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## Parents' Role in Children's Learning During and After the Covid-19 Pandemic

**Budi Rahardjo**<sup>1</sup>

**Fachrul Rozie**<sup>2</sup>

**Jessika Maulina**<sup>3</sup>

*Universitas Mulawarman, Indonesia*<sup>1,2,3</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** When children only see their friends in little squares via Google Meet or Zoom, can teachers really address concepts like the importance of teamwork or how to manage conflict? This is a learning phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic and the era after it. This study aims to see the role of parents as children's learning companions in terms of mentors and motivators when online education takes place. This research using photovoice within phenomenological methodology and have been doing with thematic analysis and collecting data through interviews and observations. The participants were eight parents and one female teacher as a homeroom teacher. The research findings show that although there are many obstacles in online learning for children, learning during the COVID-19 pandemic can still run by involving the role of parents and teachers as pillars of education for preschool-age children. For further research, it is hoped that the findings will be a way in solving learning problems for children.

**Keywords:** early childhood education, parents' role, online learning

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author:  
Prodi PG PAUD FKIP Universitas Mulawarman  
Email: [budi.rahardjo@fkip.unmul.ac.id](mailto:budi.rahardjo@fkip.unmul.ac.id)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Since March 2020, school closure policies, public services, the imposition of restrictions on social activities and the transition of the online learning atmosphere are regulated in local government regulations such as Brazil, Mexico, and Paraguay (Atiles et al., 2021). It is also happening in Indonesia to implement learning from home, formulated in the guidelines for organizing learning from home since COVID-19 occurred. The government's decision as a form of preventing the increasing spread of the virus at all levels of education from early childhood to higher education (Lilawati, 2020) through the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020, which produces online learning programs through the home environment. This policy is an effort to increase the role and involvement of parents in assisting children, especially at Early childhood Education level.

The transformation of face-to-face learning into virtual face-to-face as an adaptation during the pandemic also occurs in ECE. This phenomenon requires parents to be able to act as companions in learning in order to gain meaningful experiences (Hamaidi et al., 2021). Therefore, children do not have to come to school and continue to study at home according to instructions by the teacher (Arkorful, 2021). In Indonesia, the habit of studying at home is carried out according to the perception of parents who are influenced by educational background, economic status, and level of understanding as a learning companion (Ekyana et al., 2021). In other words, the role of parents in the context of learning at home is especially important during the current crisis.

Parents are the first educational environment for children related to a family. The involvement of parents is known through their role in assisting children to study at home. The context of studying has been around for a long time before the Corona (COVID-19) pandemic, especially in parenting and education as reflection of practice in ECE (Winship et al., 2021). Adequate technological devices facilitate learning activities by parents who support children's development in learning (Gee et al., 2017). The results of research support this phenomenon by Ihmeideh et al., (2020) concluding that the perspective of families and schools can be seen to what extent they are involved in learning activities. In other words, the phenomenon of online learning in Indonesia is not a "new thing" for parents who, before the pandemic, had been actively involved at home and in the school environment from a global perspective.

Several previous studies have shown that some parents who work and do not work experience complaints of dividing work time and accompanying children to study at home to the point of being frustrated because they do not have teaching experience (Wijaya et al., 2021). Early childhood learning during the pandemic is limited to online. One of the studies that researchers adopted from Kartini (2021) examined the online learning process during the pandemic in ECE in the City and Inland. This study describes that online learning in cities tends to be more productive because of the ease of accessible facilities and full support from parents. Meanwhile, inland areas are less active due to limited adequate facilities and a lack of optimal support from parents. The results of other studies

adopted regarding learning at home relate to the role of parents, which are reviewed as role models in personal health activities, educators in educating children, and innovators in innovating learning activities (Kurniati et al., 2020).

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in conducting further research to examine the phenomenon of learning from home in terms of the role of parents as mentors and motivators in early childhood learning during the pandemic, which there are few research studies on the role of parents in narrative. This is in line with research studies on the role of parents during other pandemics to add new insights on how to act as mentors & motivators in the context of studying at home.

