initial beliefs influence the intensity of engagement.

**3.5 Ongoing support and limits of findings regarding child readiness**

Collaboration between teachers and parents results in continuous support, particularly in developing independent habits, communication, emotional regulation, social interaction, and the meaning of enjoyable learning. Teachers provide examples of activities; parents report on the child's responses; and the results are used to tailor subsequent support.

Developmental documentation and observations indicate practices aligned with the six foundational skills. However, the study did not use a standardized instrument to measure changes in children's readiness and did not follow children after they entered elementary school. Therefore, these results should be interpreted as mechanisms supporting readiness conditions, not as causal evidence that the model improves school readiness scores.

**Table 3. Themes, evidence, and analytical meaning**

| Her | Primary evidence | Analytical meaning |
|---|---|---|
| Collaborative leadership | Policy, coordination, participation space | Creating conditions for collaboration |
| Collaborative communication | Parenting, consultation, WhatsApp, connecting books | Uniting perception and mentoring |
| Committee as a bridging actor | Socialization, aspirations, coordination | Bridging schools and families |
| Parents as partners | Dialogue, home activities, feedback | Transformation from recipient to partner |
| Home-school mentoring | Consistent strategy and evaluation | Supports six foundational capabilities |

**3.6 Synthesis of the KOLAB-TRANS Model**

Data synthesis resulted in the KOLAB-TRANS Conceptual Model. The model begins with the leadership of the PAUD principal, who provides direction, space for dialogue, and legitimacy for the involvement of various actors. Collaborative communication serves as the core mechanism. Through this mechanism, the committee serves as a mediator, teachers as pedagogical implementers, and parents as educational partners.

The interaction between the three actors results in more sustainable child support. Support focuses on six foundational skills and is monitored through information exchange. Joint evaluations result in program improvements, ensuring a dynamic and cyclical relationship between components.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of KOLAB-TRANS**




*Note: The model describes the mechanisms and relationships found in the research cases. Arrows do not indicate estimates of causal effects.*

**Table 4. Components and operational indicators of the KOLAB-TRANS Model**

| Component | Function | Operational indicators |
|---|---|---|
| Head of PAUD | Director and enabler | Policy, coordination, participation space, evaluation |
| Collaborative communication | Core mechanism | Open, dialogic, routine, responsive, two-way |
| Early Childhood Education Committee | Mediating actors | Translating information, channeling aspirations, facilitating |
| Early Childhood Education Teacher | Pedagogical implementer | Fun learning, development feedback |
| Parent | Education partners | Home support, dialogue, decisions regarding children's needs |
| Child support | Home-school bridge | Consistent and adaptive strategy |
| Transition readiness | Direction of results | Practices that support the six foundational skills |

**Figure 2. Operational Cycle of the KOLAB-TRANS Model**




## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Communication as a mechanism, not just a channel

The study's primary finding is the position of collaborative communication as an integrative mechanism. This finding is consistent with the family engagement literature, which emphasizes communication, home learning support, and participation in decision-making as complementary practices (Goodall, 2013) (OECD, 2024). However, KOLAB-TRANS goes further, demonstrating the sequence of mechanisms: communication generates shared understanding, shared understanding strengthens trust and coordination, and both enable consistent support.

In ecological theory, the quality of the mesosystem is determined by the connectedness of the child's primary environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). In this case, connectedness does not occur automatically because the child is at home and at school; it is built through the exchange of information, negotiation of expectations, and adjustment of strategies. These findings also align with research by Ahtola et al. (Ahtola, 2017), which demonstrated the importance of congruence between teacher and parent perceptions regarding transition practices.

The implication is that the number of messages in a digital group is not an indicator of partnership. Communication can be considered collaborative when it is two-way, results in decisions or adjustments to actions, and allows for family knowledge. This is important because one-way communication can broaden the reach of information without changing the parents' position.

### 4.2 PAUD Committee as a bridging actor

The conceptualization of committees as bridging actors is a unique research contribution. Within a collaborative governance framework, bridging actors help reconcile interests, develop trust, and create capacity for collective action (Emerson et al., 2012). In the context of early childhood education, committees fulfill this function because of their close relationship with families and access to the school's decision-making process.

