



# PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION IN DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

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**ABSTRACT.** The Distance Learning Policy (PJJ) during the pandemic prevented children from going to school. They ought to learn from home with the sophistication of Information Communication Technology (ICT). The existence of social restrictions during the pandemic reduces children's social interactions with teachers. Thus, the role of parents while at home is important to achieve the success of Distance Learning in early childhood during the pandemic. The purpose of this study is to describe and explore how parent-child interactions use ICT through PJJ during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The informants consisted of 3 parents and 3 Pre-school and Kindergarten students who underwent PJJ during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of the study show that firstly, the majority of mothers engage in social interactions more frequently during PJJ with their children, because they are more active at home. Second, the role of parental communication is important in PJJ assistance. Parents control when their children use gadgets. Third, the existence of PJJ does not make children want to always access gadgets, because parent-child interaction in screen time has been built before the pandemic.

**KEYWORDS:** social interaction, parents, pandemic, distance learning, early childhood

## 1 INTRODUCTION

One way to improve a child's ability to learn is through interaction with other people (UNICEF, 2017), but the global Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic causes social distancing restrictions, such as most students stay at home to avoid Covid-19 (CDC). Social distancing activities refer to the definition from John Hopkins University (John Hopkins University) aimed at preventing someone from getting sick and the occurrence of disease transmission.

The Distance Learning Policy during the pandemic made children not go to school. They study at home utilizing the sophistication of Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Dong et al., 2020). Early childhood continues to learn from home, so the role of parents is important in accompanying children during the pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). The role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Distance Learning (PJJ) for early childhood can improve the learning process in various fields and learning. Early childhood who run PJJ during the pandemic are the alpha generation who have been accustomed to using gadgets since birth. (Liu et al. 2014).

In fact, there are obstacles for parents in participating in the child's learning process during PJJ, such as there is no time because parents work from home as well, so that it can be detrimental to learning time for children (Munastiwi, 2020). Research by Muhdi et al. (2020) shows that there is still ineffective learning in early childhood education due to the ability of parents and the interaction process during PJJ. Further to this, a research by Aditya et al. (2021) shows that the role of ICT in PJJ can create effective communication to support two-way communication between student-teacher and parent-teacher. For students, the role of ICT provides an advantage during the PJJ process to understand the lessons from the teacher.

When children are at home, frequent internet access makes children have a continuous desire to use gadgets, concentration problems, hyperactivity, and internet addiction (Setianingsih, 2018; Utami, 2019;

Maria & Novianti, 2020). The study conducted by Susilowati et al. (2021) in Indonesia in early childhood shows that the presence of PJJ makes the duration of gadget access exceed the recommended limit of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which exceeds the established rules (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020).

## 2 SOCIAL INTERACTION

Children learn social skills from parents as the main role model (Aisyah et al., 2017). Setyawan et al. (2021) stated that through parents children can learn to socialize with the surrounding environment at an early stage such as through sharing stories, how to play with friends, helping children complete homework, limiting the use of gadgets, negotiating with others, solving existing conflicts, and sharpening empathy for others. The interaction of parents and children is important in early life in the development of children's social skills. Children's interactions start at home through interpersonal communication between parents and children (Olcer et al. 2014). The existence of social restrictions during the pandemic reduces children's social interactions with teachers, friends and their social environment. Thus, the role of parents while at home needs to be increased in quantity and quality, especially during the PJJ process.

The goal of parent-child interaction is to achieve PJJ success during the pandemic. The pattern of interaction during PJJ can be done directly and indirectly. Direct interaction means that parents and children together carry out direct learning according to a schedule. Meanwhile, indirect interaction is parents as supervising during PJJ (Putro et al., 2020). The role of parental communication in early childhood is important to achieve success in conducting PJJ at home. Parents can engage themselves in assisting their children's learning process, supervising, two-way communication with schools and encouraging religious knowledge. Parents also need to motivate children so that they can undergo the learning process at home (Hani et al., 2021). Before the pandemic, early childhood children who were already in school interacted with teachers in carrying out a lesson. The role of parents in interacting with children in PJJ is important, because early childhood still needs learning assistance through the use of ICT. The use of ICT in PJJ is important to be regulated by parents, so that children do not receive negative impacts during the pandemic.

During PJJ, parents and children engage in social interaction, so that children's learning needs can be met. Social interaction shows a relationship between two or more individuals when their actions get a response from other parties (Nurdin & Abrori, 2019). According to Maryati & Suryawati (2013) interaction means that there is an interrelated action or action from parents or children. The relationship between the two produces a reciprocity.

