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## Parents' Role in Supporting Their Children's Online Learning Process

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dimaksudkan untuk mengkaji peran orang tua dalam mendukung anak-anak mereka pada saat belajar secara virtual atau belajar daring selama pandemi. Peserta yang direkrut dalam penelitian ini adalah lima orang tua yang terdiri dari tiga laki-laki dan dua perempuan dari keluarga yang berbeda. Penelitian ini adalah sebuah studi kasus yang dilakukan agar memungkinkan peneliti menganalisa data secara lebih rinci terutama yang berkaitan dengan peran orang tua dalam membantu anak – anak mereka yang belajar secara on-line selama pandemi serta kemungkinan adanya faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi peran mereka tersebut. Temuan-temuan menunjukkan bahwa kesejahteraan, pendidikan orang tua, dan manajemen waktu merupakan hal yang dianggap penting dalam mendukung proses belajar on-line dewasa ini. Selain itu, diketahui bahwa bahwa pendidikan yang lebih baik dan pekerjaan orang tua yang berkaitan dengan pendidikan dapat secara signifikan membantu proses belajar anak-anak mereka. Temuan yang tak kalah penting adalah bahwa semakin rendah usia anak, akan semakin membutuhkan perhatian yang lebih besar dari orang tua, hal ini karena kondisi anak yang masih belum memahami proses belajar on-line dengan baik.

**Kata Kunci:** peran orang tua, mendukung, proses belajar anak

### Abstract

*The present study examined the role of parents in supporting their children when learning through virtual means or online learning amid the pandemic COVID-19 outbreak. The respondents of the present study were five adults (3 males and 2 females) of different families. The study was conducted in a case study to allow the researchers to identify more specific data regarding the significance of parents' role in the newly applied learning strategies as well as some potential determinants affecting their roles. The findings of the study indicate that there are some themes, which are perceived as important by the parents, such as parents' welfare, parents' education, and time management. It is also found that parents' higher education and the jobs related to pedagogy (e.g., being a teacher), can significantly help support their children's learning process. Last but not least, younger ages pose more challenges to their parents as they are not familiar with this new learning process.*

**Keywords:** parents' role, supporting, children's on-line learning process.

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## INTRODUCTION

Parental support has been widely acknowledged as one of the most significant factors affecting children's wellbeing (Wang, et al. 2018). In terms of the children's academic life, parental support is found very important to ensure their smooth learning process (Arshard et al., 2016). Some relevant studies analyzing the role of parents affirmed that parents' role can cover their children's academic life from a young until their adult education (Dixon, 2008; Smith, 2011).

Due to the newly adopted system termed 'online learning' stipulated by the government (Hardini et al., 2021), the role of parents has unprecedentedly become more complicated (Sulastri, & Masriqon, 2021). The parents, who were previously in charge to make money for the family, have now changed to be the second teachers for their children. The role of parents as the most adjacent confidants and guides has been at stake since some of the financially affected parents must also work harder to make both ends meet. Studies show that online learning has impacted not only the children as learners but also put their parents under pressure (Putri, et al. 2020). Some of the domestic violence cases claiming the lives of children have also been reported (Kandedes, 2020).

Despite its significance, studies highlighting the roles of parents in supporting their children's virtual learning activities attract relatively few scholars. (Yuhanita, & Indiaty, 2021), for instance, identify that there are some potential stressors indicated with the parent's low resilience. The low resilience can also indicate the insurmountable challenges faced by the parents when supporting their children's learning process. Their study does not specifically examine potential factors affecting their resilience whatsoever (Yuhanita, & Indiaty, 2021). Secondly, Novianti and Garzia (2020) find that some parents, who get involved in supporting their children's online learning, are still faced with challenges such as time management, attention, and teaching their children. Thirdly, Puspita (2021) identifies that some of the roles of parents, which are considered important for their children are as a motivator and supporters for their children. However, she also finds that assisting their children to learn the school learning materials remains a challenge to be solved (Puspita, 2021, p. 74). Fourthly, Palma et al. (2021) identify that there are some factors affecting parents in supporting their children's learning activities, such as parents' beliefs, perceptions, experience, socioeconomic status, skill, knowledge, energy, and time availability. Fifthly, Ribeiro et al. (2021) identify that there are some changes in the patterns of families' interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in some cases, some families experience stress and difficulties when managing time and sources. However, they also identify that there is a potentially positive impact on the increasingly greater presence of the parents in their children's school life (Ribeiro, et al. 2021).

