**BEHIND THE CHOICE OF BILINGUAL SCHOOL: PARENTS’ MOTIVATION AND THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH DAY**

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| ***Article Info*** | **Abstract** |
| ***Article History***  *Received:*  *Revised:*  *Published:* | *This study aims to understand parents' motivations for choosing a bilingual school in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decision. Through in-depth interviews with 4 parents of students with different occupational backgrounds in private bilingual primary schools, the study found that parents' main motivation is to give their children the opportunity to master English early on and prepare them for a globalized future. The English Day program is an English-speaking program for one full day a week. The program was found to be effective in facilitating active and fun learning. This study fills a gap in the literature by uncovering a dimension of parental motivation that is often overlooked in previous research. The results highlight the importance for bilingual schools to continue developing creative, innovative programs that actively involve parents in supporting children's English language learning, and for policymakers to pay attention to the need for quality bilingual education relevant to the local cultural context.* |
| ***Keywords***  *Bilingual school;*  *English Day Program;*  *Parents' Perspective*  *Parents' Motivation;* |
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**INTRODUCTION**

The growing interconnectedness of the global world has made fluency in English an essential skill. This has led to a surge in parents' desire to provide their children with the best possible education, including bilingual programs. Bilingual education, as defined by Cummins (2009), utilizes two or more languages to teach subject matter, rather than focusing solely on language instruction. Recognizing the value of English as a global communication tool and a gateway to future opportunities, parents have shown increasing interest in bilingual education. English Day Program (EDP), a cornerstone of bilingual classes, offers students ample opportunities to practice speaking English extensively and encounter diverse communication scenarios. Bilingual schools incorporate English into various subjects and complement this with engaging activities. According to Wahyuni (2014), the English Day Program (EDP) motivates students to speak English, making learning more enjoyable. Sinaga (2018) observed that students are highly motivated to acquire English skills and hope that the EDP will aid in their language development.

Few studies investigate parents' motivations for choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia. Some studies focus on factors such as academic excellence, social status, and language proficiency. Regarding bilingual programs, Sahiruddin et.al (2021) found that parents want to improve their children's social and cultural competence through early exposure to English. Widyasari (2013) also highlighted parents' desire to provide better opportunities for their children in the future. Furthermore, Agustina (2020) argues that environmental factors, such as academic achievement, can have an impact on external motivation. Another study by Jayanti & Sujarwo (2019) showed that parents believe that bilingual education can improve their children's cognitive abilities and overall learning experience. Pratama (2017) added that parents recognize the long-term benefits of bilingualism, such as improved cognitive function and adaptability. While some research on the English Day Program revealed by Wahyuni (2014), the English Day Program (EDP) motivates students to be able to speak in English, making learning more fun. Sinaga (2018) observed that students are highly motivated to acquire English skills and hope that the EDP will aid in their language development.

Previous studies have extensively explored parental motivations for selecting bilingual schools in Indonesia. Susyetina et al. (2019) found that bilingual preschool children often exhibit a preference for one language over the other when associating words with objects, which can influence language teaching methods. However, the specific role of the English Day Program (EDP) in parental decision-making has been understudied. While the EDP has demonstrated its effectiveness in fostering active and engaging learning, its impact on parental choice remains relatively unexplored. This study aims to address this gap by examining how the EDP influences parental decisions to enroll their children in bilingual schools. By investigating the specific impact of this program, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving parental choices in Indonesia.

. By reviewing previous research, this study will identify gaps in the literature and highlight the need for further investigation into this topic. To address this research gap, this study seeks to answer the following question: What are the motivations of parents in Indonesia for choosing bilingual schools, and how does the English Day Program influence their decision-making process? This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on parental motivations for choosing bilingual schools, with a particular focus on the role of the EDP. According to Agustina (2020), Parents are motivated to choose bilingual schools for their children based on internal and external factors, with friends being the most influential factor

This research contributes to the existing literature by providing a deeper understanding of the role of bilingual programs, particularly the EDP, in shaping parental decisions. By exploring the specific impact of the EDP on parental motivations, this study can inform policymakers and educators about effective strategies for promoting bilingual education and meeting the evolving needs of parents and their children. State the objectives of your work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results. Explicitly state the gap in the literature, which signifies the significance of your research.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**Research Design**

This research seeks to explore the factors that motivate parents to choose a bilingual school in Indonesia, as well as the specific role of the English Day Programme in influencing this decision. A qualitative case study design, as described by Yin (2014) and Stake (1995), was chosen as it allows for an in-depth investigation of a complex phenomenon such as parental motivation in the context of bilingual education in Indonesia. Through in-depth interviews with parents of primary school students in bilingual schools and analysis of related documents, this study will explore the in-depth perspectives of parents regarding their decision to choose a bilingual school.

