

Child workers and inclusive education in Indonesia

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Since Indonesia's transition to democracy in 1998, wealth inequality has increased significantly with a dramatic rise in the wealth of the rich and stagnating income growth among poorer citizens. Similar to many developing countries, the issue of child workers in Indonesia is a critical problem. The 2015 National Labour Force Survey recorded 1.65 million children aged 15–17 involved in child work in Indonesia. Efforts to encourage the participation of child workers in schooling has been greatly promoted but few studies have investigated the issue of the impact of child work on student learning outcomes. Children involved in work are likely to be left behind in educational achievement. Their disadvantaged social, cultural, and economic backgrounds lead to physical and psychosocial vulnerabilities, which requires democratic-classroom approaches, characterized by child-centred settings and teachers familiar with students' diverse learning abilities. This paper presents findings from a study investigating Indonesian teachers' perspectives on the impacts of work on student learning outcomes and how they implement diverse teaching and learning styles when educating child workers. This study highlighted the lack of school and teacher readiness in managing child workers' diverse needs and the absence of teachers' involvement in developing policies for child worker education that may all lead to child workers not achieving learning outcomes. This study outcomes also support democratic-style classroom approaches in making education a reliable investment for child workers. This study provides recommendations for improved policies and practices for the local government and schools in the East Nusa Tenggara province.

Keywords: Child work; inclusive education; student learning; Indonesian education

INTRODUCTION

There are three aspects to consider when conceptualizing child work: the child, labour, and work (Bhat, 2010). The *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF, n.d.) defines “a child as a person below the age of 18” (article 1) and states that children should be “protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development” (article 32). The International Labour Organization (ILO) standard, divides child work

into five types: hazardous work; nonhazardous work; light work; work excluded from minimum age regulations, including household work; and work related to education (ILO, 2004, p. 17). The ILO defines child labour as “all economically active children below the age of 12, all children aged between 12 and 14 working more than 14 hours a week, and all children below the age of 18 in the worst forms of child labour” (Kim, 2009, p. 30).

The accentuated differences between child labour and child work relate to the age and type of work the child performs. The Indonesian constitution prohibits employment of children (article 68 of *Labour Law Number 13 2003*), although the regulation includes a number of exemptions: children aged 13–15 years are allowed to be employed for a maximum of three hours a day in types of work that do not hinder physical, mental, and social development and for which they have the legal permission of parents or guardians, and in work that does not interfere with school times and does not present a hazard to safety and health (article 69 of *Labour Law 2003*).

The definition of child work used in this paper is based on minimum age and type of work, drawing on both the ILO and Indonesian labour laws: any work undertaken by any child below the age of 18, including most unconditional worst forms of work, hazardous work, nonhazardous work, light work, work excluded from minimum age regulations including household work and work related to education (ILO, 2004, p. 17). Child workers fall into two categories:

1. All economically active children below the age of 12, all children aged between 12 and 14 working more than 14 hours a week, and all children below the age of 18 in the worst forms of child labour (Kim, 2009, p. 30).
2. Children aged 13–15 who are allowed to work according to article 69 of *Labour Law Number 13 2003*. The allowed work based on this regulation includes light work, work that does not hinder physical, mental, and social development, paid-work with a maximum of three hours a day, and work that does not interfere with school time or present a hazard to health and safety.

The use of the term child work in this study is more accurately compared to child labour as researchers cannot accurately determine whether all school-aged children in this study were involved in child labour, but they are all undeniably classified as child workers.

THE CONTEXT

Despite the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower having developed strategies to eliminate child workers by 2022 and statistical records showed a decrease in the number of children aged 10–14 participating in labour from 7.1% in 2002 to 5.2% in 2007 (Kis-Katos & Schulze, 2011), there were still 1.65 million children aged 5–17 who were still working, and 1.76 million child workers were categorized as child workers in 2009 (Statistics Indonesia and ILO, 2009). As found in many studies, child work has been closely associated with poverty (Bhat, 2010; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Holgado et al., 2014) and it is evident that the presence of child workers in Indonesia is aggravated by poverty (ILO, 2013). The earnings of a child worker may support family income (Bhat, 2010; Holgado et al., 2014) and a family may rely on child work (Bhat, 2010).

However, poverty is not the sole factor influencing child work (Kim, 2009). Other contributors include: lack of opportunity in the job market, social and economic discrimination, and a lack of access to information (Kulttz, 2015). A recent study by

Holgado et al. (2014) proposed that child work has larger dimensions than economic aspects alone. Economic factors, such as family income, do influence the decision of parents to send children to work, but family and cultural values also play important roles in child work. Parents may value child work as a process for learning responsibility and child work may be culturally considered a child's contribution to their family (Holgado et al., 2014).

