



# PARTICIPATORY SYNERGY OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES IN MERDEKA CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: A MULTISITE STUDY IN ECE

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## Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the management of partnerships between schools and parent associations (school committees) in enhancing the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level. The focus of the study encompasses the processes of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating partnerships, as well as their contribution to improving the quality of educational services. This research employed a qualitative approach with a multisite study design conducted at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency. Data were collected through limited participatory observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, and parent association administrators, and document analysis. Data analysis was carried out interactively through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data trustworthiness was ensured through source and technique triangulation, member checking, and prolonged field involvement. The research findings indicate that school-parent partnership management that is planned participatively and implemented systematically is able to increase active parental involvement, strengthen support for learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum, and enhance satisfaction with ECE services. Effective partnerships are reflected in intensive two-way communication, parental involvement as guest teachers and home project mentors, and the collaborative execution of program evaluations. These findings confirm that horizontal and transformational partnership governance constitutes a key strategy to optimize children's growth and development achievements and to sustain the quality of early childhood education services.

**Keywords:** *Partnership Management, School Committee, Early Childhood Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Multisite Study*

## Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis manajemen kemitraan antara sekolah dan paguyuban orang tua (komite sekolah) dalam meningkatkan efektivitas implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di tingkat Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD). Fokus kajian mencakup proses perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi kemitraan, serta kontribusinya terhadap peningkatan kualitas layanan pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multisitus yang dilaksanakan di TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa dan TK PGRI 4 Kecamatan Bangil, Kabupaten Pasuruan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi partisipatif terbatas, wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur dengan kepala sekolah, guru, dan pengurus paguyuban orang tua, serta analisis dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara interaktif melalui tahapan kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan

kesimpulan, sementara keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik, *member check*, serta perpanjangan keikutsertaan di lapangan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen kemitraan sekolah dan orang tua yang dirancang secara partisipatif dan diimplementasikan secara sistematis mampu meningkatkan keterlibatan aktif orang tua, memperkuat dukungan terhadap pembelajaran berbasis Kurikulum Merdeka, dan meningkatkan kepuasan terhadap layanan PAUD. Kemitraan yang efektif tercermin dari adanya komunikasi dua arah yang intensif, keterlibatan orang tua sebagai guru tamu (*guest teacher*) maupun pendamping proyek rumah, serta pelaksanaan evaluasi program secara kolaboratif. Temuan ini mengonfirmasi bahwa tata kelola kemitraan yang horizontal dan transformatif merupakan strategi kunci untuk mengoptimalkan capaian tumbuh kembang anak dan menjaga keberlanjutan mutu layanan pendidikan anak usia dini.

**Kata Kunci:** *Manajemen Kemitraan, Komite Sekolah, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Kurikulum Merdeka, Studi Multisitus*

## INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) strategically serves as the primary foundation in shaping the direction of a child's future development. During this phase, cognitive, social-emotional, language, motor, and character development progress very rapidly; hence, every form of educational stimulation provided carries a long-term impact on the child's readiness to enter the next level of education. Various empirical studies indicate that the implementation of integrated and guided-play learning in ECE is capable of enhancing children's cognitive aspects through consistent and planned stimulation. Therefore, the quality of ECE services has a direct correlation with the sustainability of early child development outcomes (Souisa, Lestari, & Yusuf, 2024).

Education is inherently the main pillar in the character and competency formation of the younger generation. In the context of early childhood education, the school's role cannot function optimally without the support and involvement of parents and the community. Partnership management between schools and parent associations, which are generally accommodated within the School Committee, becomes an important strategy to strengthen the synergy between schools and the community in achieving educational goals. This partnership is not merely a complement, but a strategic necessity in answering the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum as well as 21st-century learning challenges, such as digital literacy, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Zuhri, Suwindia, & Winangun, 2024).

The concept of partnership between schools and parents positions the family not merely as a recipient of information, but as an active partner contributing to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning programs. Such forms of partnership can be realized through structured communication, such as periodic meetings and communication books, parental involvement in learning activities, including home learning practices and joint projects as well as resource support and community advocacy.

Empirical evidence shows that partnerships managed systematically through structured planning, monitoring, and evaluation yield a significant impact on improving the quality of ECE services. Evaluation of partnership models using the CIPP approach and study on program effectiveness found an increase in parental involvement, satisfaction with educational services, and

child development indicators when schools implement consistent communication mechanisms, parenting training, and measurable collaborative activities. These findings confirm that partnership management is an integral part of ECE quality improvement efforts (Komang, Febrina, & Poerwati, 2025).

