

LEARNING STRATEGIES DURING PANDEMIC: PARENTS' IDEAS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DISTANCE LEARNING

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Abstract: The current pandemic period provides new experiences for parents to recognize distance learning methods. However, parents felt overwhelmed in their efforts to support their children's learning at home. The situation creates new problems for parents who are not very familiar with the realm of technology, which also impacts their role. This article investigates the involvement of parents in assisting children during the COVID-19 pandemic. By the case at Kindergarten (PAUD) Intan Permata Aisyiyah in Surakarta and the data was collected through FGD, observation, and interviews, I concluded that some parents have certain ideas and strategies to make distance learning easy and fun so that children do not feel bored studying at home. The strategies used by parents include: 1) providing scope and summary of the learning material that the child will learn, 2) communicating the learning objectives briefly, 3) providing learning resources, either through reading material in textbooks or on the internet, and 4) flexibility study time.

Keywords: Parents, Distance Learning, Learning Resources, Reading Material, Islamic Kindergarten.

Introduction

As an effort to accelerate the handling of Covid-19, the Indonesian government issued a large-scale social restriction policy related to work, economic, religious activities, the business world, social activities, and most importantly the education aspect. On the education aspect, the government of Republic Indonesia through regulation No. 21 the year 2020 has changed the learning model in schools and universities since March 16, 2020, from face-to-face to distance learning (Agusriani & Fauziddin, 2021).

This is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which has also decided that learning will continue to be carried out at home for schools located in the yellow, orange, and red zones. This of course will make parents have to work extra at home. Especially housewives must control their children's learning activities at home as well as possible. Changes in the learning model from face to face to distance learning is obstructed the learning process, especially interactions that do not go well between teachers and students (Garbe *et al.*, 2020).

During the pandemic, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture revealed that many parents of elementary school students were perplexed due to a lack of coordination with teachers (31.5 percent of respondents), making it difficult to engage in and understand their children's lessons (34.6 percent of respondents) (Kemendikbud, 2020). While studying at home, kindergarten and elementary school students require special assistance from their parents. According to European research, children in kindergarten and early elementary school, in particular, require special educational methods to help them absorb knowledge and develop basic cognitive and motoric skills (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Some difficulties may arise, such as a lack of signal, the quota running out, and some students not owning a smartphone. To face distance learning at home, schools and parents must collaborate. When these distance learning activities are carried out, the school would be better off providing some input

for parents to control their children. Because the role of parents is now more important in achieving the school's conceptualized learning objectives (Daniela *et al.*, 2021). The issue that frequently arises in the field is that parents are unable or feel overwhelmed to accompany their children to home study. So far, they have delegated responsibility for their children's education to teachers (Manca & Meluzzi, 2020).

Whether we realize it or not, parents now play a dual role in education. First, consider the primary role of parents. Parents are expected to consider and implement the best education for their children. This is a responsibility that each parent bears. Because the presence of a child is the successor of the family's hope and future, as well as the civilization of a nation. As a result, parents must set a good example for their children in terms of personality, knowledge, and the future. Second, parents play an additional role. This additional role entails social constraints. Working and studying from home is an unavoidable solution. Parental involvement is required in the online schooling process. In a nutshell, parents are teachers who represent the school at home. They play a role in administering learning from the stage of children doing assignments, reporting assignments, to doing remote exams (Bhamani *et al.*, 2020).

On the one hand, this condition creates a new situation for educators who want to improve their creativity and innovation in order to develop better learning models. On the other hand, teachers' ability to access and apply application-based learning media may be deemed inadequate. However, these two conditions improved with the assistance of parents who played an important role in home-based distance learning. Parents who are active in guiding and directing their children's learning during this pandemic, on the other hand, will maintain the learning environment even if it is carried out at home. Parents can learn again through learning materials provided by the teacher and accessed at home as the primary learning resource, in addition to searching the internet for new references to supplement the main material. (Novianti *et al.*, 2021).

