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## **Schooling From Home During Pandemic: How Do Parents' Response Towards Online Learning?**

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**Abstract.** This study aims to find the parents' response towards online schooling from home attended by their children. The spread of Covid-19 becomes a massive pandemic hazardous for the community. Its rapid transmission forces government to implement emergency policy to cope with this virus. The Ministry of Education and Culture decided to eliminate face-to-face learning on behalf of the Indonesian Government. The school is temporarily closed to disrupt a chain of Covid-19 transmission. As a replacement, face-to-face learning is transformed to be online learning. In this case, parents' roles become more prominent because they must provide learning assistance to their children to ensure that schooling from home can be followed properly. This exploratory research involved 200 parents as respondents to fill in the questionnaire, and later 12 parents were invited to proceed with further interview sessions. The result indicated a positive response to the implementation of online learning initiated by their schools. Its implementation is an appropriate option for preventing students from infectious Covid-19. However, some obstacles occur when parents cannot assist their children optimally due to their responsibility to accomplish their work and go to the office during school hours. It is suggested that teachers' assistance during learning from home can be improved to maintain effective learning. Moreover, parents hope that face-to-face school can be held right away after the pandemic is successfully handled.

**Keywords.** Online Learning; Covid-19 Pandemic; Parent Response

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) is an infectious disease found initially in Wuhan, China, as an epidemic. Then it spread quite rapidly and became a pandemic in all countries worldwide, including Indonesia. As soon as this virus landed in this country around March 2020, the Indonesian Government swiftly established a handling officer unit to prevent Covid-19 from being widely transmitted. However, this virus quickly spread in Indonesia. Therefore, in the middle of March 2020, the Government issued a policy to carry out physical distancing, the use of masks, wash hands, work from home, learning from home, and the imposition of PSBB (large-scale social restrictions) in several cities that become epicentres of this virus transmission. Following up on the condition of the outbreak of Covid-19, which has a severe impact on the education sector, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia issued an official letter of statement number 4, 2020, on March 24, 2020, regarding the implementation of educational policies in the emergency period of the spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). Learning from home through online learning is carried out to provide meaningful learning experiences for students, without being burdened by the demands to complete all curriculum

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achievements and learning from home can be focused on life skills education, including the skills to survive in a pandemic situation (Surat Edaran Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 4 Tahun 2020 Mengenai Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan Dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19), 2020).

The implementation of online learning is the right solution in this pandemic to still have their right to learn. With the enactment of the online learning policy, the school requires parents' involvement to help their children's activities. In one study, it was explained that parental assistance to their children's academic activities improved learning achievement; sufficient interaction between parents and teachers was able to show optimal achievement towards children's learning success (Elliott & Bachman, 2018). According to the result of the prior study, it is vividly seen that parents' presence in accompanying their sons and daughters is significant. However, with the implementation of online learning, other research illustrates a condition where not all parents are ready for online learning assistance. Their children participate due to limited knowledge about using E-learning as the primary learning facility. (Abdallah, 2018). Later, it becomes a challenge for parents when their ability to mentor the activities of schooling from home is varied. Moreover, parental assistance often becomes complicated when they must work and complete their responsibilities as workers.

Therefore, referring to previous research, the communication pattern between the school and parents must be carried out to identify what parents need in learning assistance for children and the readiness of students to use facilities that support online learning activities. This fact is supported by previous studies, which reveal that parents believe it is essential for children to know how to use the e-learning platform. Parents become confident that their ability to use the e-learning platform will encourage their children to have flexibility in their abilities. Thinking as the impact of information-searching tasks or obtaining information related to completing assignments and learning exercises (Kong, 2018).

The online learning policy is considered the best strategy during this pandemic to ensure students retain their right to learn. Students participate in both synchronous and asynchronous online learning activities. With the implementation of the online learning policy, the school requires parental involvement to assist their sons and daughters in their activities. Therefore, it is essential to examine the diversity of parental abilities when it comes to mentoring activities. It is noticeable that parents grow anxious when supporting their children with online learning activities. In addition, for smooth online learning activities, parents must provide a capable gadget and an internet network (Dinamika Pembelajaran Daring Di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19 - Suara Muhammadiyah, n.d.)

Regarding the various conditions of parents in terms of fulfilling responsibilities that are critical for the implementation of online learning by their sons and daughters, it is necessary to dig deeper into the patterns of trust and response of parents to the implementation of online learning so that they can collaborate with teachers in shaping the characters. Parents who are aware of the importance of their presence for children's education will continue to educate children. Not completely dependent on teachers and this is an important lesson from the corona pandemic (Ketika Orangtua Harus Menjadi Guru - Suara Muhammadiyah, n.d.)

