



Father Involvement in Early Childhood Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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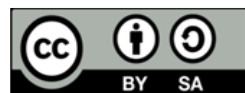
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ABSTRAK

Dalam proses pembelajaran jarak jauh di masa pandemic Covid-19 menyebabkan pelajar usia muda harus belajar dari rumah dan membutuhkan bimbingan orang tua. Namun masih banyak orang tua yang kurang mampu untuk membimbing anak dalam kegiatan pembelajaran online. Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu menganalisis keterlibatan ayah dalam pengasuhan anak usia dini pada masa pandemi covid-19. Jenis penelitian ini yaitu kualitatif. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu studi kasus. Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, dan focus group discussion (FGD). Instrumen yang digunakan yaitu kuesioner. Teknik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data yaitu analisis deskriptif kualitatif analisis data Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian ini yaitu pertama, ayah tetap melaksanakan kegiatan pembelajaran tetap tidak meninggalkan tugas sebagai seorang ayah. Kedua, ayah tetap menyempatkan waktu menghadiri diri pada anak dengan cara menemani anak melakukan kegiatan. Ketiga, tanggung jawab yang diberikan ayah pada anak memang lebih dominan pada finansial. Keempat, kegiatan yang dilakukan ayah ketika bersama anak yaitu berbagai cara dan beragam kegiatan. Disimpulkan bahwa, selama pandemic covid-19 ayah tetap menyempatkan waktu untuk anak.

ABSTRACT

In the process of distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, early age students have to study from home and need parental guidance. However many parents are still less able to guide their children in online learning activities. This study aimed to analyze fathers' involvement in early childhood care during the Covid-19 pandemic. This type of study was qualitative. The approach used in this study was a case study. Data collection used interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) methods. The instrument used was a questionnaire. The technique used to analyze the data was a descriptive qualitative analysis of data analysis by Miles and Huberman. The results of this study were as follows. First, fathers still carry out learning activities but do not leave their duties as a father. Second, fathers still take the time to present themselves to their children by accompanying them to activities. Third, the responsibility given by the father to the child is indeed more dominant in financial terms. Fourth, fathers' activities when they are with their children are various ways. It was concluded that fathers still made time for their children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world is facing Covid-19 which can attack the human respiratory system, such as respiratory disorders, lung infections, and death (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021; Sundarasesan et al., 2020). This virus can spread quickly to all countries, including Indonesia. Infected humans can spread this virus quickly, which is dangerous (Kadafi et al., 2021; Saputra et al., 2021; Swennen, 2020). It makes the government urges everyone to always apply health protocols properly, such as using masks, diligently washing hands, and using hand sanitizers. In addition, a new regulation issued by the government is establishing social distancing, so people must maintain a distance to avoid spreading this virus (Mishra et al., 2020; Ntshwarang et al., 2021; Satyawan et al., 2021). Besides, the public must also avoid crowds so as not to quickly be infected by this virus. Another government policy is large-scale social restrictions, caused schools and offices to be closed. The government also issues restrictions on activities in public facilities. It certainly impacts human life because it can decrease human interaction. The pandemic also impacts the

world of education, which causes schools to be temporarily closed so that learning activities are carried out online (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020; Yan et al., 2021).

The online learning activity uses technology and internet networks (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021; Kasman & Hamdani, 2021). In online learning activities, teachers must use various learning resources adjusted to the characteristics of students. It allows teachers to use various media, such as digital-based audio and video images (Asrial et al., 2020; Sopacua et al., 2020). In addition, learning activities also use various applications, such as e-learning Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Edmodo, Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, and Duolingo (Daheri et al., 2020; Setyawan et al., 2020). Educators must be creative in delivering material using online media. Media can be used in online learning adjusted to students so they can participate in learning activities optimally (Putra, 2021; Suhery et al., 2020). Online learning activities are not easy things for teachers or students, especially in early childhood. In early childhood, many aspects must be developed, such as cognitive, language, social, motor, religious, or moral aspects (Ayu & Junaidah, 2018; Hulukati & Maryam, 2020). In addition, the teacher's task is to guide and stimulate students so that children can develop skills that will be useful for further education.