## 2 THEORITICAL STUDY

### 2.1 *Context Learning from Home During The COVID-19 Pandemic*

Learning in the early-childhood dimension is acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes through various play-based learning activities designed as developmental tasks. Early childhood is an imitator of what he is seeing; he will do (Thomson, 2007). Therefore, the context of the home environment is seen in Broefenberger's ecological theory as the closest environment for the full self-actualization of children where parents have an essential role (Paat, 2013). It is recognized that parents are the first educators in a child's life (Ebbeck et al., 2016). Studying at home becomes an exciting activity if parents can facilitate all the learning needs of children, especially those aged 4-6 years, where they learn by doing and through interaction with the physical environment that encourages school readiness (La Paro & Gloeckler, 2016). In other words, learning needs to encourage children to have learning experiences based on their developmental age. To gain new experiences, the role of technology becomes a culture of teaching as a transition to the educational process at home. It was revealed by Plowman et al., (2010) that technology mediated in developing children's awareness of the interaction of cultural values and knowledge.

Meanwhile, understanding the context of learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic in ECE is carried out through several studies of relevant research results. Beatrik et al., (2021) examine the experience of implementing learning from home through digital and non-digital media, which impacts parents' need for efficient time management. The duration of study at home is obtained through negotiations with the teacher. Subsequent research studies from Sonnenschein et al., (2021) concluded that parents carried out early literacy and mathematics learning activities. They are more dominant in teaching literacy activities (reading) rather than math material because reading is essential. Coulter et al., (2021) research findings emphasize that physical activity needs to be done during learning from home rather than learning to lead to child development. This activity aims to increase self-confidence and mental health in children while at home. Implementing learning through an online approach must pay attention to work tasks oriented towards independence, and parental satisfaction as "teachers" also increases (Lau et al., 2021). During the pandemic, it is known that screen time studying

at home is done Egan and Beaty (2021) more often than in regular times. Children's interaction with learning technology device is a hallmark of today's learning. For example, the ZOOM, WhatsApp, YouTube and other supporting software platforms require parental mediation in supervision and demonstrating how to navigate appropriate learning resources (Lau & Lee, 2021). It is a challenge to reform the learning process in face-to-face classes into virtual classrooms in a home environment that requires the cooperation of teachers and parents (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

The context of learning from home, which is the focus of this study's primary data, describes how teachers support and guide parents in implementing learning from home during the pandemic. Eslava et al., (2016) confirmed that the context of learning at home is influenced by family structure, educational background, type of work, income level, and culture of the home environment. Therefore, teacher guidance to parents is significant in creating a class atmosphere that suits their interests and needs (Vallejo-Ruiz & Torres-Soto, 2020).

## *2.2 Understand The Role of Parents as Mentor and Motivators in The Context of Learning from Home During The COVID-19*

The suspension of learning at school also increases the role of parents to help stimulate the child's development process (Buheji et al., 2020). One of the research results shows that parents who play an active role can solve the crisis phenomenon (Giannini et al., 2021). Several other research studies also describe how parents learn at home. Sonnenschein et al., (2021) reported that parents in the United States gave the digital devices, they usually used to switch work for their children's learning time. Then, parents in the UK indicated that the activities they often do are reading to children, storytelling, singing songs, playing numbers or letters and doing art and craft works (Barnett et al., 2021).

Lin and Li (2018) argue that children learn through play involves two things; first, a planned play environment containing game materials and tools for learning; second, adults who are intentionally actively involved in play, ask what children are doing, and help children to build their knowledge. Parents also provide indoor and outdoor play facilities so that children can explore new experiences such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Dodd et al., 2021). However, the role of parents who have kindergarten age children is increasingly difficult because they must balance it with the need to earn income. These roles are challenging to manage but provide opportunities for families to build stronger relationships (Basham et al., 2020).

The interaction between parents and children during the pandemic is getting more intense. For example, fathers who work from the home feel like spending time accompanying their children to complete several tasks together (Gelir & Duzen, 2021). A Mother who works as a nurse has difficulty carrying out the role of assisting children to study at home (Celik, 2021), so as a husband and wife, they must build communication in parenting to share a balanced role and according to the needs of the child. In other

words, assisting children in learning is also contingent upon the pattern of cooperation and the outcome of parent-child negotiations.

