Family Engagement on the Promotion of Thai Learners' English Language Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Bangkok

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Abstract

This study explores the level of family engagement on the promotion of Thai secondary school learners' English language learning. This study was adapted from Epstein et al.'s (2002) family engagement model regarding communication, parenting, supporting and decision-making, and community collaboration, which essentially impact the ways families engage in enhancing their children' English language learning. Based on 402 questionnaires and focus-group interviews with families whose children studied in secondary schools in Bangkok under the supervision of Secondary Educational Service Area Offices 1 and 2, the findings reveal that the levels of family engagement varied. Parenting was rated as high because the respondents who were parents observed their roles as significant factors in contributing to their child's English language learning. Communication with school, and parents' support and decision-making did not gain much attention and were rated as medium. Community collaboration was rated as low since families did not recognize the importance of community that could lead to English language learning for their child. This study suggests that partnership programs between school, family, and community should be initiated and strengthened in promoting children's English language learning achievement.

1. Introduction

Family has been recognized as a core element in children's personal and intellectual growth through learning and formal education. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) provide three main reasons regarding parents' engagement in their children's elementary and secondary education as follows: 1) parents' fundamental roles and responsibilities in child education; 2) parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school; and 3) parents' perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved. Ye and Jiang (2014) state the importance of parental involvement as follows: 1) the parents are the first educators of their children; 2) parents have long-term responsibility for their own children; and 3) parental involvement can increase their children's chances of being successful in their learning. Jeynes (2007) suggests the influence of parental involvement is significant for the academic achievement of school children. In this study, the engagement of families including parents, relatives or guardians not only develops children's academic achievement, but also their language learning.

The quality content of children's verbal content and social interactions are primarily influenced by the regular involvement of parents (Hart & Risley, 1992). Sung and Padilla (1998), for example, suggest that young students are more motivated in learning Asian languages including Chinese, Japanese, or Korean in formal classroom settings in public schools due to high family engagement that promotes students' positive attitudes toward

foreign language learning. In addition, parents' views influencing the significance and necessity of language learning can contribute to language learners' values of their English language competence, experiences, and identities (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). Language learning is thus significantly underpinned by the engagement of families at each step of children's learning.

It is clear that family has always played a vital role in promoting children's acquisition of first, second, and foreign languages (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Nomnian, 2013). However, studies regarding family engagement in Thai children's English language learning are rare, particularly in the context of Bangkok where families spend most of their time working to increase their socio-economic status, and mainly depend on schools to develop their children's English proficiency development. Yet, families' expectations may not necessarily be achieved due to limitations on school resources that can potentially hinder children's language learning progress. According to Bartram (2006), parents are role models who contribute to the construction of children's attitudes toward language learning and use. Families should, therefore, initiate the development of their children's English language learning. The attitudes of family members, however, significantly impact on the English learning of learners whose English is not their first language (Dadi & Jin, 2013). Families' preferences, expectations, interpretations, values and beliefs about how to learn or how to teach English to promote children's English language learning by families who reside in Bangkok metropolitan area is rather underexplored. Although families and children in Bangkok seem to be able to access resources and facilities that can enhance their English language learning, results are not evident.

In this study, the aim is to investigate levels of family engagement and families' perceptions in promoting their children's English language learning for developing the English proficiency of these children in order to be equipped for ASEAN integration as English has been chosen as a working language in the region. This study hopes to elevate the importance of family engagement in the English language achievement for children in Thailand.

2. Literature review

The conceptual framework of this study is underlined by Epstein et al.'s (2002) six types of family engagement, including parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and community collaboration; each of which will be discussed as follows. First of all, parenting deals with skills, support, recognition of child and adolescent development, and home environment to promote learning at each age and grade level. It is important for schools to understand families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children. Secondly, two-way communication channels between school and home with regard to school programs and student progress are necessary. Thirdly, families become volunteers at the school or in other relevant contexts. Fourthly, learning at home requires families to be involved with their children's academic learning, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities taking place at home. Fifthly, families participate in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities as part of the school councils, teams, committees, and parent organizations. Lastly, community collaboration promotes resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups such as businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities.

