

Parenting in Multicultural Settings: Experiences of the Indonesian Mothers

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This study was an attempt to explore the experiences of Indonesian women who married to foreign spouses in the course of parenting. Six Indonesian women were interviewed following a semi-structured interview schedule. While all the participants were Indonesian in origin, their spouses were from different countries, that is India, Japan, Netherland, USA, Scotland, and Germany. The participants and their spouses differ in their parenting strategies, which can be attributed to the cultural differences between them. However, it was also observed that the spouses manage these differences by applying several strategies, such as learning from each other, tolerating each other's standards, and mixing up the cultural values. The acculturation effect of the partner's culture is being discussed in this study.

Keywords: multicultural, parenting, cultural difference, management of differences

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui pola pengasuhan anak yang dilakukan perempuan Indonesia yang menikah dengan pria asing. Enam perempuan Indonesia berpartisipasi dalam penelitian yang menggunakan metode wawancara semi-terstruktur. Keenam partisipan berasal dari Indonesia, sedangkan suami mereka berasal dari berbagai negara, yaitu India, Jepang, Belanda, Amerika Serikat, Skotlandia, dan Jerman. Partisipan dan pasangannya memiliki perbedaan dalam strategi pengasuhan anak yang disebabkan perbedaan budaya di antara mereka. Namun, hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa pasangan tersebut dapat mengatasi perbedaan yang muncul dengan mengaplikasikan beberapa strategi, seperti saling belajar satu sama lain, menoleransi standar masing-masing, dan melakukan pencampuran nilai-nilai budaya. Pengaruh akulturasi dari budaya asal pasangan juga didiskusikan dalam artikel ini.

Kata kunci: multikultural, pengasuhan, perbedaan budaya, manajemen perbedaan

Parent is a term which usually being defined in the frame of biological and genetic relationships. Nonetheless, Oates, Lewis, & Lamb (2005) argued that the biological part of parent in regard to the term of parenting could be just the beginning. Typically, parenting is thought of as involving a long-term commitment to nurturing an infant into a child, into an adolescent, and then onward into adult life. Therefore, parenting is generally believed as a very significant factor that shapes one's personality, or in other word is shaping one's emotional, relational life, and its individuality.

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The role of parenting in the development of the child was then being explored by several researchers. One of the well-known parenting researchers was Baumrind, who categorised the parenting styles into four: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and nonconformist (Oates, et al., 2005). She argued that the manifestation of each of the parenting style will have different impact in the child's development. Moreover, she argued that the authoritative parents, who tend to be warm, encouraging independence, and using explanations in parenting their young children, will encourage their children to become socially responsible.

Nevertheless, it seems that the theories of parenting cannot be universalized in every culture. Every individual will experience different process of socialization based on the cultural context. As Greenfield & Suzuki (1998) argued, culture and the child development are inextricably intertwined. On the other hand, socialization is the process of accepting values, standards, and customs of

society and adapting oneself to be functional in the larger social context (Grusec & Davidov, 2007). Thus, it is clear that the parenting strategies and style along with the benefits of each style will be dependent on the cultural context in which the child and the parents live.

Keshavarz & Baharudin (2009) reviewed the literature research on parenting styles of the three different ethnics in Malaysia that is to say Malay, Chinese, and Indian. They concluded that Malay parents were having very important roles in directing the children toward the right behavior and attitude as well as stressing on the spiritual growth in the development of the children. Malay parents also emphasize on values such as unity, sharing, and caring for others. Whereas among Chinese families, interactions between parent and child tend to differ from one age period to another. Parents tend to be more lenient toward infants and young children, but treat older children in a harsh and strict manner and also expect them to control their emotions and impulses. Finally, the Indian parents tend to stress on respect, obedience and high academic achievement in their children, and also encourage their children to control themselves, be patient and not yield to passion.

In another study, Cheah & Chirkov (2008) examined the parental beliefs about desired socialization goals and the reasons why these goals were important among Aboriginal and European Canadian mothers. Although they found that mothers in the two cultures suggested a similar set of eight goals, behaviors, and qualities and reasons overall, the differences were found to be significant when it comes to their own child's development. The European Canadian mothers endorsed qualities of social sensitivity (such as being kind, polite, and considerate) more often than Aboriginal mothers. In contrast, Aboriginal mothers provided more education, learning, and achievement-oriented behaviors and attitudes as desirable in their own children compared with European Canadian mothers. Aboriginal mothers also reported that it was important for their children to maintain his or her cultural traditions and spirituality more often than their European Canadian counterparts.

Evidence of cultural differences in parenting style between Vietnamese-Australians and Anglo-Australians was also found (Herz & Gullone, 1999). Vietnamese-Australian adolescents reported a higher incidence of the affectionless-control parenting style and a lower incidence of the optimal bonding parenting style than Anglo-Australian adolescents.

Cote & Bornstein (2003) conducted a longitudinal study in order to evaluate cultural differences and developmental continuity and stability in cultural cognitions

(acculturation, individualism, collectivism) and parenting cognitions (attributions, self-perceptions, and knowledge) in 86 Japanese American and South American acculturating mothers when their children were five and 20 months of age. In this study, it found that South American mothers were more collectivistic than Japanese-American mothers. Cultural group and attribution differences also emerged for mothers' parenting attributions in successful situations, whereas child age and attribution differences emerged for parenting attributions in unsuccessful situations. Japanese American mothers' feelings of competence increased over time. South American mothers were more satisfied in the parenting role than Japanese-American mothers.

In regards to levels of acculturation, individualism, and collectivism, Cote & Bornstein (2003) found that in both Japanese-American and South American mothers' the levels of those aspects were developmentally continuous from five to 20 months. They also noted that for their immigrant samples, biculturalism is the desired endpoint of individual-level acculturation, and because the participants were already bicultural as a group by the time their infants were five months old, their cultural identity remained static. In regards to the stability, Cote & Bornstein found that, overall, mothers' cultural cognitions were highly stable from 5 to 20 months and more so for Japanese-American than South American mothers. This stability reinforces the notion that biculturalism may have been the desired end-point of individual-level acculturation for the participants in this study and that they may prefer to remain relatively more collectivist while adopting some individualist cognitions. This conclusion implies that the process of acculturation is a choiceful situation and that increased acculturation is not the inevitable result of prolonged exposure to a culture.

The ethnic differences in the participation of the family activities and its effect to the psychological well-being were being examined by Maynard and Harding (2010). The study revealed that compared with the White United Kingdom (UK) group, all minority groups were more likely to visit friends and relatives and go other places as a family. Black Caribbeans and Nigerian/Ghanaians were less likely and South Asian groups more likely to eat a meal together as a family. In multivariate analyses all minority groups had better well-being scores compared to Whites, independent of family type and socio-economic status (SES). Although adjusting for family activities slightly attenuated the association for South Asians, the minority ethnic advantage in psychological well being remained.