**Research Subject**

This research, aimed at understanding the motivations of parents in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decisions, was conducted through in-depth interviews with 4 randomly selected parents from a pool of 30, all with different professional backgrounds, at a private bilingual elementary school in Indonesia, reflecting the holistic approach advocated by Creswell and Poth (2018) in qualitative research, but focusing more on parents’ perceptions of their motivations for choosing a bilingual school in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decision. The parents, representing the larger school community, shared their perspectives on their children's language development during English Day in the bilingual classroom, the perceived value of bilingual education, and their expectations and observations about the effectiveness of English Day activities. This diverse group of participants, noted by Patterson (2015) for its richness in providing comprehensive perspectives, ensured a multidimensional examination of English Day, reflecting the interaction of parents' perceptions of choosing a bilingual school in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decision.

Table 1

Table 1.2 The participant of parents

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Sex | Job | Age | Degree |
| Parent A | Male | Teacher | 35 | Bachelor of English Education |
| Parent B | Female | Market Traders | 40 | Bachelor of Senior High School |
| Parent C  Parent D | Female  Male | Nurse  Employee | 45  36 | Bachelor of School Nursing  Bachelor of Science |

**Data Collection Techniques**

This research design utilizes multiple data collection techniques to ensure a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, as recommended by Creswell (2013). Semi-structured interviews served as the primary technique, engaging parents in open-ended conversations that explored personal experiences, perceptions, and evaluations relating to English Day. This method facilitated the collection of deep qualitative insights into the individual and collective impact of the initiative. Direct observation in the school environment, particularly during English Day activities, complemented the interview data by providing a non-intrusive means of capturing the dynamics of classroom interactions, and student engagement in real-time, which the researcher was able to match with the results of the parent interviews relating to the research questions. Artifact analysis, which involved examining documentation of program implementation in the classroom, further enriched the data set. This technique allowed for triangulation of findings, strengthening the validity of the research by correlating observational and interview data with tangible evidence of program implementation and reception. By using these various techniques, the study ensured a comprehensive understanding that accommodated the complexity of the bilingual education context and the multifaceted nature of English Day, in line with best practices in qualitative research.

**Data Analysis Technique**

In this study, data analysis employs a thematic analysis approach, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), to systematically categorize and interpret qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, and artifact analysis. This technique involves a rigorous process of coding data through iterative cycles, which initially produces broad codes that capture key ideas and concepts emerging from the data, and subsequently refines these codes into more focused themes that encompass the core aspects of understanding parents' motivations in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decisions. The thematic analysis is complemented by narrative analysis, especially for personal stories and experiences shared during interviews, which allows for the exploration of individual and collective narratives that reveal deeper insights into the perceptions and life experiences of participants related to English Language Day. This narrative approach, supported by Riessman (2008), allows for the identification of patterns, motifs, and storylines that contribute to the understanding of cultural and contextual nuances in English language learning within bilingual educational settings.

Throughout the analysis, the constant comparative method, as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967), was used to compare findings within and across various data sets, ensuring consistency and triangulation of themes. This comprehensive analytical framework facilitates a thorough understanding of the complexities surrounding parental motivations in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decisions. This provides an in-depth exploration of its structure, effectiveness, and alignment with the broader educational goals of bilingual programs, thereby enriching the discourse on bilingual education practices and policies.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

This research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of what motivates parents to choose bilingual schools in Indonesia, as well as the specific role of the English Day Programme (EDP) in influencing this decision. A qualitative case study design, as described by Yin (2014) and Stake (1995), was chosen as it allows for an in-depth investigation of the complex phenomenon of parents' motivations for choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decision. Through in-depth interviews with parents of students in bilingual schools and analysis of relevant documents, this study will explore the parents' in-depth perspectives on their decision to choose a bilingual school for their children.

**Reasons for Selecting a Bilingual School**

Data analysis reveals several key motivations underlying parents' decisions in choosing bilingual schools.

**The importance of mastering English:**

From the interview results, some respondents emphasized the importance of mastering English in the era of globalization. Some interview results found that parents began trying to prepare their children for future global challenges early on.