At this point, after more than a year of distance learning, many parents, including those with children in early childhood education institutions (PAUD), have bright ideas for making children's learning activities effective at home. Distance learning is unquestionably more difficult for young children than for children in elementary or middle school (Rahmatunnisa *et al.*, 2020). This article will go over some of the ideas that parents have for implementing distance learning for their children who are in early childhood education.

Learning Strategies Description

A crucial component of the learning system is the learning strategy. Learning strategies are concerned with how the material to be delivered must be prepared in advance, what learning methods are appropriate for the material, and what form evaluation of the material takes (Fauzi, 2020). The learning strategy considers the material that must be prepared by the teacher in accordance with the sequence, the learning method that is in accordance with the material to be taught to students, what media are felt to help the implementation of teaching and learning activities according to the material, and how to evaluate learning used (Wigun & Ekaningtyas, 2021).

Learning strategies are actions taken by students to improve their learning. Active use of language learning strategies assists learners in taking control of their own learning by developing language skills, increasing confidence, and motivating them throughout the learning process (Shi, 2017). According to Gagne, as quoted by Asrori (2013), there are five approaches to learning processes or pathways: verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive activity regulation, motoric skills, and attitudes. Gagne's learning objectives are still guided by Bloom's taxonomy, with three learning domains as shown in Table 1. In sum, direct learning strategies, indirect learning strategies, interactive learning strategies, and independent learning strategies are the four types of learning strategies (Widyawati, 2020).

Cognitive		Affective		Psychomotor	
Bloom	Gagne	Bloom	Gagne	Bloom	Gagne
Knowledge	Verbal information	Reception Participation Rating and attitude discovery Organization Formation Lifestyle	Attitude	Perception Preparation Guided movement Accustomed movement Complex movements Adjustment Creativity	Motoric Skill

Table 1: Bloom Compared to Gagne’s Taxonomy

Direct Learning Strategy

Direct learning strategies are those that are directed at students by teachers. Direct learning strategies are effective for determining information or developing skills in a step-by-step manner; typically lead from general to more specific topics; and most common in the environment school. Direct learning strategies have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of direct learning strategies are that they are simple to plan and implement, whereas the disadvantages of direct learning strategies are that students frequently struggle to develop their abilities, and it is difficult to cultivate an attitude that is conducive to effectively improving their thinking of critical power. It is preferable to combine direct learning strategies with other learning strategies in order to improve the attitude of developing students’ thinking power and develop the abilities possessed by students (Jacobs & Michaels, 2007).

Indirect Learning Strategy

Inductive inquiry, problem solving, decision making, and discoveries are all examples of indirect learning strategies. In general, indirect learning strategies are directed at students. The teacher only serves as a facilitator in this indirect learning strategy. Then, if students discover new things and do not fully comprehend them, they can properly question the teacher. Indirect learning strategies can occur in the community as well as at school. There are benefits and drawbacks to using indirect learning strategies.

The benefits of learning strategies include encouraging students' curiosity, requiring students to think critically, requiring students to create an alternative method of completing a new thing obtained, and requiring students to be more active. The disadvantages of indirect learning strategies are that they take a long time and are difficult for the teacher to predict. Indirect learning strategies are also unsuitable for learning that necessitates students recalling the lesson (Rüütman & Kipper, 2011).

Interactive Learning Strategy

Interactive learning strategies are used in learning that uses the sharing or Interactive learning strategies are used in learning that uses the sharing or discussion method. When using this learning strategy, students usually get the opportunity to react to a new idea, experience, and knowledge of the teacher and peers in order to develop a sense of critical thinking. There are advantages and disadvantages to using interactive learning strategies (Bos & Anders, 1992).

The advantage of interactive learning strategies is that students can learn directly from teachers and their peers to build social skills and other abilities. The disadvantage of interactive learning strategies is

that teachers must have good speaking skills in order to build a good atmosphere to support the discussion process in groups. In this case, the teacher must also form groups that will encourage students to be more curious (SDERA, 2013).