Studies in the area of parenting, human development, and culture also include the effect of acculturation in parenting as well as the development of the children. Yagmurlu & Sanson (2009) examined the acculturation attitudes of Turkish immigrant mothers in Australia and the associations between their interaction levels with Australian society and their parenting values and behaviors. This study was done on the basis of previous studies that Turkey is traditionally collectivist, and punishment is more common than verbal reasoning among parents; whereas in Australia, which is predominantly individualistic, normative parenting goals emphasize independence (over obedience) and induction-based discipline (over punishment). This study revealed that Turkish mothers who endorsed values and traditions of both the original culture and the host culture (i.e., the integrated group) valued self-direction goals more and compliance less than did mothers who endorsed separation from Australian society.

In the area of research with the immigrant parents, Tajima & Harachi (2010) explored the child-rearing beliefs and physical discipline practices of first generation Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant or refugee parents in the United States (US). They identified ethnic group differences and examined the impact of acculturation on parenting beliefs and the use of physical discipline of the Vietnamese and Cambodian mothers in the US. Their findings showed that the Vietnamese and Cambodian mothers believed in hard work, obedience, and helping others which is consistent with literature suggesting that such "communitarian" beliefs are core values among Asian cultures. Results of this study also demonstrated that among these first-generation Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants to the United States, belief in independent thinking was endorsed only rarely as the most important lesson to pass along to children. However, they also found the differences between the two ethnic groups studied. For example, Cambodians in this study were more likely to emphasize obedience compared to Vietnamese respondents, while the Vietnamese were significantly more likely to emphasize helping others than were the Cambodian.

The acculturation process was also found as a factor affecting the parenting styles of immigrant mothers that will lead to the different well-being development among the youths. Driscoll, Russell, and Crockett (2008) examined the generational patterns of parenting styles, the relationships between parenting styles and adolescent well-being among youth of Mexican origin in the US,

and the role of generational parenting style patterns in explaining generational patterns in youth behavior (delinquency and alcohol problems) and psychological well-being (depression and self-esteem). The study found that as the duration of exposure to U.S. society and level of acculturation rise, children exhibit increasingly poor outcomes. They found that higher-generation teens have higher self-esteem than do the children of immigrant parents, but behavior problems increase with generation. However, the levels of depression were essentially flat across generations.

The findings of this study also suggested that parents' own acculturation plays a crucial role in their children's well-being; that is, parenting patterns differ by place of birth. The study indicated that the U.S.-born Mexican parents were more likely to practice permissive parenting styles and less likely to be authoritative in style than are those born in Mexico. This generational shift resulted in a distribution of parenting styles among U.S.-born parents of Mexican origin that is similar to the distribution that exists among U.S.-born White parents. That is, the parents of third-generation Mexicans (and higher) tend to practice a more American style of parenting as a result of their own upbringing in the United States.

Those researches in the area of acculturation process show how different cultures can affect in the parenting styles that lead to the development of a person. It shows that not only the cultural origin of the parents which would have the great impact to the parenting style as well as to the development of the children, but the influence of the culture of the host-country also plays significant role in those areas.

Several researches have also examined the effect of multiple cultures in one person. In this regard, we have to look into one term, that is to say the Third Culture Kid (TCK) which is defined by Pollock as an individual who have spent fundamental parts of his developmental period in a culture which is not his/her parents' culture and have developed a sense of relationship to all of the cultures without having full ownership of any of the cultures (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004). The term of TCK was first used by Useem in describing children who were accompanying their parents in another society instead of their parents' society (Cockburn, 2002).

Cockburn (2002) has made an attempt in order to examine and develop an understanding about TCK. She discussed the significant issues faced by TCKs, such as identity, the developmental years, the grief, loss, and change, the relationship and socialization, and the

international school issue. Regarding the identity issue, Cockburn stated that the TCKs would include multiple factors in building their identities, and they would identify themselves as international children who view the world as their homes. She also noted that children who are living in TCK world are sometimes also binational, where their parents are coming from two different nations.

She continued her discussion regarding the developmental years, in which the role of parents is very crucial, since even a short period of exposure of one different culture would likely to have impact in a child's development. TCKs would also likely to experience grief and loss when the environment is changing from one place to another place. This grief and loss would include the loss of friends and homes. In the context of relationship and socialization, TCKs would likely to develop relationship with other people in different context and in different periods of time. However, these relationships seem to be temporary, so that children should learn quickly to adjust and develop friendship in wherever they move. Finally, in the area of schooling Cockburn (2002) noted that school is playing a great role in transitional period of the TCKs who have just moved to a new place. She mentioned that the complex challenges in the family together with the cultural changes can be a significant challenge to the school psychologist. More challenges would be experienced by the TCKs with special needs who have to shift from one school to another school. Therefore, she noted that a great deal of preparation and understanding from the side of international school should be attempted.

Fail, Thompson, & Walker (2004) has examined several literatures in this topic and combined the result of their review with interview data from former international school students who were living in their passport countries and outside of their passport countries. The literature review showed that a sense of belonging is a subjective, emotional response to a place or community of people. There is evidence that TCKs may have a multiple sense of belonging or no sense of belonging. It has been suggested that their sense of belonging may be in terms of relationships rather than geographical place (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004).

From the interview data in this study, it shows that there is an aspect of the TCKs' lives in which they feel marginal to the mainstream. They feel outsiders in the countries in which they are living, even though if they are living in their passport countries. However, there is evidence from many of the interviewees that they are positive and enthusiastic about the advantages of their background and the ability it has given them to feel at home in different places and also

to relate to other people like themselves. On the other hand, there is evidence that the adjustment to university in one's passport country, if one has not been well prepared for the experience, can result in a major identity crisis (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004).

The consequences of being a TCK have also been examined by Fry (2007) in the Japanese context. In examining this issue, Fry used the term of *kaigashijo*, that is to say the children who accompanied their parents on these overseas work assignments and *kikokushijo*, that is to say those who subsequently returned to Japan at the end of such assignments. She reviewed the perspective shift in Japan regarding *kaigashijo* and *kikokushijo*, from the negative to positive perspective. The *kaigashijo* and *kikokushijo* were initially viewed as particularly educational disadvantaged, not being the 'real Japanese', and considered as foreigners in their own home country. This resulted in the bullying practices toward these children, ranged from the peers, teachers, and the society. However, together with the perspective changing of Japanese toward globalization and international mobility, the perspective of the Japanese society toward the *kaigashijo* and *kikokushijo* has also changed. Japanese society has now consider the *kaigashijo* and *kikokushijo* as individuals who can transfer their international experiences to other people in their home country and have been given more facilities than before in order to facilitate the transfer process of internationalizing others.

A qualitative research was conducted by McLachlan (2007) to investigate the survival methods of the internationally mobile (IM) family. This study was conducted with 45 IM families who had children attending a private, international school in Southern England. The finding of this study suggested that the IM parents and children were not simply 'passive' agents who were moved about the globe by their employer. Instead, these families demonstrated awareness of the dilemmas, which can occur as a consequence of transience; what was clearly evidenced was the resilience of these families. McLachlan (2007) found that the IM families used a range of strategies through which they worked to ameliorate difficulties while ensuring that the family not only survived, but thrived during periods of relocation.

