Family-School-Community Partnerships in an Atayal Village: A Case Study of the Role of Tribal Tutors in an Indigenous Taiwanese After-School Tutoring Program

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Governmental and non-profit programs have been providing supplemental learning support for indigenous children in the remote areas of Taiwan. Using the theory of social support networking, this study examines the efforts of the unique non-profit Boyo After-School Tutoring Program and uncovers the self-perceived roles of Boyo tutors in promoting the educational growth of indigenous students in the community. From thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with five tutors, several themes emerged: (1) motivation to become a tutor; (2) tutors' diverse roles/responsibilities; (3) tutors' obstacles and challenges; and (4) tutors' perceptions of their contributions and value to their community. Most significantly, the research suggests the effectiveness of practising the concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" that a tribal village which invests in relationships among family, school, and the local community can promote and sustain its educational efforts.

Keywords: Taiwan, indigenous education, after-school tutoring, community empowerment.

Indigenous Education in Taiwan

Taiwan's indigenous population accounts for about 2% of the country's population, with 16 tribes officially recognized, one of which is the Atayal group (Executive Yuan, 2017). Of the elementary and junior high school student population, approximately 3.6% are of aboriginal descent and 0.66% are from the Atayal group (Ministry of Education, 2016). Over time, shifts in family structure, social/economic mobility, and the teaching workforce in Taiwan have had noticeable effects on indigenous children, who often live in the remote regions of the country (Chen, 2007; Xie, Wei, & Lee, 2009). Limited job opportunities in rural areas have forced many indigenous parents to seek employment in bigger cities, entrusting their children to the care of one parent or grandparents; thus, the proportion of elementary and junior high school students raised by single parents or grandparents is significantly higher in indigenous tribes than it is in Taiwan as a whole (Lee, Chao & Chang, 2011). Single parenting or custodial grandparenting, combined with lower income earnings, poorer educational backgrounds, and lower literacy rates among indigenous parents and grandparents, have led to less parental supervision and homework assistance provided (Hou & Huang, 2012; Lin, 2000; Wu, 2009; Wang, 2009). Additionally, the rise in teacher turnover and lack of parent-teacher interaction (Chen, 1997; Chen, 2001) have led to the characterization of indigenous schooling as "the dark corners of national education" (Chen, 2007, p.4).

In light of these disparities, the Taiwanese government and other community agencies have begun organizing supplemental educational programs to address the academic and social adversities of indigenous students. Since 2006, the Ministry of Education has initiated after-school programs that hire college students and schoolteachers to offer remediation to students (Ministry of Education, 2006). Furthermore, many

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social welfare organizations and religious groups also provide after-school programs to assist underserved students and indigenous students in remote tribes. These groups often provide services by dispatching university students to assist in children's homework completion. Still, teacher shortage remains a challenge as few teachers choose to work in after-school programs, and remote areas lack college student recruits as tutors (Chen, 2008; Hong, 2012).

Boyo After-School Tutoring Program

In order to try to address this problem an after-school initiative, founded by the Boyo Social Welfare Foundation, has adopted an innovative model. Operating under the philosophy of developing local capacity, Boyo established a tutorial training program in 2008 that, unlike other programs, provides training to local adult residents from the local tribal village to become tutors for children in remote areas of Taiwan. The tutor training program intends to stem not only constant employee turnover in remote areas, it seeks to impart its educational philosophies to residents in the community.

As long as tutor candidates can make a commitment to the intensive training, Boyo requires neither prior experience nor credentials for employment. English and Mathematics are core subjects for elementary students; therefore, expert teachers who graduated from university in English or Mathematics (or alternatively, advanced, certificated tutors—or Seed Teachers) lead the training of tutor candidates. Currently, each tutor candidate receives two hours of weekly individual training for each subject per semester until they gain subject proficiency. Tutors are expected to maintain proficiency, so even after they officially take charge of their class, they continue to undergo monthly English and Mathematics assessments and are required to meet subject benchmarks. Tutors are also responsible for documenting student learning and reviewing student performance and behavior with social worker supervisors and learning counselors.

Beyond academic tutoring, the Boyo tutors make visits to students' schoolteachers at least twice a semester to discuss the needs of students and families. Tutors also offer support services to families in crisis (e.g., social work intervention and reporting, resource referrals) and hold two parent-tutor conferences each semester to apprise parents of students' attendance, performance, and behavior in the after-school sessions and at school. Their communication with 'homeroom' teachers and parents stresses positive family-school interactions and understanding.