*“Because English is an international language so I think it is important to be able to master English fluently, especially in this modern era all equipment also uses English.”*

***(Interview Parent A)***

The speaker emphasizes the significance of English proficiency in the modern world due to its status as an international language. They argue that English fluency is crucial for effective communication and interaction in various aspects of life, from education and business to technology and everyday activities. Moreover, the speaker highlights the prevalence of English in modern equipment and technology, underscoring the necessity of English skills for navigating and utilizing these tools effectively.

**Rich Learning Environment:**

Another reason parents choose bilingual schools is that they are also attracted to the rich learning environment in bilingual schools, which allows children to interact with peers from different backgrounds. Mrs Dewi says:

*“I like the multicultural atmosphere in this school. My child has become more open and tolerant, plus there are several activities in the bilingual classes, one of which is English Day, which helps children to practice speaking English more comfortably.”*

***(Interview Parent B)***

The speaker expresses their appreciation for the rich learning environment at the school, which fosters a multicultural atmosphere. They believe that this exposure has positively influenced their child's openness and tolerance. Additionally, the speaker highlights the various activities offered in the bilingual classes, particularly the English Day program, which they find beneficial for their child's English speaking practice and comfort level. The rich learning environment, characterized by diverse perspectives, collaborative learning opportunities, and engaging activities, contributes to the overall development and well-being of students.

**Preparation for higher education:**

The majority of respondents are already thinking ahead, They stated that choosing a bilingual school and the influence of the English Day program on their decision serves as a stepping stone for continuing their education at universities, both domestically and abroad. Parent B stated:

*"I chose a bilingual school because I want my child to be prepared to continue their studies abroad. By enrolling them in a bilingual school from an early age, they will become accustomed to and be able to master English fluently."*

***(Interview Parent B)***

The speaker explains their decision to choose a bilingual school for their child's future academic pursuits. They believe that starting bilingual education early will equip their child with the necessary English language skills to successfully continue their studies abroad in the future. By immersing their child in a bilingual environment, they aim to foster fluency and confidence in English, which they perceive as essential for international academic success.

**The Impact of the English Day Program**

The English Day program has a significant influence on parents' decisions when choosing a bilingual school**.**

**Improvement of English language skills**

All respondents observed an improvement in their children's English language skills after participating in the English Day Program. Parent C stated:

*"Because of a lot of speaking practice, my child is now more confident speaking English. He even dares to participate in English debate competitions."*

***(Interview Parent C)***

The numerous speaking exercises, especially through the English Day program, have significantly boosted the children's confidence in using English. They even dare to participate in English debate competitions. This English Day program is very beneficial as it provides students with the opportunity to practice speaking English intensively and enjoyably, allowing them to master the second language more quickly and significantly improve their speaking skills.

**Enjoyable learning:**

The English Day program is seen as a learning process where learning English becomes more fun and engaging for children. The use of media tools and books, along with an appealing classroom setting, supports the learning experience. Parent D added:

*"My child enjoys the activities in the English Day Program. He often tells me that the activities are fun and there are rewards for those who are active, so he is always enthusiastic about going to school."*

***(Interview Parent D)***

Seeing the quote from the interview above, it is stated that children's enjoyment of activities and the presence of rewards create a positive learning environment that encourages enthusiasm to attend school. This shows that the program successfully integrates enjoyable and engaging elements with academic goals, making English learning fun and beneficial for children. Furthermore, the children's enthusiasm for attending school indicates a broader impact of the program on their overall educational experience, suggesting the potential to positively influence students' attitudes toward learning.

**Encouraging Critical and Creative Thinking**

The English Day program also provides many extensive benefits for students. In addition to enhancing English language skills, this program also plays a crucial role in developing 21st-century skills that are essential for the future, such as children's abilities to communicate, collaborate, think critically, and be creative. This program also contributes to the holistic growth of children, in terms of social, emotional, and cognitive aspects. Therefore, the English Day program not only prepares students for an increasingly global future but also shapes strong characters ready to face various challenges.

*"I believe that by participating in this English Day Program, my child can become proficient in English and develop the skills needed for future success, such as communicating with others, collaborating, and thinking more critically and creatively."*

**(Interview Parent A)**

From the quote, it can be found that most parents who enroll their children in the English Day Program have high hopes for their children's future. They are confident that this EDP program will equip their children with good and fluent English language skills, which are very useful in today's era of globalization. In addition, they also hope that this EDP program can help develop crucial 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. With a solid foundation in language and comprehensive skills, parents will believe their children are better prepared to face challenges and achieve success in the future.