Early childhood requires parental assistance in carrying out online learning activities. Parents who consist of a father and mother have the task of leading their children because they are the closest people to them (Fitriani et al., 2021; Hamzah et al., 2021). Parents' responsibility to children is to educate, nurture, and ensure children's development. The relationship between children and parents will influence children's development (Resti Mia Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2020; Yani & Jazariyah, 2020). Parental involvement also greatly influences shaping children's character because parents are examples for children to speak or behave and socialize with the outside world (Meilanie, 2020; Putri Abadi & Suparno, 2019). This parental assistance in online learning causes learning for early childhood to require proper consideration in determining an appropriate platform for early childhood. The learning platform used must be adapted to the background of the student's parents because they will accompany the child later when doing online learning activities at home. It is what causes the significant role of parents in online learning for children to achieve maximum knowledge and skills (Wardani & Ayriza, 2020; Zaini & Soenarto, 2019).

However, the problem nowadays is that many parents are still less able to guide their children in online learning activities. In addition, other research findings also reveal that the problem with online learning is that parents lack time to lead their children because they are busy working (Wardani & Ayriza, 2020; Resti Mia Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2020). In addition, the lack of father involvement in parenting in Indonesia is also low, causing Indonesia as one of the fatherless countries in the world (Munajat, 2022; R. M Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2020). Other research findings also reveal that father involvement in parenting tends to be low due to job demands (Sairah & Chandra, 2022; Sofiani et al., 2020). It is what causes parenting more often done by mothers. The lack of father involvement will cause the child to grow and develop without the presence of the father, so the father's role is not optimal in the child's development and parenting process. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted at the Kids Fantasy Camp Kindergarten, it was also found that father involvement in parenting was not maximized because they had to work. Based on the interview results, it was also found that fathers only focused on the task of making a living, so they did not have time to do parenting. In addition, the interview results also showed that some fathers still carry out their duties in raising children by dividing their time and accompanying children in carrying out learning activities at home. Some fathers also still take the time to parent their children so that the learning activities carried out by children can run smoothly. It causes online learning activities without parental assistance cannot run optimally.

Online learning activities are the responsibility of early childhood parents because they supervise children well when learning activities begin. Parents must guide children during learning activities (Harahap et al., 2021; Wulandari & Purwanta, 2020). Learning from home is a special task for parents because they can balance the learning provided by the teacher with the children's understanding. The role of parents is to avoid misconceptions about learning in children. In addition, parents are also responsible for nurturing and guiding children to carry out other activities at home (Suhendro, 2020; Sutarna et al., 2021). Parenting provided by parents to children will help improve children's academic competence (Harahap et al., 2021; Satrianingrum & Prasetyo, 2020). In addition, mentoring can also reduce the problem of unfavorable behavior. One of them is the need for parenting from a father figure. Father is an important figure in early childhood life. Not only a mother has the responsibility for parenting, but a father does as well. Children whose fathers are active in every child's activities will show better academic abilities when compared to children whose fathers are not directly involved in educating them (Arif & Wahyuni, 2017; Asy & Ariyanto, 2019).

Previous research findings also reveal that the role of a father in parenting can be seen from the father involvement in directing children to grow and develop (Khasanah & Fauziah, 2020; Septiani & Nasution, 2018). Other research also states that a father involvement in parenting will help children to

reduce behavioral and psychological problems (Khasanah & Fauziah, 2020; Rahmawati & Rahmah, 2016). It proves that good parenting involving a father's touch will positively impact early childhood. In addition, good parenting will also help children to have high motivation in learning. Thus, they can get high achievements in school. There is no study regarding the father involvement in early childhood care during the Covid-19 pandemic. The advantage of this study is that the father involvement will positively impact early childhood during the Covid-19 pandemic so that children can grow and develop well. This study aimed to analyze the father involvement in early childhood care during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that the father involvement in parenting early childhood can help children to learn online at home.