Social Support Network Theory

If schools, families, and tribal communities have been described as the three pillars of indigenous education in Taiwan (Chen, 2001), the interrelations among those pillars must be understood to grasp their total effect on students. One approach to exploring the school-community-family partnership potential in these communities is through the multidimensional lens of social support network theory (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). A social network includes the interactions and relationships among people and groups (House, 1981). The structural dimension of a social support network takes into account the number of people belonging to the network and the interrelations among members of the group (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). In the remote areas of Taiwan, the social network of the educational community comprises the children, their families, the local schools and organizations, and the residents of the communities. According to the theory's functional perspective, these networks have the ability to harness different types of support: emotional (e.g., trust, affection, care), informational (e.g., advice), instrumental (e.g., financial assistance, time investment), or appraisal (e.g., enhancement of esteem; House, 1981). These types of support can relieve distress and strengthen individuals' adaptability (Sarason et al., 1990; Thoits, 1986). Another aspect of social support is whether the assistance is reciprocated (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). The present study applies the theory of social support networking to the Boyo model by considering the resources and institutions relevant to elementary and junior high school education and exploring the program's means to bolster school-community-family partnerships. Evidence of sustainable, effective mutual aid among members of the tribe may mean such a program could be expanded to or replicated in similar communities.

Method

Since 2008, Boyo has trained nearly 400 tutors and has offered its after-school tutorial program to children from economically and socially underserved families in 12 tutoring centers, among which seven are located in remote indigenous tribal areas. This present study focuses

on a remote township of the Atayal indigenous tribe to investigate the perceived roles of Boyo tutors in promoting the educational growth of students in the community.

Participants

Five Atayal participants were selected based upon recommendations from Boyo's executive and the supervisor of the tutoring center in the Atayal community. They comprise four female tutors and one male tutor ranging in age between 35 and 45 years old. Their educational background ranges from junior high to senior high school graduate. The participants each have over seven years of tutoring experience at the Boyo tutoring center, and are currently either tutors, Seed Teachers, or full-time Boyo Social Welfare Foundation staff. Pseudonyms were used in place of participants' names.

Interview Procedure

An interpretive case study approach was employed to conduct a holistic, in-depth investigation of how participants interpret and reflect upon their perspectives as tutors in the after-school program (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand participants' roles, responsibilities, and impact, as well as the journey that they have taken as tutors (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and allowed for a comfortable environment for participants to express themselves. To ease conversation, the interviewer used a mixture of Mandarin (with a local accent) and indigenous vocabulary of the Atayal. Interviews with each participant were translated and transcribed; participants were given the opportunity to review their transcribed documents for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network approach was used to analyze transcripts from the interviews conducted in this study. This inductive approach summarizes segments of transcript text into concise concepts and creates a framework for understanding the experiences and perceptions derived from the text data (Thomas, 2006). More specifically, thematic networks systematize the extraction of: 1) basic themes; 2) organizing themes; and 3) global themes. Basic themes are lower-order patterns derived from summarized theses, which are interpreted in the context of

other basic themes. Organizing themes group the main concepts proposed by several basic themes, and then finally are brought together to illustrate superordinate global themes (Attride-Stirling 2001). The primary researcher initially coded the data, and through an iterative process of identifying thematic levels with multiple team member perspectives, the current structure of themes emerged.

Results

Participant Descriptions

Descriptions of the five participating Atayal tutors and their background provide context for the thematic findings of this study.

Lituk. A dedicated student, Lituk originally planned to go to college after nursing school. However, her parents believed that marriage and children were more important, and so she married a young man from her tribe and they left for Taipei. The challenges of adjusting to city life spurred them to return to their village with their young son, and soon after, their second and third children were born. Lituk's life was confined to housework and childcare. In difficult times, she and her husband relied on relatives for support. It was not until 2007 that Lituk, at the suggestion of other tutors, decided to become a tutor herself. "Being a Boyo tutor made my life more interesting and meaningful, and I didn't have to worry about finances anymore," Lituk noted.

Malaw. In Malaw's second year of army school, he was expelled for truancy but stayed in Taipei until the instability of his part-time earnings no longer permitted him to stay in the city. After returning to his village, he described his life in this way: "When there was nothing to do, the best way to kill time would be to drink." One day, at a vendor's place, he met a Boyo social worker who convinced him to begin a new life and consider being a tutor. Malaw has served as a Boyo tutor for eight years and is currently teaching both mathematics and English at the junior high level. He has been certified a Seed Mathematics Teacher since 2012.