In the ECE context, this thought aligns with the principle of collaborative-transformational leadership in education, which encourages teachers and school principals to build horizontal rather than hierarchical relationships with parents. This approach aims to reinforce the values of independent learning and active family participation, which lie at the core of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation (Souisa et al., 2024).

Partnership management between schools and parent associations comprises a series of intertwined activities, ranging from planning, organizing, implementing, to evaluating. In the planning phase, schools and parent associations need to agree on shared goals, role distribution, and clear success indicators, such as increased parental participation in learning activities or the achievement of child competencies in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Participatory and local-need-based planning makes the partnership program more relevant and applicable, while simultaneously reducing the gap between central curriculum policies and actual learning practices in the field (Christy, Wahyu, & Jamain, 2024).

In the implementation phase, the partnership is manifested in the form of tangible activities, such as parental involvement in the P5 project (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project), home learning activities integrated with the lesson plans, and short training sessions for parents so they can act as learning facilitators. Effective implementation is generally supported by consistent communication through routine meetings, online groups, and activity documentation. Consequently, parents do not only become information recipients but feel like an integral part of the educational process. Case studies in ECE units demonstrate that such forms of involvement are able to increase parental participation and the regularity of learning activity execution (Zuhri et al., 2024).

This study aims to examine and analyze the partnership management between schools and parent associations in improving the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) services. More specifically, this research is directed to describe the partnership planning process carried out by schools together with parent associations in supporting the execution of learning aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum; to analyze the partnership organizing which encompasses the division of roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms between parties; and to identify the forms and implementation of partnership execution in learning activities both within the school environment and at home. Additionally, this study also aims to evaluate the partnership program evaluation mechanisms applied collaboratively by schools and parents, and to analyze the contribution of such partnership management toward improving the quality of ECE services, particularly in aspects of parental involvement, satisfaction with educational services, and sustainable support for child development.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach with a multisite study design carried out at two Early Childhood Education institutions, namely TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency. Data collection was carried out in stages and took place simultaneously at both research sites. The initial stage began with research preparation, which included determining the focus of the study regarding partnership management between schools and parent associations in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, developing research instruments in the form of observation guidelines, semi-structured interview guidelines, and documentation formats, as well as processing research permits. Subsequently, the researcher conducted field data collection through limited participatory observation to directly observe the forms of collaboration, interaction patterns, and implementation mechanisms of the school and parent association partnership. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, parent association administrators, and related parties who possessed direct experience in partnership planning, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, a documentation study was performed by reviewing various supporting documents, such as school work programs, parent association meeting minutes, activity reports, and Merdeka Curriculum implementation documents, in order to strengthen and complement the data obtained from observations and interviews. If any data were found to be incomplete or required deeper exploration, the researcher carried out clarification and data enrichment through follow-up interviews and additional observations.

Data analysis in this study was performed interactively and continuously from the data collection process until the end of the research, referring to the analysis model by (Huberman & Miles, 1992) as well as coding techniques from Saldaña (Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). The first stage of analysis was data condensation, which is the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying data through the transcription of interview results, initial coding, and grouping of main themes relevant to school and parent association partnership management. The condensed data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, and cross-site comparisons to facilitate the researcher in understanding interaction patterns, partnership strategies, and the roles of actors in each institution. The next stage was drawing and verifying conclusions, which was carried out by interpreting the data deeply to find general patterns and specific characteristics of partnership practices at both research sites. The conclusions obtained were continuously verified by comparing across data sources and across sites until consistent and accountable findings were achieved. Data trustworthiness was maintained through source and method triangulation, member checking with key informants, prolonged engagement of the researcher in the field, and examination of supporting documents to ensure the credibility, dependability, and consistency of the research findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## FINDINGS

To provide a comprehensive overview of the partnership governance across both early childhood education units, a cross-site analysis was conducted. The comparative matrix of the findings is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Cross-Site Findings Matrix