2. METHOD

This type of study was qualitative. The approach used in this study was a case study. This study emphasized a deep understanding of the problem that will be explained descriptively and in detailed analysis. The focus of the study was to describe the father involvement in early childhood care. The study location was Kindergarten Kids Fantasy Camp. Data sources of this study were primary and secondary data. Data collection are using interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) methods. Interviews were used to obtain information from informants concerning research. Besides, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect specific data about the problem through group discussions. The instrument used in collecting data was a questionnaire. The instrument layout can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Instrument Lay Out

No.	Dimension	Indicator
1	Engagement (Father's Direct Interaction Experience)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the father participate in childcare activities? 2. Does the father always make time for the child? 3. How does the father interact with his child? 4. What activities the father usually does with his child?
2	Accessibility (Father Figure's Presence and Willingness)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the father still work during the Covid-19 pandemic? 2. How does the father treat his child so his child feels that the father's presence is there? 3. Does the father ever support his child? 4. How does the father support his child?
3	Responsibility (Father's Responsibility)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of responsibilities does the father give to his child? 2. How has the father carried out his role as a father so far? 3. How does the father parent his child? Does it give freedom to his child to do what he likes, or does the father manage all the child's activities?

The technique used to analyze the data was descriptive qualitative analysis. This study used data analysis by Miles and Huberman. The analysis process divide the activity steps in qualitative data analysis into three, but the division of these activities is carried out after conducting data collection activities (Huberman & Miles, 2012). The division of three activity flows is carried out: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Checking the data validity could be done using triangulation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study analyzed the father involvement in early childhood care during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study collected data through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Respondents in the discussion were six people with the aim of respondents being able to express their opinions and responses. The interview results regarding father-child interactions showed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, fathers of students' parents did regular work but also followed the health protocols set by the government, such as wearing masks, physical distancing, and washing hands. The interview results also stated that even though the father worked, he did not forget his duties as a father by providing full care for his children and sparing time for them. The way to do this was they give time to accompany their children when they come home from work and on holidays. Respondents also stated that sharing time with children was done after work and on holidays. The interview results are presented in Table 2.

Based on Table 2, a father will give affection to his child, thus he does not lose his role as a father. Every parent has a sense of love and affection for their child, but every parent has a different way of showing it. Some parents show it with direct physical touch, such as giving kisses and hugs to children, and are

always there if children need their parents. It should be noted that the application of a father's affection is different from a mother's affection. It indicates that every parent has their own way of showing affection so that the child feels that the father loves him. Some fathers show affection by inviting stories, chatting, and accompanying children to play. When the father is with the child, he must be able to create a comfortable and warm atmosphere. A father creates a comfortable atmosphere by inviting children to play and joke, especially in early childhood not far from playing. Play activities are always under the supervision of parents. It concludes that a father always accompanies and supervises children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the interview results show in [Table 2](#), on the perception of self-presence as a father, it was found that fathers took the time to accompany their children. The way to do it is to accompany the child in activities he likes and take a little time to make the child feel loved. The treatment given by the father is different from the mother. The father is more assertive. A father disciplines his child, which later becomes provisions for his child. Respondents said that fathers participate in providing care for children and try to be present through mentoring. Another respondent also stated that he always attends to himself near the child so that if the child needs help, the child can see the father figure. In addition, the respondent responds that being near the child makes the child feel cared for and protected. The interview results can be seen in [Table 3](#).