From the research in the area of parenting styles and cultures, the acculturation process, to the research of TCKs and the multicultural families, it is obvious that culture is playing a significant role in the individuals' lives. Different culture would impact individuals in a different way, and thus would impact the way they behave, including in the way they would use in the course of parenting.

Present Study

In the era of globalisation, people are now much easier in getting access and travel from one country to another country than it was before. As the consequence of such situation, interaction with people from other countries and/or with different cultural backgrounds is unavoidable. Therefore, friendship and relationship between people from different countries has now become common phenomena in the world, and this includes the intercountries marriage. A US statistic data showed an increasing rate of marriage between persons from different groups, including interreligious, interethnic, and interracial marriages (McNamara, Tempenis, & Walton, as cited in Sengstock, 2001). None-theless, it has been established that people from different cultural background would have different believes, attitudes, values, and standards. Thus, it is intriguing to find out how the parents who are coming from different cultural backgrounds can get along together and cultivating cultural features to their off springs.

Research in the area of multicultural family is now growing although still small, to seek the process which is going on in such family. Sengstock (2001) conducted a study in order to find out the factors which make the multicultural family works from the sociological perspective. In this study, she found that the members of multicultural family (differs in either ethnic or religion or nationality) are aware of the differences in their families, but prefer to focus more on their similarities rather than to the differences. They are also able to distinguish between the important and unimportant, which provides comfort to each of the cultural pattern and recognizes the broader cultural patterns which the entire group shares in common. She also found the critical role of the social settings, that is when the social setting is positive and supportive to the existing cultural differences, the individuals will feel comfortable with their multiculturalism.

Nonetheless, Souto-Manning (2006) reported that the society is not always acting as a supportive agent for the children who are bilingual or multilingual. In her observation of urban playgroup children in the south part of the US, she found that while a growing number of diverse children are entering US schools, misconceptions regarding language acquisition still remained. She found that the concept of language diversity as a deficit is still widespread. Mothers of young children still believed that efforts to learn multiple languages diminish a child's ability to learn other things, while it is apparently

contradictory with the research points to multilingualism as a resource rather than a deficit.

An American woman shared her experience of being in a multicultural marriage with Japanese in a website (Kanaka, 2008). She described that several conflict could emerge between her and her husband, regarding the cultural differences, such as the language, gestures, habits, where to live, child rearing practices, even the concern of the in-laws meeting. She described that such differences could emerge as conflicts between her and her husband, but they manage that by being more tolerant to each other and try to learn and understand more about each other's culture and take the difference as something which is unique.

A preliminary study was done before the conduction of the present study with two of the participants. This shows that such conflicts regarding the cultural difference were prevalent. When the couples could speak fluently in any of the language, language would not be a problem. However, other daily activities, which were different such as eating habits, can be the source of conflict. It was depending on how the husband and wife would manage the conflict and their attitudes toward the difference itself.

Consistent with the preliminary study result, Cockburn (2002) shared her experience in assessing a multicultural family which consists of an Indonesian mother and a Japanese father located in Singapore. She found that the main issue of this family was that the children were confused of being raised with two standards and expectations. The Indonesian mother was coming from a vibrant and expressive culture in which emotional feelings were often demonstrated, while the father believed that the children will developed by themselves and thus no need to be managed by the parents. Beside this difference, both the parents have been influenced by the culture of the host country in parenting style, which is quite punitive.

Looking at the growing body of research in the area of multicultural families and the challenges which they encounter, it is obvious that members of such families must have encountered a great deal of struggling process which influence the development of every of the family member. This struggling and survival process includes the experiences and challenges faced by the parents in parenting children in such a multicultural family.

The present study was an attempt to find out the experiences of the parents in a multicultural family. The term multicultural was being used in this study in similar way as what was used by Sengstock (2001) in defining the families that consist of multiple cultural groups, such as multiple race, ethnics, and religion.

Therefore, six Indonesian women who are and were married to men from foreign countries were being interviewed in order to find out their experiences and challenges in parenting children with two cultures. It would also include the strategy that the parents use in minimizing the negative consequences of the TCKs, such as the identity issue. This study would focus more on the experience of the mothers since it is believed that mothers are more dominant in the child-rearing practices.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer the four research questions, (a) What are the differences, problems, and conflicts, which emerge in child rearing practices with two different cultures, and how do the parents manage it? (b) What kind of strategies that the parents use in socializing the two cultures to the children, the preferences, the ongoing process, and the future plan? (c) What kind of self-identity that the children have according to parents regarding to their cultures? (d) What are the problems that the children might encounter of having parents from different cultures and how would parents manage the problems?

Methods

Participants

The inclusion criteria for this study were: (a) Indonesian mother who are and/or who were married to men from other countries; and (b) the couple should have children, with minimum age as old as 2 years. Eight women were initially contacted to participate in this study, but two of them refused. Therefore, six mothers participate in the study; with one currently stayed in Germany and the others were in Delhi, India. The age range of the participants was from 28 to 51 years old. The period of marriage varied from 3 to 27 years. Five of the participants were currently married to foreign partners, such as Indian, Japanese, American, Dutch, and Scottish, while one was married to a German but has just recently got divorced. The six women were coming from different tribes in Indonesia, such as Sundanese, Javanese, Balinese, and Chinese-Javanese, who were speaking in different regional languages. They were also having different religious backgrounds, such as Islam, Hindu, and Christian. Four participants were still keeping their Indonesian nationality, while the

Table 1.

Demographical Information of Participants

Participants		Husband/ex-husband		Children	
Name	Age	Nationality	Age	Son/Daughter	Age
Fira	30	Indian	53	Daughter	5,6
				Daughter	2,6
Dina	30	Japanese	36	Daughter	2,10
				Daughter	4
Hana	35	Dutch	31	Daughter	2
				Son	26
Indah	51	American	61	Son	23
				Son	20
Nina	28	Scottish	38	Daughter	2
				Daughter	0,4
Sari	42	German	60	Son	13
				Son	11
				Son	9

two others had been converted into Dutch and German nationalities. Five participants were non-working women, while one was working in a company.

In this study, the author also got the opportunity to interview two of the participants' husbands, age 31 and 38, who were from Netherland and Scotland; a son of Indonesian-American marriage, age 23, was also being interviewed in this study.