Therefore, the phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic is a new experience for parents in accompanying their children to study at home. This research aims exploring the experiences of parents in acting as mentors and motivators in learning mentoring activities during the covid-19 pandemic and revealing the extent of support from the teacher to parents. This Research provides new insight into the dynamics between parents in attitudes and actions that are limited to the circumstances and demands of children learning from home.

### 3 METHOD

#### 3.1 *Research Approach*

This research using phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2015) that used a combination of photovoice methods (Duran, 2019) to reveal the actual situation in the field by research participants. The context of the research setting was carried out in East Borneo Province, Melak Regency, which had limited facilities and infrastructure during the research conducted by the researcher.

#### 3.2 *Participants*

The study involved eight parents and two teachers at one of the supervisory board State Kindergarten institutions in Melak Regency. The selection of these participants was based on the criteria of having carried out online learning and using a cover letter by the research team. Prospective participants willing to join are explained to choose to resign if they are not satisfied with this research. Participant data can be seen in table 1 (parents) and table 2 (Teachers).

Table 1. Research participants data (Parents)

Participant	Background of Education	Economic level	Type of work	Amount
A.M	MAN	Low	Housewife	4
S. D	SMA	Low	Retail	3
A. S	SMA	Low	Masseuse	4
S. R	S1	Middle	Housewife	4
A	S1	Middle	Housewife	5
T.H	SMA	Low	Civil Servant	4
S	SD	Low	Housewife	5
N. A	SMEA	Low	Farmer	7

Table 2. Research participant data (Teachers)

Participant	Position	Education
YTN	Kindergarten Teacher Group B	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
HNY ST	Kindergarten Teacher Group A	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
IT WL	Kindergarten Teacher Group B	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education

### 3.3 *Ethical Considerations and Procedures*

Before starting the study, the researcher asked participants to fill out a willingness to participate. The researcher also explains the aims and objectives of the research and the risks involved in maintaining the research code of ethic. The researcher does not mention the participants' full names. The data collection procedure was conducted through direct semi-structured interviews and was limited to 30-40 minutes. In the interview, participants were asked several questions about the research theme, and throughout the interview process, a photovoice data collection method was used, namely allowing participants to express their feelings in the form of photograph.

### 3.4 *Data Analysis*

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content. This approach aims to identify problems and experiences based on the researchers. The analysis focuses on cross-checking the data repeatedly through interview transcriptions and reflective journals collected by the researcher. In detail, the flow of the interview data analysis procedure adopts the method used by Ferdiansyah and Angin (2020), which begins with transcribing the results of the interview with the following process.

## 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 *Result*

All collected data will be coded and interpreted following the theme in this study (See table 3). The researcher interprets the information through critical discourse analysis to find the relevant meaning of each word from the interview dialogue with the participants. The results of qualitative data analysis in this study resulted in several research finding's themes, (1) the role of parents was reviewed as a mentor & facilitator, (2) parental constraints, and (3) forms of support from the school. These themes will be described as follows The Role of Parents as Mentors and Motivators.

Table 3. Data Analysis Procedure with Thematic Approach

Interview Data	Data Encoding	Theme
ITW #1	If we don't know the details, but we just see it when they send the video .....	Role as Mentor and Motivator
HS # 2	..... they might be bored more often (studying at home) than offline (face to face) especially when they are at home online, they are already bored	Parental Constraints
DF # 3	The assistance is in the form of videos, facilities for books. That's one of our benchmarks for children's development, if it's not given from the beginning, it becomes difficult....	Forms of support from the school

#### 4.1.1 *The Role of Parents as Mentors & Motivators*

Early childhood Education during the pandemic, parents of students assisted in learning at home based on the instructions of the TK Negeri Pembina Melak Regency teacher. Therefore, the findings in this study that describe parents acting as mentors &

facilitators are known through direct interviews and voice photos during home visits by researchers (for those who are willing). The following is excerpts from interview manuscripts for several research participants.