Research Focus	TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa (Site I)	TK PGRI 4 Bangil District (Site II)	Common Conceptual Themes (Cross-Site Synergy)
<b>Partnership Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated through a formal Joint Working Meeting (Raker) involving the school management, teaching staff, and classroom parent association administrators.</li> <li>Implemented a need-assessment approach using potential mapping questionnaires (capturing parents' backgrounds, expertise, and availability) at the beginning of the school year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated through an "Early-Year Open Dialogue" forum designed with a more fluid and communal atmosphere.</li> <li>Focused on the procurement of environment-based learning media and integrating the academic calendar with monthly parenting activities.</li> </ul>	<b>Participatory-Collaborative Planning:</b> Establishes a shared vision from the onset of the academic year to minimize resistance and foster a strong sense of belonging among parents toward the Merdeka Curriculum programs, particularly the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5).
<b>Partnership Organizing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained a formal parent association structure legalized by the Principal's Decree (at both institutional and classroom levels).</li> <li>Established a specialized unit: "P5 Creative Division," voluntarily staffed by parents with artistic expertise to facilitate project celebration props and stage needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained a formal school committee structure legalized by the Principal's Decree.</li> <li>Applied clear role differentiation: Educators serve strictly as academic conceptors, while the Parent Association acts as a mediator, resource provider, and companion for non-academic activities.</li> </ul>	<b>Horizontal-Transformational Structure:</b> Positions parents as management subjects (equal partners). Clear division of duties through legalized decrees proves reliable in preventing role overlapping and conflicts of interest.
<b>Partnership Implementation (Merdeka Curriculum)</b>	<p><b>School Dimension:</b></p> <p>Guest teacher program (parents introducing their professions through playful methods) and active involvement in the P5 celebration under the theme "I Love Indonesia."</p> <p><b>Home Dimension:</b></p>	<p><b>School Dimension:</b></p> <p>Mutual cooperation (<i>gotong royong</i>) to build a portable traffic park, a family medicinal garden (TOGA), and conducting monthly parenting classes with guest experts.</p> <p><b>Home Dimension:</b></p>	<p><b>Two-Dimensional Synchronization (Mesosystem):</b></p> <p>The burden of Merdeka Curriculum implementation does not rest solely on teachers. Intensive use of digital technology (WhatsApp Groups)</p>

	Assisting children with daily eco-print projects; monitored using digital communication books via WhatsApp.	Internalizing character values through the "Dare to be Courteous" ( <i>Berani Santun</i> ) slogan; monitored using daily activity checklists.	maintains a real-time flow of child development data between school and home environment.
<b>Partnership Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative Evaluation: Monthly reflection forums between classroom teachers and parent coordinators following major events.</li> <li>Summative Evaluation: Transparent end-of-semester plenary meetings.</li> <li>Instruments: Satisfaction surveys, meeting minutes, and the curation of children's learning development portfolios.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative Evaluation: Monthly reflections focusing on technical communication barriers and logistics.</li> <li>Summative Evaluation: End-of-semester plenary meetings.</li> <li>Adaptive Solutions: Management formulated options for virtual involvement and highly flexible home project schedules for working parents.</li> </ul>	<b>Periodic Collaborative Evaluation:</b> Evaluation goes beyond measuring children's cognitive outcomes to assess the performance of the partnership governance itself. It functions as an early warning system to drive continuous improvement.

### Partnership Planning between Schools and Parent Associations

The partnership planning process at both early childhood education institutions serving as research sites exhibits a highly participatory-collaborative pattern. This strategic step was intentionally initiated at the beginning of the new academic year to establish a shared vision between the institutional management and all parents. Through this open initial approach, the educational institutions sought to break down conventional barriers, ensuring that the work program development process no longer proceeded unidirectionally but instead involved an equitable two-way dialogue to support the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Specifically at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa (Site I), this operational partnership planning process is formally facilitated through a joint Working Meeting (Raker) mechanism. The Raker forum brings together the principal, the teaching staff, and the entire classroom parent association board into a single discussion space. The primary agenda serving as the core axis of discussion in this forum focuses on concrete steps to align the institution's vision with the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) program, which is a hallmark of the Merdeka Curriculum.