Research Design and Tools

This study is a qualitative research by using the semi-structured interview and non-participant observation as research tools. The interview was done in order to seek answers of the main research questions in seven domains, namely (a) differences of child rearing practices between two cultures; (b) the difficulties, problems, and conflicts which emerge due to the cultural differences in child-rearing practices; (c) managing conflict due to the cultural differences; (d) preferences and strategies of teaching values, norms, and languages to children; (e) problems and difficulties faced by the children, the parents' awareness and the strategies in solving the problems; (f) supports from family; (g) cultural practices at home. Questions were developed as the guideline for conducting the semi-structured interview on the basis of the seven domains. Non-participant observation was also conducted by home-visit during the interview. The non-participant observation was used in order to see the pattern of parent-child interaction, particularly in the communication pattern regarding the language used between mother and children. Interviews with husbands and children were also attempted in order to get the

confirmation of the wife's answers and to explore the seven domains stated above. Analysis of the results was done by the thematic analysis in order to seek the themes emerge in each participant and the common themes emerge from all of the participants.

Procedures

Four Indonesian women who were currently married to foreign partners and who were currently living in Delhi were initially contacted by phone, one of them had already known to the researcher prior to study. The researcher described the purpose of the study and got the agreement from participants to participate in this study. The other participants referred three more contact numbers to the researcher, but two of them refused to participate. The author via electronic mail described the purpose of the study and also by then got the agreement to participate in the study from one participant who was currently living in Germany. After the first contact, the researcher made appointments to take interviews and conducted the non-participant observation. A consent form to convince the confidentiality was signed by each of the participant in Delhi and was sent via electronic mail to the participant in Germany.

The first and second participants also participated in the preliminary study, in which the author took interviews individually and conducted non-participant observation in their houses separately. After that, the author made new appointments with all the participants to take interview in their houses. Most of the interviews and observations were done face-to-face and individually, except the second interview with the second participant and the first interview with the third participant which was conducted together. The interview with the sixth participant is conducted by on-line interview using the Yahoo! Messenger[®] feature.

All of the interviews with the participants were conducted in the Indonesian language, except with the sixth participant which was using the Javanese regional language, since it was considered as more comfortable for both participant and the author. A rapport building was attempted before every interview, and only after the comfort state had been reached then the interview would be started. The interview would begin by asking the demographic information of the participants and their families (husband and children), continued by asking the cultural background of each participant, and then began asking the questions according to the interview schedule. Several other questions related to the study

would also emerge during the interview. All interviews were being recorded and then being transcribed. Some other additional information was also gathered in an off-record informal interview and was written by the author in the field notes.

The non-participant observation was conducted by the time of home-visit, at the same time of the interview. The author would make the observation notes containing the parent-child interaction during the time of the interviews. Non-participant observation could not be conducted with the sixth participant.

After finishing the interview with each of the participants, the author told the participant if she might need to interview their husbands. Two of the participants' husbands agreed to participate while the other husbands were not available due to their works. One Indonesian-American son was coincidentally coming to India by the time of his mother's interview so that he was also able to participate in the study.

Results

The aim of this study was mainly to seek the experiences of mothers who are married to men from foreign countries, in parenting. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six participants as well as to the two spouses and one son.

All interviews were recorded and then transcribed, while some additional information gathered from the off-record informal interview was written in the field notes. Thematic analysis was done one by one to each of the corpus of data represented by the transcription. Thematic analysis was done by following the steps suggested by Smith (1995). After all the transcriptions were made, the author read through each of the transcription, then made some notes using one side of the margin, regarding the significant information emerge in the text. By using the other side of the margin, the author wrote down the key words of each of the significant information found in the text. The next step was writing up the list of the themes which emerge in each participant, and then writing the list of several themes which occurred significantly in the text as the master of the themes for each of the participants. After analysing each of the transcription, the author seek out the common themes emerge from all of the participants. Results of the analysis were being presented in the narrative form, on the basis of the emerging themes. The analysis will be presented in the following paragraphs in theme-wise.

The Marriage Decision

The theme of marriage decision emerged as one of the themes since it was considered as influencing the strategy used by husband and wife in managing the cultural differences in parenting strategy. All of the participants agreed that the matter of religion was the most important consideration for all of them as well as for their family before deciding their marriage. Three of the participants' spouses converted their religions into participants' religions, two of the spouses have had converted their religion before meeting participants, while one spouse was not converting his religion.

Nonetheless, even in the case of non-converting spouse, the participant still considered religion as the most important consideration before deciding her marriage. She believed that her marriage was a way from God and answer of her prayers.

"...jadi ya aku bilang, ya orang kalo emang jodohnya dari Tuhan ya pasti ada aja jalannya nggak tau gimana...(so I said... yah, if he is really my soul mate sent by God, there must be some ways (to make it easier))" (Fira)

Personal character of the prospective husband was also another important consideration for participants as well as their parents. A participant stated:

".. ya baguslah ya kesannya, ya dia juga sopan apa, serius apa gitu...apa lebih ini ya... lebih hormat sama orang tua jadi ya dia ee...ya kenapa enggak gitu cuman ya dengan catatan, ya dia mau nggak ee ke Islam, gitu kan, kalo dia mau ya oke, kalo enggak ya jangan... (... yah the impression was good, he was also polite, and also serious... he also respected parents... so why not, but with one requirement, if he agrees to convert to Islam, if he agrees then okay, otherwise don't...)" (Dina)

Cultural difference was also being considered, although not for all of them. However, all of the participants agreed that they did not really consider the cultural difference as a big deal, even though in some cases they put it into a consideration.

"Sebelum nikah, walaupun masih pacaran, kita sudah, ya bikin komitmen sih, istilahnya kalau mau terus ya kamu harus terima aku orang Indonesia, aku

adatny pake ini, seperti ini, kamu harus bisa terima. Dan dia pun seperti itu, dia punya adat yang berbeda-beda, aku pun harus bisa penyesuaian ke dia, kalo kita berdua oke, ya lanjut, kalo kamu nggak mau ya kita nggak terus gitu. (Before marriage, even though we were still in a relationship, we already made a commitment, like if you want to continue the relationship then you have to accept me as an Indonesian, I'm using this kind of tradition, and you have to accept. And he was also like that, he has different traditions, I also had to adjust with him, if both of us would be okay then we will continue, otherwise no)." (Nina)

Influence of Family and Cultural Background in Parenting Strategy

In most of the cases, participants' strategies in parenting were being influenced by their own childhood experiences and views toward parenting. Most of participants learned from their parents, either by merely taking them as their strategies or by modifying them into better strategies.

"Sampe sekarang pun aku juga pake pukul, tapi... sebisa mungkin aku nggak pake. Cuman masalahnya kan backgroundku dah begitu... (Until now, I also use hitting, but I try as much as possible not to use it. But the matter is, my background is like that only...)" (Fira)

In some cases, when participants considered that their own parents' parenting strategies were not suitable for their present condition, they modified the strategy to be well-suited with their present conditions.