Above all, identifying determinants affecting the role of parents is important as this can provide all relevant education stakeholders with insightful information regarding the significant role of parents. Besides, the data regarding the determinants can improve the parents' and teachers' awareness on how to deal with their children learning process effectively. The research questions are formulated as the followings:

1. How do the parents describe their roles in supporting their children's learning process?
2. How do the parents describe the determinants affecting their role in supporting their children's learning process?

## RESEARCH METHOD

Merriam (as cited in Barrale, 2017, p. 39) suggests that qualitative study is suitable for describing the participant's experience and the meaning that they give to their experience. Specifically, the method employed was a qualitative case study. Yin (as cited in Sutrisno, 2014, p. 92) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident". Yin (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545) elaborates that case study method is suitable for some considerations, such as the focus of the study is

to answer “How” and “Why” and the absence of manipulation conducted to the respondents or participants being studied.

**Table 1**  
**Participants**

<b>Participant's Code</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Children</b>
A	35	Male	Company worker	Undergraduate degree	1 elementary 1 junior
B	32	Female	Jobless	High school graduate	1 elementary 1 junior 1 high school
C	47	Female	Small business owners	Junior high school graduate	1 junior 1 high school
D	45	Male	Teacher	Master degree	1 junior 1 high school
E	40	Male	Jobless	High school graduate	2 children of elementary students

The data collection procedure was conducted as the followings: firstly, the researcher recruited the participants purposively. The use of purposive sampling is based on Frankel, Wallen, and Hyun's concept (2012) indicating the relevance of the sampling taken by the researcher. Further, the researcher briefed the participants before the commencement of the study. The researcher also offered the participants the chance to ask for clarification to ensure that they had already grasped the whole interview items. The interview was conducted in the participants' native language. The interview was recorded to maintain the naturalness of the data. The result of the recorded interview was also confronted by the participants.

The sources of data collected in the present study were the participants' verbal responses indicating their roles in supporting their children's virtual learning activities as well as potential determinants affecting their roles.

The analysis of the verbal data was conducted using theme analysis (Creswell, 2008). Since the instrument used in the present study was a semi-structured interview, the data analysis in this section referred to the oral responses in qualitative analysis. Some of the steps were based on the “coding process in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2008, p. 251) and were systematically conducted as the followings: 1. An initial reading of the text data. In this case, the transcript was read several times in order “to get a sense of the interview” (Creswell, 2008, p. 251). 2. Dividing the text into segments of information. The importance of dividing into segments was to help improve the researcher's understanding. The segment could be a sentence or a paragraph that was related to a single code. 3. Labeling the segments with codes. The labels were used to describe a segment of text or an image. 4. Reducing overlap and redundancy of codes. Some similar or redundant codes were further reduced to allow the researcher to identify fewer yet meaningful themes. 5. Collapsing codes into themes. Finally, similar codes were aggregated to form a major idea in the database (Creswell, 2008, p. 252).

The instrument used in the present study was an open-ended interview. The benefit of using open-ended interviews is to allow the respondents/participants to freely express their views on their experience naturally (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Given the potential limitation on the use of a single instrument in the present study, the researcher adopted some of the steps conducted by Barrale (2017, p. 41), such as allowing the participants to provide more clarification to the researcher, multiple interviews/follow up interviews when needed, etc.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 2**  
**Participant's role in supporting their children on-line learning process**