To support the effectiveness of the P5 program designed at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa, the school also implements a comprehensive need-assessment planning method. This step is actualized by distributing potential mapping questionnaires to parents at the beginning of their children's enrollment. Through this questionnaire instrument, the school successfully captured valid

data regarding the occupational backgrounds, specialized expertise, and time availability of each parent to be involved in the school's agenda.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of partnership planning at TK PGRI 4 Bangil District (Site II) is packaged through a slightly different interaction format, namely through a forum called the "Early-Year Open Dialogue." This forum is designed with a more fluid and communal atmosphere, yet it retains clearly structured program achievement targets. The primary focus of planning at this second site is centered on efforts to procure learning media based on the surrounding environment and to co-develop the academic calendar. This academic calendar periodically integrates parenting activities to support the alignment of parenting practices between the school and home environments.

In general, drawing a common thread from both research sites, the formulated partnership planning has successfully established clear and measurable success indicators. These success indicators are not merely administratively oriented, but include target parent attendance percentages in every program organized by the school. Furthermore, the high level of parental involvement in providing independent learning assistance at home is also utilized as one of the primary parameters for the effectiveness of the jointly planned partnership.

### **Partnership Organizing between Schools and Parent Associations**

Partnership organizing at both research sites is systematically directed toward the division of roles and responsibilities that possess legal standing and a clear structure. This was intentionally arranged early on with the primary objective of avoiding overlapping authority in daily operational decision-making. With clear task distribution, educators at school and the parent association board can move synergistically without feeling intervened in by one another.

A review of the formal structures indicates that both TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 Bangil District possess robust Parent Association or School Committee structures. These organizational structures are legally authorized through the issuance of official Principal Decrees signed directly by the Principal at each institution. To guarantee a smooth flow of coordination from top to bottom levels, this committee organization structure is intentionally divided into two tiers: the main coordinator at the school level and operational coordinators at each classroom tier.

Regarding the depth of role distribution, the school side, consisting of the Principal and the teaching staff is positioned absolutely as academic conceptors. They hold full control as primary facilitators in the early childhood teaching and learning process inside the classroom. This academic role demands professional teacher competence in compounding learning materials so that they align with the flexible and child-centered principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

On the other hand, the Parent Association acts as an external supporting pillar executing three primary functions: as a spokesperson or mediator, a resource provider, and an activity companion partner. As mediators, the association board plays a role in bridging the flow of information and aspirations from parents to the school to prevent miscommunication. As resource providers

and companion partners, they make tangible contributions in the form of thoughts, labor, and materials for the smooth running of non-academic school activities.

A unique characteristic of this organization is visibly apparent at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa, where they innovated by forming a specialized structure named the "P5 Creative Division." This operational division is voluntarily staffed by parent representatives who possess competence or interest in arts and crafts. The main task of this creative division is to help facilitate and prepare all technical aspects related to meeting performance equipment needs, stage props, and children's cultural arts needs when curriculum project celebrations take place.

### **Partnership Implementation in the Merdeka Curriculum**

The partnership implementation taking place at both early childhood education institutions is the tangible manifestation and practical execution of all previously agreed planning documents. The collaboration pattern woven in the field is not merely centered within the formal institutional area but spans two continuous spatial dimensions. These dimensions explicitly divide the form of partnership interaction into activities carried out within the school environment and independent stimulation activities conducted in the home environment.

In the dimension of implementation within the school environment, TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa actualizes it through an innovative program where parents are brought directly into the classroom to serve as guest teachers. In these special sessions, parents are tasked with introducing their various professions to the children using fun, play-based methods. Additionally, parents at this first site also demonstrate highly active involvement in ensuring the success of the P5 project celebration, which adopts the grand theme "I Love Indonesia."

Conversely, school-environment activities at TK PGRI 4 Bangil District realize partnership implementation through mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and parental capacity building. The school, together with the association, organizes mass community work to build a portable traffic park facility and create a family medicinal garden (TOGA) within the school area. Not only that, this second site also consistently organizes monthly parenting classes that bring in expert speakers to dissect materials related to early childhood developmental psychology.

Meanwhile, for the dimension of implementation within the home environment, both schools design activities that demand intensive interaction between children and parents. At TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa, parents accompany their children in executing simple projects, such as creating fabric pattern wonders through the Eco-print technique using leaves collected around their house yards. To monitor this activity, parents are required to fill out digital communication books sent periodically through the use of the WhatsApp application.

As for the home implementation at TK PGRI 4 Bangil District, more emphasis is placed on the aspect of child character building through daily habituation titled with the slogan "Dare to be Courteous" (*Berani Santun*). The process of internalizing these character values is monitored by parents by filling

out a daily child activity checklist provided by the school. This entire process of guided-play stimulation at home is run by parents by continuously following the written guidelines and systematic directions provided by the classroom teacher.