"...karna saya dari kecil itu orang tua saya ee strict ke agama ya...jadi saya gini... ee...dia (anak) mau seperti apa terserah dia... hanya saja, eee saya mau apa namanya, ee dia punya pegangan ya agama... (because since I was kid my parents were strict in teaching the religion to me... so I'm like this... umm...she (her daughter) wants whatever she wants, it's up to her... but, umm I want her to have a guideline, that is religion...)" (Dina)

One of the participants who married a Dutch emphasizing her concern about moral development of her children. She realized that there is a big difference between her own culture and her husband's culture regarding social interaction between young children and the elders. Therefore, she considered important for

her children to be taught about how to interact with elders in the frame of her cultural back-ground, even if she herself has converted her nationality into Dutch and no longer stay in Indonesia.

“...jadi maksudnya kalo di Belanda kan kadang-kadang suka, kebanyakan kalo orang Belanda itu dia ee... orangnya ee...menyamartakan ya, sama orang tua... sama itu kadang-kadang cuman manggil, ‘Halo Tom.’ padahal itu omnya gitu ya... nah saya tu nggak mau gitu lho...saya bilang, itu kakek kamu... (So I mean if in Netherland sometimes they like to, most of them treat other people in the similar way, with elders... with elders they sometimes only call, ‘Hello Tom’, while he is their uncle... so I don’t want to be like that... I said, that is your grandfather...)” (Hana)

Differences in Parenting Strategy

All of the participants agreed that there are several differences in parenting their children due to the cultural differences. The differences are rooted from the cultural background in a broader context, that is the one which is prevalent in the society level, and thus it became participants’ concerns regarding the development of their children. It was stated by participants who were married to German (Sari) and Indian (Fira).

“Wahhh okeh banget (perbedaan mbak. Pergaulan sing rodo piye, teros anak2 juga diberi kebebasan,tapi harus dalam pengawasan orang tua, masalahe anak2 kelas 4 wes di wulang masalah sex, nek orang tua ora ngati2 dadi berabe. (There are lots of differences. Relationship is the big difference, and also children are having freedom, but still have to be under parental monitoring, because children at class 4 have been taught about sex, if parents do not careful about this, there will be problems).” (Sari)

The difference of parenting strategy is more prevalent in the Indonesian-Western marriages, most of them agreed that the Western parenting strategy is more structured and encouraging more independent since a very young age.

“Pasti ada ya. Karna kan kita di Indonesia ya, cara mendidiknya di Indonesia dengan (budaya Indonesia)... contohnya aja kalo anak baby, orang bule itu kalo anaknya masih bayi udah harus tinggal, ee udah harus tidur kamarnya berbeda. Sedangkan kita

orang Indo-nesia, kadang sampai gede pun, masih sama orang tua kan... (Of course there is. Because we are Indonesian, so the way we educate the children will be in Indonesia with (Indonesian culture)... for example for a baby, for foreigners, when their kids were still baby, the baby has already to sleep in a separate room. Whereas for us, sometimes until adult we will still are with parents...)” (Nina)

“Kalo ini, kan kalo kita ya orang kita selalu apa ya, melindungi, anak apa... selalu di ini... memang saya kan begitu, ya namanya saya orang Indonesia, begini begini, tapi kalo suami saya dalam kayak, misalnya ngerjain PR, kita kan pengennya ngebantuin, kalo suami saya, nggak boleh, biar dia kerjain sendiri, mau apa, sebisa dia gitu.. (In the case like, you know our people are tend to umm... protect their children... always like... so I’m also like that, since I’m an Indonesian, like this and like this, but my husband is not like that for example in the case of doing school home works, our people used to want to help children, but my husband is not like that, no, let them do it by themselves, whatever it is, according to their ability...)” (Indah)

On the other hand, two participants who experience Indonesian-Asian marriages stated that the differences in parenting strategy between them and their husband’s culture are not very big. Even though they also stated that the differences are prevalent.

“...mungkin... hampir sama kayaknya kita juga sama-sama Asia jugalah ya... (...perhaps... almost the same I think, both of us are also coming from Asia...)” (Dina)

“Ya seperti itu suamiku pengennya kita bisa budayanya seperti kayak mamanya, tapi kalo saya sih ngomong saya nggak bisa... saya lahir juga bukan Hindu, budaya Hindu juga terlalu banyak, saya nggak bisa terima. (Yah like that my husband wants us to follow his mother’s culture, but I said that I can’t... I was not born as a Hindu, and Hinduism culture is also vast, I cannot accept that.)” (Fira)

Managing the Differences in Parenting Strategy

Realizing the differences between them and their husbands, all of the participants agreed that the most important way to manage the differences is by talking to each other. By discussing their opinion to each other, they tried to learn, to understand, and to select the best way for their children.

“Most of all I leave up to my wife, only if I can contribute in different way, then I’ll correct it or I’ll discuss it with my wife.” (Bram, Hana’s husband)

“*Nah, dijelasin begini begitu suamiku oke, ya okelah nggak papa gitu, jadi kita nggak nggak dibikin ribut gitu ya.* (So, I explained like this and like that, then my husband agreed, okay doesn’t matter, so we don’t make it as a conflict).” (Nina)

In order to teach the best for their children, most of the spouses stated that they prefer to mix up their cultures. They take the best way from the both sides and believe that it would be the best way for their children.

“*Jadi yang istilahnya mixed ya... campur... jadi mana yang terbaik untuk anak ya udah... (So it is mixed... mixed... so whatever which is the best for the children...)*” (Fira)

“...that’s why so let’s keep it as simple way as it is, let them be, according to Indonesia, enjoy they day, but we offer them with more structured.” (Bram, Hana’s husband)

“Yeah, sure... we have to... I don’t think it will be bad if we’re trying to take up from both sides, you know...” (Damon, Nina’s husband)

This mixing-up strategy is also being used by Fira who married to an Indian and who have different religion with her husband, in the matter of religion. She who is Christian and her husband, who is a Hindu, teach both religions to their children.

“...*cuman setiap Selasa kadang dia ngajak anak-anak ke temple, kalo saya setiap Minggu anak-anak sama aku ke gereja, sekolah minggu...* (...but every Tuesday he goes with children to the temple, but I every Sunday go with children to the church, the Sunday school...)” (Fira)

In other cases, like in the case of Dina who married to a Japanese and Sari who was married to a German, they tend to use one culture as the dominant culture, due to several reasons. In Dina’s case, it was her husband who asked her to learn Japanese language along with the culture even before their marriage. Hence, her present family is using Japanese in daily life and the culture being dominantly used is Japanese. Whereas in

Sari’s case, she preferred to choose Indonesian culture since her children are still too young while they are staying in a European country. According to her, Indonesian culture is better to teach morality and social interaction.

“*Anakku iso nerapke budaya indo ro jerman mbak. Contone wae nek ono tamu yo nyalami, sopan nek anak2 wong eropa yo mong say hello thok, nek salaman tangane di cium. Tingkah lakune untuk sementara koyo wong indo.* (My sons can apply Indonesian and German cultures. For example if there is guest coming they will politely shake his/her hands, while European children will only say hello, but my sons while shaking hands they will also kiss the hands).” (Sari)

In managing the differences, either participants or their spouses have to sometimes balancing the standard into a comfort level of their spouses. This case is happening to Dina.