Independent Learning Strategy

Individual initiative, independence, and self-improvement are the goals of independent learning strategies (Williamson, 1995). Students are more engaged in independent learning strategies and can study with friends or with people in their surroundings. The benefits of independent learning strategies are that they teach students to be independent because they require students to be able to communicate with people around them or with friends, and students have a greater sense of responsibility in doing anything (Field & Duffy, 2014). The disadvantage is that students' sense of independence does not always develop, particularly among elementary school students and those in early childhood.

Distance Learning

The use of the internet network in the learning process is referred to as distance learning. Students who study via distance learning have greater flexibility in terms of learning time, as they can study at any time and from any location (Dewi, 2020). Distance learning is carried out in accordance with each school's capabilities. Distance learning can make use of digital technology such as Google Classroom, Study House, Zoom, video conference, phone or live chat, and others (Öçal *et al.*, 2021).

Distance learning allows students to learn without having to go to a classroom, and learning can be scheduled according to an agreement between the instructor and students, or students can determine their own desired study time (Mahnun, 2018). Meanwhile, Ruth Colvin Clark and Richard E. Mayer stated, First, distance learning must have two important elements, information and teaching methods that help people understand the lesson content. Second, distance learning is accomplished through the use of computers and text, sound, or images such as illustrations, photos, animations, and videos. Third, distance learning is intended to assist educators in objectively teaching a student (Clark & Mayer, 2016).

Consideration of the use of e-learning must also pay attention to several characteristics of e-learning, as expressed by first, using electronic technology services to obtain information and communicate easily and quickly, both between teachers and students or between teachers and students. between students who are in contact with one another Second, making use of computer media such as computer networks or digital media. Third, studying learning materials on one's own (self-learning materials). Fourth, learning materials can be stored on computers so that they can be accessed by teachers and students or anyone who is not limited by time and place anytime and anywhere according to their needs, and fifth, using computers for the learning process and to determine the results of learning progress. or education administration, as well as to obtain a lot of information from various sources of information (Sari, 2015).

In general, learning is a process characterized by interactions between various elements of the education system such as students, educators, teaching resources or materials, and a learning environment that supports the process in order to achieve the learning objectives (SDERA, 2013). The learning process will be successful if all of these elements are well managed using a standardized learning management system that has been discovered. As a result, during the COVID-19 pandemic, distance and offline learning must be capable of ensuring learning management in accordance with these principles in order to achieve student learning success (Manca & Meluzzi, 2020).

One effort to improve the effectiveness and quality of student learning outcomes is the use of learning media in the teaching and learning process. When compared to traditional learning, the use of distance

learning media as a distance learning media creates a new paradigm (Garbe *et al.*, 2020). Distance learning aims to provide high-quality learning services through a large and open network in order to reach a larger number of people (Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005).

The use of various learning strategies is one way to find the right ingredients in transforming knowledge to students, which is beneficial to their development. Teachers, as educators, must, of course, be able to collaborate with various parties, particularly as a bridge between parents and schools in implementing learning strategies while the pandemic continues. The use of appropriate learning strategies has a significant impact on each student's intelligence (Daniela *et al.*, 2021).

Methodology

This study is a qualitative descriptive case study that aims to describe the problems of distance learning for early childhood and the initiative of parents in parsing and finding the right formula to help their children learn online. Overall, this study taken at PAUD Aisyiah Intan Permata, Makamhaji, Kartasura. The private school have no more than 50 students in two levels, class A and B. For the reason, I involve six parents, whom they were represents from two classes: B, L, M, U, Y, and Z. This research was carried out for two months from February 1 to March 31, 2021. The data collection techniques in this study used observations and interviews.

Observation is used to observe the behavior of parents as research subjects in the distance learning process. Observation techniques enable me to see, and record behavior and events in real-world situations. By observing, I can notice the research subject more closely and in-depth. When the distance learning process is gone on, I conduct observations at the students' homes for a period of 15 minutes before the learning activity begins and 15 minutes after the learning activity concludes. I need approximately two hours to observe one parent. I obtained more in-depth information about the role of parents in assisting children's online learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as parental opinions about online learning activities, through interviews.

