

Teacher Strategies and Parental Involvement in Supporting the Transition from Early Childhood Education to Primary School in West Java: A Survey Study

Susan Maulani¹, Shinta Mutiara Puspita², Agus Ruswandi³, Cucu Susanti⁴, Widya Tasya Astiti⁵, Siti Nasriatul Hamidah⁶, Nailal Munayah⁷

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The transition from early childhood education to primary school remains a critical yet underexamined phase, particularly in contexts where school readiness is narrowly defined in academic terms. Despite increasing attention to early childhood education, limited research has explored how teacher strategies and parental involvement jointly shape children's transition. This study aims to examine the strategies employed by PAUD teachers and the role of parental involvement in supporting children's transition to primary school in West Java. A cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 132 teachers and 182 parents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Kruskal–Wallis H test. Findings indicate that teachers predominantly implement classroom-based strategies focused on pre-literacy, numeracy, behavioral regulation, and independence. However, these practices are more strongly influenced by parental expectations for early academic achievement than by child-centered pedagogical approaches. Collaboration between early childhood and primary school teachers remains limited, contributing to a fragmented understanding of school readiness. Parental involvement is largely home-based, with relatively low participation in school-based programs. These findings highlight the need for structured institutional collaboration and more balanced approaches to school readiness that integrate academic and developmental dimensions to support children's holistic transition.

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Corresponding Author:

Susan Maulani

Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Islam Nusantara

Email: susanmaulani@uninus.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The transition from early childhood education to primary school is widely recognized as a critical phase influencing children's academic, social, and emotional development. Across diverse educational contexts, this transition is often associated with differences in

pedagogical approaches, shifting from play-based learning environments to more structured academic settings, which may pose adjustment challenges for children [1], [2], [3]. This change can be challenging for children because of the difference between the learning environment in PAUD, which is predominantly play-based, and that in elementary schools, which is more structured [2]. A smooth transition can increase motivation and academic achievement. In contrast, a less-than-optimal transition can cause anxiety and difficulty adapting [4]. Therefore, the role of teachers in preparing children to face this change is very crucial.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of teacher strategies, including play-based learning and social-emotional support, as well as the role of parental involvement in facilitating smoother transitions [5]. In addition, parental involvement has a significant impact on children's readiness to enter elementary school [6], [7], [8]. Effective communication and collaboration between teachers and parents have been shown to reduce children's adjustment difficulties. However, transition practices in many contexts remain uneven, often characterized by an overemphasis on early academic preparation at the expense of holistic development [9]. However, in practice, many early childhood education settings continue to face structural challenges in implementing effective transition practices. These challenges include limited coordination between early childhood and primary school institutions, differences in academic expectations, and insufficient integration of social-emotional readiness into transition programs.

Despite the growing body of research on school transition, existing studies have predominantly focused on qualitative case studies or single-institution contexts. As a result, there is limited empirical evidence that systematically examines the relationship between teacher strategies and parental involvement across a broader sample. Furthermore, few studies have explored how these two dimensions interact to shape a more integrated understanding of school readiness. Along the way, several main problems need to be investigated further. First, what strategies do teachers use to help children adapt to the elementary school environment? Second, to what extent is parental involvement in supporting children's transition from PAUD to elementary school? Third, what are the main challenges faced in this transition process? Some challenges that often arise include a lack of coordination between early childhood education and elementary school, differences in academic expectations, and limited resources to support an effective transition [10].

This research has a high urgency considering that the transition from PAUD to elementary school can have a long-term impact on children's development. Children who experience a poor transition are more likely to face learning difficulties [11]. The lack of standardization in transition strategies leaves children unprepared for elementary school, so more in-depth research is needed to identify best practices that can be widely applied. [12]. Parental support and involvement can increase children's confidence and help them adapt more quickly to an elementary school environment. The results of this study are expected to provide policymakers with recommendations for designing a more effective transition program between early childhood education and elementary school, thereby improving the overall quality of early childhood education.

Various previous studies have examined the topic of transition. Case study of the role of teachers in the PAUD-SD transition [13]; teachers' performance in facilitating a pleasant transition [14], [15]. Literature study on child protection strategies during the transition [16], school introduction programs in transition [17], children's readiness, parents, learning environment, and teacher competence, a pleasant PAUD-SD transition with collaboration on fundamental foundation skills [18], and the role of maternal involvement in transitions that do not match her expectations. Parents trust teachers and schools more in transition problems [19].