“...*saya juga ini ya, kalo saya strict ke agama, seperti yang saya alami gitu ya, saya juga bukan nggak enak ya, takut nantinya saya sama suami malah jadi ee... fightlah ya... jadi saya pikir ya... agama bukan saya ngebebasin, saya monitor aja...* (... I’m also like this, if I’m strict to religion, like what I have experienced, it’s not that I will feel bad, but I’m afraid if it will trigger a fight between me and my husband... so I think... I’m not totally giving freedom, but I’ll just monitor ...)” (Dina)

Nevertheless, no matter what are the differences which prevalence between husband and wife, all of the participants agreed that the most important matter is the future of their children. They do not want to exaggerate the differences which are already there, rather they do not feel the difference as a big deal. In the end, they believe that they are applying the best way for the best future of the children.

“*Tapi kita menganggap itu bukan perbedaan gitu, penyesuaian... kita jadi bukan bilang itu perbedaan, ya jadi kita penyesuaian aja.* (But we don’t consider that as differences but adjustment... we don’t say it as differences, so we just adjust to it).” (Nina)

“Yah, I think in different way than what Nina thinks, but it’s not the wrong way, it’s not the wrong way, but just different.” (Damon, Nina’s husband)

“Pokoknya saya pokoknya mau membuat anak saya terbaik, suami saya bilang begitu, tetapi akhirnya ya udah nggak apa-apa, yang jelas hasil mereka kan baik, yang penting hasil mereka baik. (The most important is that I want to make my children as the best, if my husband said like that, but eventually he said okay doesn’t matter, the most important is that the outcome will be good).” (Indah)

Language Practices

In the matter of language practices, the case is varied. Like in the case of Fira and Indah, they use more than one language in their families. While in other cases, they tend to use one dominant language, depends on where they stay, or depends on what culture is being dominantly used at home.

“Kadang pun bahasa Indonesia sekarang karna dah seringnya Inggris sama Hindi, sama saya juga bahasa Indonesia tapi sehari-hari... akhirnya dia bahasa Indonesiannya nggak bisa kayak orang Indonesia. (Even now sometimes she uses Indonesian, but since now she often uses English and Hindi, she speaks with me in Indonesian... finally her Indonesian is not as fluent as Indonesian people now.)” (Fira)

“Malah kalo Rino (anak ketiga) ini, karna takut kelupaan, beli buku, apa sih dictionary ya bahasa Sunda, trus bahasa Indonesia, juga selalu bawa. Karna kadang-kadang kalo udah lama di sana (USA), kayak Bas, Andrew, suka udah mulai... lupa... (Even Rino (third son), since he is afraid that he would forget, he bought book, umm... dictionary, Sundanese, and also Indonesian, he always brings. Since sometime if they are staying there (USA) longer, like Bas, Andrew, they started to... forget...)” (Indah)

There was an interesting finding regarding to language practices. It is that there are some cases where the participants’ children are experiencing a language delay, although not all of them. Even in one extreme case of Sari’s children, they needed to be included in a speech therapy.

“Sampe sekarang pun Divya masih (belum bisa bicara)... padahal udah dua tahun setengah... sama... (Even until now Divya still... (cannot speak clearly)... but she is two and a half years now... so the same...)” (Fira)

“Onten mbak, malah anak kulo terapi, soale bahasane gado2. Anakku terapi soale nek ngomong

sering diulang2 nganggo 2 bahasa jerman jowo. (Yes there was, even my son went for therapy since his language was mixed, my son went for therapy since when speaking he used to repeat the words in two languages, Germany and Javanese)” (Sari)

There was no clear evidence on why the language delays happened to some children. However, as Sari stated above, perhaps the problem was rooted from the so many languages being used in a very young age, so it might be confusing for them.

Nonetheless, participants agreed that teaching more than one languages is important for their children since it will be very beneficial for them. Aside from that, they believe that it is also a part of their responsibility as parents.

“...so at least they start learning all the different languages earlier... because it’s better to start practicing in very young age, because then it will be easy, they can get as much information as they want...” (Bram, Hana’s husband)

“Paling enggak ya biar tau. Nanti kalo gede, dia nggak pake ya terserah, paling enggak ya, nanti gedanya dia nggak nggak nanya, ‘Mommy, kenapa sih kok aku nggak diajarin bahasa Indonesia’, gitu... (At least she knows. Later when she will be bigger, if she will not use then it’s up to her, at least, later she will not question me, ‘Mommy, why didn’t you teach me Indonesian’ ...)” (Nina)

Children’s Self-Identity

The matter of the children’s self-identity was not already well recognized by participants who have young age children. However, some of them stated that their children have started to know about the differences that are prevalence between their parents.

“...dia ngerti sih saya orang dari maksudnya, beda gitu ya... dan dia sih, saya lihat sih dia seneng-senang aja ya sih maksudnya nggak bilang bilang gimana.. atau warna kulitnya itu dia nggak ada masalah.. ya masih kecil ya, dia jadi nggak nggak ini... (...she understands that I’m from, I mean, different... and she is, I see that she is happy with that I mean not saying anything about that... or the skin color like that she doesn’t have problem... yah still too young, so she is not...)” (Hana)

In cases where they stay longer in one place like in Fira's case her children identified herself as someone from that particular place.

"... *dia bilangnyanya... orang Indonesia...* (...she says... I'm Indonesian...)" (Fira)

Participants also realized that there is a possibility that in the future their children will experience identity confusion.

"Because, in any kind of, they will be, they will be yah, split up, because one part they are part of Indonesia, and one part they are part of Netherland, so they always will be in confusion in their life..." (Bram, Hana's husband)

This was also supported by Andrew, the only son who was interviewed in this study. He stated that he experience difficulty to identify his sense of belonging.

"*Ee... susah ya... ya orang Indonesia juga, orang Amerika juga.* (Umm... difficult yah... yah Indonesian also, American also)." (Andrew, Indah's second son)

"*Umm... ya ada positifnya ada negatifnya ya. Positif-nya misalnya, tau gimana di Amerika, di Indonesia juga, jadi bisa semua, negatifnya ya ada perasaan indifferent.* (Umm... yes, there is positive and negative. Positive is knowing how is in America as well as in Indonesia, so I'm able to be in both, negative is yah there is a feeling of indifferent)." (Andrew, Indah's second son)

Discussion

This study explored the parenting experiences of Indonesian mothers in a multicultural setting. The term multicultural context in this study was being used to define the family setting which consists of more than one culture (Sengstock, 2001). In this study, the multicultural setting was being represented by the differences of cultural origins between the parents. The experiences of Indonesian mothers were particularly examined and being the focus of the study. Five mothers were currently married to men from different countries and one mother was recently divorced. The variations of the husbands' cultures were varied from India and Japan

which represent the Asian origins, and the Netherland, USA, Scotland, and Germany which represent the Western cultural origins. Result of this study indicated that the individual's cultural origin is one of the factors which influence parenting strategy, which is also evidenced in the previous studies (Herz & Gullone, 1999; Cheah & Chirkov, 2008; Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009).