In the Indonesian context, a distrust of education also contributes to child labour (ILO, 2013). The absence of relevant quality education might contribute to repeated cases of child work. The provision of relevant education characterized by democratic approaches (ILO, 2004) in the frame of inclusive education is seen as the basic response to the issue of child work in Indonesia (ILO, 2013).

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Studies have shown child workers experience physical, psychological, and psychosocial disruptions (Holgado et al., 2014; ILO 2004; Woodhead, 2004.), including impedance of child workers' learning outcomes (Aziz and Iskandar 2013; Bhat, 2010; Holgado et al.; 2014; Hoop & Rosati, 2012; Kluttz, 2015; Raj, Sen, Annigery, Kulkarni, & Revankar 2015; Zabaleta, 2011) as their particular circumstances mean they have special educational needs. The *Salamanca Statement* (1994) on special needs education states that "every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs" and that "education systems should be designed, and educational programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs." The Indonesian constitution (*Law 20 2003*) clearly states that every citizen has an equal right to quality education and that every individual who has physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disability has a right to be provided with special education. It describes special education as that which is provided to learners who endure difficulties in their learning process due to their distinctive physical, emotional, mental, social, and/or intelligence potential and gifted condition (*Law 20 2003*, article 1). Students from isolated areas or are impacted by natural disasters and who are economically disadvantaged are also entitled to special education (*Law 20 2003*, article 2).

Accordingly, a strategic educational approach that is most relevant to child workers is inclusive education, where students with diverse characteristics and learning needs can build effective social skills and be provided with quality education (Adams, Harris, & Jones 2016). Staub and Peck (1995) outline the advantages of inclusive education as increasing the self-dignity, self-conception, social consciousness, and social relationships of students. Allen and Cowdery (2005) state that it is through inclusive education that the basic rights of students in receiving education regardless of their competences and disorders is upheld, thus ensuring educational equality. They also maintain that inclusive education provides students of all abilities with the ability to gain a high level of education. Additionally, Terzi (2014) suggests that inclusive education can be perceived as the practice of fairness, protection, engagement, and guardianship in the classroom.

However, there are mixed opinions regarding the appropriate model of inclusive education. In the Western context, inclusive education features locating children with special needs in special schools (Terzi, 2014). Supporters of this idea argue that combining all children in the one classroom, regardless of psychological and physical background, may lead to the exclusion of those with certain physical and psychological

disorders because they may be engaged physically, but not emotionally (Terzi, 2014). While the opponents of the idea to relocate children with special needs maintain that it is the primacy of inclusive education where learning features the flexibility and ability to acknowledge the diversity (Terzi, 2014). The leading policy to support the idea of integrating children with special needs into regular schools is the *Salamanca Statement* (1994), which states that children with special educational needs must “have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.” The challenge is ensuring teachers have the resources and capacities to ensure that all children, including those with special needs, have the equal right to quality education. The presence of teachers who have a special skill to design a lesson plan that is compatible with children with diverse needs is essential (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprabhan, 2016). It is also important to encourage collaboration between educators who have a specialization in children with special needs, general teachers, and other multidisciplinary teachers to develop a modified curriculum (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprabhan, 2016).

There are 1.6 million children with special needs in Indonesia, but only 18% have access to inclusive education (Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), 2017). The government has built new special schools and developed existing inclusive schools across the region to provide access to education for these children. However, there are challenges to implementing inclusive education in Indonesia, including insufficient school infrastructure, lack of community knowledge and parents’ awareness to send special needs children to inclusive schools (MoEC, 2017; Sunardi et al., 2011).

The lack of preparation in the education system and its practices when implementing inclusive education is another barrier identified by Sunardi, Yusuf, Gunarhadi, Priyono, & Yeager (2011, p. 9), encompassing school management, curriculum, assessment and evaluation, and teaching. A deficiency in the capability of school staff in developing inclusive programs is another concern (Sunardi et al., 2011). In inclusive classroom settings, Wilkerson et al. (2013) stress that it is important to encourage students with special needs to own a sense of collaboration and social interaction, which can be achieved through asking questions, speaking, negotiating, and posing arguments. The teacher’s capacity to manage children with social-emotional issues is also a prime requirement of inclusive classroom settings, including how to help children with frequent and high intensity misbehaviours, children with social interaction problems, and children who have poor self-direction (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Teachers play an important role in eliminating child work (ILO, 2013). The vulnerability of child workers arising from their background of poverty (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005), psychological disturbance (Woodhead, 2004), and generalized psychological problems (ILO 2004, Heady, 2002) demands more inclusive and democratic approaches in teaching and learning (ILO, 2004). As a teacher, competences in dealing with diverse characteristics are essential (Voss, Kunter, & Baumert, 2011). Further, Kluttz (2015) argues there is a need for child workers to have effective social skills, which is the leading benefit of inclusive education. Kluttz suggests that education provided to child workers should encourage them to think critically, be innovative, able to solve problems, and interact with other people. Child workers’ poor self-concept (Woodhead, 2004) can be addressed through inclusive education, which promotes self-dignity and self-conception (Staub et al., 1995). In the context of the Indonesian government’s program of sending child workers back to school and eliminating child workers in the country by 2022,

