CROSS – CULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH KOREA, TURKEY, AND TAIWAN: PRESCHOOL TEACHERS’ AND PARENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION

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The aim of this paper is to conduct an exploratory study to investigate the perspectives of teachers and parents in multicultural communities in three countries (South Korea, Turkey and Taiwan). Teachers and parents were surveyed about their interaction and communications about supporting children’s learning. In each country, 5 volunteer teachers were recruited from a preschool, serving low-income and multi-cultural students in urban setting. Teachers were then asked to recruit 5 parents from their school to complete the surveys. In South Korea, as the number of multi-ethnic children increases every year (Oh, 2005), Korean-speaking teachers are communicating with mothers from other countries, who have married Korean men. In Turkey, there are many Kurdish people whose mother tongue or second language is Kurdish (Ergil, 2000). Turkish-speaking teachers are working with those Kurdish parents whose language and cultural contexts differ from those of the teachers. In Taiwan, teachers are interacting with Tagalog-speaking and Malaysian-speaking mothers married to Taiwanese men (National Immigration Agency, 2010). Data was gathered from both 15 families and 15 teachers through open-ended questionnaires. Epstein’s parent involvement model (1995) was used as a guide for developing our questionnaires for parents and teachers. The translated questionnaires were given to bilingual native speakers of each language (Korean, Turkish, and Mandarin) with extensive experience in translating in both languages. They performed back translations of each items in the questionnaires. We compared their translations to our original English questionnaire items. We worked through any confusing translations to establish consensus about clearly communicating in each of the languages (Korean, Turkish, and Mandarin). The preliminary results of the research indicated many commonalities among both teachers and parents across all three countries. However, the results also showed that teachers and parents in each country reported their interactions and communications differently; teachers raised more concerns about communications and parents reported more positively about interactions with teachers. Moreover, teachers and parents differed in their suggestions about how to solve their communication problems. Drawing on theoretical and conceptual frameworks in research with immigrant families and teachers in the United States (Allexsaht-Snider, 1995; Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Marshall & Toohy, 2010; Ramirez, 2003), we situate our findings in these three multicultural communities in the broader literature about parent-teacher cross-cultural
communications. Implications for teachers, parents and researchers in diverse multicultural communities in other countries are discussed.

Keywords:
Teachers-Parent Communication, International Perspectives, Cross-cultural Perspectives

References:


