

Toward Socially Just Parent Engagement in Islamic Schools

Analysing Texts for Cross Currents

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Session Overview

1. A model for school-home-community relations
2. Study of Islamic school websites
3. Discourses of parent-school relations
4. Socially just parent engagement in Islamic schools
5. Ways forward

Social Justice and Parent Engagement

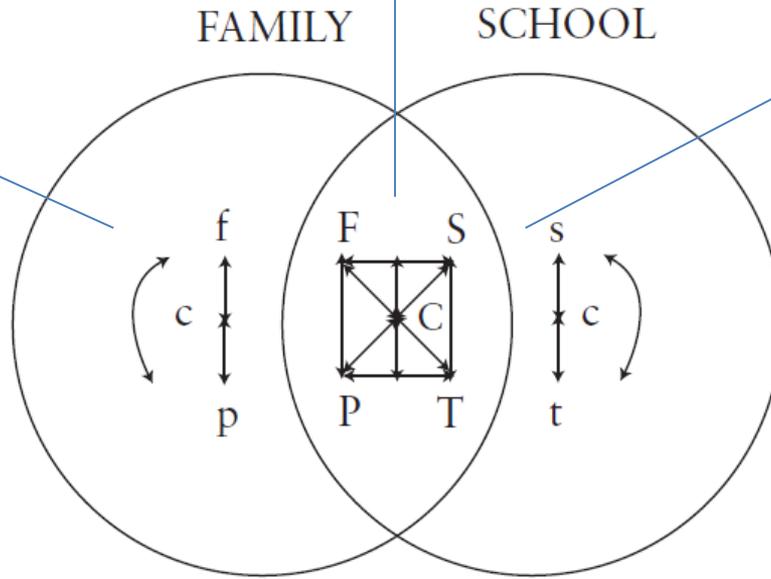
Beyond “involvement”

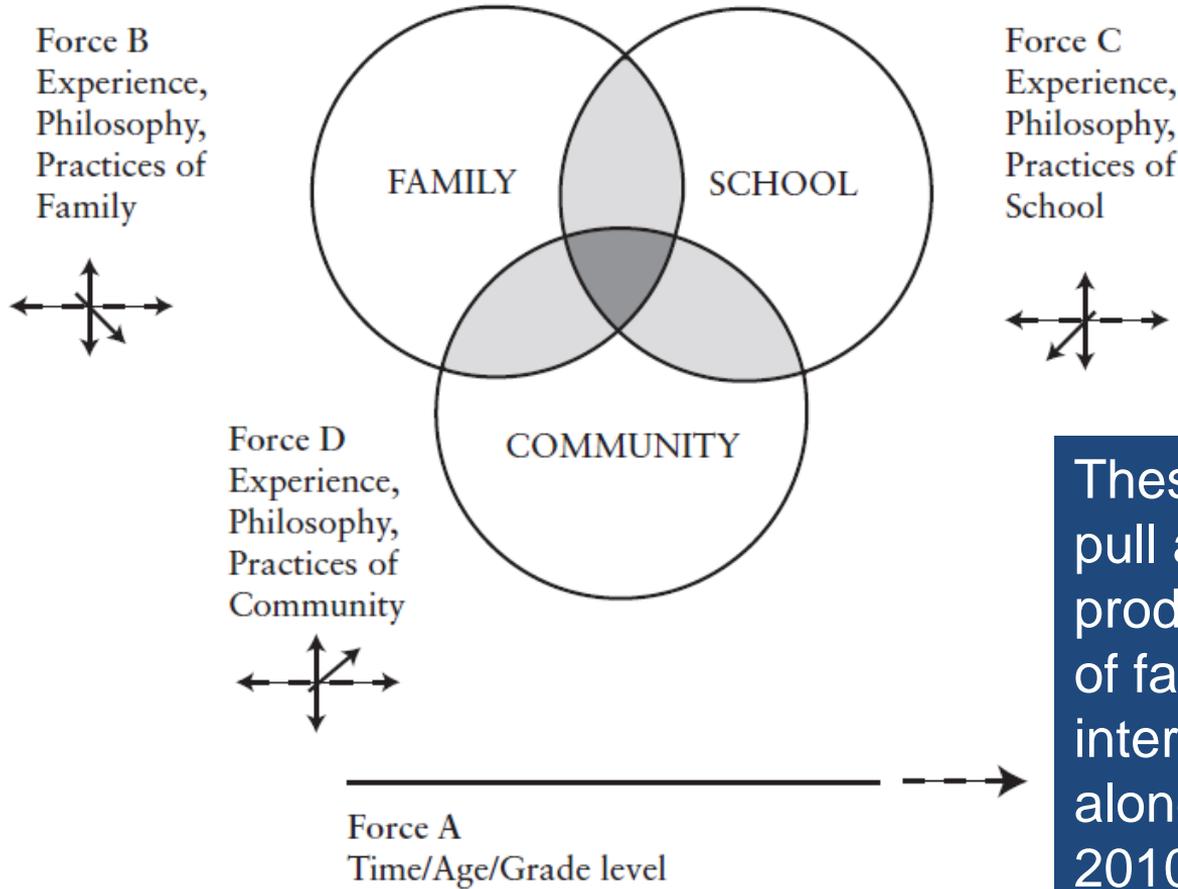
- Challenge institutional inequities and barriers
Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Terriquez & Rogers, 2011; Welton & Freelon, 2018
- Challenge deficit views of marginalized communities
Bertrand et al 2018
- Shift from deficits to assets / Center Lifeworlds
Huerta-Charles, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Soto, 1997
- Parents as co-researchers and co-collaborators
Hernandez-Johnson & Flores 2018

Interactions between the family and the school

Interactions within the family

Interactions within the school





These forces push together or pull apart the spheres to produce more or less overlap of family and school actions, interactions, and influence all along the time line. (Epstein 2010 p. 33)

Applying the model:

A Malaysian case study

“Parental partnership in the learning of children with learning disabilities in inclusive classes in Malaysia” was investigated by Norshidah Abu Husin (2013).

Focus: Support for children who have transitioned from a special education (SE) to a mainstream (MS) class.

Participants:

- Parents/carers (P)
- special education teachers (SE)
- mainstream class teachers (MS)
- in two schools (A & B).

Analysing external and internal relations

When considering the **external** interactions, there were strong relationships between SE and P.

However MS and P had very little interaction.

In terms of **internal** interactions, there was very little interaction between SE and MS.

“I heard that the parents are easily offended.” (MS1)

“I was told that we need to be smart to handle the problems.” (MS2)

“I have no problem with all SE teachers. We communicate about everything.” (P2)

“I never have the chance to meet the mainstream teachers.” (P1)

Why study school web-sites?

Wilson & Carlsen, 2015 p. 29.

1. A non-invasive snapshot
2. An element in the school ecology
3. Helps to frame roles and relationships
4. A first step in raising issues

School websites have been described as “a window into how a school wants to be understood by an external audience”

'Angel College' Website

Our Parents & Friends are an integral support group here at the South Campus. One of the most significant features of being a member of the Angel College family is the sense of warm welcome and instant belonging that is to be found in this community.

Students will participate in a number of organised camps and excursions throughout their journey at the school. Every year, parents receive comprehensive information prior to each of these events from the teachers involved and often copies of this information will be published online.

Parents/guardians are expected to support the College digital learning program by endorsing relevant College policies and guiding their children in adhering to the practices highlighted in this document.

In the event of theft the student's parents/guardians must lodge a police report and obtain a police report number.

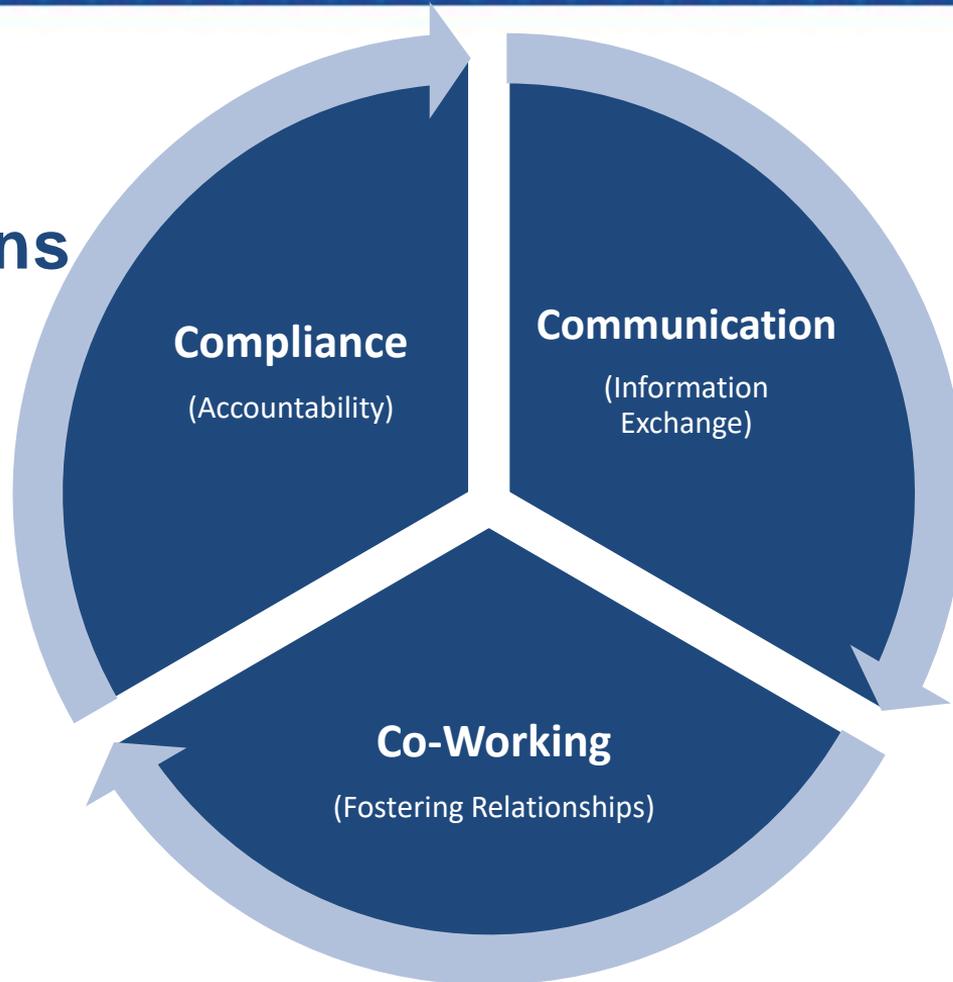
Extreme hair styles and colouring is not permitted. Parents will be contacted to have the matter corrected immediately.

'Angel College' Website

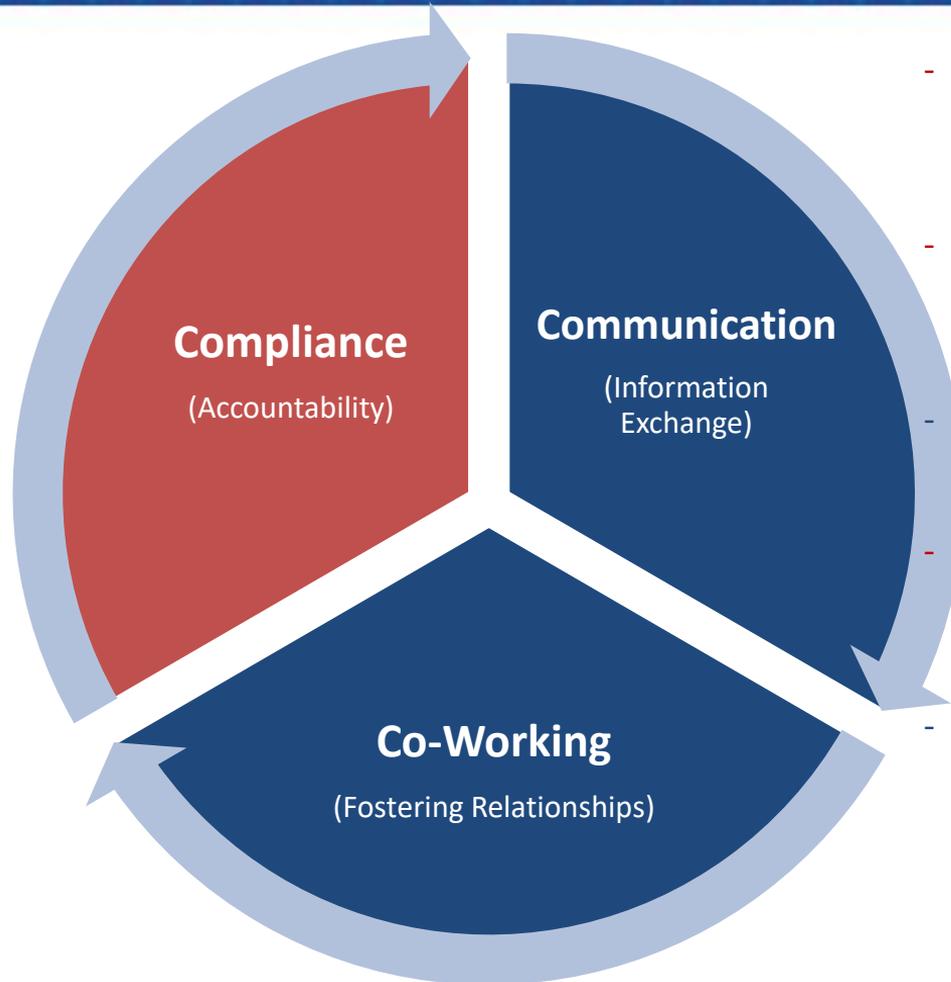
Working in partnerships with parents and acting as an extension of the home, our passion is to prepare our students for their life beyond the classroom.