Referring to those studies that illustrate the situation and the gap of online

learning implementation, this study aims at (1) finding the parents' response towards the implementation of online learning in primary school and (2) investigating the obstacles found during parental assistance for schooling from home.

Some prior studies dealing with the implementation of online learning during pandemics have been conducted. First, a study from India portrays that over 75% of parents responded that they were happy with their children's online lessons and felt its application was practical. For parents, the teaching approach is the most significant aspect in boosting the teaching-learning process in virtual mode, according to 41% of parents. Parents believe that providing individualized attention to their children can help the system improve by 29% (Malik, 2020). Meanwhile, in China, most parents in the survey (92.7 percent) said their children had online learning experiences throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with the majority (84.6 percent) spending less than a half-hour each time. Parents had mixed feelings about the value and benefits of online learning, they preferred much on traditional learning in early childhood settings. They rejected online learning for three reasons: online learning's flaws, young children's lack of self-control, and lack of time and professional experience in assisting children's online learning. They are also suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making them more resistant to online learning at home. (Dong et al., 2020). Indeed, the perceptions towards online learning implementation are varied. It depends on how the Education centers provide sufficient facilities and preparation. A particular study in rural are in Indonesia showed that in the lack of other options, parents must live and encourage the learning approach used during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Despite the lack of unfavorable impressions among parents, distance learning has raised the financial, psychological, and social load on parents and families (Lase et al., 2020)

According to the previous studies, research related to parents' opinions regarding the implementation of online learning that their children participate in during the pandemic is still limited. It is indeed inseparable from the pandemic condition, which is still unstable, so the decision to conduct online learning is still being carried out. As an effort to make the education in this country can be adequately supported, through this research, the authors want to take a closer look at how parents respond to the implementation of online learning at the elementary school in which when data is collected, the online learning is still implemented.

## **METHOD**

### **Type and Design**

To obtain the scientific answers for the research questions, explanatory sequential mixed methods is used as the research design. Exploratory sequential mixed methods collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data in stages (Creswell & Clark, 2018). As the first phase, the researchers acquire quantitative data, which is a survey. Then proceed to the qualitative step. This step is essential for formulating particular research questions for the quantitative phase, including a questionnaire, survey, or other forms of data collection (Mihis, 2019).

The authors surveyed by involving 200 parents to be the respondents from six Muhammadiyah Primary Schools in Surabaya. The procedure was then followed by an in-depth interview participated by 12 respondents. This study was conducted from

October to December 2020 during the implementation of online learning due to a pandemic situation.

### Data and Data Sources

The data consist of the survey result and transcripts of the in-depth interview. The data sources were derived from two hundred parents of students from six Muhammadiyah primary schools in Surabaya were taken part as respondents, consisting of 13% of males and 87% of females. The participants were aged 29 - 59 years old, and 30 - 39 years old respondents dominated around 60%.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' percentage

No.	Primary School	Percentage
1.	Primary School A	38 %
2.	Primary School B	17.5 %
3.	Primary School C	4 %
4.	Primary School D	16.5 %
5.	Primary School E	4.5 %
6.	Primary School F	19.5 %
Total Respondents		100%

Table 2. Distribution of respondents' gender

No.	Range of Age	Percentage
1.	Male	13 %
2.	Female	87 %
Total Respondents		100 %

Table 3. Distribution of respondents' age (years old)

No.	Range of Age	Percentage
1.	20 -29	4%
2.	30 -39	60%
3.	40 -49	33%
4.	50 - 59	2.5%
5.	Above 60	0.5%
Total Respondent		100%

Table 4. Description of Informant for Interview

No.	Initial	Gender	Primary School
1.	L	Female	Primary School B
2.	M	Female	Primary School A
3.	N	Female	Primary School B
4.	S	Female	Primary School C
5.	Y	Female	Primary School B
6.	D	Female	Primary School F

7.	N	Female	Primary School D
8.	M	Female	Primary School C
9.	M	Female	Primary School B
10.	A	Female	Primary School A
11.	B	Female	Primary School E
12.	M	Female	Primary School B

The authors applied the following ethical guidelines in this study: (1) Maintaining the confidentiality of informants. (2) No deceptive practices were employed. (3) Informants were given the option to leave the study at any time.

## **Data Collection Technique**

### **Survey**

The survey was carried out by distributing questionnaires through a google form. This survey was conducted to obtain information related to the response to the implementation of online learning that their children attended.

The aspects have obtained from respondents (parents) as follows: (1) Online learning as an educational innovation, (2) Readiness of schools and teachers in carrying out online learning (3) Readiness of the curriculum and facilities in the implementation of online learning, (4) Communication between parents and teachers during online learning, (5) Readiness and role of parents in assisting children during online learning, (6) Achievement of student learning competencies in online learning, (7) Option Face-to-face learning is preferred over online learning.

### **Interview**

The interview used in this study was semi-structured. The authors have prepared the draft of the questions. The authors interviewed twelve respondents to follow up more profound information about the parents' response towards the implementation of online learning. The question items of the interview are as follow:

- 1) How is the implementation of online learning which the students follow?
- 2) How do the parents carry out the assistance mechanism?
- 3) Does the school facilitate online learning with a systematic e-learning program?
- 4) What is the biggest and most challenging obstacle while accompanying children to learn online?
- 5) What is the form of communication between teachers and parents?
- 6) How does mentoring during online learning lead to a better close relationship between parents and children?
- 7) How can the online learning platform chosen by the school make learning varied?
- 8) How can the implementation of online learning still help the achievement of spiritual competence, attitudes, knowledge, and skills?

### **Data Validity**

The authors utilized two types of triangulation to assess the data's validity: source triangulation and technique triangulation. The data was collected from parents as respondents in a survey, which served as a triangulation source. At the same time, triangulation was employed by combining more data from interviews with survey data.

## Data Analysis

The researcher did a pilot test for the sample group from other school clusters who gained online learning experience to determine the research instrument's reliability and validity. In this case, errors in the questionnaire were observed through statistical analysis assisted by SPSS. The data analysis from primary respondents was done quantitatively and qualitatively. At first, the questionnaire was distributed to respondents from target schools to capture the main tendencies related to parents' response to schooling from home, and the result was analyzed quantitatively. Then, the transcript of the in-depth interview was examined qualitatively to dig more information and match it with the survey result through questionnaire distribution related to the parents' response towards their experiences in assisting their children during online learning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Survey Analysis

The implementation of schooling from home due to the bloody spread of Covid-19 affected much of the role of parents in family life. The children stayed at home and conducted their learning activities in an online way. When parents are expected to be a companion and a teacher for their children, the duty becomes not accessible. With the various backgrounds of parents and available facilities, this situation was challenging.

The following table reveals the findings of a survey that involved 200 parents of students.

Table 5. Percentage Of Parents' Response Towards Online Learning

NO	Parents' Response	Percentage (%)			
		Very Agree	Agree	Disagree	Very Disagree
1	Online learning is an educational innovation during covid-19 pandemic	19	67.05.00	10.05	3
2	Parents are convenient for online learning assistance	13.05	64	19	03.05
3	Parents play important roles in online learning	34	58	07.05	0
4	The curriculum and facilities are sufficient to support online learning	09.05	69.05.00	19	2
5	Limited time in online learning assistance becomes obstacles	38.05.00	56	5	00.05
6	There is good communication between schools and parents regarding online learning	11	73	15.05	00.05
7	Online learning facilitates students to develop talents and interests	2	37	55.05.00	05.05
8	The option of face-to-face learning is preferred over online learning	66	32.05.00	01.05	0

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According to the questionnaire result, as seen in table 5, point 1, it is reported that around 67, 5% of respondents agree that online learning is an educational innovation during the Covid pandemic. The interview supports this finding. Parents claim that online learning is one way to sustain teaching and learning activity during the pandemic. It is such an advanced innovation to replace face-to-face learning to avoid outbreaks.

Meanwhile, as shown in point 2, it is seen that 64% of parents agreed that they were easier to monitor their children's learning progress during online learning. The activity of schooling from home enabled parents to assist and observe their children's activities, including learning accomplishments. Moreover, mothers tend to have sufficient time to assist their children for those who serve as housewives. 13.5% of parents even indicated they strongly agreed with the statement. Due to this pandemic situation, they feel compelled to spend more time with their children while they study remotely from home.