Therefore, this study aims to examine the strategies employed by PAUD teachers and the role of parental involvement in supporting children's transition to primary school in West Java. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What strategies do teachers use to support children's transition? (2) To what extent are parents involved in the transition process? and (3) What challenges are encountered in this process?. This study contributes to the literature by providing quantitative evidence from a broader sample, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between teacher practices and parental involvement. The findings are expected to inform the development of more structured and collaborative transition frameworks involving schools and families.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine teacher strategies and parental involvement in supporting children's transition from early childhood education to primary school [20], [21]. The survey method was chosen to capture patterns across a relatively large sample and to enable statistical comparisons across groups.

The study involved early childhood education (PAUD) teachers and parents in two districts in West Java. A multistage sampling approach was applied. In the first stage, districts were selected purposively to represent urban, semi-urban, and rural contexts. In the second stage, PAUD institutions were selected randomly. In the final stage, teachers and parents from selected institutions were recruited as respondents. The sample consisted of 132 teachers (from a population of 220) and 182 parents (from a population of 380), determined using a 5% margin of error [21].

Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to measure (1) teacher strategies in supporting school transition and (2) parental involvement in the transition process. The instruments employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) [22]. The teacher strategy instrument consisted of 13 items covering dimensions such as academic readiness, behavioral preparation, social-emotional support, institutional collaboration, and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in the transition. The parental involvement instrument included 10 items measuring home-based and school-based involvement. Content validity was established through expert review, and internal consistency reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0,72$).

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS [23]. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize patterns of teacher strategies and parental involvement. The Kruskal–Wallis H test was applied to examine differences in teacher strategies by teaching experience and school location, as well as differences in parental

involvement by educational background [24]. This nonparametric test was selected because the data were not normally distributed. When significant differences were identified, post-hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted to determine which groups differed significantly [24].

Ethical procedures were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Data were collected anonymously, and confidentiality was ensured.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Teacher Strategies in Supporting School Transition

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of teacher strategies (N = 132). Overall, teachers reported moderate to high implementation of strategies related to academic readiness and behavioral preparation. The highest mean score was observed for introducing pre-literacy and numeracy through play-based activities (M = 3.36, SD = 0.48), followed by training children to follow structured classroom rules (M = 3.33, SD = 0.53).

Strategies related to independence and task responsibility also showed relatively high mean scores (M = 3.06, SD = 0.70). In contrast, strategies involving cross-institutional collaboration, such as communication with primary school teachers (M = 1.45, SD = 0.72) and school visit programs (M = 1.58, SD = 0.88), were reported less frequently. Similarly, strategies addressing children's emotional readiness, such as discussing feelings and anxieties about school transition, showed lower mean scores (M = 2.37, SD = 0.73).

Table 1. Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Strategy Variables (N=132)

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Introducing pre-calistung through the play method	3.36	0.48
2.	Implement learning with a longer focus duration	3.06	0.70
3.	Assign tasks that train independence & responsibility	3.06	0.70
4.	Facilitate activities that train group work	2.64	0.63
5.	Discuss specifically the child's feelings/anxieties related to elementary school	2.37	0.73
6.	Train children to follow more structured classroom rules	3.33	0.53
7.	Communicate with elementary teachers to align the curriculum	1.45	0.72
8.	Hold a visit program at the nearest elementary school	1.58	0.88
9.	Inform parents about developmental stages	2.73	0.73

Differences in Teacher Strategies by Experience and School Location

The Kruskal–Wallis H test indicated statistically significant differences in teacher strategies based on Teacher Experience (H = 8.974, p = 0.011) and School Location (H = 9.845, p = 0.007). Post-hoc pairwise comparisons revealed that teachers with 5–10 years of experience reported significantly higher implementation of transition strategies compared to less experienced teachers. In addition, teachers in rural areas had higher mean ranks than those in urban and suburban settings.

Post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Dunn–Bonferroni test revealed that teachers with 5–10 years of experience reported significantly higher strategy implementation than those with fewer than 5 years of experience ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Summary of the Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test: The Effect of Teachers' Experience and School Location on Teacher Strategy

Differentiating Factors	H Test Results	Asymp. Sig. (p)	Highest Strategy Group (Mean Rank)
Teacher's Experience	8.974	0.011	5-10 Year (78.50)
School Location	9.845	0.007	Rural (78.90)

Parental Involvement in the Transition Process

Table 3 summarizes parental involvement practices ($N = 182$). Overall, parental involvement was more prominent in home-based activities than in school-based participation. The highest mean scores were found in time-discipline practices ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.54$) and promoting children's independence ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.61$). Providing motivation ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.77$) and accompanying children in completing tasks ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.86$) were also relatively common.