In addition, Epstein and Salinas (2004) state that a well-organized partnership program starts with an action team for partnerships that are composed of teachers, administrators, parents,

and community partners, which is linked to the school council or school improvement team (p. 13). With a clear focus on promoting student success, the team writes annual plans for family and community involvement, implements and evaluates activities, and integrates the activities conducted by other groups and individual teachers into a comprehensive partnership program for the school. Furthermore, the concept of 'school, family, and community partnerships' recognizes parents, educators, and others in the community to share responsibilities for students' learning and development by sharing information, guiding learners, solving problems, and celebrating academic achievement of learners (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Epstein, 2011). Sheldon's (2003) study, for instance, suggests that schools' involvement with families and the community in learners' learning is potentially beneficial in order to help learners achieve in early elementary schools located in large urban areas in the U.S. Setiasih's (2014) research also reveals that Indonesian parents, who were advised to participate in a family learning program provided by school, could develop better understanding of their children's learning and gain more confident in promoting their children's English literacy education; and thus, the school should establish relationships with the students' family in order to create a positive impact on children's English literacy.

According to the aforementioned studies, it is clear that parental involvement leads to their children's academic achievement. Yet studies regarding Thai family engagement in their children's English language learning, particularly in Thai government schools in Bangkok, are underexplored. Epstein et al.'s (2002) framework provides this study with fundamental aspects that should be taken into account when researching family engagement leading to the development of child learning. For the practicality and suitability of the contexts in this study, Epstein's concept was employed and adapted by combining 'volunteering' with 'support and decision making' and 'learning at home' with 'parenting'. Therefore, the four main aspects of family engagement in this study include communication, parenting, supporting and decision making, and community collaboration.

3. Research methodology
Populations and samples of the study

The populations in this study were families including parents, relatives, or guardians, who were responsible for raising and/or supporting children who were studying at secondary school level in Bangkok. There are 119 public secondary schools in Bangkok, which are under the supervision of the Secondary Educational Service Area Offices 1 and 2. Due to the unspecified large number of the population, Yamane's (1967) formula with 95% confidence level determined the sample size of 400 families. Samples of the study were then given an informed consent form to sign in accordance with research ethics as required by Mahidol University's Institutional Review Board in Social Sciences and Humanities (MU-SSIRB). The following section presents the demographic data of the questionnaire respondents.

Table 1: Sex

Sex		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Men	269	66.9	67.1	67.1
	Women	132	32.8	32.9	100.0
	Total	401	99.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.2		
Total		402	100.0		

According Table 1, there were 402 respondents from families in Bangkok including 269 men and 132 women with 1 unidentified sex. It shows that more men responded to the questionnaires than did women.

Table 2: Age

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	25-34	77	19.2	19.2	19.2
	35-44	141	35.1	35.1	54.2
Valid	45-54	144	35.8	35.8	90.0
	>55	40	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	402	100.0	100.0	

From Table 2 above, the majority of the families were aged between 45-54 years (35.8%) followed by the families from 35-44 years age group (35.1%). The minority group included those over 55 years of age (10%). The data suggests that a large number of respondents to the questionnaires were middle-aged.

Table 3: Educational background

Educational background		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Primary	48	11.9	11.9	11.9
	Secondary	42	10.4	10.4	22.4
	High School	66	16.4	16.4	38.8
	Vocational	36	9.0	9.0	47.8
Valid	Bachelor	171	42.5	42.5	90.3
	Master's	34	8.5	8.5	98.8
	Doctorate	4	1.0	1.0	99.8
	Others	1	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	402	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 3, more than half of the respondents had achieved university graduate qualifications: Bachelor's degree (42.5%), Master's degree (8.5%), and Doctorate degree (1%). This suggests that a large number of families in Bangkok are university educated.

Table 4: Occupation

	Occupations	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	-Government officers	81	20.1	20.1	20.1
	-State enterprise officers	11	2.7	2.7	22.9
	-Private employees	69	17.2	17.2	40.0
	-Permanent wage-earners	21	5.2	5.2	45.3
Valid	-Temporary wage-earners	12	3.0	3.0	48.3
	-Business owners	76	18.9	18.9	67.2
	-Self-employed	55	13.7	13.7	80.8
	-Home makers	48	11.9	11.9	92.8
	-Others	29	7.2	7.2	100.0
	Total	402	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 4, the occupations of family members included: government officers (20.1%) in the majority followed by business owners (18.9%) and private employees (17.2%). State enterprise officers (2.7%) and temporary wage-earners (3.0%) made up the minority occupations of respondents.