*"...Guiding is also certain, because learning is called teaching from the beginning, especially during this pandemic, like it or not, parents are the ones who play the most role from guidance, enthusiasm, and facilities" (Ctl.W/Participant 02/02. 03.2021).*

*"I try to provide understanding assistance to children. For example, the practice of counting glasses was asked by the teacher to be recorded using a cellphone. Sometimes he gives up easily. I do sing activities with my child..." (Ctl.W/Participant 01/01. 03.2021)*

*"This letter recognition and spelling are what I often help by doing it repeatedly. I think it's time for this child to recognize letters and spell words. Although, he is easily frustrated when studying at home. I remain patient in facing ups and downs in the mood" (Ctl.W/Participant 03/08. 03.2021).*

From the quote, it is known that parents' role as mentors and motivators in activities of recognizing letters, reading, and counting with natural objects is carried out with parents. In other words, the figure of a mother is a companion who spends more time at home than a father who works outside the home as a learning companion for children.



Figure 1. *Photo Voice* Parents as Mentor & Motivator in Learning from Home

The results of the documentation above provide meaning that during the learning process at home, mothers as parent's children provide education with patience and are oriented towards the ability to be achieved when children continue their following education. Children's expressions in the photograph are interpreted as a process of adaptation, with parents serving as mentors and motivators.

#### 4.1.2 *Parental Constraints*

The role of mentor and motivator by parents who are participant's experiences obstacles in learning at home. They are also workers and some as housewives. An interesting finding during the interview process, participant 01 (Mrs. AM) emphasized that there were no obstacles while accompanying her child to study. He revealed that children who quickly change their feelings (mood) do not learn at home as expected. Meanwhile, participant 02 (Mr. S.D) felt the constraints that were often felt regarding managing time to work as a street vendor and delivering material so that it was easy for children to

understand. The following excerpts from the interview manuscript with Mrs. AM and Mr. S.D.

*"There's no problem, it's good to teach it. However, the child sometimes has a mood too. Some-times if the mood is good, it runs smoothly but if the mood is not good, then I don't want it at all"..... (Ctl.W/Participant 01/01. 03.2021).*

*"It's a bit difficult to deliver a good teaching method... Because it's never been, and it's not normal, so it's just so modest besides that, what I feel is not capable, maybe I'm taking lessons, especially dividing the time when preparing to sell which I do myself" ..... (Ctl.W/Participant 02/02.03.2021).*



Picture 2. Study assistance by Mr. DF along with the appearance of his home environment

Other participants who worked as civil servant did not feel any obstacles because their children were disciplined in learning at home. However, some participants complained that they often found children challenging to manage during home learning and became more daring to fight when accompanied. It is known as the following interview manuscript excerpt.

*"Yes, sometimes it's hard to persuade to want to learn. It's hard to be told to learn, just eat something" (Ctl.W/Participant (Ctl.W/Participant 08/09. 03.2021).*

*"My child is in a learning mood. Sometimes he wants it in the morning, afternoon, or evening. He manages me according to his wishes" (Ctl.W/Participant 07/17. 03.2021).*

*"I often scold my children while studying at home. He makes excuses when it is time to study. He also neglects to study at home and chooses to play with friends who invite him to play and shout at him and his friends. As a result, he became resistant and, as a parent, felt annoyed" (Ctl.W/Participant 04/04.03.2021).*

#### 4.1.3 School Support

The support from the school, represented by the teacher as a homeroom teacher, is needed by parents. The teacher's education to parents and the procedures from the results of the learning tools that are easy to understand will help during learning at home. Then, communicate with the information that parents need to know. It was revealed by the participants as teachers that they had socialized learning at home since the instructions from the local government provided education through several learning programs and communicated through the WhatsApp and following excerpt from the interview manuscript that the researcher has done.

*"Yes, since the beginning of the school year, LFH has been given directives in groups who attend school and all students, all parents, have been invited to follow the health protocol in a limited number. Then, some media and teaching materials are given and information about changes in themes and learning activities every week" (Ctl.W/Teacher 01/01. 03.2021).*

*"We also instruct parents to participate actively in the WhatsApp group that has been created, especially the collection of children's assignments during learning at home. Parents are also encouraged to carry out learning programs according to our directions, for example creating a comfortable environment for children, learning is not forced and oriented towards children's desires and interests in learning". (Ctl.W/Teacher 02 /04.03.2021).*

*"We also provide some learning media that parents need, such as hand puppets, Plasticine, and textbooks as a companion for learning activities at home. Meanwhile, stationery and books are prepared by parents. We only prepared two documents to help with the assessment, namely the Student Worksheet (LKPD), which is usually attached after the weekly learning kit is sent, or we submit it directly when we hold a scheduled home visit" (Ctl.W / Teacher 03/06. 03.2021).*

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted, it can be understood that school support includes the socialization of Learning from Home (LFH) policies, facilitating learning media and learning tools, educating parents how to do learning at home and monitoring the learning process, that parents have carried out on a scheduled basis. In other words, the description of the findings above implies that the supervisory board State Kindergarten institutions in Melak have made efforts to adapt during the pandemic.