Table 2. Interview Results Regarding Father and Child Interaction

No.	Subject	Interview Results
1	Respondent 1	Accompany children in the morning before going to work or after coming home from work. Holidays too. Maybe Sundays and holidays. That is the only time to accompany the children.
2	Respondent 2	When coming home from work, on holidays, Sundays, and when at home.
3	Respondent 3	At least if the child asks for shopping, I will give it, that's all. If we take a trip on a Sunday or holidays, that is the children's time. As parents, I give time to the children once a week to refresh on their holidays.
4	Respondent 4	Telling stories, chatting, and accompanying when watching TV.
5	Respondent 5	If that is the case, I usually just accompany them. They usually feel comfortable when we are accompanied. Usually, some parents let their children go, which is sometimes wild. Maybe, we accompany them at home when they are playing.
6	Respondent 6	Like before, if the children know we love them, it will automatically create a safe and comfortable atmosphere when we are together. So the activities carried out are the same, such as going for a walk, accompanying children to sleep, and listening to stories because children will like it if we listen to their daily stories.

Table 3. Interview Results on Perception of Self-Presence as a Father

No.	Subject	Interview Results
1	Respondent 1	When the mentoring is done, for example, if the child needs something, we are ready beside him. He will definitely feel comfortable.
2	Respondent 2	Trying always to be near the child and easy to find by the child because being near the child will make him feel that someone is guarding and protecting him.
3	Respondent 3	Yes, usually. If the child has positive desires, I will support him. For example, he wants to do a dance course like now and a course at school.
4	Respondent 4	We do together to support like this, such as giving appreciation if the child can do his job well and providing encouragement by inviting children to take lessons because children do their work from home during the pandemic. Kindergarten children still need direction or guidance from the teacher, so I ask children to take a course, and they are happy to do it.
5	Respondent 5	My wife usually attends school activities because my workplace is quite far, so I have to leave early in the morning.
6	Respondent 6	We usually attend school activities. Sometimes, if I do not have time, his mother will come. His mother takes his school report. In the morning activities, if I do not have a day off, it must be his mother, mostly his mother.

Based on [Table 3](#), a father not only provides care but also support to children. Father's supports will balance mother's support. All fathers said that providing support can make them to be more

independent and eager to learn in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic period causes changes in the child's learning system so that they do learning activities from home. It requires strong support so that children can carry out positive activities. In addition, children can also be trained independently by completing their own tasks and parents only supervise them. Respondent one stated that he supported his child in all things the child wanted, as long as his desire had a positive impact. Activities carried out, such as inviting children to do a lesson course to develop their talents. Other respondents also stated that they appreciate children who can do a good job. The pandemic condition makes children learn from home, and parents have additional tasks in taking assignments and bringing them home so that children can do them at home. It concludes that fathers still take the time to present themselves to their children by accompanying them in activities.

The interview results regarding the responsibilities given by fathers found that fathers had financial responsibilities. Fathers are responsible for all the finances at home, including the cost of education and child care. In addition, fathers are also responsible for educating so that the child's success in the future will be guaranteed. Respondent one stated that the father is more dominant and financially responsible. Interview results regarding the responsibilities given by fathers can be seen in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Interview Results of Responsibilities Given by Father

No.	Subject	Interview Results
1	Respondent 1	Financial for sure. Parenting too. If the parenting is more likely for the mother, if it is financial, it must be part of the father's provision, the provision of facilities.
2	Respondent 2	If we as husbands from finance first, education too, and all of that. But more dominant to finance. Giving freedom to children, but I still control them. If not me, then their mother will. The point is that giving children the opportunity to be themselves and do all their important desires is still within reasonable limits because children are still in kindergarten, so they can still be given freedom.
3	Respondent 3	It is different if children are already teenagers; it may be different again.
4	Respondent 4	The reason is that children are still young, I can still monitor if they are doing naughty things with their friends.
5	Respondent 5	For parenting, fathers usually complement each other with wives. I give freedom to children to choose what they like as long as they do positive things when they stray, such as not wanting to make assignments, etc. Their mother usually will act.
6	Respondent 6	The reason is so that children can find their own interests and talents. If they are too regulated, we are afraid that they will feel burdened later