Table 5: Salary

	Salary (Baht/Month)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	<15,000	76	18.9	18.9	18.9
	15,001-25,000	141	35.1	35.1	54.0
	25,001-35,000	62	15.4	15.4	69.4
Valid	35,001-45,000	39	9.7	9.7	79.1
	45,001-55,000	31	7.7	7.7	86.8
	>55,000	53	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	402	100.0	100.0	

From Table 5, most respondents earned 15,001-25,000 Baht/month (35.1%) with a minority (7.7%) earning 45,001-55,000 Baht/month. 18.9% of the respondents earned less than 15,000 Baht/month. The data reveals that the financial status of most respondents made it possible for them to support their children in schools in Bangkok.

To sum up, the respondents were mainly men, with the 35-54 years age group. A slight majority had obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher and most earned 15,001-25,000 Baht/month. The most popular career was that of government officer.

Data collection and analysis

Two main research tools which were used in this study namely, survey and focus-group interview. Each tool will be discussed as follows:

1) Survey

Survey was employed in this study because it allowed researchers to understand the overall picture of family engagement with their children's learning of English. Bloch (2006) suggests that a survey provides data collected from cases being given the same questions that allow researchers to measure the same variables and gain the data from the targeted group of population. Postal survey was implemented by posting a questionnaire to schools which would distribute them onto parents. The questionnaire was designed and produced by researchers who drew upon Epstein et al.'s (2002) conceptual framework regarding the elements of parental engagement. The questions were written, verified and revised a few times by piloting them with parents who volunteered to answer the initial version of the questionnaire. This pilot survey promoted clear statements and questions. Bloch (2006) argues for the pilot study of the questionnaire because it helps to make the questions more simple, clear, and precise, which can avoid ambiguity, misinterpretations, and negativity for the respondents. Then, the questionnaires were directly delivered by hand with a random sampling to parents at schools. As a result, 402 questionnaires were collected. Following the return of the questionnaires, SPSS was used to analyze the data that provided descriptive statistics with mean scores and standard deviations (S.D.). The questionnaire was designed with the five-point Likert scale for the respondents to rate their level of engagement with the given interpretations as follows:

Mean scores	Interpretations
4.210 - 5.000	Highest
3.410 - 4.209	High
2.610 - 3.409	Medium
1.810 - 2.609	Low
1.000 - 1.809	Lowest

The interpretations are useful for the researchers to interpret data for each aspect of family engagement to observe the overall picture prior to interviewing families in the focus groups. This point will be discussed next.

2) Focus-group interviews

Focus-group interviews were employed in this study because they provided richer data that could supplement the quantitative data drawn from the questionnaires. Drawing upon Flick (2006), focus-group interviews stimulate participant responses by providing data beyond the supportive scope of questionnaires and individual interviews because a group dynamic can be promoted by a facilitator who asks relevant questions and provides further guidance if the group needs clarification. In this study, facilitators were researchers and research assistants with experience in conducting focus-group interviews as they were able to provide clear instructions and questions. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2011, p. 546) state that focus group research aims to answer 'how' and 'why' questions thus yielding rich, complex, and sometimes, contradictory accounts of how people interpret their experiences leading to social policy and social change. In addition, focus-group interviews explore the deeper insights of participants whose social-interactional dynamics can induce memories, positions, ideologies, practices and desires that allow researchers to understand the complexity of how

the participants position themselves in relation to each other as they respond to questions, issues, and topics that are specially posed to them (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 559). In this study, the participants were called for the focus-group interviews that were held at a university on the weekend. They were separated into groups of 6-8 participants whose children were studying at Thai public secondary schools in Bangkok. Although there was a mixture of economic and social backgrounds, they were members of parents associations in their respective schools, which demonstrated, to a certain extent, that they paid much attention to their children's learning and believed that participating in the focus-group interviews would enable them to better understand their parental role that could be a significant impact on their children's learning of English. There were six focus-group interviews, which took place on two separate occasions. Focus-group interview questions were based on Epstein et al.'s (2002) conceptual framework as follows:

1. How do you communicate with the school about your child's learning of English language?
2. How do you promote of English language learning with your child?
3. How do you enhance your child's learning of English language?
4. Have you ever volunteered for the school to promote your child's English language learning? If so, why and how?
5. How do you make decisions with the school to promote your child's English language learning?
6. Do you have any networks to promote your children's English language learning? If so, how do you make use of these networks?
7. Does your community support your children's English language learning? If so, how?
8. In your opinion, what do you think about the efforts of your school and community in promoting your child's English language learning?
9. In your opinion, in what ways can you promote your child's English language learning?