The school will generally collect personal information held about an individual by way of forms filled out by parents or pupils, face-to-face meetings and interviews, and telephone calls. In some cases where the School requests personal information about a pupil or parent, if the information requested is not obtained, the School may not be able to enrol or continue the enrolment of the pupil.

Findings: 3 Broad Categorizations

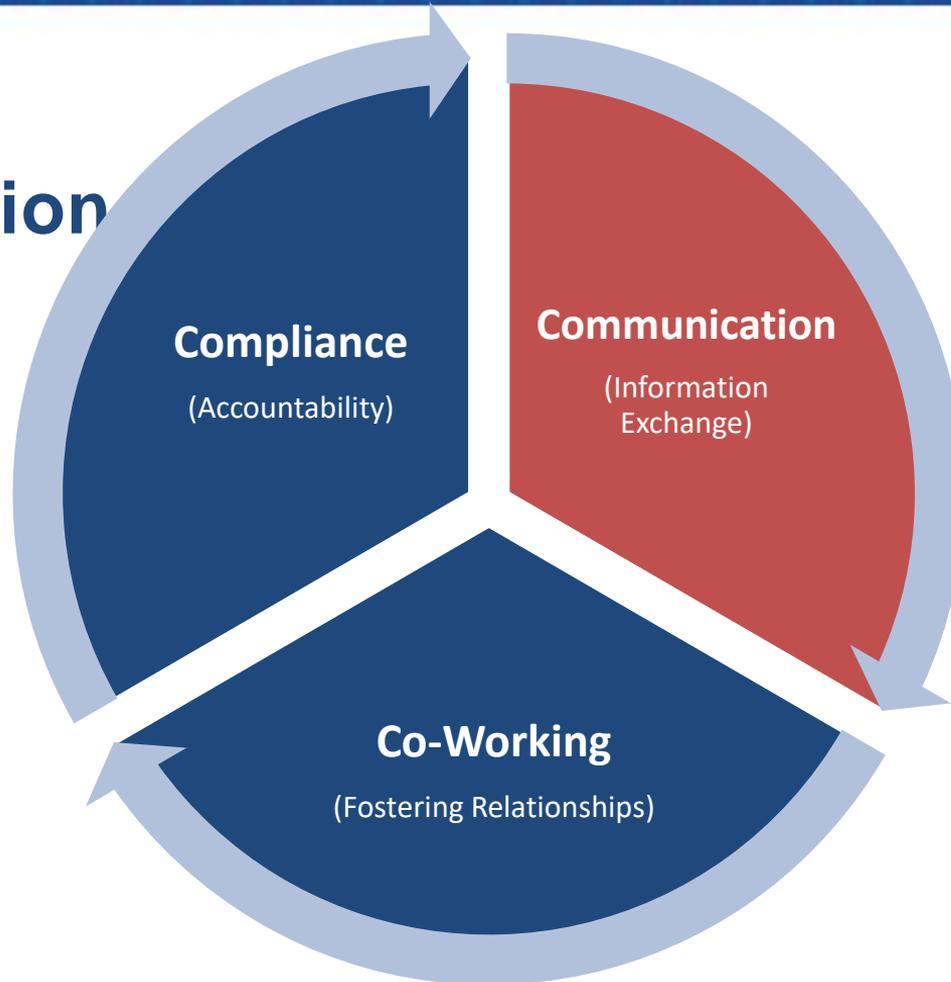


Findings: Compliance



- **Overemphasis on compliance** via school policies
- **Intricate policies**, overly verbose (e.g. behavior, homework, uniform)
- Emphasis on **'rules' over 'rationale'**
- **Policies are clinical** – no visuals, stories, cases (e.g. when traveling)
- Directive language – **'you'** [parents] must comply with **'us'** [school]