understanding the role of teachers' perspectives could contribute to improved policies and practices with respect of child workers' equal opportunity to quality education.

In the context of the above discussion, this study addresses two questions:

1. What are teachers' perspectives of child work and the impacts of working on children's learning activities in five Indonesian junior secondary schools?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on existing policies and practices to improve child workers' learning?

To address the research questions, this paper first outlines a review of child workers and their learning activities as well as child work policies in Indonesia. It subsequently discusses the methodology employed to generate the findings, followed by further discussion of how teachers might create more inclusive and democratic classrooms for child workers.

CHILD WORK AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Child workers constitute significant numbers of enrolled school-aged children (Bhat, 2010) and have more absences than nonworking children (Zabaleta, 2011). In particular, children who work in the morning may find that work clashes with the school timetable (Holgado et al., 2014). However, Kluttz (2015), and Hoop and Rosati (2012) suggest a less significant relationship between working and school attendance. In addition, Aziz and Iskandar (2013) propose that children who have part-time work while attending school do not find it difficult to organise their time for work and school, although some have problems with attendance. Thus, despite some studies indicating child work may influence learning outcomes (Holgado et al., 2014, Psacharopoulos, 1997; Ray & Lancaster, 2005), it might be insufficient to claim working is always detrimental to school attendance.

In many developing countries, the government provides children with tangible support, such as money transfers and food, to aid school attendance (Hoop & Rosati, 2012). The idea of providing families with cash to send children to school rather than work was implemented to offset the economic loss of children leaving work to attend school (Dessy & Knowles, 2007). While this money transfer might increase attendance, schools must also create a relevant and quality education so that child workers continue to consistently attend school. Bath (2010) and Kluttz (2015) maintain that quality education can retain children in school, and irrelevant and poor-quality education acts to the detriment of child work (Holgado et al., 2014; ILO, 2013). The need for quality education for child workers is also vital in raising the trust of child workers' parents in education as an investment (Kluttz, 2015). Parents may opt to send their children to work rather than to school when the perceived benefits of work outweigh those of school (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Kluttz 2015). Thus, a model of education that equips child workers with extended skills, and relevant and usable capabilities (Kluttz, 2015) would be most compatible with child work.

Many studies that have examined child work and student achievement suggest that child workers have lower academic achievement than students who do not work (Holgado et al., 2014; Psacharopoulos, 1997; Ray & Lancaster, 2005). Long working hours that lead to physical exhaustion (Holgado et al., 2014), poor motivation, and psychological disturbance (Heady, 2000) disrupt child workers' educational achievement. Woodhead

(2004) proposes a number of signs of psychosocial problems child workers endure, including poor cognitive development, problems in communicating, and lack of interest and long-term orientation. However, the failure of working children to achieve learning outcomes might not always be related to the impacts of working; it could also be related to the absence of quality learning opportunities. As child workers are prone to experience psychosocial problems (Woodhead, 2004), schools need to ensure a supportive environment tailored to child workers' backgrounds. The kind of education that can encourage child workers to think critically, be innovative, solve problems, and interact with other people (Kluttz, 2015) might help address some of the psychosocial issues cited above. Further, when children combine work and education, or cease working and go to school, education needs to provide children with necessary capabilities in the job market (Aziz & Iskandar 2013; Kluttz, 2015). Otherwise, education may potentially deprive working children of opportunities to earn without offering a reliable pathway to future employment (Kluttz, 2015). As such, policymakers should consider integrating practical skills into the school curriculum (Kluttz, 2015).

Because the delivery of quality education also enhances the trust of child workers' parents (Edmonds & Pavcnik 2005; Kluttz, 2015), their involvement in their children's education is essential. Epstein (2013) suggests that collaboration between educators and families might be hampered due to the heterogeneous nature of intellectual, social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, and literacy levels (Epstein, 2013). Contreras (2007) proposes the enhancement of parental resources by providing education and training programs, including literacy skills, that would be beneficial for the future success of a child. Education approaches should encompass child workers' parents' involvement. Regular communication with parents to discuss children's learning progress and behavioural issues and home visits are examples of parental involvement (Miller, Lines, Sullivan, & Hermanutz, 2013).