The facilitators provided the participants with the aims and objectives of the study and gave the informed consent form for each participant to sign. Then, the focus-group interviews were conducted which lasted approximately two hours. The participants' responses were digitally recorded for further transcription and analysis. Qualitative content analysis was employed in this study because, as Flick (2006) suggested, it would yield categories that could be repeatedly assessed and modified where necessary. Thus, the findings of this study will be presented in following section.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the responses to the questionnaire regarding "Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning" from the 402 respondents. The details of each aspect will be presented as follows:

Table 6: Family Engagement in the Aspect of Communication

Item	Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning	Inter pret.	Mean	S.D.
1.	You have been informed about school's policies regarding English language teaching and learning.	High	3.455	1.152
2.	You have known school's expectation toward English language learning.	High	3.590	1.042
3.	You have been advised to promote your child's English language teaching and learning.	Med.	3.338	1.055
4.	You understand school's assessment toward English language learning.	Med.	3.219	1.048
5.	You have received information regarding English language teaching and learning.	Med.	3.219	1.095
6.	You have responded to needs survey of your child's English language learning development.	Med.	3.219	1.222
7.	You have visited school's English learning resources.	Med.	2.756	1.236
8.	You have advised school regarding English language learning and teaching for your child.	Med.	2.736	1.227
9.	You have attended English language activities organized by school.	Low	2.547	1.315
10.	You have examined your child's English language learning portfolio.	Med.	3.067	1.231
11.	You have communicated with English language teachers about your child' English language learning.	Med.	2.726	1.319
12.	You have communicated with school about English language learning through Facebook and/or Line.	Low	2.383	1.330
	Overall mean score	**Med.**	**3.021**	**1.247**

As to Table 6, item 1) families knew the school's expectations toward English language learning (mean score = 3.590) and item 2) families were informed about school's policies regarding English language teaching and learning (mean score = 3.455) were rated relatively high. Communicating with the school via social media such as Facebook and/or Line was limited and rated as low (mean score = 2.383). The data suggest that parents would like to communicate with the school more; and in so doing, they would be kept updated about their child's English language teaching and learning. It is, therefore, clear that the overall picture of families' communication with the school was rated as medium (mean score = 3.021).

According to the focus-group interview transcripts, one of the parents stated that:

Extract 1

"Communication between the school and family is not sufficient. I used to live in Japan for ten years and observed that there would be a printed document to parents to update about school activities every week. The school would ask for parental involvement. I don't think Thai schools communicate much with parents."

Extract 2

"Most parents do not communicate much with the school about their children's English language learning because they don't know how to communicate or with which teacher to communicate. Some parents have sent their children to study in Bangkok; and thus, they hardly have a chance to communicate with the school."

These two extracts illustrate that families did not have opportunities to communicate with the school about their children's English language learning as much as they wished. In

addition, parents might not know which channels of communication were available. Some parents suggested an alternative communication channel through a parental network via social media platforms such as 'Line.'

Extract 3
"I think it's a good idea to have a Line group that allows parents to know what's going on with their children at school. We can exchange information with one another."

Extract 4
"I have a Line group made up of my child's class. The teacher sends information about homework that may need parents' assistance. Some parents also post interesting news to share among parents."

It is evident that parents used Line for communication among themselves and with the teacher in order to share necessary information regarding their child's learning, which can keep parents within a child's learning loop.