<b>P</b>	<b>Expressions</b>	<b>Themes</b>
A Male company worker	Basically, I have no problem with my role as leader of the family and a guide for my children and I share with my wife who fully stays home and does the chores. I earned a bachelor's degree and it is better than my wife so I think I need to assist my children to help them learn better. However, I sometimes have difficulties adjusting my time. This is because the company I am working for has also reduced the number of workers, so the burden for the rest of the workers is increasing. I know that I have to be thankful for this job as others have already left the company, but I finally have to bring my work home too. So, I find it very hard to manage my time between my office workload and guiding my children who are still trying to learn. Especially, because I still have to accompany my two children who are studying at elementary and junior levels.	Despite having higher/relevant education, managing time for the children is not easy as he must adjust between his work and his duties to accompany his children.
B Jobless female/House wife	I am a housewife, I once worked in a company but I was fired as the company went bankrupt. So, my job is at home supporting my children. Luckily, my husband still works and makes enough money for us. So, I work at home.., do the chores, as well as teach my children. It is hard as I don't have enough education background and I am not a teacher but I have no other choice, if I hire someone to teach my children at home that will be even more expensive.	The difficulty is having no relevant education background.
C female small business owner	It is a very difficult time for me. I have to get up early to prepare things to be sold, and I am still tired when I suddenly remember that my children have to log in and have to see some video containing the lessons. My shop requires me to stay alert so that I can serve my customers or buyers well. So, I may have no time to help my children. I hope the teachers understand my difficulties in helping my children to learn. I am a single parent as well. Why doesn't the school let the online program at school and why don't the teachers help the students there. I think schools have more rooms and facilities and they can still teach while adopting a strict measure of physical distance. Lastly, I don't have a good educational background and I am not familiar with this kind of learning so I really expect school does something to help us.	Education and managing time are the core issues for the families.
D Male elementary teacher	As a teacher, I don't work pretty hard in these years. This is because I work at home. Besides, I also teach the students online. However, the student's mastery of the material I give is a big issue for me as teachers as we have very limited interaction. I am not sure that the students can study as effectively as what they do during off-line means. Despite this challenge, my work-from-home activities allow me to use my time to teach both my students and my children at home. I also supervise the process where my children access some internet sources. This is important as not all sources are relevant to them. In fact, many of these sources are actually distractors to them and are very harmful to the children.	Having no problem to work and teach the children as he can adjust his time by teaching at home as well as helping his children.

P	Expressions	Themes
E	Jobless male I don't formally work as I have been fired by my company. Now, I have to do whatever I can do to help make my ends meet. So, I find it hard to help my children. Thinking about making money has been very stressful for me, let alone helping my children. I must survive and make money as the family's daily needs are a must and I have no idea to help my children study.	No time at all to support the children study as he focuses only to making money to fulfill daily needs.

**Table 3**  
**Participant's description on determinants affecting their roles**

P	Expressions	Themes
A	In my opinion, managing time is the most important thing we must have. This is because not all people can accompany their children all the time. We must work, parents must make money. However, the school lesson is also getting more difficult and complex, I think I find it hard to help my children in some lessons.	Managing time and the difficulties in teaching and mastering school learning materials are potential determinants
B	Despite being a housewife, I have been actually busy with my chores and other cooking. However, I find that teaching at home requires me to read books to help answer the questions. This is not difficult as some learning materials can be found on the net, but being patient and making the children learn well is difficult. My younger kid makes me work harder.	Time management and the difficulties of supporting her elementary children are the potential determinants.
C	I think the most important thing at this time is providing time for the children, although most slogans from the government are dealing with that. But, as we know that we need to survive, So, we need to make money, so this is more important and I need to open my shops to help serve the costumers to survive. I don't have high education as well. I think the school must give some tutorials to the students not burden them with things that we are not familiar with. This is impossible to expect that the parents can replace the teachers to teach the students.	Making money and the difficulties in teaching children are potential determinants.
D	As a teacher, my problem is how to balance my activities in teaching my students and my children. Secondly, I find that the younger child needs more attention than the older ones. It is possible for them to find the answer from Google but I think it is not the right way to learn. In fact, the younger one needs to have more reasons why this is the case and why it is not like that. So, I must really help her to understand the reason why.	Managing time and teaching younger children are potential determinants.
E	I know that I must also act as the parents at home, but I can not do that as I don't know the material. Besides, I am working hard to fulfill the needs of the family. How, can I do them both? I don't graduate from university or college so I never learn much, let alone to teach children. Besides, I have to work harder to fulfill our needs, and I have to find whatever I can do to survive. This is the hardest thing in my life, I and my wife work harder and we have to be very patient with my children who are also unable to study online. My children are still in elementary school so they have to get used to using the gadget and find lots of sources, which are not all relevant to their lessons.	Education background, time management, and teaching children are some potential determinants.