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Since 1992, the ILO has collaborated with the Indonesian government to implement the *International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour*, which aims to strengthen the capacity of ILO country members to reduce child labour, especially for children involved in the worst forms of work. There were 3–4 million children aged 13–14 in Indonesia involved in child labour in 1993, and only the Philippines and Nepal in the Asia–Pacific region were worse than Indonesia. The government of Indonesia has since produced a number of policies, capacity building programs, and direct interventions to combat child labour (ILO, 2013). The policy development included: the ratification of *ILO Convention No. 139*, regarding minimum working age in 1999; *Convention No. 182*, regarding the elimination of the worst forms of work in 2000; and adoption of the *ILO 182* convention in the development of *National Labour Law 2003*. From 2002 to 2006, the Indonesian government had prevented 34,695 children from engaging in the worst forms of work and freed 3,398 children from the worst forms of work (ILO, 2013).

Despite the Indonesian government's efforts to prevent child workers, access to education remains a significant problem. A Human Rights Watch report (2009) confirmed that child workers have very limited access to education because they cannot afford to pay for their school fees. To address this issue, in 2005, the government launched the School Operational Assistance Fund Program, the *SMP Satu Atap* (One-Roof Junior Secondary School) and *Bantuan Siswa Miskin* (Cash Transfer for Poor Students). In 2007, the

government also launched the Hope for Families Program, *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), adopted from Conditional Cash Transfer, which has been implemented in developing countries like Bolsa Familia in Brazil and Progreso in Mexico (ILO, 2013) to combat poverty. This program supports poor families with a regular cash distribution in order for families to send children to school until they finish nine years of basic education. If families fail to send children to school, the cash transfer will stop. In 2008, the PKH program was combined with the Reduction of Child Worker program, termed *Pengurangan Pekerja Anak* (PPA). The PPA-PKH was an endeavour of the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration to reduce child workers, particularly children involved in the worst forms of work (PPA-PKH, 2014). In this program, working children from very poor families who drop out of school are sent back to school. In 2014, the program had a national target of sending 15,000 children back to schools in 100 districts across Indonesia. The priority group of children targeted were working children aged 9–17 years, particularly those engaged in the worst forms of work, including hazardous and hard labour, and those who had dropped out of school. Before being sent back to school, children were placed in a temporary shelter and attended a series of academic and psychological preparation activities prior to returning to school. Awareness of child rights, basic reading and math skills, citizenship, leadership, communication skills, sports, and religion subjects were provided to these children during a 30-day school preparation program.

As a result, the Ministry of Manpower claimed that, in the period 2008–2015, the program had returned 80,555 child workers to school (MoEC, 2017). It was found that the attendance rate for children involved in the PKH program was around 80% to 90%. This high attendance rate was influenced by the conditions of this program that required children to attend more than 80% of the year, otherwise the amount of money received was reduced. Cash transferred to children was Rp. 1 million per year, distributed quarterly. If the children did not reach the monthly attendance target, their money was cut to Rp. 50,000 per month.

While the government's Conditional Cash Transfer programs has significantly contributed to child workers' attendance, quality participation in learning activities and the relevant education they experience would contribute more to their learning success. Rather than attendance, it is the learning process the child workers undergo that would more significantly explain the consequences of child labour (Zabaleta, 2011) and this affects child workers' learning success.

METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured interviews were employed to capture teachers' perspectives of child workers and their learning because it provides more freedom for participants to express their perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Data were collected in July 2015 in Kupang, a capital city of East Nusa Tenggara province, with approximately 23,103 child workers as estimated by the East Nusa Tenggara Child Protection Board (Tempo, 2010). Its status as the capital and biggest city in the province makes Kupang a target for jobseekers, particularly from districts located nearby such as South Timor Tengah (Timor Tengah Selatan) and North Timor Tengah (Timor Tengah Utara). In some cases, children from those districts relocate and live with relatives to attend school in the city because there is limited or no access to schooling in rural areas. In the city, rural children engage in work to support themselves and/or recompense relatives for their board and lodging.

Prior to data collection, ethics approval was obtained from The University of Adelaide. Before each interview was conducted, permission was sought from participants and each was asked to complete a consent form. All participants selected for the study signed the consent form indicating they were willing to participate, have their interview recorded and were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Four of the five public junior high schools, known as *Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri* (SMPN), were selected according to recommendations of the Kupang Department of Manpower and Transmigration, whose program of sending child workers back to school is relevant to this study. Junior high schools were selected because they have students aged 13–15 years, the ages of which nonhazardous work and light work are allowed. The four public schools recommended by the Department were SMPN 5, SMPN 8, SMPN 9 and SMPN 11. Another school, SMPN 19, was also selected by the researchers because of its location in the port area where many children work part-time as porters.