The findings broaden the understanding of committees from formal structures to relational infrastructures. Their effectiveness is measured not only by meetings, funding, or activity support, but also by their ability to explain policies, listen to concerns, maintain information flow, and mitigate tensions. These functions are relevant to transitional policies that demand a paradigm shift from reading, writing, and arithmetic to holistic development.

However, the mediation function also has risks. Over-reliance on a single committee member can create bottlenecks, parent representation may not be equal, and messages can change as they are relayed. Therefore, the model recommends maintaining direct teacher-parent communication channels, while the committee strengthens—not replaces—that relationship.

**4.3 Transformation of parental involvement**

The shift of parents from information recipients to partners supports the Hoover-Dempsey et al. (Dempsey et al., 2005) model: involvement develops when parents perceive themselves as having a role, feel invited, and have the resources to act. This research adds that role beliefs are formed through repeated communication and examples of possible activities.

The findings are also relevant to Indonesian research demonstrating the importance of maternal perspectives and family support in transition readiness (Fridani, 2021). Meaningful engagement doesn't have to be academic activities. Self-care routines, conversations, turn-taking, emotional management, and positive habits are all part of the foundation of transition.

Variations in participation highlight the need for adaptive models. Flexible scheduling, a combination of in-person and digital communication, concise materials, individual consultations, and the use of accessible language can expand access. The OECD (2024) also emphasizes that early childhood education centers need diverse staffing capacities and strategies to engage families.

**4.4 Contributions, limitations, and applicability of the model**

Theoretically, KOLAB-TRANS connects ecological theory, school-family partnerships, parent involvement, and collaborative governance into a single process explanation. The model not only lists actors but also explains the liaison functions between them. Practically, the model offers a sequence that can be translated into joint planning, shared understanding, implementation, mentoring, evaluation, and improvement.

In policy terms, the model reinforces the principle of the Joyful Early Childhood to Elementary School Transition Movement that foundational skills are built gradually and continuously. KOLAB-TRANS can be used as a framework for unit reflection, rather than a standard package. Units can assess whether leadership has fostered participation, two-way communication, committees have functioned as mediators, and mentoring has been connected to children's needs.

The model has important limitations. Data come from one institution and seven adult participants; elementary school teachers' perspectives and children's voices have not been directly collected. There is no standardized measurement of foundational skills or longitudinal follow-up after children enter elementary school. Therefore, the model describes plausible mechanisms and is based on contextual data, not universal effectiveness. Cross-case validation, instrument development, and mixed methods testing are needed before the model can be used to conclude impacts on child readiness.

**4.5 Implications for practice**

| Actor | Practical implications |
|---|---|
| Head of PAUD | Establish transition as an institutional agenda, provide time for coordination, and lead a joint evaluation. |
| Teacher | Making communication with family's part of pedagogical practice and linking feedback to learning planning. |
| Early Childhood Education Committee | Developing facilitation competencies, inclusive communication, representation of aspirations, and protection of family confidentiality. |
| Parent | Engage in dialogue and developmental support through realistic activities at home, rather than early academic pressure. |
| Education office/supervisor | Incorporate strengthening of partnerships and committee functions in unit mentoring and encourage connections between PAUD-SD/MI. |

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research produces a KOLAB-TRANS Conceptual Model to explain collaboration in the Enjoyable Early Childhood Education to Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Transition Program. The model consists of collaborative leadership, collaborative communication, committees as bridging actors, teachers as pedagogical implementers, parents as educational partners, home-school mentoring, and an orientation to six foundational skills.

Collaborative communication is a core mechanism because it aligns perceptions, coordinates actions, builds trust, and connects information about the child from home and school. Committees expand channels of communication and participation, while parenting and dialogue processes support the transformation of parents from service recipients to partners.

KOLAB-TRANS provides a reflective framework for early childhood education units, but it is not yet a validated effectiveness model. Further research is needed involving diverse units, elementary school teachers, and children; developing measurement instruments; and assessing changes in foundational skills and the sustainability of transitions longitudinally.

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