Table 7: Family Engagement in the Aspect of Parenting

Item	Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning	Inter pret.	Mean	S.D.
1.	You study developmental approaches regarding your child's English language learning.	High	3.435	1.102
2.	You have advised your child regarding English language learning.	High	3.530	1.085
3.	You have advised your child regarding English language learning materials.	High	3.580	1.083
4.	You have created appropriate environment for your child's English language learning at home.	Med.	3.177	1.122
5.	You support your child's needs for English language learning.	High	3.853	1.069
6.	You are responsible for your child's English language learning with English language teachers.	Med.	3.107	1.277
7.	You know the content of your child's English language learning.	Med.	3.134	1.148
8.	You stimulate your child about the significance of English.	High	4.147	0.958
9.	You help your child who encounters obstacles in English language learning.	High	3.888	0.950
10.	You are able to link English language knowledge that your child learns at school with his/her learning at home.	Med.	3.301	1.092
11.	You encourage your child to use English language media such as movies, songs, and Internet.	High	3.756	1.082
12.	You set up time for your child's English language learning at home.	Med.	3.129	1.163
13.	You have been trained in terms of skills for problem-solving and decision-making regarding your child's English language learning.	Med.	2.915	1.222
14.	You have been trained to help your child's English language learning development in various aspects.	Med.	2.823	1.252
	Overall mean score	**High**	**3.413**	**1.180**

According to Table 7, parenting was rated as relatively high for children's English language learning because parents are able to stimulate their child to recognize the importance of English language (mean score = 4.147). It is clear that parents play a

significant role in promoting positive and effective English language learning outcomes for their children (the overall mean score = 3.413).

The focus-group interview transcripts also provide parents' perceptions regarding English language learning as follows.

Extract 5

"I personally like English. Therefore, I use my own experience to teach and learn English with my children through listening to English songs, watching movies in English, and taking English tutorial courses."

Extract 6

"I let my child learn English independently by listening, reading, and writing. When my child doesn't understand some words, I advise him to open a dictionary."

Extract 7

"My child likes to play on-line games in English. He told me that playing games helps him learn to read in English."

These extracts suggest that these parents spent time with their children at home to encourage them to use English as much as possible through daily activities in English such as listening to music, watching films, and playing games. However, children may still lack opportunities to speak in English; thus families seek to support teachers and the school in offering activities for their children to practice speaking through parent networks and associations. This will be the topic to be discussed next.

Table 8: Family Engagement in the Aspect of Supporting and Decision-Making

Item	Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning	Interpret.	Mean	S.D.
1.	You have attended school's meeting regarding your child's English language learning.	Med.	2.749	1.353
2.	You have attended schools' training regarding your child's English language learning.	Low	2.609	1.320
3.	You have organized English language learning at school.	Low	2.577	1.297
4.	You have parents networks to exchange about your child's English language learning.	Med.	2.617	1.282
5.	You provide school with your child's English language teaching and learning materials.	Low	2.607	1.262
6.	You and the school evaluate school's English language learning activities.	Med.	2.649	1.271
7.	You have engaged in the decision making of your child's English language learning development.	Med.	3.129	1.247
8.	You have engaged in creating parents networks to create English language learning culture for your child.	Med.	2.679	1.249
9.	You have supported parents association to promote your child's English language learning.	Med.	3.214	1.302
	Overall mean score	**Med.**	**2.759**	**1.305**

From Table 8, the data reveal that families did not have opportunities to engage in organizing English language learning at school (mean score = 2.577). In general, family support and decision making was rated as medium (mean score = 2.759). According to the focus-group transcripts, families seemed to rely the parents association and network as a means to assisting in their child's language learning.

Extract 8

> *"Regarding the parents network, whoever wants to join must volunteer for all kinds of school activities and expenses. However, a parents network committee is compulsory for every school to have according to the Ministry of Education."*

Extract 9

> *"I normally attend school meetings and activities like New Year, Songkran (Thai New Year), Buddhist festivals, and English dramas."*

Extract 10

> *"I think parents are willing to engage and collaborate with the school in all kinds of aspects in order to help their children to learn better; and that will make the society and country better. Parents do not know what the school needs. For English, for example, the school should check the background of parents as to whether anyone who has an English education has time and can volunteer to help with English teaching and learning. I believe that they would like to help."*

These extracts reveal that although parents would like to support the school and be part of the school committee to make decisions, the school did not call for parents' involvement for the development of their children's English language learning as it should be. Yet, it is important for the school to communicate with parents and provide opportunities for them to volunteer at school for real action rather than serving on school committee in order to fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education without actually doing anything