The selection for interviews were limited to school principals and one to two teachers in each of the five schools who fulfilled the following criteria: an experienced teacher, a class teacher and/or have experiences assisting with working students. There were nine teachers and five school principals overall from the selected schools who voluntarily participated in the study.

The study findings were organized into four key themes: types of work, the impact of child work on schooling, current policies to support child workers' education, and teaching practices applicable to child workers. The four key themes were broken down from the two research themes: teachers' perspectives on child workers and the effects of working on schooling were used to interpret the impact of child work on education, and their views of teaching practices and policies formed the basis for the types of model educational policies and practices that are relevant to child workers.

TYPES OF WORK

In this study, working more than 15 hours a week was classified as high intensity. Selling newspapers and cakes were the most intensive forms of child work, as children sold newspapers until late evening and walked long distances to sell cakes. Children could also be involved in making cakes during the night, which increased the intensity of their work. Selling vegetables also required children to walk long distances, although some families sold vegetables from the family house.

Many child workers in Kupang were from other regions, such as Soe and Kefa which are located 109–192 km or 2–4 hours' drive away. These children sought greater access to education as the large distance between their homes and secondary schools prevented them from attending school. They undertook domestic work, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing to repay their food and accommodation costs to hosts which were considered an obligation and a tradition, as described below:

Children have to work as they live in other people's houses. It is not the right practice for them to just sit and eat. Our tradition is that children have to do household tasks; they must wake up earlier, clean the house, wash dishes. (Teacher 2)

Generally, poor background, migration due to the lack of education infrastructure in the child workers' places of origin and local values towards working were perceived to be the cause of child work. A majority of teachers also linked child work with economic-

related activities. Reasons that a family engaged children in child work included adults undertaking low paid non-permanent work or a large number of family members to support. In such cases, money earned by children was used to support family needs.

The children come from poor families and they need to work to get money to pay for public transport from home to school. Some children work as shoe makers and sell their home-made cakes from school to school. (Teacher 8)

Their parents back home told them to work to get pocket money and to pay for their own transport since they live with other people in Kupang. (Teacher 10)

THE IMPACT OF WORK ON SCHOOLING

Most participants highlighted particular characteristics of working children, such as daydreaming, losing concentration, and feeling sleepy, when discussing school interactions of child workers.

Due to their tiredness of selling cake until night, it is difficult for them to concentrate in their learning ... they have spent much time for working, when will they have time to read books? (Teacher 7)

The child got sleepy in the class, perhaps due to the tiredness of long walk to sell cakes. (Teacher 1)

It was quite obvious that there is a direct relationship between intensity of work, measured by physical activities and length of work and child workers' engagement in learning activities. Physically demanding work undertaken in long hours proved to be detrimental to child workers' active involvement in the classroom. For example, child workers would spend up to three to four hours per day to walk long distances to sell cakes or newspapers, because the more they sold, the more commission they receive.

Distinctive mature physiological characteristics due to child work also affect child workers' school interactions. One teacher noted that working children with specific characteristics, such as a more physically developed body, exhibited misbehaviour problems as they seem older and more grown up than their peers:

This child was older when he was grouped with children from primary school and he felt ashamed because he was bigger and taller than friends of the same age. If not regulated, the child could cause trouble. (Teacher 7)

There was also an indication that older children found that school did not match with their freedom of expression and they left:

There are two boys, aged 17-18 years old. They resigned after two weeks at school. They cut their hair, scrawled and made themselves different from other students. (Teacher 7)

Regarding school attendance, most teachers stated that child workers came to school regularly and had average attendance rates of 80%–90%. High attendance rates were influenced by external supporting policies and practices in terms of classroom policies, family support and the government cash transfer program. The findings suggest that child work did not interfere with school attendance in the five junior secondary schools in the study.

Along with the existence of external support to increase school attendance of child workers, a child's personal motivation also contributed to school attendance. This idea was derived from the case for children who came from regions outside of Kupang with

the intention of continuing their schooling. Despite living with their relatives or acquaintances and undertaking domestic chores before and after school, these children attended school consistently, as described by Teacher 1:

They realise their condition and disadvantages; they must learn and go to school... although they are probably tired from working at home.

With regard to student achievement, some child workers had serious issues with academic achievement and were described by teachers as “weak students” or “below standard” (Teachers 1 and 8). Low academic achievement for these students was related to types and intensity of work, as stated by Teacher 1:

He is very cognitively delayed in class because of tiredness. But he has good attendance, is polite and obedient.