Social interaction is a factor in the relationship between two or more people or groups that influence each other. The main key to a person's social life is through social interaction, because life together is done through social interaction (Soekanto, 2012). The characteristics of social interaction are that there are two or more actors; there is a symbol that is exchanged for communication between individuals or groups; there is a time dimension, namely the present and the future; there are goals to be achieved (Kun & Juju, 2013)

According to Soerjono Soekanto in Maryati & Suryawati (2013) social interaction occurs through social contact and communication. First is social contact. Social contact means being together and touching. Social contact is divided into positive and negative forms of social contact. It means that a contact in which there is cooperation can be said to be positive social contact. On the other hand, if there is a conflict, social contact is called negative social contact. Next social contact is primary or secondary. Primary social contact means that it occurs face to face directly. Meanwhile, secondary social contact means social contact through media or intermediaries.

Second is communication. Communication is the process of sending messages from a source to a recipient consisting of two or more people. The five factors that motivate a person to communicate include (a) communicators; (b) communicant; (c) messages; (d) media; (e) effects, and (f) factors driving social interaction. Communicators are sources of messages that convey messages in the form of feelings, thoughts and information to others. Communicants are individuals who receive messages in the form of feelings, thoughts, and information from others. Message is something that is sent by the source of the message in

the form of thoughts, feelings, and information. Media is a way to send messages in the form of verbal or non-verbal communication. The effect is a change that is received by information (Maryati & Suryawati, 2013).

There are three forms of social interaction, namely initiation, parallel, and involvement. The initiation of an interaction is a close distance and there is vocalization. Parallel means a lack of verbal communication. Engagement means the exchange of verbal communication through closeness (Buggey & Ogle, 2013).

### **3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of writing this article is to describe and explore how parent-child interactions in the use of ICT during PJJ during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research subjects used were parents who did PJJ activities and early childhood or preschool aged 4-6 years.

### **4 RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is qualitative research methods by using a phenomenological approach. According to Muljono (2012) the phenomenological approach means understanding the meaning of parent-child interaction events on PJJ during a pandemic. Interpretation of meaning is done through an interaction that produces an experience. The research was conducted in Semarang on April 2022. Data was obtained by deep interviewed with three parents whose the children are in the kindergarten and three students pre-school who experienced in online learning during the pandemic.

### **5 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the results of the research as well as a discussion of the topic under study. This chapter is divided into several sub-chapters of research results and material that is important and relevant to the research topic, including the interaction of parents and children during PJJ, the role of parental communication during PJJ and how children use gadgets during a pandemic.

#### **5.1 Parent-Child Interaction During PJJ**

Parent-child interaction during PJJ is important to increase children's knowledge during the learning process through gadgets. PJJ is a learning support for students who are separated due to geographical conditions (Moore et al., 2011). The results showed that mothers provide assistance for early childhood to achieve the success of PJJ. Mothers play an active role in assisting children such as preparing children's learning needs, providing assistance when children need them, and directing teacher messages to children. The majority of mothers accompany their children during the PJJ process (Novianti et al. 2022) compared to fathers due to busy working. The results of this study are in line with research (Novianti & Garcia, 2022) that parents are involved in PJJ activities. Dong et al (2020) argue that the presence of PJJ can improve the parent-child relationship by 47.6%.

During the PJJ process, the mother interacts with the child through mentoring activities so that the child can receive messages and provide feedback to the teacher. Learning through gadgets such as tabs/mobile phones/laptops so that mothers ensure that their children can carry out the teaching and learning process. The child is not always accompanied 100% by the mother, because the mother also monitors the child's ability during PJJ, if the child can do learning activities independently, the mother does other activities. As stated by Parent 1 as follows: "The interaction is most accompanying. It can't be 100% full. I think if there is a discussion that he can control, I will not stay" (Parent 1).

Likewise, what Parent 2 said that legal assistance was always carried out during PJJ learning: “You have to be full of assistance, bring your cellphone if it's not full it's dangerous. Kids want this to press this and many things.” (Parents 2). Interestingly, there are children who are also happy during PJJ, as stated by Parent 3, “Tends to run smoothly. My son is happy. He tends to be calm (silent) and happy to listen” (Parent 3).

From the three informants, it can be seen that children can take part in PJJ smoothly when parents provide assistance. Children will ask parents when something is not clear. In reality, children feel that face-to-face meetings are more exciting than PJJ, because they don't meet friends, as the children said as follows,

“Usually if there are guesses, the mother will help”. (Kindergarten A students).

“Mother who is very supportive. In Kindergarten A, my mother is next to me to help me in preparing a notebook, a counting book” (Kindergarten B students).

The existence of a pandemic makes children unable to meet their friends. At the Kindergarten Age, it has shown that children are interested in meeting their social needs by meeting friends of their age. “I enjoy coming to school. Going to school is fun.” (Kindergarten A students). Meanwhile another student says, “Not good. Why? Not happy. I can't play” (Kindergarten B students).