Intensive and two-way communication ultimately proved to be the primary key behind the success of the entire partnership implementation at both institutions. Both TK Muslimat 16 and TK PGRI 4 smartly utilize the existence of online groups such as WhatsApp Groups as their primary communication channel. Through these groups, the teaching staff can routinely share the latest Daily Lesson Implementation Plan (RPPH) documents or teaching modules, so that parents at home have a synchronized reference in providing further educational stimulation for their children.

### **Partnership Program Evaluation**

The evaluation mechanism for the partnership program is conducted by both schools periodically and collaboratively to measure the extent to which the preset program targets have been achieved. This evaluation is deemed essential not to seek individual faults, but as a forum for shared reflection toward sustainable educational service quality improvement. Through the involvement of all parties in the evaluation process, the data obtained becomes more objective and comprehensive from the perspectives of both educators and parents.

At the daily operational level, both institutions apply a Formative Evaluation system carried out routinely every month. This monthly evaluation agenda proceeds in the form of a shared reflection forum that brings together classroom teachers with their respective classroom association coordinators. This meeting is usually held shortly after the school completes a major activity agenda or toward the end of the month, focusing primarily on discussing technical communication barriers, logistical hurdles, and the fluctuation of parent participation.

In addition to monthly evaluations, both research sites also execute a Summative Evaluation mechanism carried out at the end of every semester. This large-scale evaluation process is actualized through the holding of end-of-semester plenary meetings attended by all school stakeholders. In these plenary meetings, all achievements and shortcomings of the partnership program over the past six months are transparently dissected based on authentic field data that have been collected.

The array of evaluation instruments used in the plenary meeting is designed to be quite varied to capture a complete portrait of the partnership. These instruments include the distribution of parent satisfaction surveys regarding the quality of educational services, the review of monthly meeting minutes, and the curation process of children's learning development portfolio documents. This portfolio sheet serves as tangible proof of whether the stimulation collaboration between school and home yields a positive impact on the child's growth and development achievements or not.

Through the summative evaluation process at TK PGRI 4 Bangil District, critical data was uncovered indicating that the greatest challenge in the partnership resides within the group of parents who hold status as active workers. Responding to these time-constraint obstacles, the school management

adaptively formulated alternative solutions for working parents right away. These solutions were manifested by providing options for virtual involvement in coordination meetings and providing child stimulation project assignment schemes at home that are far more flexible in terms of time.

## DISCUSSION

### **The Essence of Participatory Planning in ECE**

The research findings at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 Bangil District clearly indicate that planning involving parents from the very beginning is capable of minimizing resistance to institutional policies. When a decision or work program is no longer top-down instructional in nature, the fear of additional burdens among parents can be subdued early on (Trisnawati, 2025). This process opens a space for open dialogue that thaws bureaucratic rigidity, allowing policy transitions for new curriculum implementations to be accepted with a more cooperative attitude across all student family environments (Yaqin et al., 2026).

This active involvement directly implicates the enhancement of parents' sense of belonging toward all programs and policies launched by the school. Parents no longer view themselves merely as consumers of educational services, but as an internal component bearing a moral responsibility for the success of that education (Yuda & Sesmiarni, 2025). Ownership triggers the birth of a collective consciousness to participate in maintaining the institution's existence, supporting facility fulfillment, and upholding the good name of the ECE institution in the eyes of the broader public.

Theoretically, this phenomenon reinforces the relevance of Participatory Planning Theory combined with contingency planning principles. The baseline assumption of this theory states that the active involvement of all stakeholders in formulating organizational strategic goals is an absolute prerequisite for birthing a shared vision. In the context of ECE management, this shared vision eliminates sectoral egos and unifies perceptions regarding early childhood growth and development targets to be achieved during an ongoing academic year (Watson, 2015).

Within the implementation framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, local potential-based planning actualized by both research sites is proven to be a solution to macro limitation constraints. Capturing potential data through questionnaires and early-year dialogues ensures that the designed work programs are not utopian, but down-to-earth and adaptive to the socio-cultural realities of the Bangil community. This tactical step makes school work programs more flexible, efficient in budget utilization, and grounded because they draw directly from the real support capacity of the surrounding community.