Ciwas. Ciwas is a single mother of six children. As an adolescent, she received financial assistance to attend one of the best junior colleges in northern Taiwan. However, after her father's stroke, Ciwas dropped out of school to support her family. When she became pregnant the next year, she gave up her aspirations. She recalled, "One day, a social worker from Boyo approached me and asked, 'Do you have a job? Would you like to

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be a tutor of an after-school tutoring program?' …That day changed my entire life and from that day I have never worried about my livelihood." After six years as a tutor, Ciwas obtained a Seed Teacher certification in mathematics and English and became full-time staff at the Boyo Social Welfare Foundation.

Yawas. According to Yawas, her father became violent toward her mother and the children whenever he drank too much. Her mother died when Yawas was young and her father regularly went ocean fishing, and so the children were left to fend for themselves. When Yawas's oldest sister married, she decided to live with them until she graduated from high school. For years, Yawas worked as a dormitory supervisor staff before she "jumped at the chance of becoming a tutor."

Ciwang. Ciwang's parents, who were busy with farm work all year round, were not particularly involved in her education. She recalled an unpleasant junior high experience: "I lagged far behind my non-indigenous peers, feeling ashamed about my poor academic performance and isolated because of my indigenous origin." Ciwang only studied for a semester in high school before she dropped out due to homesickness. Her father insisted that women did not need education, so Ciwang married, took care of housework and childrearing. She often felt intimidated by her husband because she neither had a high school diploma nor was she equipped with the skills to help her children academically. Shortly after, she began attending the Boyo training and has been an active "tutor mom" for eight years. "Now I'm not only a wife and mom, but I can offer much more to society, too," said Ciwang.

Thematic Network of Tutors' Roles

As seen in Figure 1, the global theme of the study is *on becoming and being a Boyo tutor in the family-school-community partnership*. Under the global theme are organizing themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Accompanying these organizing themes are their respective basic themes.

Motivation to become a tutor.

Tangible benefits motivate people when they contribute to something that is larger than themselves, that holds meaning to them and others, that makes them different, and that leaves a mark or impression. Within this organizing theme, three basic themes emerged. All participant tutors believe the tribe needs a

localized tutoring program that fosters local human resource—addressing tutor shortage and ensuring continuous operation. Some tutors also think that the position not only earns them additional income but also meets their own families' needs. Furthermore, through training and teaching, tutors can improve their own abilities, enabling them to receive positive feedback about the benefits they bring to students, to their own families, to their tribe, and to themselves. These factors can encourage tribal residents to become and remain tutors.

Tribal need. Although governmental and non-governmental resources are provided to indigenous tribes, those resources have mostly provided support in the form of cash, goods, or short-term projects, resulting in a continually changing cycle of support. For local tutors, short-term and discontinued tutoring programs in the past neither significantly promoted students' academic achievement nor did it improve parents' involvement in their children's education. Ciwang noted, "Every time one organization came, they would leave not long after, and another one would come. The kids had no sense of belonging, and they fell into the habit of taking things for granted." All the Boyo tutors believed that the tribal village needs a stable, ongoing tutoring program specifically tailored to address students' learning difficulties. Lituk pointed out:

> The schoolteacher said that my son was behind by at least a year. I thought he would improve in a tutoring program, but instead, he was just given the answers from [non-Boyo] tutors! Boyo's tutoring program gave me new hope, and I wanted my child to be in this program because they focus on remedial instruction and have classes everyday.

In addition, other tutors pointed out that the lack of tutors in the village is a long-term issue. The tutors believe that the only way to solve this shortage is to cultivate tribal people as human resource. Based on tutors' voices, stability is a significant factor in boosting student progress and achievement.