During the PJJ process, children also experience boredom because they have been at home for too long and do not interact face-to-face with teachers or friends at school. Thus, the role of parents is very important in providing support to children so that children continue to pay attention to the teacher. It is like Parent 1:

“Focus. If the discussion isn't fun, there's just brains and pictures. *Kiddos* are difficult to be focused, so we need to help them to stay focus. My son using his brother's Ipad during online it is because there is a filter called Unicorn Filters. If you're bored, just use this unicorn application. There must be something to follow, such as what's in your head? Then my son would respond and he became focused again so he was enthusiastic” (Parent 1).

While Parent 2 said that her son pay attention to the teacher during online but he is also drawing and doing another things.

Further to this, Parents 3 says that she will always remind their children to pay attention to learning and what the teacher says, “When you have a video call, pay attention to the teacher.” Parents 3 says that she never feels tired of reminding the kid otherwise the kid will not focus and play around during the PJJ.

From interviews with these informants, the results showed that parents, in particularly mothers, had more social interactions with early childhood during PJJ than fathers. Mother helps children, assists, and prepares children's school needs so that children can undergo PJJ smoothly. Especially for early childhood, the need for direct interaction is the initial foundation for children to interact with other people. This is in line with the research of Dhahir et al. (2021) show that parents can play the role of teachers who provide support resources for children during PJJ. The direct parent-child interaction makes learning possible for children, because there is an interaction between the two (Miski, 2021).

## 5.2. The Role of Parental Communication in Mentoring PJJ

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in children doing PJJ. According to Sofyana & Abdul (2019), online learning is carried out using a platform to assist student learning activities at a distance. Distance learning is carried out to achieve quality learning and can reach students widely. During the pandemic, children learn to use gadgets to facilitate learning activities. Preschool children who learn to access ICT for their learning needs have a positive impact on their learning process in understanding various fields (Liu et al., 2014).

Children interact more with their parents than their teachers or friends during the lock down condition. According to Alharthi (2022) argues that parental involvement is important in children's learning experiences. Parents have a role in controlling and supervising the use of gadgets in children. During the Covid-19 pandemic, children interacted more using gadgets, one of which was because of PJJ. The gadgets used by children are televisions, cellphones, tabs, and laptops. Early childhood is more important to hone interpersonal skills with the people around them than spending time using gadgets. The role of parents is important in regulating screen time for using gadgets for children, as stated by Parent 1, "When we accompany the kids, there should be me or the father in order to see what kids are doing with the gadgets so we can communicate and accompany the kids."

Meanwhile, Parent 2 said, "our role was for control. How long has it been? And reminding the kids about the eyes that could harm by seeing the gadget for such a long time". So it can be seen that parents are trying their best to keep their children focused and concentrated during the learning process and also pay attention to their children's health. According to Parent 3, they also arrange the kids' time in using gadgets, and communicate to the children about the rules such as the children may use the gadgets on Saturday such as watching YouTube".

The informants described that children feel helped by assistance from parents during PJJ. Parents who accompany children during PJJ can increase children's understanding. Parents also provide support in preparing children's needs. Kindergarten students expressed this, as said by Kindergarten A students, "I was helped by my mother." In line with PAUD students who said that, "Supported by my mom. For example, the teacher says let's prepare folding paper, yes, my mom helps to prepare it."

Informants of Kindergarten B students who are currently undergoing hybrid also said that when they held Face-to-face meetings (PTM) they were not satisfied studying at school, due to limited time at school. Thus, children ask parents to be facilitators so that children can be more satisfied in the exploration process related to the learning process. As stated by the informant that when he was at home, he invited his parents to try again what was done at school, "Fathers and mothers are like facilities. Ma'am, let's make this like I did at school, let's try it. It's fun to dig into the facilities with a lot of markers and others" (kindergarten B students).

The results of the interview with the informant show that parental communication plays a very important role in the child's learning process during the pandemic. Parents who accompany their children seem to know the difficulties and problems of children during learning so that parents can direct their children to continue to follow the lesson well. Parental control through good communication will be able to help children follow PJJ. Even when children have face-to-face learning that is limited in time and children feel dissatisfied, they are able to communicate their desire to parents to be able to repeat what they did at school. It can be seen that there is good

communication between parents and children, even though they still use gadgets on a daily basis during PJJ.

### 5.3 The Use of Gadgets by Children During a Pandemic

Since the existence of PJJ, the use of gadgets in children has increased. Children access the internet according to a predetermined schedule from the school for the purposes of PJJ. The following is the length of time that children spend online learning using gadgets: "2.5 hours" (Parent 1); "1 hour. One-on-one video calls" (Parents 2); and "HP during a school lesson video call" (Parents 3). It can be seen that the time used by children in using gadgets in an online learning day is between 1-3 hours and has not added the time for children to access gadgets with other applications.