Based on [Table 4](#), the responsibility as a father is great if it will affect children's future. At an early age, it is very good for children to become independent and responsible so that it can shape their character. Character formation can be done by parenting. A father will provide parenting that frees the child to do what he likes and gives positive results to the child. It is done so that the child is not burdened when the father arranges his activities. The type of parenting provided under supervision can also control the child on a safe path. Respondent two also stated that so that children are not overplaying, fathers supervise through Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in their homes. It can be concluded that the responsibility given by fathers to children is indeed more dominant in financial terms because a father, as the head of the family, has to provide for the family's needs. The type of parenting provided by the father is to give freedom to what the child likes but through supervision and control.

Interview results regarding activities carried out by children when they are with their fathers found that respondents stated that the activities carried out, such as asking to play, watching TV, and walking around the house. Playing activities that are often done will make early childhood happy. This play activity is very often done when accompanying children. In addition, fathers also do other activities that make children feel happy and not bored when they cannot play with their friends. Accompanying children to play will also have a positive impact on children because children do not feel lonely. One respondent also stated that accompanying children is the father's responsibility. Interview results can be seen in [Table 5](#).

Based on [Table 5](#), activities carried out by children are better supervised by parents. It can help children when they have difficulty solving their problems. If parents accompany children, they can solve their problems because the parent guides them. It can prevent them from feeling sad. If children are sad and even cry, then assistance is still needed. As a father, he must accompany a sad child. Respondents stated that when children are sad, the father asks about the cause of the sadness and speaks to them wisely. If

children are sad, the father will comfort them so they will be happy again. It can be concluded that the activities that fathers do when they are with their children are various ways and activities. Every father has his own way of accompanying children. It will make them happy and prevent them from feeling sad.

Table 5. Interview Results Regarding Children's Activities when with Their Father

No.	Subject	Interview Results
1	Respondent 1	The activities often with children are watching TV, playing, and walking around the house.
2	Respondent 2	The most common thing to do is the most playing, usually walking and cycling.
3	Respondent 3	Because it is a duty and a responsibility, so have to do that.
4	Respondent 4	Actually, to fill the time and focus on studying because he cannot do it at that age.
5	Respondent 5	We usually ask the children why and what they want. After that, we will be told them slowly so that their sadness does not drag on. We entertained them.
6	Respondent 6	We entertained them. We entertained them with a little joke or made a joke when they were angry, so they laughed again.

Discussion

Father involvement in parenting is a form of direct activity that he can do to his child, either physically, affectionately, or commission. Thus, the child can develop to the next stage. Children need father involvement because the role of a father is as important as the role of a mother who can provide direct interaction with her child (Harahap et al., 2021; Sofiani et al., 2020). Three dimensions of father involvement in parenting provide direct experience through interaction with children, such as doing joint activities (Rosalina et al., 2010; Yulianingsih et al., 2020). Second, the father's presence is always there. Third, the father's responsibilities include understanding and fulfilling children's needs and providing a living (Davis-Kean, 2015; Goryacheva & Sinelnikova, 2014). Based on the study results, it was found that some father involvement in the care of early childhood during the Covid19 pandemic, namely as follows.

First is the interaction experience with the father. The study results are about direct interaction with the father; children interact when the father is at home. It is shown when the father interacts directly with the children before the father leaves and returns from work or on holiday. It is the role of a father, namely asking children to play so that they feel closer to their fathers (Marr et al., 2021; Pramudyani, 2020). Opportunities when with fathers can be used by fathers to show their love for children entirely. It can be done by taking their children out, such as walking while telling stories and chatting. In addition, not only showing affection, but fathers must also create a warm and comfortable atmosphere when children are with the father (Ni et al., 2021; Wang, 2020). It is in line with previous research, which revealed that fathers have a role as protection (Khasanah & Fauziah, 2020; Kurniati et al., 2020). One way that fathers can do this is to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere for their children. In creating a comfortable atmosphere, fathers can do this by accompanying children and taking children for walks, as well as accompanying and listening to children's daily stories.