When asked about learning achievements of child workers, several teachers mentioned not only academic achievement but also attitudes. For example, Teachers 4 and 7 stated that the current Indonesian curriculum, Curriculum 2013, emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also children’s attitudes and skills as a measurement of learning outcomes. In this curriculum, attitudes are measured by religious values in the form of prayer and children’s social skills, including building good relationships with peers, demonstrating collaboration, honesty, and expressing ideas in discussions. In general, child work in this study did not appear to prevent child workers from engaging in schooling. However, there were strong indicators that their education was highly disrupted by working, as noted by their tiredness, daydreaming, lack of concentration, and withdrawal from school.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Teachers provided a number of strategies to improve learning outcomes for child workers. The most common strategy was establishing good communication with parents. Other strategies were inclusive, non-discriminatory teaching and learning, providing motivation and support, and an emphatic approach to the role of the teacher.

The participants indicated the importance of regular communication between teachers and parents. Generally, communication with parents was undertaken at the end of semester when student learning achievements were reported, as stated by Teacher 2. Issues-based meetings were implemented when teachers communicated with parents about particular academic or behaviour problems (Teacher 4), which can be conducted via face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Teacher 12 (also a school principal) stated that contacting parents was useful in overcoming child workers’ common problems such as tiredness or losing concentration.

If they are sleepy in the class, do not do their homework or coming late to school, I will call their parents and they will come. (Teacher 4)

Despite the advantages of communication with parents of working children, a potential hindrance was related to parents’ educational insight. An example was provided by Teacher 7 who stated that in some cases neither children nor parents understood what the learning assessment was and how it was undertaken. From the teacher’s point of view, understanding assessments were important for parents to encourage children to achieve academically. However, communication with parents did not always deal with topics of learning or technical matters. Communication between teachers and parents also included

topics on child workers' wellness and attitudes, such as physical and mental health, which influences learning success.

TEACHERS' APPROACHES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Several teachers stressed that an emphatic personal approach to child work can help motivate child workers in the classroom. This may be done by the teacher explaining that she herself had once been in the child's position and playing a flexible role not only as a teacher but also as parents in the school:

All I can do is give advice. We give them the insight that we once were like they are now, living with other people and we studied under trees in the afternoon. They need to think that education is important for their future. (Teacher 1)

We play a role as a mother as well. (Teacher 1)

Another approach is utilizing the school counsellor. Although it is a standard procedure for all children with behavioural problems, this was also a relevant approach given to child workers with learning disabilities as a result of working. In the classroom, learning was undertaken without discrimination, meaning that no special treatment was given to particular children regardless of their background. Teacher 7 stated that since children with advanced learning abilities and those with learning problems were combined in one class, teachers could not devote themselves to applying special approaches to a particular group of students as other students would suffer. Furthermore, academic testing did not differentiate children based on learning abilities, thus teachers were responsible for the success of all children. Teacher 1 highlighted that there was no discrimination in the classroom:

It is the same, there is no golden child or silver child. Competing equally, whosoever learns harder, he/she achieves academic success. All children are similarly treated. (Teacher 1).

While the same treatment was provided to all children in a classroom to avoid exclusivism and strive for so-called social justice, children with particular learning problems or coming from disadvantaged backgrounds were potentially left behind. Hence, providing the same treatment to all children created injustice. Children with learning problems or special needs required additional support and particular approaches to achieve minimum learning outcomes. In this context, the same treatments did not necessarily indicate equality where all children have the same opportunity for academic success. However, as emphasised by Teacher 7, implementing specific teaching and learning approaches for children with special needs demanded far-reaching reforms including upgrading the teaching capacity.

Nevertheless, some teachers had already tried to apply particular approaches to motivate child workers in their learning. A majority of teachers agreed that providing extra encouragement to child workers (Teachers 2, 4, and 9), playing a flexible role not only as a teacher but also as parents in the school (Teachers 1 and 4), and considering children's characteristics in group-based activities in the classroom (Teacher 4), were helpful in making their learning more engaging. It is evident that without being adequately prepared to teach child workers who have since returned to school after dropping out for an extensive period of time, teachers will not be able to implement inclusive approaches.