Family need. Boyo pays tutors for both training and teaching. Yawas expressed, "The salary isn't much, but it is sufficient for our daily expenses. Also, my two older children are in my class, and I can carry the youngest on my back as I teach."
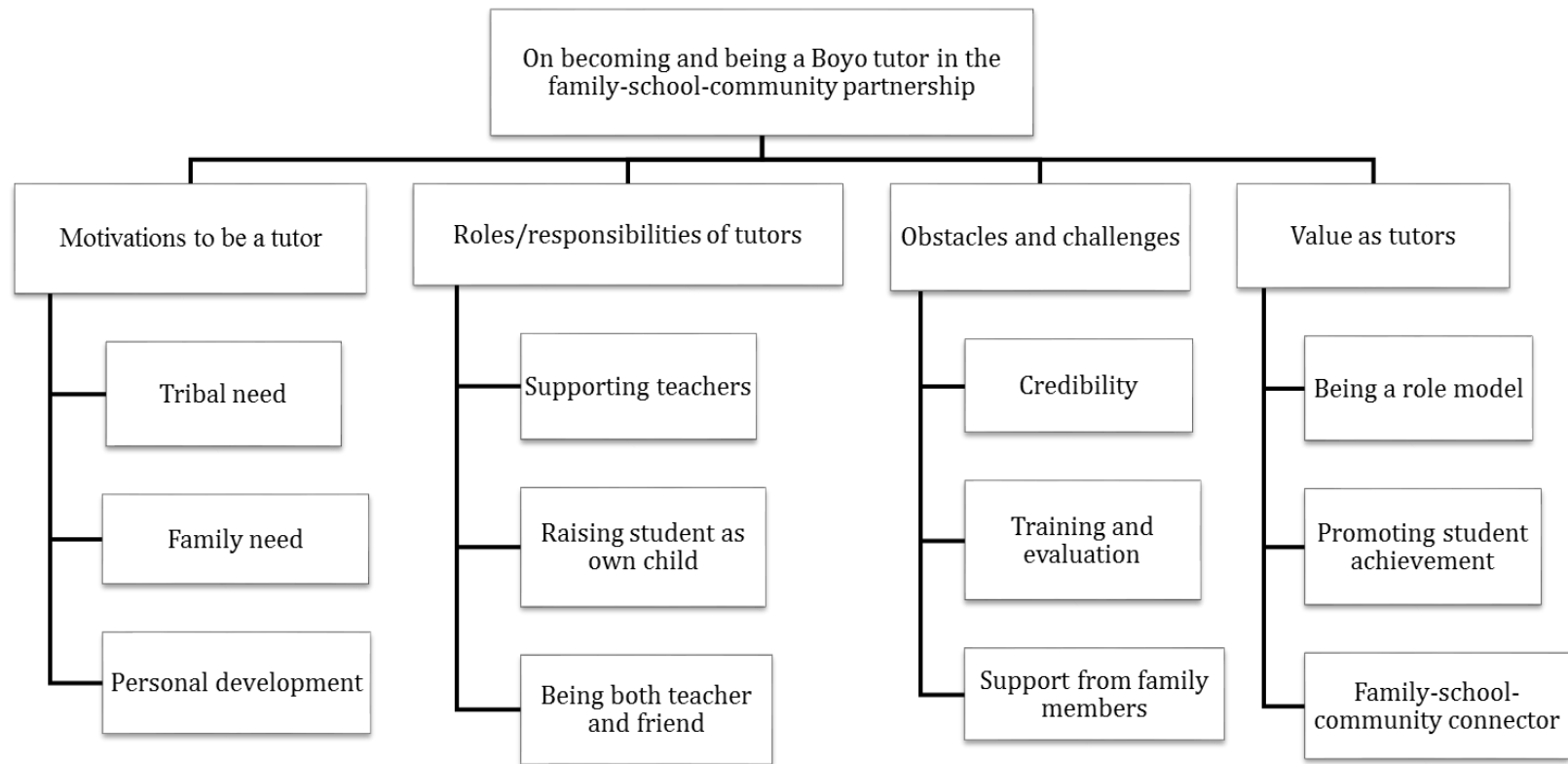
Figure 1.
Thematic structure modeled after Attride-Stirling (2001).

For tribal people without stable earnings, being a tutor offers a steady flow of income. From Malaw's perspective: "I was always worried about getting through one day, let alone the next. Being a tutor at the Boyo doesn't pay as much as working in the city does, but I have a steady income and life now." Tribal residents suffer from limited job opportunities in the tribal village combined with low-income status, but even a slight income can offer hope for a more secure life.

Two other tutors with their own children mentioned that being a Boyo tutor "not only means teaching but also learning." Receiving intensive, regular training has helped tutors develop their academic skills so they can teach and care for their own children at the same time. Yawas shared, "As a Boyo tutor, I could watch over my own children while helping other children with their homework during the day. At night, I could still work night shifts at the dormitory. One move, two gains."