## Discussion

### Parent's income and children education are related issues

Based on the finding it can be interpreted that most of the participants perceived that parents' income is one of the most important factors for them. The fact indicating the parents' difficulties or inability to help their children learn at home due to their hustle-bustle activity is closely related to their income. This finding confirms what Mayer (2002, p. 30) has long researched in that parental income is closely related to "every dimension of their children's well-being". For instance, the children of rich parents are generally healthier, better behaved,

happier, and have better education during their childhood compared with poor families. However, in some instances, Mayer (2002, p. 66) concludes that the effect of parents' income may vary depending on several variables. Another important finding indicates that the participants, whose education is relatively higher do not seem to have serious problems in supporting their children's online learning process. Despite having to teach his students, the participant, who works as an elementary teacher, could still manage his children's learning process well. This finding is relevant to Dey's study (2010) in that parents' education impacts their children significantly.

### **Time management**

Based on the findings, it can be identified that time management is the second theme, which is perceived as important by the participants. However, the researcher identified that basically, time management problem occurs due to the financial problem faced by the parents. For instance, the worker whose work is getting much harder due to the layoffs imposed on many of his co-workers makes him unable to fully support his children. Likewise, the time management problem also appears to the small businesswoman, who must serve her buyers, thus making her unable to support her children's online learning. Lastly, the unemployed face similar challenges in that he cannot accompany his children since he must work to fulfill his family's needs. In short, time management is considered only by those having income problems and not by the teacher who can still manage his time to teach his students while accompanying his children at home. This finding is relevant to Lv and Lin (2017, p. 53) research indicating family income as an important factor supporting their children's educational level. For instance, a financially well-off family is generally able to provide their children with more educational resources. On the other hand, lower-income families are generally busy with their low-pay jobs, thus making them unable to fully support their children's learning (Lv, & Lin, 2017, p. 53).

### **Children's learning process poses more challenges to their parents**

The finding also indicates that younger children pose a more serious problem to their parents. Based on the parents' verbal expressions elicited in the interview, it can be interpreted that their younger children require them to work and spend more time. This holds as the younger children will usually face problems in learning online means. Unlike their elder siblings, online learning has not been very familiar to the children.

Although comparative studies contrasting the impact of online learning on different ages are not commonly found, the study researching children learning process through online means confirms the difficulties of children in learning virtually. Specifically, Putri et al. (2020) identify that Indonesian students are commonly used to interacting both socially and physically. Therefore, the shift of the learning process through online means has probably changed the way they are used to doing, thus making them unable to interact naturally. In other words, the present study supports the consensus of other studies that younger ages pose more challenges and require more involvement of their parents (Daniela et al., 2021; Ribeiro, et al., 2021).

Lastly, the present study also indicates some of the determinants, which are intertwined. Of these factors, the parent's welfare and education are found to be the most important determinants generating the other factors such as time management, and pedagogical inability (Afifah, 2021; Palma, et al., 2021). These findings are relevant to other findings indicated by Ribeiro et al. (2021) who confirm that COVID 19 does not only complicate people with the ordeal, in fact, it also provides those, who have certain qualities to accompany their children more often. This finding is relevant to the participant who works as a teacher and claims to have no problem in both teaching his students and accompanying his children to study at home.

Despite highlighting quite important issues and findings, some limitations of the study should be acknowledged. Firstly, the present study was conducted in a case study involving very limited participants. Besides, the data collected in the study was mainly elicited from the open-ended interview. Although interviews may provide more chances for the participants to express ideas, some bias or misunderstanding due to the differences between participants' backgrounds and the researcher's may affect the result of the interviews. Further studies may involve a gatekeeper or informant so that the participants will find it easier to express their

ideas. Another instrument, such as a questionnaire can also be employed, particularly when the participants have a relatively higher educational background.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident that pandemic has created numerous problems in Indonesian people's life. More specifically, this pandemic has impacted the Indonesian young generation more than adults (Kusumaningrum, et al., 2021). Given the disparity of welfare in Indonesia, the government should meticulously identify those having financial problems and offer them comprehensive assistance. So far, the support is given by the government merely focuses on the economic package, which is conducted separately. Ideally, these economically vulnerable families should also be given more support in handling or supporting their children's learning process. Providing mere financial support will only help the parents temporarily but not their children's education. For instance, the government can provide a more integrated program, which is offered to economically vulnerable families, so that these families can learn to survive as well as manage their families properly. Further studies can be conducted using a much more complex research method so that the generalizability can be more warranted.

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