In contrast, school-based involvement, such as attending transition meetings ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.06$) and discussing children's readiness with teachers ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.06$), showed lower mean scores.

Table 3. Frequency of Parental Involvement Practices in Preparation for the PAUD-SD Transition ($N=182$)

No.	Parent Involvement Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	I had a discussion with the teacher about my child's readiness	2.59	1.06
2.	I attended a meeting at school about transitioning to elementary school	2.56	1.06
3.	I read a book/tell stories about activities in elementary school	2.84	0.976
4.	I train children to be independent.	3.67	0.605
5.	I accompany my child to do simple tasks	3.34	0.856
6.	I invite my children to visit the elementary school environment	2.68	1.08
7.	I talk about new rules and habits in elementary school	2.90	0.992
8.	I give time discipline exercises.	3.70	0.538
9.	I communicate with other parents	2.97	0.934
10.	I provide motivation and enthusiasm	3.43	0.768

Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Table 4 presents teachers' perceptions of parental involvement ($N = 132$). Overall, parental involvement was perceived as moderate. The highest mean score was observed for parents having realistic expectations of their children ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.90$). In contrast, parents' active initiative to inquire about their children's readiness showed a lower mean score ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.72$). Participation in transition programs ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.90$) and follow-up of teachers' suggestions ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.60$) were also moderate.

Table 4. Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Transition Preparation (N=132)

No.	Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement	Mean	SD
10.	Parents actively ask about the development of their child's readiness	2.60	0.721
11.	Parents participate in transition preparation programs	2.99	0.899
12.	Parents follow up on advice from teachers at home	2.68	0.598
13.	Parents have realistic expectations of their children	3.13	0.899

Differences in Parental Involvement by Background Variables

The Kruskal–Wallis test showed no significant differences in parental involvement based on School Location ($H = 0.218$, $p = 0.897$). Mean rank values across urban, suburban, and rural settings were relatively similar. However, significant differences were found based on Parental Education ($H = 8.124$, $p = 0.044$). Post-hoc comparisons indicated that parents with higher educational levels demonstrated higher levels of involvement compared to those with lower educational backgrounds. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that parents with a bachelor's degree demonstrated significantly higher involvement than those with elementary-level education ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test: Teachers' Perception of Parental Involvement

Differentiating Variables	Category	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square (H)	df	Asymp. Sig.
School Location	Urban	20	65.50	0.218	2	0.897
	Suburban	20	68.75			
	Rural	92	66.10			
Parent Education*	Elementary Education	11	38.50	8.124	3	0.044
	Junior High School	31	42.75			
	High School	84	47.10			
	Bachelor	56	55.85			

*Shows significance at the p level < 0.05 .

3.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that teacher strategies are predominantly oriented toward academic readiness and behavioral regulation, particularly through pre-literacy activities and structured classroom practices. This pattern aligns with previous studies suggesting that early childhood educators often prioritize academic preparation as a key indicator of successful transition [25], [26]. The approach to play in pre-calculistic introduction is also consistent with literature recommendations that emphasize the importance of *developmentally appropriate practices* in the transition period [27].

However, the relatively lower emphasis on social-emotional support suggests an imbalance in transition practices. This finding may indicate a tendency toward “schoolification,” in which early childhood education increasingly adopts primary school expectations [28], [29], potentially limiting children’s emotional adjustment during transition [30], [31].

Another important finding is the limited implementation of cross-level collaboration strategies, particularly communication between early childhood and primary school teachers. This suggests that the transition process remains fragmented rather than

institutionally coordinated. Such limitations may reflect structural and cultural barriers, including differences in professional roles, a lack of institutional policies, and limited resources. As a result, the responsibility for transition tends to fall primarily on early childhood teachers without systemic support.

The findings also reveal that parental involvement is predominantly home-based, with greater engagement in activities such as independence training and time-discipline practices. This pattern reflects the important role of families in preparing children for school transition, particularly in fostering self-regulation and adaptive behavior. Several studies confirm that home-based parental involvement is an important predictor of the success of the early school transition, especially in terms of children's self-regulation, independence, and adjustment [32], [33], [34]. Activities such as time discipline, habituation, and independence training contribute directly to school *readiness*, especially in non-academic domains that have been shown to play a significant role in children's early success in primary school [30], [35]. Thus, the high intensity of these practices reflects parents' awareness of the importance of social-emotional and behavioral readiness, not just academic readiness.