**Discussion**

The findings from the study on understanding parents' motivations in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the impact of the English Day program on these parental decisions align with previous research regarding parents' motivations in selecting bilingual schools in Indonesia. As highlighted by Agustina (2020), parental decisions are influenced by various factors, including the needs, expectations, talents, and interests of the child, psychology, peers, facilities, and infrastructure, as well as teachers. This study increasingly emphasizes the importance of English language proficiency, a rich learning environment, and preparation for higher education as key considerations. One of the school's efforts to create a bilingual environment is through the English Day Program (EDP), which is a program conducted in English for one day a week. This EDP program influences parents' motivation in choosing a Bilingual school because the English Day program provides more opportunities for children to practice and use the English language. As emphasized by Wahyuni (2014), English Language Day enhances students' speaking skills and motivates them to speak in English, leading to significant progress in the psychomotor and cognitive domains.

This research reveals that the motivations of parents in Indonesia for choosing bilingual schools are very diverse and influenced by various factors. According to Zhang's findings (2023), a comprehensive learning environment, encompassing physical, social, and cultural aspects, plays a crucial role in English language learning. The English Day Program (EDP) has proven to create a supportive and enriching learning environment, significantly contributing to language mastery and the overall development of students. Specifically, parents choose bilingual schools because they want their children to have strong English language skills, be exposed to a learning environment rich in culture, and be prepared to continue their education at a higher level. In line with Kovács's findings (2023), parents also feel that they play an active role in providing the best education for their children by choosing bilingual schools. They appreciate the innovative learning methods and inclusive learning environment offered by those schools. EDP, with its various engaging and interactive activities, has successfully created a fun and effective learning atmosphere, thereby encouraging students' interest in learning English, as stated by Sinaga. (2018). Thus, EDP not only helps students master English but also prepares them to face global challenges in the future.

This study attempts to answer the research question about what motivates parents in Indonesia to choose bilingual schools, and how the English Language Day Program influences their decision-making process. Although there are similarities in the answers from the parents regarding motivation and perception, the interview results also revealed variations among the respondents. For example, Parent A places more emphasis on academic aspects. According to Sahiruddin (2021), parents' motivation to enroll their children in bilingual or international schools is more integrative than instrumental, with English serving as the lingua franca in a multicultural world. Meanwhile, Parent B is more interested in the social and cultural aspects of bilingual education. In Lee's (2015) research, it is explained that parents want their children to be bilingual for better career opportunities and the preservation of culture and native language. This shows that parents' motivations in choosing bilingual schools are complex and influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic background, family values, and hopes for their child's future. Kovács (2023) explains that parents choose bilingual early childhood education for their children because they feel effective in their role as parents, appreciate innovative pedagogical methods, and have an inclusive attitude.

This research makes a significant contribution to our understanding of parental motivation in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the role of the English Day program in their decision-making process. The results of this research not only enrich the academic literature in the field of bilingual education but also have broad practical implications. By identifying the key factors that influence parental choices, including the active role of parents in supporting their children's learning at home, as emphasized by Grolnick (2022) that parental involvement in children's education enhances motivation, engagement, and learning, especially when that support fosters autonomy and is emotionally positive, this research can serve as a foundation for schools, educational institutions, and policymakers to design programs and policies that are more relevant and responsive to community needs.

**CONCLUSION**

This study systematically examines the motivations of parents in choosing bilingual schools in Indonesia and the influence of the English Day program on their decisions. These findings align with previous research, highlighting the multifaceted nature of parental motivation and the importance of various factors, including English proficiency, learning environment, and future aspirations. The English Day program has proven to influence parental choices, offering supportive and enriching learning experiences that are beneficial for students' language acquisition and overall development. This research emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in children's education. Active parental support can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes.

This research makes a significant contribution to understanding parents' motivations in choosing bilingual schools and the role of the English Day program. The findings of this study have broad implications for the development of bilingual education in Indonesia. By understanding the factors that influence parental motivation, schools and policymakers can design more effective programs and policies to improve the quality of education.

This study has several implications for educational institutions: Tailored Programs: Schools can utilize these findings to design and implement programs that align with parental motivations and address the diverse needs of students. By understanding parental priorities, schools can create more effective and engaging learning experiences.

Enhanced Teacher Training: Schools can focus on training teachers to create supportive and engaging learning environments that foster critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Teachers equipped with these skills can better facilitate student learning and development. Collaborative Partnerships: Schools can establish partnerships with parents and communities to create a strong support network for students. This collaboration can enhance parental involvement and contribute to student success. Assessment and Evaluation**:** Schools can regularly assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their bilingual programs to identify areas for improvement and ensure they meet the needs of students and parents. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can create high-quality bilingual programs that empower students to succeed in a globalized world.

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