Distance learning held by most teachers and students also uses several interesting digital platforms and certainly helps to increase the effectiveness of student learning during this pandemic. Some of these digital platforms are Google Classroom, e-Learning, Edmodo, Zoom and Google Meet. The most famous ones are Zoom and Google Meet because they are known to be easy to access, do not look confusing and of course use internet data which is more efficient than other discussion and video conferencing applications. The use of technology as a source of information, learning resources, systems and service quality has had a positive impact during this pandemic, most of which are beneficial for the distance learning process (Greenlee & Reid, 2020). In this study, at PAUD Intan Permata Aisyiyah, the platform that is always used is Zoom.

The technique of checking the validity of the data uses triangulation, which combines various methods used to examine interrelated phenomena from several different points of view and perspectives (Moleong, 2006). Triangulation in this study uses 3 things, namely: (1) Triangulation method: comparing information and data from interviews, and observations; (2) Triangulation of data sources: comparing the results of informants with related documentation; (3) Triangulation Theory (Maxwell & Reybold, 2015).

Result

The learning process for early childhood puts forward the principle of learning while playing. It also means that there are things to consider in the selection of media for the learning process as we know that early childhood will not easily understand and understand the learning information conveyed. Therefore, it needs to be considered in the learning process in early childhood education. The role of

parents is also very important in the distance learning process because early childhood cannot use their own gadgets without the help of their parents (Agusriani & Fauziddin, 2021). Instead, they destroy and violate existing functions.

The phenomenon that occurs at PAUD Intan Permata Aisyiyah Surakarta is incredible. According to my observations, they are not only passive recipients of material from the teacher via distance learning, but they also assist teachers in determining the best solutions and strategies for accompanying children when distance learning is used. I began this research by observing six parents with children aged 4-6 years who attend early childhood education (PAUD) Aisyiyah Intan Permata, Surakarta and meet the following criteria: free time, mastery of the internet and technology, and creative ideas.

In this case, my first question is whether or not parents have free time to prepare a summary of the learning materials provided by the teacher. The answers given vary because the amount of free time that parents have varies. Some people are available in the morning, afternoon, evening, and even at night. The first example comes from "M," who has a five-year-old son. Her child receives learning materials online three days a week during the pandemic. M uses a unique strategy to support the teaching and learning process, one of which is to spend time at night preparing learning resources in summary form, which he obtains from the internet as supporting material for what the teacher said: *"Teachers typically provide material to be studied over the next week for learning materials. Every night before the start of online learning, I look for additional references on the internet based on this material. Then I provide a summary so that my daughter understands the gist of the information presented."*

The answer from "M" is in accordance with the results of observation I made a few days before conducting the interview. Providing time for "M" is not only helping her son prepare learning resources at night or summarizing the material that will and has been given by the teacher, but "M" is also prepares learning facilities needed by her son such as writing tools, writing desks, explaining to children the summary results, and providing nutritional intake in the form of drinks and snacks, so that the child feels comfortable sitting for 1.5 hours in front of the smartphone. She had quite a lot of free time because her job is a housewife, so making time is her priority in accompanying children during distance learning.

This is consistent with what "L" does. Setting aside free time to look for additional materials just like what the teacher taught to his children is very important, according to her, so that children have more references: *"As a stay-at-home mom, I have plenty of free time to search for new content on YouTube or the internet. I've been looking for additional material as support a day or two before distance learning, so that if my child doesn't understand the material the teacher is presenting, I have other references to help them understand"*

Slightly different from "M", the observation I found on "L" regarding free time were more on the aspect of providing understanding to children about the material taught by the teacher with the help of YouTube channel. When I went to M's house, she was looking for additional material on the YouTube channel with her son. From some of the material that was searched on the YouTube search engine, then "M" gave the opportunity to her son to choose which video, according to the interests of him. Most of the videos taken are animations with a combination of stories and songs.