This cross-site participatory planning model highly aligns with the thoughts of Christy et al., who emphasize that applicable partnership planning based on local needs is highly effective in reducing the gap between central curriculum regulations and real implementation at the ECE unit level (Christy et al., 2024). Frequently, national regulations feel abstract at the regional operational level; however, with compromises and creative modifications within joint

planning with the school committee, the national content of the Merdeka Curriculum is successfully translated into concrete activities that are child-friendly and contextual to the local environment.

### **Organizing with a Collaborative-Transformational Leadership Approach**

Hasil The results of data analysis show that the division of partnership organizational structures designed horizontally, placing parents as equal partners is proven to increase coordination effectiveness. This model of organizing reduces the psychological barriers that frequently trigger a sense of inferiority among parents in front of teachers. Equal communication permits the free exchange of ideas, the resolution of conflicts through consensus (*musyawarah*), and a fair distribution of workload in ensuring the success of major upcoming programs.

The application of this horizontal formal structure directly strengthens the relevance of Transformational Leadership Theory in the management of ECE institutions. This theory emphasizes the importance of the leader's role (in this case, the School Principal) to delegate authority, inspire followers, and build collective capacity through mutually empowering partnership relations. A transformational principal does not lead with rigid instructions but acts as a conductor harmonizing the potential of teachers and parent associations into an organized force (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

This leadership concept is reinforced by the thinking of Puspita et al., who state that the horizontal relationships built between educators and the family environment are capable of stimulating the emergence of independent learning values in children. The harmony of working relationships at the macro level of school organization emits a positive aura captured by the children. When children see their teachers and parents respecting each other and working closely together, psychological comfort for the children at school and at home will be formed, which becomes the primary foundation for their freedom of learning (Puspita, Maharani, & Wildanah, 2025).

The most fundamental impact of this organizational arrangement is seen when parents are no longer positioned as objects or recipients of hierarchical instructions, but are instead elevated as management subjects. As subjects, parents' intrinsic motivation to support the engine of education and ensure the success of school programs can develop optimally. They move to assist the school not based on economic compulsion or regulatory coercion, but due to an internal calling of consciousness that their contributions are valued and yield a real impact on their children.

Furthermore, neat organization legalized through official Principal Decrees (SK) is proven reliable in preventing conflicts of interest in the field. The clear coordination structure establishes strict boundaries of work areas between the academic domain of teachers and the supporting domain of the association. This clarity of boundaries ensures that all resource support, both material and labor gathered by the classroom associations, is oriented purely toward improving the quality of child development and not for intervening in internal school policies.

## Partnership Implementation Synergy: The Key to Merdeka Curriculum Effectiveness

The Merdeka Curriculum mandates a new paradigm wherein the learning process must be child-centered and developed contextually through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) content. This demand necessitates a diversification of teaching methods that cannot possibly be borne alone by ECE educators. An expansion of the learning space is required so that children do not grow bored and can interact directly with the realities of social life existing around their places of residence.

The tangible partnership implementation found at both sites, such as the presence of parents as guest teachers and home project mentors, proves that the burden of new curriculum implementation does not rest solely on teachers. The presence of parents brings a breath of fresh air in the form of a variation of practical expertise that classroom teachers do not necessarily possess. This practical collaboration distributes the workload proportionally, where teachers act as designers of pedagogical scenarios, while parents contribute to enriching children's learning experiences in the field.

Theoretically, this form of two-way partnership implementation synergy confirms the truth of the Development Ecology Theory (Ecological Systems Theory) pioneered by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This theory focuses on the mesosystem level, which explicitly states that a child's development is heavily influenced by the quality of interactions and relationships woven between two or more primary environments where the child lives, namely the school party and the home party. Strong synergy within this mesosystem ensures the absence of contradictory stimulations that can confuse the moral foundation of early childhood (Pitri, Hidayat, & Wulandari, 2024; Sheerin, Brodell, Huey Jr, & Kemp, 2023).

The alignment of consistent forms of stimulation in the school environment and the home environment ultimately accelerates the process of internalizing the character values of the Pancasila Student Profile within the child. Values such as independence, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and global diversity do not merely become theoretical memorizations in class but are practiced directly at home under parental guidance. It is the continuity of this learning experience across environments that matures the child's personality formation holistically and sustainably.