Thematic analysis was being used as the method of analyzing the data, which was done one by one for each participant. Uniformity of the emerging themes was found in several cases, with variations of the detail. The process of deciding the marriage emerged as one of the themes found in the study which later was considered as having an impact in managing the differences and conflicts which occur due to the differences between the husband and wife during the marriage. They way the spouses perceived their differences before marriage, would influence the way they perceive the differences during the marriage. The strategies which were being used in managing the differences once they realized it before the marriage would later influence the pattern of conflicts as well as the strategies being used in managing differences during the marriage.

Religion was considered as the most important matter before making the decision of marriage in all cases. Most of the participants were eventually managing the marriages by requiring their partners to convert to participants' religions. The attitudes of Indonesian people towards the religion are consistent with the finding of parenting strategy of Malay ethnic parents in Malaysia who are also emphasizing the spiritual growth in their children (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). While more easy going attitude of the participants' husbands, especially those who were from the Western culture is consistent with the finding in Cheah & Chirkov's (2008) study that the European Canadian mothers were less considering the spirituality in comparison to the Aboriginal mothers. When the religion between husband and wife had already become similar to each other, the conflicts occurred due to this matter would not be as bigger as the spouses who have different religions. Although it does not necessarily mean that there would be no conflict at all, as what was seen in the case of Dina who married to Japanese where she had to tolerate her husband's assumption regarding Islam, the difficulty would not be as bigger as what was experienced by Fira who kept different religion from her husband.

The attitudes of participants as well as their partners toward the other cultures before the marriage was also found to be playing a key role in managing and adjusting to the cultural differences in regard to the

parenting strategy. The level of conflicts between spouses due to the cultural differences would be influenced by how deep the spouses understood the cultural background of their partners. When the partner had a deep understanding about participant's culture as well as the opposite, such as in the case of Hana whose husband had an Indonesian grandmother and the fact that Hana had been staying in Netherland two years before her marriage, they would not face such big problems in managing their cultural differences. However, in Fira's case in which discussion regarding cultural differences before marriage was not prevalent, the greater conflict and cultural shock during the marriage were experienced.

The cultural differences between participants and their partners would impact the parenting strategy used by both spouses, since the cultural heritage and customs may influence the way parents approach the tasks of parenting (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Interestingly, different pattern of the cultural differences was found between the Indonesian-Eastern marriage and the Indonesian-Western marriage. As it has been established before, the Eastern culture is more collectivist than is the Western culture (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009; Tajima & Harachi, 2010). It was shared by two of the participants who were married to the Western partners that Indonesian people were more likely to meet together and tend to be close to their families. This finding was supported by the previous study in the United Kingdom (UK) which suggested that all the minority groups in the UK, including Asian groups, are more likely to visit friends and relatives as comparing to the White UK group (Maynard & Harding, 2010). With the same, this study revealed that interferences from the other people in parenting strategy were more prevalent in the Indonesian-Eastern marriages than in the Indonesian-Western marriages. Almost all of the participants shared similar experiences that interferences from their own parents regarding parenting such as giving ideas and suggestions; however when it comes to the in laws' interference, only two mothers who were married to Indian and Japanese who shared the similar experience, while those who were married to Dutch, Scottish, American, and German stated that there was no interference from their in laws regarding the parenting strategy.

The differences in parenting strategy between Indonesian and Western spouses varied from the disciplining strategy, the structure, and the strategy which promotes independency. The finding was consistent with previous research which suggested that one of the Australians, which represent the Western,

parenting goals is to promote the independency (Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009). Participants who were married to Western partners shared that one of the differences in parenting strategy between them and their partners was emphasize of the independency. The Western fathers were emphasized more on the development of independency, while the Indonesian mothers were more lenient toward the children and thus promoting more dependency of the children toward the parents. For instance, the Western fathers were likely to request their wife's in letting their babies to sleep in separate rooms since a very young age; whilst the Indonesian mothers were usually finding it difficult to be implemented.

The difference between Indonesian and Western cultures in parenting strategy also occurred in the structure. It was shared by the participants that the parenting strategy in the Western culture was more structured than the Indonesian. This structure was shown from the daily practices as well as the discipline, while the Indonesian pattern of parenting was found to be more easily going.

On the other hand, the differences in parenting strategy between the Indonesian-Eastern parents were not very prevalent. Both participants who were married to Indian and Japanese stated that the strategy of parenting used by them and their partners were almost similar. This finding was consistent with the notion that the Asian culture was mainly rooted from the same core (Tajima & Harachi, 2010). However, in practicing the disciplining strategy, the experiences were varied which was probably as the impact of their own childhood experiences.

The parenting strategy which was currently used by participants was found to be influenced by the family and/or cultural background. Participants learned from their parents' parenting strategy, and then modify or simply following the same pattern, which depended on the participant's values and attitudes toward this parenting strategy. This was consistent with the finding in Tajima & Harachi's (2010) study that a parent's childhood history of physical discipline is a predictor of the use of similar strategy with his or her own child.

The differences in parenting strategy were considered as one of the challenges of parents who were coming from two different cultural backgrounds. It was shared by one of the participants that managing the difference was initially difficult. However, all participants have applied a range of strategies in managing the multicultural effects in their families (McLachlan, 2007).

The most common strategy used by all of the participants and their partners was not to exaggerate the

differences which are prevalent between them. It was consistent with the finding of Sengstock's (2001) study which suggested that the members of multicultural families prefer to look at their similarities more than the differences that occur between them.

Result of this study also revealed that parents with different cultural backgrounds tend to mix both cultures by picking up the best way from both sides for the benefits of their children. This finding was also evident in the previous study that the members of the multicultural family were able to distinguish the importance from the unimportant matters (Sengstock, 2001). The similar case was also employed regarding the religion teaching between husband and wife. Although it has been noted above that the Indonesian culture is emphasizing religion in the course of parenting, but the practice of religion teaching was not the same for all cases in this study. Besides that, participants were able to distinguish the important from the unimportant, they like to provide comfort to each of the cultural patterns and recognizes the broader cultural patterns which the entire group shares in common (Sengstock, 2001). Thus, the participants would consider the comfort level of their partners and adjusting their standard into the comfort level of their partner, particularly in teaching the religion. The mixing up of the cultures was also consistent with the previous study as Cote & Bornstein (2003) suggested that biculturalism is the desired endpoint of individual-level acculturation.