Personal development. After completing training and beginning their tutor roles, the tutors felt more confident and greater self-worth. Taking Ciwas as an example, her internal self-worth increased from her own diligence. She remarked:

> Because of the Boyo tutoring program, I found that working hard helps me pass each evaluation. Also, it lets me recognize I'm capable of overcoming the challenges of more advanced academics, and also allows me to know I can achieve a college degree.

Furthermore, Malaw described the effect of his positive sense-of-self on his motivation to teach:

> I finally found the purpose and meaning of life. And, for the first time, I seriously want to do this job from the bottom of my heart. I came to realize that I can help other people. In the past, I received assistance from others, and it was rare for me to give back. Doing this job really makes me happy and confident!

Tutors' self-worth could also be drawn from their perceptions of others' opinion of them; these perceptions include increased work ethic or academic ability. According to Yawas's experience, after she solved a math question at her son's request, she gained immediate acknowledgement from her husband. From that day forward, Yawas felt that she was "no longer chained to the kitchen sink." Whether the sense of accomplishment came from within or from perceptions of others' opinion of them, the positive recognition of their development and the progress has been a motivating factor.

Roles/responsibilities of tutors.

The main responsibilities of tutors are often assumed to be teaching and behavior management. However, Boyo requires tutors to provide not only instruction and homework assistance, but also emotional support to children and their parents. Becoming a friend, teacher, and parent-like figure to students and their parents has been an unexpected outcome for tutors.

Supporting teachers. Some tutors consider themselves to be supporters of schoolteachers, especially when their students face academic and emotional difficulties. As part of the tutors' duties, they are expected to contact the student's 'homeroom' teacher to share information about academic progress or emotional/behavioral developments during tutoring. Likewise, schoolteachers also inform tutors of any changes, so the tutors can be aware of the needs of students. Both parties work together to help solve student problems and provide counseling when necessary. For example, Malaw noted:

> Once a schoolteacher told me about one student's behavioral disorder, and her obvious depression, which had lasted for a while, and it alerted me. In our talk, [the student] confided that she had been molested by her mother's boyfriend. I reported this case to a social worker right away.

In addition, most school teachers in the tribe communicated their difficulties to caregivers, such as grandparents. Due to language barriers, tribal tutors also play an important role as translators (e.g., for teacher-grandparent communications) during home visits and other situations. Sometimes, misunderstandings occur, and tutors such as Yawas step in to help both sides communicate. The cooperation between schoolteachers and tutors is not limited to teaching and learning; cooperation can also facilitate communication among families, schoolteachers, and tutors so that students' psychological needs are met in a timely manner.

Raising student as own child. During the tutoring process, tutors see that many tribal children are excellent learners but lack adequate

academic support at home. Lituk, for instance, reflected:

> Many tribal children are raised by grandparents, who are mostly illiterate, and therefore, are only able to put food on the table. I think they [the students] are smart, but they perform poorly at school, which prompts them to give up learning or even become too lazy to learn. My responsibility is to motivate them and let them know that they are smart, just like the way I encourage my own child.

Although Malaw does not have children, he treats tribal students as if they were his own children because students "living in the mountains are not stupid at all; they just lack care and companionship from adults." Tutors agree that nurturing children and helping them improve in school are the goals of a tutor. Ciwas, for example, spends extra time to tutor students who lag behind at school and thinks of extra exercise questions for students to practise after their tutorial session.

Being both teacher and friend. Other tutors determined that the relationship with students and parents should be like that of a teacher and friend. Since many students in remote villages are raised by single parents or by grandparents, parents may not be able to provide ample attention to students' academic performance or behavior. Therefore, tutors feel that they do not merely help students with their schoolwork; they also step into the role of friend or family member. Ciwas recalled an incident with a student: "One day, I walked up to her and touched her hand; she gave me a surprised look, and then she started crying…whispering softly 'I miss my mom.' I suddenly realized that all she wanted was motherly love." The student lost her parents since childhood and was reared by her grandmother. This event reflects tutors' care and warmth toward their students. Two other participants explained that a tutor should be a teacher in class and a friend during recess or off-hours. This way, the tutors can make clear to students that they expect respect but also so that students would be comfortable to entrust to them their thoughts and feelings.