We treat them all in the same way and when we differentiate them school management and teachers must be really prepared. Not all teachers are capable of managing troubled children. (Teacher 8)

The need for the modifying the curriculum is also voiced by a teacher who stressed that the assessments and evaluations must also be updated if teachers apply a different, more inclusive strategy for child workers. However, the Curriculum 2013 already provides alternative assessment and evaluation systems for child workers by including affective and psychomotor skills:

Beforehand, the common problem in public schools is that there's no differentiation in the school evaluation. The evaluation should vary based on students' ability. Now that we have the new curriculum, academic achievement is not the only aspect to be assessed but also psychomotor and affective skills. (Teacher 8)

This statement might require further investigation into whether child workers achieve less academically and have more potential in psychomotor and affective aspects, leading to the teacher believing life-skills and emotional intelligence would be more beneficial for child workers. However, the statement invites ambiguity when the teacher discriminates between academic and psychomotor and affective intelligence because the academic assessments within the Curriculum 2013 also includes cognitive, psychomotor, and affective competence. Additionally, using a ranking system as a product of academic achievement was problematic. A rank system was less meaningful if not followed up by the design of diverse learning approaches for children with different abilities. Teacher 7 proposed that a rank system should be pursued by classifying children based on learning achievement, for example, advanced, middle, and less progressed students. Children who had less progress in learning should be placed in a different class in order to be taught with different learning approaches. The current practice of mixing all children regardless of their background and abilities in one class and treating them the same meant children with learning problems were left behind. However, in order to place children according to their special needs requires substantial preparation, as indicated by Teacher 7:

When children are differentiated, school management and teachers must be well prepared, as not all teachers have the ability to manage children with special needs.

There was only one teacher interviewed who had developed particular strategies of grouping students when dealing with child workers as a form of classroom management. The teacher said that she organized children in a way that those with attitude problems are not placed in the same group:

Don't unite children who provoke other children to play in one group. They must be spread over different groups. (Teacher 5)

While the statement above could indicate that teachers already apply particular pedagogic approaches for child workers, it could also reveal their assumptions of child workers as misbehaving children. It seems that teachers' lack of knowledge of the complexity of child workers risks supporting a misconception of child workers as troubled children.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Four out of five schools involved in this study participated in the PKH. This program provides poor families with regular financial support for education, health and economic empowerment. While increasing school attendance is crucial, child workers' cognitive

and psychological background as well as school readiness must be considered before sending them back to school. One teacher, whose school was involved in PKH, argued that the program should not just place children without paying attention to the progress of the child:

After sending these children, they (the government) think their project is accomplished while we somehow accepted these children regardless their background. We hope the relevant department can also solve the problem on these children. (Teacher 7)

This teacher shared a case where a child withdrew from the school due to not performing well in class. The provision of sufficient information regarding the background of working children helped the school prepare different approaches when dealing with learning problems.

THE IMPACT OF WORK ON SCHOOLING AND RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Teachers' perspectives on child work can be summarized in three findings. First, children who are involved in high intensity work experience significant disruptions to their learning. Children included in this category are those who undertake double work or are involved in work that demands great physical fitness, such as walking long distances to sell cakes or vegetables. Tiredness and lack of time for study are some of the main factors impeding these children's learning. This validates previous studies (Chanda, 2014; Heidy, 2000; Holgado et al., 2014) which demonstrated that learning achievement is sacrificed when children combine work and schooling. Distractions (Chanda, 2014) and exhaustion (Heidy, 2000) have direct effects on child workers' education. Street child workers and child workers who left school and later returned to school are more likely to display behavioural issues.

Anker and Melkas (1996) suggest that the mismatch between school policies and curriculum and the lack of school flexibility to older child workers create further issues for their education. It seems that their different needs might be ignored when they enter or re-enter schools that are inhabited by differently aged children. For example, street child workers who are used to managing their own freedom in the street could face a tremendous difficulty when attending school as they might feel the discipline restricts their independence and self-authority (ILO, 2004). The presence of compatible school policies and practices that are tailored to child workers' psychological needs is essential when they return to school.

Second, although attendance rates should not be considered as the only measure of educational achievement, it may influence student learning and is an early indicator of future educational outcomes. This study suggests that child labour did not interfere with school attendance, which challenges a previous study that found working children are likely to have more absences than nonworking children (Zabaleta, 2011). Rather, the findings of this study agreed with Kluttz (2015) and Hoop and Rosati (2013) who proposed that child labour has an insignificant impact on school attendance. Aziz and Iskandar (2013) also suggested that children who worked part-time while schooling did not find it difficult to organise their time for work and school, although some did have problems with attendance.

The government's PPA-PKH program played a significant contribution in encouraging working children to attend school because it provided cash transfers to families in return for high school attendance. A number of studies (Dessy & Knowles, 2007; Hoop & Rosati, 2013) argued that tangible government support, such as money transfer and food, can promote school attendance for child workers. However, the physical and psychological deficiencies suffered as a result of working were clearly more disruptive to child workers' learning quality than their attendance. Zabaleta (2011) suggested that it is the learning process that child workers undergo that explains the consequences of child work rather than their presence in the classroom. Thus, judging the connection between working and academic achievement by only measuring attendance rates might be misleading.