However, 19% disagreed due to their limited hours and roles as mothers and workers who should manage and adjust their time. This situation is also supported by 3 % of parents who strongly disagree because their roles and responsibilities as working parents cannot be dismissed. So they find it very difficult to arrange time for online learning assistance

In addition, it is revealed from point 3 that nearly 58% of respondents agree that parents play a significant role in a series of children's online learning. This portrayal is supported by an interview done with the parents. They explained that mentoring is very important for children who still need parental assistance in learning and completing assignments. Some parents also act as motivators who have to maintain the learning mood of their children. The parents contribute two forms of genuine support for this online schooling. First, by maintaining a close consistency of communication with the class teacher that students do not miss any information regarding the topic being covered or the due dates for tasks. Second, be present for children both mentally and physically when they need further enlightenment during schoolwork accomplishment or participating in learning activities on this new online learning environments.

Then, dealing with the implementation of online learning, in point 4 shows that 69.5% of respondents stated that supporting facilities in devices and internet connection were available along with the policy of implementing learning from home. Parents are trying to prepare these facilities to make their children participate in online learning. Unfortunately, not all parents had sufficient time to assist their children during schooling from home.

Meanwhile, in point 5, it can be seen that around 56% of respondents agreed that limited time for parents to accompany their children becomes an obstacle. This situation happens due to parents' obligation to work in the morning, in which their children also did online learning. This condition prevented parents from providing intensive assistance.

The communication between schools and parents related to the continuity of the implementation of online learning is as seen in point 6, approximately 73% of respondents stated that communication between schools and parents ran well. The weekly update from teacher through communication platform such as Whatsapp, was held. The percentage is quite far from those who disagreed, which is around 15.5%.

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In point 7, the long pandemic and the absence of face-to-face learning seemed to prevent the development of students' talents and interests. It can be seen from the portrayal of table 5, nearly 55.5 % of respondents claimed that online learning could not facilitate students' learning needs and interests.

The limited direct interaction between teachers and students, according to parents, is a factor. Parents must always ensure that their children get a good learning experience even though it is done online through their support.

Although in point 1, 67.5% of respondents stated that online learning is an applicable innovation to support education amid a pandemic, in fact parents stated that face-to-face learning options are still the most appropriate. Therefore, there is no greater hope than the return of direct learning. This can be seen in point 8, in which 66% of respondents strongly agreed with the face-to-face learning option, followed by 32.5% of respondents who agreed. The Parents believe that in-person instruction at school where students can engage directly with teachers and their classmates, deserves precedence over online instruction at home. Therefore, students can more conveniently enjoy learning.

### **Interview Analysis**

An interview session was conducted to find in-depth responses towards the implementation of online learning. NVivo is used to assist in coding transcripts of interviews conducted via zoom.

An in-depth interview was carried out on 12 parents who participated in the survey and came from representatives of 6 Muhammadiyah schools used as samples. The Covid pandemic that has lasted for months has had a meaningful effect on students and parents who must experience online learning. One aspect that makes parents respond positively to online learning is that the school systematically provides online learning facilities. More than 85% of parents accompany their sons and daughters to study at home with this facility. Simultaneously, the school's e-learning platforms (portals) include Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet. Based on the interviews with respondents, these online platforms are the primary tools in communicating with teachers and a medium for collecting student assignments. Video Conference applications such as Zoom and Google Meet are beneficial to greet students and optimize interactions between teachers and students.

Dealing with the first question, implementation of online learning, which the students follow, most respondents (parents 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12) agree that online learning is a good option for replacing offline learning due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Meanwhile, parent 1 stated that lack of face-to-face interaction with the teacher made her son quickly bored towards online learning. It is also said by parent 2; she said that online learning is not quite adequate for her daughter due to the type of active student who prefers to socialize directly with her friends.

The second question concerns the parental support method. The majority of respondents indicated that their children required assistance and that the role of parents was vital. In order to ensure that the subject matter is appropriately followed, parents must stay by their children's side during their learning activities. However, as noted by

parents 3, 4, and 5, several respondents claimed that providing student learning support was challenging since they had to work within their children's study hours.

The third question concerns how schools can help students study online through a structured e-learning program. According to respondents, schools have mostly adopted online learning systems such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. In addition, Zoom and Google Meeting are applicable for synchronous learning. Parents and teachers use WhatsApp for communication purposes to make submitting and collecting assignments easier. In addition, parent 6 said that Google Form is also applicable for doing the task.

The fourth issue concerns the most important and complex challenge parents face while accompanying their children as they learn online. Most parents think that the most challenging barrier to support online learning is the lack of parents' facilities, time, and availability, preventing children from adequately being accompanied. Parent 3 mentioned that the most challenging aspect of their situation is working when their child begins studying. Therefore his granny helps him study. Parents 5 had a similar situation in which the material studied by the children was highly diversified, and he found it difficult as a parent to keep up.