This approach extends to interactions with parents. Tutors frequently interact with parents/caregivers during their normal daily activities in their village (e.g., communal gardens, church) as well as brief chats during drop-off and pick-up at the after-school program. More formally, tutors are required to provide report cards to parents and conduct at least one home visit per semester. However, tutors visit homes more often if necessary. Tutors take the opportunity to discuss student performance whenever caregivers have time, even on the streets of the village. Over time, relationships between tutors and parents develop based on mutual trust and respect, where few secrets are kept from one another. Lituk, for instance, stated: "I was always asked to have dinner with them, and sometimes, I intervened in couples' arguments, just like a relative or friend would." Oftentimes, the tutors are asked about learning strategies when helping their child with homework. Yawas mentioned, "Some parents frequently ask me to explain the steps of math problem-solving in accordance with the tutors' explanation in order to avoid confusion." Tutors and parents become intertwined with strong bonds, and the caregivers see the tutors as both mentor and friend.

Obstacles and challenges.

High quality after-school programs are often associated with highly educated staff. Therefore, at first, Boyo tutors' lack of experience and credentials were criticized by those in the community, especially by students, their parents, and their schoolteachers. Some tutors gave up tutoring because the public doubt was too burdensome to bear, but most tutors made efforts to improve, earning respect and praise from community members. As tutor Malaw expressed, "People mocked me because of my past image. I showed even more devotion to my job, studying before noon as my habit, and passing each evaluation and assessment. Importantly, I quit smoking and drinking alcohol." In addition, many tutors commented on the pressure they feel from the intense training and regular evaluations, particularly if they have to retake failed exams. For those who had been stay-at-home wives or mothers, tutoring disrupted housework and placed them in conflict with the needs of their families.

Credibility. Tribal tutors have neither a college degree, formal teacher training, nor teaching experience. Their position as instructors has produced immense doubt among parents. Malaw expressed, "Some parents would mock me, saying I was an alcoholic and I wasn't qualified to teach any of my students when I started out as a tutor."

Although much of the community discourse served to discredit the tutors, most tutors overcame negative public regard through sheer industriousness. Malaw continued:

> I strengthened my academic knowledge, showing even more devotion to my job. Studying before noon became my habit, and I passed each evaluation and assessment. Importantly, being addressed as 'Teacher' was not something I was used to. Now I feel gratified for all the hard work I have put into the job.

Students and schoolteachers were also suspicious of their tutors' abilities. Ciwas frequently encountered questions such as, "What can this junior high school graduate do? What is she going to teach? How can you be my teacher?" These doubts and rumors did not deter her. Ciwas diligently studied mathematics and English after her children went to bed and before they woke up in the morning. She remarked, "Whenever I had a question, I rushed to the coaches and questioned them until I really understood it, so I never failed a test after training." Still another tutor recalled schoolteachers who indirectly refused to meet and gave excuses such as "I need to go to a meeting now" or "I am busy dealing with..."

All Boyo tutors initially faced doubt from parents and caregivers, schoolteachers, and students. However, each improved their content knowledge and teaching strategies, which had direct impact on the academic and behavioral progress of their students. The tutors' efforts earned recognition from schoolteachers. As Lituk noted, "When I visit the schoolteachers, they call me 'Teacher,' saying 'Teacher Lituk, your students are making advancements' and 'Thank you, Teacher Lituk!'" Similarly, over time, caregivers came to address the tutors as "teachers." For all tutors, being called "Teacher," was one of the highest forms of honor that can be bestowed, symbolizing the transformation from initial doubts and mistrust to subsequent respect and trust.

Training and evaluation. Regular training and evaluation are required for each and every tutor. Training sessions are usually held in the afternoon before students arrive. The stress of fitting these trainings and evaluations into their own family-related tasks can wear down tutors. Ciwang explained:

> I find myself racing against time nearly every day because I have to cook dinner for my family immediately after a training session and then rush back to the tutorial center to help these children. I often skip dinner myself. Sometimes, when I feel tired, I think about quitting.

The exams taken after training can also be daunting for tutors. Yawas mentioned:

> I could hardly sleep the night before an exam, as if I were about to take another entrance examination for college—utterly nervous and extremely worried. In the early months, I had failed a lot of times. I was so overwhelmed that I almost decided to quit.

For tutors, meeting the training and assessment requirements entail much anxiety in and of itself, not to mention causing conflict in mothers who juggle work and household responsibilities, so much so that many have considered giving up their post.