In addition to accessing learning from school, children also access outside school hours such as playing games, entertainment, learning other things, watching movies from YouTube/TV. The following is the use of time to access other online media, "Watching YouTube, learning Whatsapp (for writing), games, digital drawing" (TK A students); "TV, yes, RTV *Sopo Jarwo* cartoons, cartoons, *Putri Juju*, Rainbow Ruby, Spongebob" (PAUD students); and "watch troontum, pinterest" (TK B students).

The use of gadgets during the pandemic and the addition of access to gadgets, there are several obstacles facing by children during the PJJ. Obstacles can be in the form of a problematic wifi signal during the PJJ process, it can come from the teacher or student side, and misunderstanding in receiving a message; as expressed by a TK A student, "I like to hear it wrong... (sometimes what does that mean, what is the meaning according to my kid). For example, when you make origami folds like this, folds like this, when you go online, you don't know how to fold them" (kindergarten child A). Apart from that, another obstacle is "Signal. Sometimes it's a signal from the teacher and sometimes our signal" (Parent 2).

Parents have rules for using gadgets for their children outside of school hours. For example, every day with a time setting of one hour, children are allowed to open gadgets for entertainment or specifically on Saturday-Sunday, children are allowed to access the gadgets for about two hours. Although learning through gadgets during the pandemic, screen time is still applied so that children don't get a lot of negative impacts through gadgets. Parent Informant 1 said that:

"We let the children know the effect of using gadget for such a long time in a day. So we have given the rules, they already know that holding a cellphone is allowed to play games Saturday-Sunday. If you want to Whatsapp, you can say it's okay to not be with mom, can't be with dad, because there are rules from the start, he already knows what to do. In addition, there are eye health problems, because children have to learn through screens (face to screen)" (Parent 1).

The same concern was also expressed by Parent Informant 2, "If there is no assistance, we are afraid that the kids cannot control themselves in using the gadgets and so far, we can control them". (Parents 2). This is different from parents of 3 who get additional time to use gadgets during the pandemic. Children have many activities at home so that children can access gadgets for more than 2 hours from morning to night outside PJJ. Children watching cartoons on TV. The following are the opinions of 3 parents regarding the impact of using gadgets during the pandemic:

"TV, yes, RTV *Sopo Jarwo* cartoons, cartoons, *Putri Juju*, Rainbow Ruby, Spongebob. After breakfast, waking up, after lunch, in the afternoon before taking a bath and before sunset" (Parent 3).

The results show that children continue to access gadgets during the pandemic other than for learning needs. Children use gadgets for entertainment, online games, and other educational needs (McCloskey et al., 2018). Parents regulate the use of gadgets so that their children do not access the internet excessively. Children who are used to obeying screen time rules will find it easier to control the use of gadgets. Thus, the role of parents in the use of gadgets for early childhood is very important so that children know the rules for using gadgets.

One parent said that during the pandemic children became smarter in accessing ICT and there was an increase in the use of gadgets even though it was only for entertainment needs. Children are allowed to access gadgets in one day because they are more active at home. Liu et al. (2014) stated that ICT can help the learning process for preschool children in China and Greece. Early childhood who are exposed to ICT.

In conclusion, the existence of PJJ also increases the use of gadgets for children. Thus, children stare more at the screen (face to screen) and do entertainment through gadgets. The impacts felt by parents and children during the pandemic were the health effects of tired eyes, incorrect understanding due to being disturbed by internet signals or not being delivered directly, and an increase in gadget use of more than one hour per day according to the American Academic of Pediatrics. This is in line with the research of Susilowati et al. (2021) showed that the impact of PJJ on early childhood using mobile phones to access the internet was (91.6%), television (86.1%), and computers (61%).

## **6 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is to describe and explore how parent-child interactions use ICT through PJJ during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of the study show that first, the majority of mothers engage in social interactions more frequently during PJJ with their children, because they are more active at home. Parents/mothers ensure or prepare children's learning needs are met according to the school curriculum. During the PJJ process, the mother is often beside the child helping to receive messages received by the child through the gadget. The role of parental communication is important in PJJ assistance. Barriers received by students during the PJJ process are problematic wifi signals coming from children or teachers and misunderstandings in receiving information from teachers

Second, the results of the study indicate that the role of parental communication is important in PJJ assistance. Parents control when their children use gadgets. The gadgets used are TV, Tab, and HP. Parents are responsible for internet access used by children. Parents also provide support during home learning by preparing children's needs so that children can succeed in achieving PJJ success.

Third, the results of the study also show that the existence of PJJ does not make children want to always access gadgets, because parent-child interaction in screen time has been built before the pandemic. Parents have given clear rules to children that children have special time to use gadgets. As in one day children only use gadgets for 1 hour or use gadgets outside school hours, namely on Saturday-Sunday. Subsequent research can examine the role of father's communication in the success of PJJ. During the pandemic, parents can do Work From Home in this case fathers have more time at home.

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