Table 9: Family Engagement in the Aspect of Community Collaboration

Item	Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning	Inter pret.	Mean	S.D.
1.	You have attended community meetings regarding English language learning development.	Low	2.455	1.321
2.	You have engaged in creating resources that support English language learning.	Low	2.510	1.274
3.	You have developed English language learning for children in your community.	Low	2.498	1.287
4.	You have supported English language learning for children in your community.	Low	2.512	1.278
5.	You have publicized news regarding English language learning to your community.	Low	2.455	1.280
6.	You have engaged in building English language learning resources in your community.	Low	2.445	1.313
7.	You have provided data regarding English language learning resources	Low	2.530	1.346

Item	Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning	Inter pret.	Mean	S.D.
	for people in your community.			
8.	You have stimulated children in your community to recognize the importance of English language learning.	Low	2.595	1.324
9.	You have engaged with your community to promote English language learning for children in your community.	Low	2.552	1.354
	Overall mean score	**Low**	**2.506**	**1.308**

As to Table 9, the overall rating scale for community collaboration is significantly low (overall mean score = 2.506) for every item, which is rather disappointing as families did not recognize the importance of communities in Bangkok in terms of supporting their children's English language teaching and learning. Parents claimed that they lived in isolation and that no one cared for one another.

Extract 11

> *"In my community, there is no connection. We live in isolation."*

Extract 12

> *"People in my community need only money. They just think what to sell to students to make more money. The community doesn't focus on English at all."*

These extracts illustrate that the communities in which they lived could not contribute to the promotion of English since they focused more on their economic and financial status to overcome problems in their daily living rather than considering the well-being and learning of children in the communities. Yet, one parent considered that socio-cultural context in the community was also important in shaping the way people in the community regarded English use.

Extract 13

> *"Our community is not located in a foreigner zone like the Sukhumvit area where there are foreigners and foreign cultures."*

Sukhumvit is one of the areas in Bangkok popular with foreigners and an increasing number of foreign tourists and expatriates live and work there on a regular basis. It is inevitable that the community generally needs to use English. Another parent, however, suggested hiring foreign teachers to improve their children's English.

Extract 14

> *"I notice that some communities hire foreign teachers to teach English at their schools and communities by sharing costs among parents."*

To sum up, parenting was rated as high because the respondents, who were parents, perceived their role as being a significant factor in contributing to their child's English language learning. Communicating with school, support and decision-making by families did not earn much attention and were rated as medium. Families might not be able to engage much with the school in terms of communication, support, and making decisions to promote their children's English language learning. Collaborating with the community was rated as low since families did not recognize the importance of community collaboration that could lead to

English language learning for their children.   The following figure summarizes the overall mean scores of each aspect.
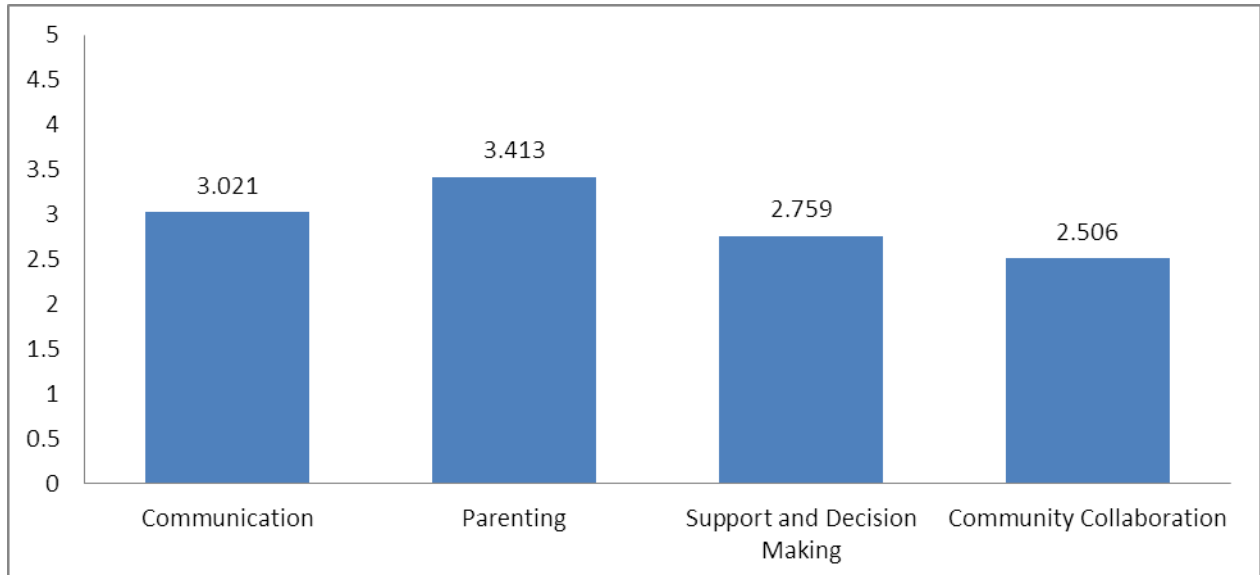