When it comes to achieving distance learning goals, children sometimes don't understand the specifics of what needs to be done. In this case, parents briefly explain the learning objectives that must be met after receiving the material via the digital platform. The explanation from parents is sufficient to assist children in measuring their learning achievement. A concrete example comes from "Z," where the child struggles with online learning. Even though they use the "zoom" platform to allow their children to see the teacher's face, they are still having difficulty digesting the material, so "Z" must find alternative methods to ensure that their children understand what the teacher is saying: *"My child has a typical audio-visual learning style, so I must see and hear what the teacher is saying directly. He finds it difficult to receive material via*

distance learning. As a result, the solution is to look for videos with the same theme to repeat the material that has been received, followed by communication with the children. This method is very active in helping me understand my child's reactions to various materials"

Z's mastery of the digital platform Zoom was learned since the beginning of the pandemic, when the government decided that learning was done online. Because the office where he works is closed, "Z" had more time to accompany his son to study. In my observation, "Z" is very good at operating Zoom through his laptop, especially in the aspect of recording videos between teachers and students. Before the start of the learning material, "Z" sets the Zoom to the "record" mode, due to sometimes his daughter in one lesson still does not understand the material presented by the teacher, so he can show the recording back to his child, while re-explaining some parts that have not been understood.

When his son was more focused on following the subject matter from his teacher via the zoom platform while drawing something in a book, "U" experienced a different condition. Feedback and material achievements on that day can be well absorbed using this model: *"My son enjoys drawing anything, so when we're doing distance learning, I let him follow the lesson while drawing something he enjoys. It turned out that the results were more effective because he was able to answer the teacher's questions well during the daily evaluation"*

Similar to "Z", who has his own method for ensuring that his child understands the material, "U" assists in resolving children's learning difficulties by allowing him to draw while making video calls using the Zoom platform. While observing, I noticed a drawing book and a coloring book beside the table where "U" had placed his smartphone. Even while delivering the material, "U" assisted his son in coloring some pictures.

The statements "Z" and "U" indicate that the role of parents as facilitators is critical in distance learning. One of the responsibilities of parents is to prepare good learning resources so that their children's psychology in receiving subject matter improves.

In terms of supporting materials, especially for distance learning, parents frequently provide additional reading resources in the form of books, pictures, or stories obtained from the internet based on their children's wishes and preferences. In this case, looking for other learning resources as well as studying them requires parents to have flexible time so that their children can enjoy activities outside of the material delivered by the teacher via learning applications. This is what "B" and "Y" are going through: *"Time flexibility is essential for me because I have to work in the morning. My child does not always understand the material presented by the teacher. So, in my spare time, I provide motivation by assisting in the discovery of other sources of reading with the same theme on the internet, in accordance with this selection. Apparently, this adds a new nuance, which improves my child's comprehension."* (B)

Parents' creativity is related to more than just their ability to combine ideas with materials or the technology used in the distance learning process. However, it is also important to provide motivation so that when children are bored and have limited understanding, parents are ready to be an encouraging figure and restore the child's mood. "B" did this because his son was bored and refused to participate in distance learning. I noticed that "B" was very patient in offering a few words of encouragement along with an offer of a gift if his child wanted to participate in the lesson. B's motivational words *"Come on, son, it's only for 1.5 hours, I'll give you a gift later,"* were effective enough to make the child want to participate in the lesson again. In the case of "B," parents can act as motivators by encouraging their children to do everything, particularly home study. Giving gifts is also an important aspect of motivation because it ensures that children continue to do well in their studies and are not bored with them *"My child's learning style is slightly altered by using Zoom, and he frequently loses focus. When the mood is not good on that particular day, the child always wants to play and not infrequently wants to watch videos on YouTube via the smartphone. In this situation, I must find the best time to study based on the child's mood, as well as look for new material to improve the learning process that was hampered the day before."* (Y)

In the case of "Y," parents play the role of a figure who can influence. This means that parents allow their children to pursue their interests and talents. Not all children enjoy situations in the classroom that require them to concentrate on specific materials. However, in online learning, children have more options for obtaining additional materials that supplement the lessons taught by the teacher, and these materials can, of course, be suited to their specific needs.