Support from family members. Starting wages for a Boyo tutor is relatively low. Tutors from more financially stable families are often discouraged by family members to work for Boyo. Yawas provided an example:

> Being a tutor, I had no support from my family. My husband's family owns a grocery store and didn't approve of my working long hours for so little money and asked me to be in charge of the store.

Family members may also worry about tutors' time away from household tasks, given the intensive preparation for constant examination. As Ciwang mentioned:

> I had faced a lot of difficulties in the first few months, because I did not have a good enough educational background and needed more time to catch up. I spent extra hours preparing myself for the tutorial program, aside from joining training sessions with my peers. As I spent so much time in the program, my mother-in-law started taking care of my child for a period of time.

Value as tutors.

Since tutors and the children they teach share similar backgrounds, experiences, and identities, tutors feel they take on the natural position as role models. Some tutors believe that their importance lies in their unique ability to bridge communication and work cooperatively with parents, teachers, and community members. As indicated by the purpose of their position, tutors

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also believe their benefit to the community is their capacity to improve children's academic achievement. Therefore, when it comes to the value of tutors in the eyes of their community, tutors often refer to the importance of being role models to students, being knowledgeable and able to effect progress in their students, inspiring confidence and motivating students to learn, as well as understanding the students' academic and emotional needs.

Being a role model. From the perspective of tutors and students, role models are seen as examples to encourage children to improve, from whom children can learn and emulate. The tutors are willing to work harder to make up for any past failure, hoping to set good examples to their own children. Ciwas's perceived past failure—giving up a chance to attain higher education—encouraged her to work harder and to stimulate her children. She expressed:

> I didn't take the chance to continue my studies in the past, and now that I have children, I want to learn again and show my children that their mother is studying hard too. I can even help them when they encounter problems in their schoolwork.

Apart from demonstrating hard work, tutors also encourage students to work harder by instilling a healthy sense of competition. As Ciwang said:

> When students see that I not only teach them every day, but learn from other teachers, and that I, like others, also have to take tests, they eventually realize that tutors are just as competitive as others, and that my ability (to teach them) is the result of my efforts…I can feel that they are becoming more serious [in learning]…

Students learn from and see what teachers do. It is particularly meaningful then when a child observes an adult surmounting past challenges to become a respected tutor. One tutor recalled that a student pinpointed her neighboring uncles and aunts as role models because they tutor her every night; these uncles and aunts have backgrounds and education levels similar to the tutor. This recollection seems to reflect the point that despite backgrounds, all individuals can inspire others to succeed in school through hard work.

Promoting student achievement. Promoting and attending to students' academic performance are some of tutors' critical responsibilities. Many factors contribute to academic performance, including individual, family, and neighborhood characteristics and experiences. But research suggests that, among school-related factors, the quality of teaching matter most in students' outcome (McKenzie, Santiago, Sliwka, & Hiroyuki, 2005). Similarly, tutors have firsthand evidence—positive feedback from schoolteachers and parents—that they have influenced student progress. Ciwang remarked:

> Some parents were rather conservative about Boyo's after-school program at first, and did not care at all when their child skipped our classes. Then, they observed obvious progress made by their child and began to pay attention to their attendance [in the after-school program].

According to tutors, some students compete with tutors to show how good they are. The competition makes the students more motivated to learn. As Lituk mentioned:

> Since students know that we [tutors] need to learn and take exams just like they do, they are encouraged to compete with us [in passing exams]. Naturally, they have become more efficient learners than how they previously were.

Family-school-community connector. Tutors can close the communication gap that frequently exists among students, their schoolteachers, parents, and the community. When students are reluctant to disclose their worries to teachers, it is often the tutor who coaxes a student to talk. If a student reveals information about abuse, this disclosure engenders prompt treatment. As Ciwang shared, "I tried to talk with my tutee; then he cried, saying he was exposed to abuse at home. I immediately reported this information to the school and social workers."

Tutors and schoolteachers meet regularly, so they can help convey information to parents. According to one tutor, a majority of parents were not willing to attend parent-teacher conferences in the past. "Then, through meeting with schoolteachers, teachers requested tutors' help to persuade parents to participate. Now, many more parents attend such conferences." Yawas added that since tutors have a closer relationship with parents, they help schoolteachers deliver messages to parents: "I am a messenger on behalf of teachers. That is why I come to the

students' homes so often. I have to relay messages to the parents."