Findings: Communication



- **'Business'** and **'warning'** voice over 'welcoming'
- Information facilitation – **notify 'us' / we notify 'you'**
- **School requests** information / **parents respond**

Findings: Co-Working



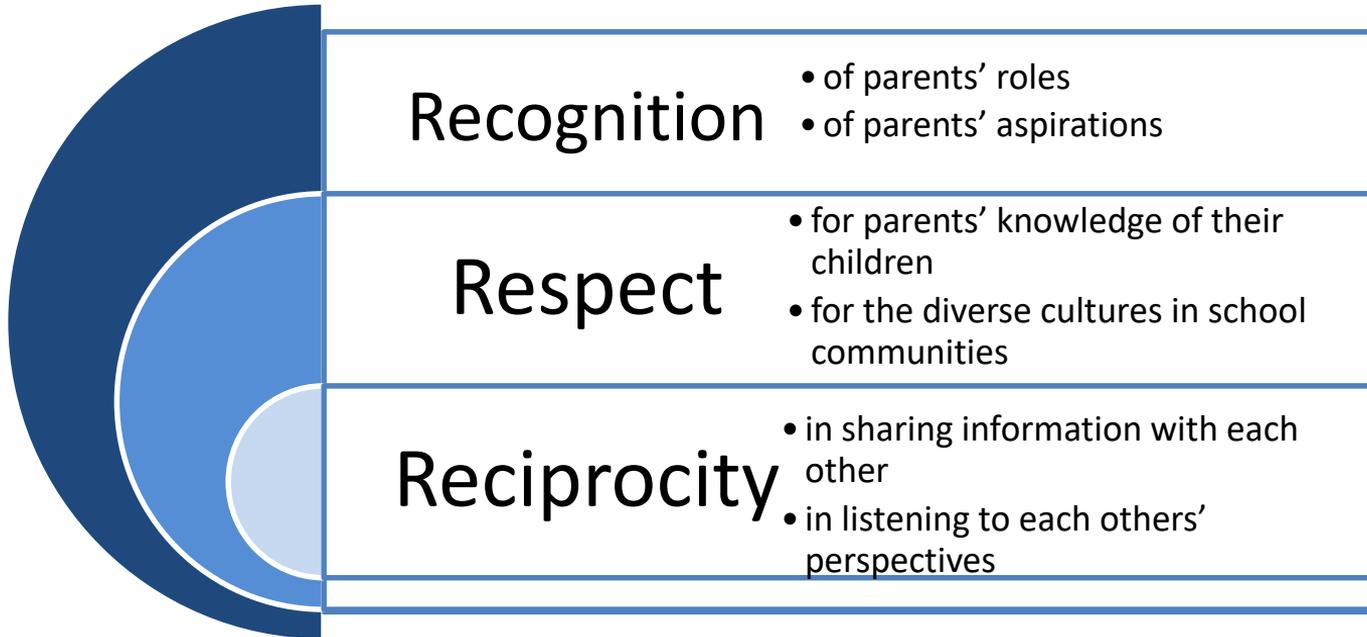
- **Principal Letters:**
Welcoming / warm messaging:
 - 'we', 'us',
 - 'our parents',
 - 'our school family'
 - parents as partners,
 - believe in school vision

- **Parents Associations** established but unclear of function – focus is **“school wellbeing”** – comes across as a compliance and information exchange

Discourses of parent-school relations

1. **Discourse of Disengagement** – parents viewed in deficit (Baquedano-Lopez et. al. 2013), as absent rather than present (Cooper 2009), schools misrecognize working class families' funds of knowledge (Luet 2017)
2. **Discourse of Partnership** – dominant ed reform slogan see parents as 'partners' but unclear what this entails (Hadley 2014); parents as 'problem' and 'solution' (Prins & Toso 2008)
3. **Discourse of Accountability** – expects parents 'to do more' e.g. Parent Education Profile while not alter policy and social structures in schools (Prins & Toso 2008)
4. **Discourse of Professional Authority** – educators 'know' and parents are 'receptients' (Prins & Toso 2008)

Values for socially just engagement with parents/families in Islamic Schools



A system that values pastoral care might be interested in an alternative

WAY FORWARD

Thank you.



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References

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