However, participation in school-based activities and communication with teachers remains relatively low. This may indicate challenges in establishing effective home-school partnerships during the transition process. Previous research has shown that formal school environments can sometimes limit parental engagement due to institutional norms and communication barriers [36], [37].

The significant differences in parental involvement based on educational background highlight the role of educational capital in shaping engagement patterns. Parents with higher levels of education tend to demonstrate greater involvement, consistent with studies on cultural capital and parental engagement [38], [39]. This suggests that disparities in parental education may influence access to information, confidence in interacting with schools, and participation in structured educational activities.

The finding that communication with fellow parents is more frequent than direct communication with teachers reinforces the argument that horizontal social capital plays an important role in the school transition process. Previous research has shown that parent networks serve as a source of practical information, emotional validation, and adaptive strategies that are often more accessible than the formal school channel [40], [41]. However, over-reliance on informal networks can reinforce information gaps and lead to transitional practices that may not align with school expectations or curricula.

Conceptually, the results of this study confirm that the PAUD-SD transition remains positioned as an individual responsibility of the family, rather than a structured collaborative process between home and school. This is contrary to the shared *responsibility paradigm* widely recommended in the international literature, which views successful transitions as the result of active partnerships among parents, teachers, and educational institutions. Therefore, these findings have important implications for the development of more inclusive transition policies and practices, emphasizing the need for proactive school strategies to bridge communication gaps and reduce institutional friction.

The most prominent aspect of involvement, according to teachers, is parents' realistic expectations for their children. The high score on this indicator shows that most parents are

perceived to have understood the child's developmental capacity and do not demand excessive academic readiness before entering elementary school. These findings align with previous research indicating that realistic parental expectations contribute positively to children's social-emotional adjustment during the school transition period. Developmentally appropriate expectations have also been shown to correlate with lower children's stress levels and more positive adaptation in the early years of primary school [27].

However, communication and interaction between parents and teachers remain limited. The low level of parental initiative in engaging in dialogue with teachers suggests that parental involvement remains largely reactive rather than proactive. This pattern indicates that engagement is more individual and situational rather than structured and collaborative.

The results of the Kruskal–Wallis test further clarify this dynamic by showing that there is no significant difference in parental involvement across school locations. The uniformity of teachers' perceptions across urban, suburban, and rural schools indicates that the challenges of parental involvement during the transition period are cross-geographical. These findings are consistent with cross-country research showing that parental involvement barriers are more influenced by structural and cultural factors than by mere location factors [40].

On the contrary, significant differences based on parents' educational backgrounds confirm the important role of educational capital in shaping patterns of engagement. Parents with higher levels of education are perceived as more involved in their child's transition, which aligns with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and previous empirical findings. Highly educated parents generally have greater confidence, greater educational literacy, and a better understanding of the school system, enabling them to communicate more effectively with teachers and participate in school programs. In contrast, parents with low education tend to face symbolic and psychological barriers that limit their involvement in formal interactions with schools [36].

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that parental involvement in the PAUD–SD transition remains unequal, both in terms of involvement and socio-educational background. This condition indicates the need for a more inclusive and responsive transition approach to parental diversity. Schools and teachers need to develop more proactive and empowering communication strategies, especially for parents with low educational backgrounds, so that the PAUD–SD transition can be understood and undertaken as a collaborative process that supports the sustainability of children's learning experiences.

This study has several limitations. First, the data were collected from two districts in West Java, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias. Third, the cross-sectional design does not allow for causal interpretation of the relationships observed. Future research is recommended to include longitudinal designs and broader geographic coverage to understand the dynamics of school transition better better.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the transition from early childhood education to primary school in West Java remains characterized by an imbalance between academic preparation and holistic developmental support. While teachers tend to emphasize pre-literacy, numeracy, and behavioral readiness, strategies related to social-emotional development and cross-level institutional collaboration are less consistently implemented. Parental involvement, although relatively strong in home-based practices, has not yet developed into an active and sustained partnership with schools. The findings further indicate that parental education plays a significant role in shaping engagement patterns, suggesting unequal access to educational resources and communication opportunities.

These findings underscore the importance of reorienting transition practices toward a more integrated and collaborative approach. Schools and policymakers should develop structured mechanisms to strengthen coordination between early childhood and primary education, while also promoting inclusive and accessible parent engagement strategies, particularly for families with lower levels of education.

Future research is recommended to explore the longitudinal dynamics of school transition and to examine how institutional interventions can enhance alignment between home and school environments to support children's learning continuity.

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