"Y" has a unique way of motivating and improving her child's learning, as evidenced by my observation. "Y" allows her son to watch videos while he studies online. When the child is finished with the videos and in a good mood, "Y" goes over the material presented by the teacher again so that her son enjoys learning more.

Discussion

Several problems commonly encountered by parents were identified in this study, including time management, child and parent psychology, discipline, family environment, and access to teaching materials sourced from online media. These problems are in accordance with the findings of Astuti and Harun (2020) in Bantul District, Yogyakarta that the challenge for teachers in online learning is to plan interesting learning activities that revolve around the children. The stand-by teacher monitors children's activities via WhatsApp and evaluates them based on videos/photos they send. Meanwhile, parents must be aware of and maintain their child's learning mood, invite children to participate in learning activities in a pleasant environment, and be able to divide their time between work and accompanying children to school. According to the findings of their research, teachers and parents should collaborate in implementing learning activities at home.

In Riberio's study (2021), the finding shows that interventions to increase parental involvement on Portuguese parents should consider a variety of factors. Opportunities could also be identified, such as increased parental presence and involvement in their children's school lives. During the pandemic, new forms of parental involvement emerged that can be addressed as useful methods of involvement even after the pandemic, particularly home-based parental involvement and home-school communication. Meanwhile, other problems such as home stress, personal resources, logistical, and financial conditions have also occurred.

Different results are described by al Hakim's research (2021). The results of his research show that network limitations, lack of training, lack of awareness, and interest are stated as the main challenges faced by parents. The obligation to study online is a serious obstacle, especially for students from economically weak circles. Online learning in a number of regions in Indonesia is not running optimally, especially in remote areas with limited technology and internet networks.

Children have more time to learn when they participate in distance learning. Children can learn anywhere and at any time, with no regard for space or time. This is undoubtedly a challenge for parents when it comes to distance learning, particularly patience. So far, parents are bored, if not exhausted, by the distance learning process. When their children are learning, parents' patience is frequently tested when they only play with gadgets, laze around, play without knowing the time, and so on.

Another challenge for parents is balancing their time between accompanying their children to school and doing their own work. Parents must also act as facilitators and motivators for their children. As a result, parents must be able to take the time to accompany their children as they learn, as well as facilitate and motivate their children to remain passionate about distance learning so that children can develop well. Accompanying him while he learns brings parents closer to their children, allowing them to better understand their children's personalities and mindsets.

Implication

This study has four implications. *First*, parents must be open to technology. Distance learning will almost certainly involve the use of technology and the internet. As a result, parents will inevitably need to learn how to use a variety of applications, including Zoom and Google Meet. With an openness to technology, the child's learning process will be enhanced.

Second, keeping an eye on children when they are surfing the virtual world, even if they are looking for educational materials. Children are more likely to come into direct contact with the virtual world because of the online learning system. With all types of cybercrime, including some negative sites, parents must play an important role in supervising their children while they surf the internet. Give children the understanding that the virtual world is not always a safe place.

Third, making time for discussion with the children. Even with all of the busyness that exists, parents must set aside time to talk with their children. Parents can inquire about the issues that are causing him difficulty during the distance learning process and work together to find solutions. Getting children used to discussing will make them more open, allowing them to avoid stress and other mental health disorders, which are common during the current pandemic.

Fourth, making distance learning atmosphere enjoyable. Another important role of parents is to ensure that the online environment is enjoyable. Especially mothers who have more time at home and can freely communicate with their children.

Conclusion

Parents' creative ideas for supporting distance learning at PAUD Intan Permata Aisyiyah are fourfold. The first is to provide scope and a detailed summary of the material from the teacher based on the child's understanding. Second, through two-way communication, parents provide a clear picture of the learning objectives for children so that the desired learning outcomes are met; third, before distance learning is implemented, providing learning facilities and infrastructure for children in the form of supporting materials and summaries; and fourth, providing flexible time so that children want to learn independently according to their talents and interests.

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