Due to the inseparable nature of schools and the tribes that house them, activities are integrated no matter which institution initiates them, and Boyo tutors are seen as linking schools with community.

Discussion

This investigation of indigenous tutors in the Boyo After-School Tutoring Program provides insights into a unique practice—recruiting and training tribal people as tutors—as well as the impact of the practice on families, schools, and the community. One finding of the study was that a community-based tutoring program can persist in meeting local tribal people's needs (i.e., employing local tribal tutors as a community resource to avoid tutor shortage), allow tribal students to engage in interactive learning and develop lasting enthusiasm toward learning, and enhance tutors' earnings, academic abilities, credibility, and self-worth. A second finding was that a tutor's roles are diverse—assisting schoolteachers in managing students' learning difficulties and emotional issues, supporting tribal parents to nurture their children, translating for families to aid their communication with schoolteachers, and establishing a mentor-friend relationship between tutors, students, and parents to keep the lines of communication open. Thirdly, tutors meet a number of challenges, including discrediting reputations initially ascribed by schoolteachers and other locals, as well as the difficulties of juggling family and tutoring duties— and these tutors are able to overcome these obstacles. Lastly, the contribution and true value of tutors in their community can be distilled to being role models for students, being bridge-builders among family-school-community partnerships and being a support for students' progress and positive learning attitude.

The present study reveals that the process of hiring and training local tribal residents as tutors constitutes a working model that can compensate for a lack of initially qualified tutors. The practice of recruiting and training tribal residents without prerequisites of experience or qualifications may challenge assumptions about the value of higher education and formal teaching credentials and experience. However, rigorous requirements are apparently incorporated in the training process to develop and maintain the quality of Boyo tutoring via assessments of tutors' baseline knowledge,

intensive training on teaching approaches and behavior management training, and ongoing-assessment. This process, the visible efforts of tutors, and the improved academic capabilities of both tutors and students successfully drown out the voice of public doubt.

In light of Boyo's operational framework, the recruitment and training of local tribal residents puts the social support network theory into practice by placing the role of tribal tutors as a source of emotional, informational, and instrumental support in the Atayal family-school-community partnership. As shown from our results, tribal tutors play multiple roles, such as teacher-supporters, mentor-friends for students and parents, and connectors for the family, school, and community.

Regarding suggestions for future studies, more exploration is needed to investigate how after-school programs and social work can be integrated to complement each other without being confined to their respective area of expertise. For example, the Boyo Social Welfare Foundation uses social workers and educational specialists to implement the after-school tutoring program. How it achieves interdisciplinary cooperation between these two entities to develop a children-oriented after-school system is worth exploring.

With these findings, the study offers an example of a program that leverages the network of a rural community to promote multiple forms of mutual support. The study attempts to understand the roles and perspectives of the tutors involved in this program to define each tutor's obligations and to build the collaborative relationship between the Boyo management, the schoolteachers, and families, ultimately creating an active community where students learn happily and effectively. This study also explores how collaboration affected and bolstered school-community-family partnerships by describing the difficulties tutors encountered and the solutions they adopted, as well as the benefits produced for schools, students, communities, and families. The findings serve as a useful model for other local communities intending to adopt the program.

Limitations

While the findings expand upon prior reviews on the effectiveness of school-community-family practices and interventions, the study must be interpreted in light of its limitations. Similar to limitations of many qualitative interview studies, the sample size is small and may not be

representative of the larger group of Boyo tutors. Additionally, the focus of the study is primarily on tutors. To obtain a more holistic understanding of school-community-family partnerships, future studies are in progress to include the in-depth perspectives of parents and caregivers. Further investigation is also needed to determine whether the results and recommendations can be generalized to other tribal communities.

Conclusion

Tribal tutors play an important part in creating a network of resources among families, schools, and community, simultaneously developing a power of community-based education and sense of

duty for their own tribe. As one tutor expressed, "To continue this tutoring system in our tribe, it must be handed over to us (tribal people)." Another tutor elaborated: "Even though the tribe has the support from the Boyo Foundation now, it will leave one day. To keep this program, we [local residents] have to do it ourselves." Recruiting and training tribal residents as tutors has not only reinforced change but also provided evidence for practising and expanding the concept: *It takes a village to raise a child, and every child belongs to everyone in the tribe*. It symbolizes the Atayal value of traditional education — the responsibility of the whole tribe to raise a child.

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