Second, the presence and willingness of fathers. Fathers' presence is also very much needed by the children, so fathers must give time to accompany their children, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is because children do many learning activities at home. Early childhood begins to shape cognitive, religious, language, social, and emotional development (Marr et al., 2021; Pramudyani, 2020; Wang, 2020). The children need the father's presence to help them to form an emotional function. In addition, the father figure can also teach discipline to children. By presenting themselves in front of their children, children will get to know their fathers better, and children can follow their fathers' positive traits (Ni et al., 2021; Özkan Yıldız & Yılmaz, 2021). According to previous study, children have firm discipline and good problem solving, so it is not uncommon for them to ask their father for help solving a problem (Knauer et al., 2020; Lanfranchi et al., 2021). In addition, the father has an essential role in the family to lead the family so that children can imitate and take a positive attitude contained in their father. It indicates that the role of fathers is very important to help children solve their problems. Early childhood requires support from both parents so that the child's growth and development become optimal (Mifsud et al., 2021; Özkan Yıldız & Yılmaz, 2021). Moreover, learning activities are carried out at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, so children need support from their parents in completing the tasks given by the teacher.

Third, the father's responsibility to the children. The father figure in the family, as the head of the family, must be able to meet the needs of all family members, including children, and ensure their welfare. In addition, fathers can also be friends with children in activities, such as playing and being an example for

children, as well as financial support for children. This study also shows that fathers are more involved in financial responsibilities. The way fathers fulfill their needs is by working, so they can meet the needs of their children and pay for their children's educational needs. It causes fathers to spend more time outside the house because of their work times. Thus, it causes their time for children to be very limited. However, fathers still have to spare time for their children because children will shape their character at this early age, so appropriate parenting is needed (Çelik et al., 2022; Lanfranchi et al., 2021). Parents should not be too restrictive of children and not allow children to choose freely, but they can still control children's choices to provide positive benefits (Mifsud et al., 2021; Wang, 2020).

The description above indicates that a father figure is needed in early childhood, so a father must take the time to show his affection for his children. Fathers can do activities with their children, like playing together and taking walks around the house, to please them. Playing is always carried out in early childhood because it is a fun world for children. It is supported by previous research saying that playing is a means of learning for children, so it is essential for children's growth and development (Rahmatia et al., 2021; Slovaček & Čosić, 2020). In addition, the task of a father can also calm the children when they are angry or sad. Thus, the father's role is needed so the children can express their emotions well. It is revealed in previous research which said that father involvement in parenting would give positive results (Sairah & Chandra, 2022; R. M. Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2020). Therefore, the optimal involvement of fathers during the Covid-19 pandemic can help children's growth and development during learning activities. In addition, the father's presence will provide the children with a sense of comfort (Arif & Wahyuni, 2017; Asy & Ariyanto, 2019). Fathers can also provide supervision to children so that they are in a safe and comfortable environment.

The implication of this study is providing overview related to father involvement in early childhood care during the covid-19 pandemic. This research implies that the father involvement in parenting can make children feel respected and loved by them so they can feel the presence of a father figure. This research can be a reference for parents, especially fathers, in guiding their children when studying from home. This study also has limitations, one of the limitations in this study is that the research subjects involved as respondents are still very limited so that the data obtained cannot be generalized. Therefore, it is hoped that future research will be able to further deepen and expand research related to parents involvement in early childhood care during the covid-19 pandemic.

4. CONCLUSION

The father involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic still provides care at certain times. Fathers still take time to present themselves in front of their children because they still need affection from their fathers. It could be concluded that fathers' time in carrying out activities was not too much, but they had the intention to involve themselves in accompanying and supervising the children.

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