In addition, this study found that child workers with distinctive physical and psychological characteristics require tailored education. This confirms a previous study that older child workers endure serious problems in school because of the absence of education suitable for their ages and particular cognitive, affective, and social characteristics (ILO, 2004). Holgado et al. (2014) also suggested that the failure of a school to provide quality and relevant education might lead to children leaving school to be a child worker. Therefore, along with the policy of sending child workers back to school, the government should ensure that schools are well equipped to provide relevant education to the child workers, including matching the curriculum and teachers' capacity with their students' special needs.

In considering child workers' special needs, the majority of schools share the same perspective that child workers experience difficulties with learning and engagement as a consequence of working, especially when engaged in high physical intensity work. This might indicate that teachers perceived child workers as those with special needs. However, there was a mixed perception from teachers when dealing with child workers. Some teachers were likely to support nondiscriminatory learning by providing nondifferentiation approaches to child workers. Others believed that child workers require different approaches but found that the absence of relevant policy and lack of teachers' capacity prevented them from using special approaches for child workers. These teachers suggested that child workers who experienced consistent learning problems due to distinctive cognitive and psychological challenges did not fit well in regular schools, suggesting that open junior secondary or other nonformal education and training were better options. This study found that despite some individual approaches to help child workers, such as providing motivational supports and communication with child workers' parents or guardians, there was a lack in institutional readiness to manage child workers with their distinctive needs, including lacks in school management, curriculum, teaching materials and instruction, and teacher capabilities. Taking actions to warrant institutional and individual teacher's readiness could help schools achieve the benefits of inclusive education as proposed by Allen and Cowdery (2015) and provide equal and quality education for all children regarding their abilities and disabilities as well as develop students' social skills.

CONCLUSION

Government policies support improved access to education for child workers. The combination of policies, including sending children back to school with the provision of financial aid to families through the PPA-PKH program, helped children to regularly

attend school. However, it is inadvisable to assume that attendance alone ensures a better future for child workers. It is important for schools to design and implement policies and practices to encourage child workers to achieve high academic outcomes and positive social and emotional wellbeing outcomes. It is also important for schools to shape child workers' academic orientation and motivate these children to continue their education. A failure to shape child workers' educational vision may result in a repeated cycle of child work practices across generations. The improvements in education quality and the provision of relevant education towards child workers can be a strategic investment to increase child workers' competence (Kluttz, 2015) and is of relevance to the Indonesian government's program encouraging child workers back to school and eliminate child labour in Indonesia by 2022 (ILO, 2013).

It might be useful to view the concept of inclusive education as presented by Terzi (2014) as a practice of education that allows social justice, fairness and equal participation. If referring to this notion, child workers who had been shown by many studies as being prone to unsuccessful learning (Holgado et al., 2014, Psacharopoulos, 1997; Ray & Lancaster, 2005) might be treated in an inclusive setting. There are at least three reasons why inclusive education can meet the needs of child workers. First, inclusive education promotes the formation of self-conception and social relationship skills (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Staub & Peck, 1994/1995). Second, inclusive settings enable a differentiated approach to engaging with children who display social-emotional problems, consistent misbehaviour, and poor self-vision (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Third, inclusive education is a gateway to a democratic education, in which the basic rights of students to receiving education regardless of their competences and disorders is guaranteed (Allen & Cowdery, 2005). ILO (2004) advocates that democratic approaches to learning would help to counter child workers' circumstances. A model of education that encourages child workers to think critically, be innovative, able to solve problem, and interact with other people (Kluttz, 2015) can be found in more inclusive and democratic approaches to education.

The study suggests that the Indonesian government should carefully design a comprehensive plan for school and teacher readiness as part of its agenda to eliminate child labour and return child workers to school. This may also lead to the manifestation of democratic education in Indonesia. Striving for child workers' equal access to quality education is a demonstration of lifting up the basic rights of economically, socially, and culturally marginalized and disenfranchised communities. This study highlights the need for school institutional readiness, including curriculum modification, assessment and evaluation, learning activities, methods, and time allocation for students with special needs, alongside teacher readiness embracing different mindsets, understanding students' special needs and improving pedagogic skills, particularly methods to enhance students' social skills.

Finally, the study leaves a number of issues to be examined in future research. This research focused on the perspectives of teachers whose schools were part of PPA-PKA program. Investigating child workers' voices on the impacts of the government programs would provide further insights to this issue.

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