#### 4.2 Discussion

The results of this study emphasize that the process of adapting in limited conditions for the benefit of their children (Lim, 2020). They also work as mentors and motivators in learning at home. The findings of this study are relevant to Stone et al., (2017) which concluded that parental involvement in the learning of preschoolers is an implication of age development-oriented parenting. Child. In other words, the resulting role in this study is a form of parental responsibility for educational needs. So, parents must know how to become educators for their children on an ongoing basis. Especially in preparing an engaging, fun learning environment, children do not feel pressured because children need space for learning activities that can support interactions in learning while at home with their parents (Hassinger-Das et al., 2020).

A study revealed that learning activities at home have implications for children's psychosocial behavior, which is influenced by teacher competence, adequate learning tools and easy-to-obtain teaching media (Novick et al., 2021), the existence of socialization carried out by the implementing school related to the program and the delivery of learning instructions that parents by the teacher quickly understand. This

finding is supported by Muhdi et al., (2020) who asserted that the failure of learning policies during the pandemic was caused by the competence of teacher-parents, limited facilities, and the family economy level. Unfortunately, those who experience unsuccessful learning at home are some parents who are in rural areas, especially early mathematics, and reading literacy (Stites et al., 2021). Therefore, learning activities provide new experiences for parents who require them to make dynamic adjustments.

The researcher realizes that several research studies on the implementation of learning are still limited to discussing what the role of parents is and how this role is in-home care for children with tracheostomy requires high patience and persistence in accompanying the child in learning (Gong et al., 2019). ECE current research have several studies on how parents can manage emotions when getting their children's personal assignments and homework online. Henter and Nastasa (2021) support the findings of this study so that as parents, they must be able to manage their time in carrying out their main work and accompanying children while studying at home to work cooperatively with teachers for home learning with each other (Harris, 2021).

Meanwhile, parents feel the obstacles to learning at home, especially the dimensions of the child's ups and downs in learning enthusiasm and the demands of work to fulfil economic needs. In addition, children's learning difficulties are found in recognizing letters, numbers and writing activities that parents feel the need to be repeated. This finding is refuted by the research results from Finn & Maureen (2013) which confirms that repetitive learning activities such as cooking with parents can increase learning opportunities with older children in the home environment. To overcome these obstacles, support for school programs such as parenting activities and consultation on child development achievements when teachers do home visits is a form of professionalism (Jiles, 2015). Parents can convey, frankly, and openly what they feel and want in accompanying learning at home. As the main component, parents should be involved in learning. Bron-fenbrenner's theory is that the child's immediate environment affects the quality of learning interactions, especially the atmospheric context of family life (Houston, 2017). It is supported by a follow-up research study on Bronfenbener Theory, which describes that parents and schools work well together, so the opportunity to learn new thing is more open to children (Iruka et al., 2020).

Thus, the integration of this research contributes to the role of parents in the dimensions of caring for preschool-aged children. Being a child's learning companion is also part of the implementation of home education, which has an impact on the developmental dimension, as the results of a study by Pujiastuti et al., (2022) reported that the impact before the pandemic and during the pandemic affected socio-emotional abilities which were influenced by self-regulation and the results of social interactions in the community home-school environment. However, learning in the COVID-19 pandemic will continue in a move that involves the role of parents and teachers as pillars of education for preschool-aged children.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Having children is a gift for parents and providing learning assistance is also seen as a picture of responsibility, especially for preschool-age children who still need role models and parental guidance. The results of this study contribute to providing support for parents to keep their children in school and educate according to the cultural context adopted and the current situation. In other words, the image of parents as mentors and motivators in early-childhood learning can still be explored in depth through the socio-cultural paradigm.

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