The cultural mixing level was also depending on how the acculturation level from the other culture was affecting the participants' attitude of her and her husband's culture. As noted by Berry (2002), the acculturation effect in individual's psychological level is regarded as a process of changing an individual's experience as a result of being in contact with other cultures and as a result of participating in the process of acculturation that his or her cultural or ethnic group is undergoing. In the case of Dina who married to Japanese, she had to undergo a process of acculturation in the beginning of her marriage by living with her in laws separately from her husband. This was eventually influencing her parenting strategy with her child, which was more into Japanese than Indonesian culture. The same was also implemented in the case of Indonesian-Scottish marriage in which the participant has been exposed to the Western culture before the marriage, and thus she was more into Western in parenting the children. It was shown in the case of Nina as well as Hana that both of them were currently applying the strict routines to their children as one of the ways of Western parenting strategy. As what was found in the study of

Yagmurlu & Sanson (2009), the Turkish mothers who endorsed values and tradition of both the original culture and the host culture, namely the integrated group, valued self-direction goals more than did the mothers who endorsed separation from the host culture.

In other cases, when the acculturation process was not really strong, participants were more influenced by their own cultural background, as what was seen in the case of Fira and Sari. This was supported by Cote & Bornstein's (2003) finding which suggested that the process of acculturation is a choiceful one and the increased acculturation is not an inevitable result of prolonged exposure to a culture.

Regarding the language practices, a similar case in the process of acculturation was employed. When the acculturation level from the partner's culture was high, the most dominant language being used in the family would be the partner's language, as what was seen in the case of Dina and Nina. The preference of language used was also depending on the exposure of the participant toward the partner's language as well as the places where the family is staying. In case of Hana, she was able to speak in the same language of her husband and moreover they were initially staying in her husband's country, so that the dominant language which is used is Dutch. While in the case of Indah, she had a commitment of speaking Indonesian with her children even before the marriage, so that she was maintaining to speak in Indonesian with her children.

Another interesting finding in this study was that in most of the cases participants' children were having language delay or problem due to the mixed language. As what was shared by Sari, her two sons were having problems in language in their early age, that is repeating the words in two languages, and thus need to be included in the speech therapy. The children's problem in language development was also found in the case of Fira and Nina whose children were not being able to speak clearly at the age of two and a half years, which was not following the typical developmental milestone that in the beginning of the second year of the infants, they would be able to speak the words together with the gesture related to the words spoken (Berk, 2006). However, as being shared by the participants that their children who were experiencing problems in the language development would later being able to distinguish the languages, with or without help, and began to speak fluently in more than one language.

Children's self-identity was another challenge in multicultural family. As all of the participants children were considered as the Third Culture Kids (TCKs), the problem that they faced was mainly related to the identity confusion. As what was shared by Andrew, Indah's second

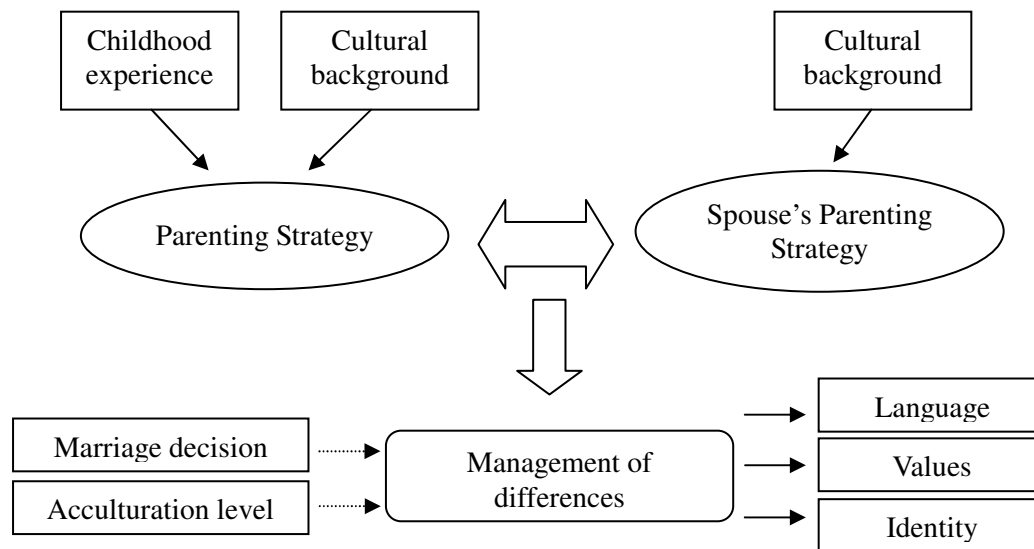


Figure 1. The pathway of managing differences in parenting strategy of multicultural families

son, the TCKs used to feel as outsiders even though if they are living in their passport countries (Fail, et.al. 2004). The TCKs also tend to include multiple factors in building their identities and used to consider themselves as international children (Cockburn, 2002), which was also in line with the participants' views that they would consider their children as the international children.

In this regard, all participants were aware of these consequences and actively making efforts by introducing the two cultures and transferring the knowledge to their children regarding their conditions. This was consistent with the findings of the study of internationally mobile (IM) which suggested that the IM parents and children were not simply 'passive' agents who were moved about the globe by their employer, but demonstrated awareness of the dilemmas, which can occur as a consequence of transience (McLachlan, 2007).

Overall, the pathway to the management of differences in parenting strategy of the multicultural families was concluded in Figure 1. Each of the mother has already being influenced by her own childhood experience and cultural background in general; while on the other side, her husband had also brought the influence of his cultural background for his own idea of parenting. When the two met, conflicts would possibly emerge between them. With their experiences of managing their differences before marriage along with the impact of acculturation process between both of them, the spouses created strategies to manage their differences in parenting which would influence the practices of language and values at home, as well as the child's identity.

This study will contribute to the growing body research in the area of the cross-cultural psychology. In particular, this

was an attempt to understand more regarding the parenting strategy of the TCKs. This study is also giving another variation in the area of indigenous psychology, in which the participants are coming from the South East Asia region, particularly Indonesia. In the education as well as clinical psychology arena, this study is useful as the baseline of counseling TCKs and their parents in managing the conflicts that occur due to the cultural differences in the multicultural families.

Limitations

First, the study was focusing more only to the influence of the participants and their partners' cultural background, without giving more consideration into the acculturation affect of the host country in which they are living. Second, most of the participants were having young children so that the exploration of the children's self identity and the parenting strategy in minimizing the negative consequences of being TCKs is not likely to be comprehensive. Third, the proportion of the Eastern and Western cultures as the variation in this study was not adequate, so that the sufficient comparison between the two different cultures is not likely to be done in a comprehensive way.

It is noteworthy that the acculturation process was influencing the parenting strategy used by the participants. Whilst in this study the acculturation process was regarded as the influence from the cultures of the participants' partners, it would be more intriguing if the study is being extended in order to understand the acculturation process of the host country in which participants live. A more

comprehensive study should also be done with participants who are having at least adolescence children, so that they would be able to be interviewed to give the more complete pictures of the parenting strategy. The future study in this area should also include more participants from different countries so that the comparison would be more comprehensive. For the practitioners in the area of developmental psychology and education, it is also important to take into account the multicultural background of TCKs in order to provide trainings and/or education for them as well as for the parents.

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