Figure 1: Levels of Family Engagement to Promote English Language Learning Implications

Drawing upon the findings above, it is evident that Epstein's concept of 'school, family, and the community partnership' has not been completely achieved among Thai families whose children went to secondary schools in Bangkok under the supervision of the Secondary Educational Service Area Offices 1 and 2.   This was because the parental partnership between the school and community was not effective or strong enough that families could not satisfactorily promote their children's English language learning.   There are two implications on how partnerships with the school and the community can be created so that families may seek more engagement and further collaborations to enhance their child's English language learning and teaching.

First of all, the school should provide opportunities for families to participate more with school activities through volunteering and decision making that enables them to be part of their child's English language learning development since parents play a role in raising the child's recognition of English learning.   Schools that effectively engage with families and the community must concentrate on building trusts; promote collaborative relationships and two-way communications among teachers, families, and community members; and recognize, respect, and address the needs of families and communities (Epstein et al., 2002; Setiasih, 2014).   By doing so, families in this study can potentially connect with the school appropriately and effectively with clear goals and objectives for English language learning development that are shared by all stakeholders within the community.

Secondly, the community needs to be strengthened by collaborations among community leaders and members.   This can be done, according to Sheldon (2003), by providing team training and workshops, funding, and technical expertise, with district and state leaders helping schools connect with the families and communities they serve.   Therefore, factors within and outside schools contribute to the effectiveness of school,

family, and community partnership programs. Epstein and Sheldon (2006) further suggest district and state leaders must guide schools in strengthening and sustaining programs of family engagement and community involvement, which can be implemented following multi-level analyses to study the supportive efforts, contributions and connections made by district leaders and school actions to initiate partnership programs. With regard to English language teaching and learning in Thailand, Deerajviset (2014) suggests that there is a need for the involvement from all stakeholders including the government, education institutions, educators, teachers, and students to meet the demand of English as a working language in ASEAN. In this study, it is imperative for community leaders and authorities to step in and foster linkages between families and schools to recognize the importance of English language learning among children and community members in preparation for ASEAN and use for future career and communication.

5. Conclusion

Drawing upon Epstein et al.'s (2002) concepts, this study explores the levels of family engagement in the promotion of children's English language learning in Bangkok. Family in this study is considered as a cultural model that comprises set meanings, values, and process contextualized within a particular family because parents are transmitters of the cultural values that shape their parenting and their children's learning attitudes. In order to promote English language learning, aspects regarding family engagement include communication, parenting, support and decision making, as well as community collaboration. Although parenting has been proven to be the most influential factor, community collaboration requires the greatest attention from all parties including school and family. Support and decision-making, and communication need to be further addressed. It is imperative to establish stronger school, family and community partnership programs in collaboration with relevant stakeholders for the betterment of children's English language competence. It is, therefore, clear that school, family, and community contexts are overlapping with one another depending on the institutional policies and individual beliefs and practices within each context. It is also advisable for educators, researchers, and relevant stakeholders to connect and integrate these three key aspects when the aim is to promote children's English language learning in Thailand. It is time to change the mindsets and attitudes of families and communities that English learning can take place beyond the classroom and the school. Everyone has shared responsibilities to create better English language learning environments for all. It is also important to conduct more research in this field to strengthen the English language learning achievement for children through family and community engagement. This will help parents, educators, and researchers to empower children, teachers, educational administrators, families, and communities in a more holistic and synergetic way.

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