The fifth question concerns how teachers and parents communicate. The answers to these questions are all over the place. As stated by parents 7 and 8, some parents believe that the teacher constantly interacts well with parents. However, as parents 1, 5, and 6, communication with the school was very limited, apart from checking on homework submitted. They tried to find information on their own if there were issues, such as missing assignments, so that their children could continue to study. The sixth question is that the mentoring process during online learning led to a better close relationship between parents and children.

The seventh question concerns how the teachers' preferences of online learning platforms make learning more varied. According to the interview, there are not many e-learning platforms that parents utilize. As a direct learning tool, the school prefers Zoom and Google Meetings, followed by Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Whatsapp.

Eight questions pertain to online learning, which contributes to spiritual competencies, attitudes, knowledge, and abilities. Parents believe that the essential thing is to follow instructions and enjoy learning. However, as parents 2 have remarked, it is beneficial to find new skills while studying online. The children initially engage in extracurricular activities such as swimming outside of school and then develop new skills such as coloring and sketching during online learning.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the finding, the lack of face-to-face interaction with the teacher made children easily bored with online learning, and it becomes an obstacle for active and sociable children. This condition is supported by previous research where many parents commented that online learning at home lacks a learning atmosphere due to a lack of social interaction (Dong et al., 2020). The absence of a learning atmosphere drives students to play around, and these conditions make students feel less obliged to carry out their duties as students. In addition, the compulsory on accomplishing the assignments

given by the teacher becomes a particular burden for students. As stated, many students enrolled in home-learning programs claim that the workload of online classes is greater than that of face-to-face classrooms (*Challenges of Home Learning during a Pandemic through the Eyes of a Student - Lifestyle - The Jakarta Post*, n.d.)

Meanwhile, the importance of parents as companions should not be underestimated because, in fact, kids still rely on their parents for everything from the operation of electronic devices to the learning process and even the completion and collection of teacher-assigned homework. Some working parents, on the other hand, face a problem. During this epidemic, the responsibility to work and help learning has become an obstacle in the dynamics of online learning. As it is detailed on this study, parents' act in assisting their children during schooling from home plays a pivotal role. Parents' situation reinforces this with two related functions, an interpretive function, and a pragmatic function. Parents are equipped with beliefs to provide children with an interpretive framework for understanding the interpersonal world in family functioning (Rodrigo & Triana, 1996).

Considering the pandemic situation, which is currently getting better, face-to-face learning is the primary option to enable students to return to study well. However, the condition of the spread of this virus in Surabaya still exists with the accumulation of cases of more than 60 thousand people in January 2022. So it is necessary to improve the quality of online learning by preparing platforms and teachers' readiness at the implementation level. If the decision of conducting online learning still needs to be done, then the quality of learning is much better and more prepared. We hope that the pandemic that has been going on for almost two years will not cause learning loss, and students will have optimal learning opportunities.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Novelty and Contribution**

Online learning in primary schools has only been implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing learning from home. Therefore, studies on this matter are relatively new, along with the pandemic outbreak in early 2020. In addition, previous studies regarding parents' responses as children's learning companions, especially online, are still limited and need to be explored from various sides. Therefore, the presence of this research is expected to provide scientific contributions that can be useful and provide insights to be used as references for further research.

### **Limitation and Future Study**

This study is limited to parents of students who study in elementary schools under the Muhammadiyah association. The majority of the schools have almost the same vision and mission of education. Regarding the implementation of online learning, Muhammadiyah schools have relatively similar efforts to provide academic services for their students. For further research, it is necessary to expand and involve respondents from other elementary schools, both public and private. The research results may vary to provide meaningful insights for improving the quality of learning, especially at the elementary school level.

### **Implication and Suggestions**

This research has three suggestions. First, the school needs sufficient preparation related to the implementation of online learning. Pandemic conditions and other disasters allow academic activities to be carried out online at any time, therefore, even though the learning activity is carried out from home, the role of the teacher can still be optimized. Second, it should be noted that not all parents are able to accompany learning because of other responsibilities and obligations, such as having to go to work. Consequently, intensive communication between teachers and parents needs to be carried out and possible to minimize misunderstandings. Third, face-to-face learning which is considered better than the implementation of online learning must still be carried out with a qualified health protocol so that the safety of teachers and students is maintained.

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