Active family involvement in these school-based projects is reinforced by the findings of Souisa et al., which state that the active involvement of families in project-based learning in ECE significantly increases orderliness, stimulation variations, and the success of children's learning achievements (Souisa et al., 2024). Additionally, the utilization of digital media channels in intensive two-way communication is proven reliable in answering 21st-century literacy challenges as voiced by Zuhri et al. The flexibility of digital technology collapses the barriers of distance and time, maintains information transparency, and ensures that the data flow of child development runs in real-time (Zuhri et al., 2024).

## Collaborative Evaluation as an Instrument for Sustainable Quality

**Mekanisme** The evaluation mechanism implemented at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 Bangil District contains a strategic management breakthrough. Evaluation at these two institutions is no longer trapped in assessing children's learning outcomes solely from a cognitive standpoint, but dares to measure the performance of the partnership connection itself. This step positions the partnership governance process as an essential variable determining whether an early childhood education institution service is quality-driven or not.

The execution of periodic evaluations, both formative monthly and summative each semester acts effectively as an early warning system. Through routine reflection forums, declines in the percentage of parent participation or seeds of dissatisfaction with educational services can immediately have their causes identified before expanding into conflicts. The responsive characteristic of this evaluation maintains the stability of the school organization's climate so that it remains conducive, transparent, and free from negative rumors.

The collaborative evaluation approach practiced across sites highly aligns with the basic principles of the CIPP Evaluation Theory (Context, Input, Process, Product Evaluation Model) developed by Stufflebeam. This model views evaluation as a holistic instrument to provide information for decision improvement. The evaluation focus on the Process component (the running of the partnership) and the Product component (satisfaction and child growth and development outcomes) provides a comprehensive overview regarding the efficiency of resource allocation as well as the effectiveness of the partnership program that has been run (Artanto & Ibadin, 2023).

In accordance with the empirical study results of Souisa et al., a partnership evaluation process that is measurable and consistently performed implicates directly an increase in parent satisfaction toward the quality of the educational institution's services. This satisfaction is born because parents feel that their voices, complaints, and contributions are heard and accommodated into school improvement policies. This high public trust will, in turn, reinforce the bargaining position of ECE institutions in the eyes of the community (Souisa et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the end result of this collaborative evaluation contributes a highly objective feedback loop for the school management. Recommendations generated from the evaluation forum become the primary baseline to perform continuous improvement on the formulation of short-term plans in the subsequent semester. This management cycle, rotating from participatory planning to collaborative evaluation, guarantees the realization of sustainable quality in ECE services amid the dynamics of changing times.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion regarding the partnership management between schools and parent associations (school committees) in enhancing the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at TK Muslimat 16 Tanwirul Hijaa and TK PGRI 4 Bangil District, the planning and organizing aspects have proven to be a solid and

primary foundation. The partnership planning process at both sites initiated at the beginning of the academic year through the mechanisms of joint Working Meetings and Open Dialogues, which were further reinforced by a need-assessment method based on parent potential mapping questionnaires. This participatory-collaborative approach successfully aligned the institutions' visions with local needs and fostered a high sense of belonging among parents toward school programs, particularly in supporting the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). This success was supported by horizontal organizing based on transformational leadership, where the organizational structure of the parent association was legalized through the Principal's Decree (SK) with tiered coordination. This horizontal structure positioned parents as equal partners or management subjects, thereby minimizing psychological barriers, clarifying the boundaries between teachers' academic authority and the association's supporting domain, and preventing role overlapping in the field.

At the operational stage, the effectiveness of the curriculum was optimized through a two-dimensional implementation synergy and periodic collaborative evaluation mechanisms. The partnership implementation proceeded continuously, encompassing the school environment dimension (through guest teacher programs and P5 celebrations) and the home environment dimension (through mentoring independent projects such as eco-printing and internalizing daily character values). The utilization of WhatsApp Groups became a key success factor in sharing the Daily Lesson Implementation Plans (RPPH) in real-time to maintain mesosystem synchronization or consistency of child stimulation between the school and the home. This entire series of activities was subsequently monitored through a structured evaluation that combined monthly Formative Evaluations to reflect on technical-logistical constraints and end-of-semester Summative Evaluations through transparent plenary meetings. Utilizing varied instruments such as satisfaction surveys, meeting minutes, and children's development portfolios, this evaluation system successfully functioned as an early warning system while providing objective feedback for continuous improvement to guarantee the sustainable quality of early childhood education services in both institutions.

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