

Parents' Perception: Roles and Involvement in Distance Learning Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to ascertain parents' perceptions of their roles in mapping students' English learning achievement and identifying their involvements and strategies for involvement in students' English learning achievement amid the Covid-19 pandemic at a private junior high school in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara province, Indonesia. The study is qualitative in nature and employs a case study design. The questionnaire and interview were made public in this study. Additionally, a descriptive model was utilized to examine the data. The findings suggested that parents agreed on their roles and responsibilities in mapping their children's English learning achievement. Certain parents considered their duties and involvement were critical, even more so during the Covid-19 epidemic, during which children spent most of their time at home. Parents believed that supporting, motivating, and directing their children's roles might aid the school and their children's English learning. Additionally, English teachers are expected to act like parents, monitoring, guiding, and acknowledging their students' assignments. Additionally, parents actively participated in school activities like teacher-parent online sessions to interact and discuss their children's academic success during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi orang tua tentang peran untuk memetakan prestasi belajar siswa dan mengidentifikasi keterlibatan dan strategi yang digunakan untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris siswa di tengah pandemi Covid-19 di sebuah SMP swasta di kota Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Penelitian ini memaparkan kuesioner dan wawancara. Model interaktif Miles et al juga digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa orang tua setuju tentang peran dan keterlibatan mereka dalam memetakan prestasi belajar bahasa Inggris anak-anak mereka. Sebagian orang tua meyakini bahwa peran dan keterlibatan mereka sangat penting, terutama di tengah pandemi Covid-19, di mana anak-anak lebih banyak menghabiskan waktu di rumah. Orang tua percaya bahwa mereka dapat membantu sekolah dan prestasi belajar bahasa Inggris anak-anak dengan bantuan memberikan lebih banyak dukungan, motivasi, pengendalian sebagai bagian dari peran mereka. Selain itu, guru bahasa Inggris juga seharusnya menjadi orang tua untuk mengontrol, membimbing, dan memotivasi anak-anak dengan pekerjaan rumah mereka. Strategi yang digunakan orang tua untuk terlibat dalam kebijakan sekolah di tengah pandemi Covid-19 adalah aktif mengikuti program sekolah seperti pertemuan online guru-orang tua untuk berkomunikasi dan mendiskusikan prestasi akademik anak.

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INTRODUCTION

The education development of children is affected by the social situation such as the family, school, and society whose education relationship has recently grown in significance (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012; Aditomo & Hasugian, 2018; Harjanto, Lie & Wijaya, 2019; Muslim, Hamied, & Sukyadi, 2020). Much less, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government suggested all students must learn from home. This policy has changed face-to-face learning into distance learning (Miguel et al., 2021; Domina, Renzulli, Murray, Garza, & Perez, 2020). Contradictively, a related study conducted by Hermansyah & Aridah (2021) revealed some obstacles found related to the use of technology in facing the impact of Covid-19. Those obstacles are using platforms as media, teachers' knowledge, schedule, and the motivation to run distance learning. Furthermore, parents need to build collaborative relationships with teachers to promote the learners' achievement when they learn from home. The studies of parents' roles showed that parental engagement also impacts students' attitudes, motivations, and interactional development (Henderson, 1991; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Patel, 2006; Burcu & Sungur, 2009; Hosseinpour et al., 2015). Therefore, the role of parents in children's learning outcomes has become crucial (e.g. attitudes and motivation) to carry out the school progress includes the corporations among parents, teachers, and schools.

The previous studies on parents' roles to involve in students' academic achievement had been observed by some scholars. Deng et al. (2017) studied the partnership between parents and teachers where contacts with parent-teacher are connected explicitly and indirectly with the students' development outcomes through the relationship between parent-teacher and teacher-student. Moreover, based on a study conducted by Castro, Expósito-Casas, López-Martín, Lizasoain, Navarro, & Gaviria (2015), the parental models most closely linked to high achievements are those that concentrate on general monitoring of the learning activities for children. Gubbins & Otero (2018) also conducted a study about the effect of educational standards, perceived self-efficacy, and the school's knowledge on parental participation at home and in school. By helping children with school-mandated tasks at home, they participate in school-organized activities and the research results in New Zealand, Denmark, the United States, and Panama (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012; Yamamoto, Hollaway, & Suzuki, 2016).

The parents' roles and effects on parental involvement in academic achievement have recently been attending a study (Mabuza & Mafumbate, 2019; Shah, Naz, & Mumtaz, 2019). However, some researchers argued that true teamwork between parent and teacher is only possible when both parties have good and frequent interactions built on trust and honesty. Then, good parent-teacher cooperation requires both parents and teachers to be extremely empowered, supportive, and engaged in good communications. Miles (2016) reveals that parents' idea of their roles was an occasional visit to the school or help their children control and guide homework. Therefore, parental participation in education includes supporting children's activities at home, such as facilitating children's home assignments, assisting children with reading, promoting school attendance, and supporting school events such as attending conferences, attending parental sessions, and engaging in fundraising projects. On the other hand, parental involvement in children's education is essential in enhancing academic performance and encouraging good conduct among young people.

The parents' roles influenced the students learning achievement in the educational system. Although the parents are not in the classroom with their children, they can learn about their children's progress by cooperating and communicating with teachers. According to Arends (2015, pp. 501), the schools are also called the social system, which is influenced by the teachers and the larger community or society. Corresponding to the school's context, Epstein (2011) explains the model as overlapping spheres between school, family, and community partnerships that affect children's development and learning directly or indirectly. Epstein (2011, p.4) said that the family,

school, and community are responsible for children's educational achievement. It means that students' educational success is not just the concern of the schools but also the roles of parents.

However, Epstein (1995, pp. 712-739) mentioned six forms of parental involvement contained in three environments for children's development, growth, and learning. They are parenting, volunteering, communication, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration. Parenting is the process of the parents taking part in children's activities at home. It includes assisting families in developing a home atmosphere that encourages children's academics. Volunteering means the parents spare their time participating in the schools' activities and programs. Communicating refers to the way the parents and teachers share about the students' learning development. Learning at home refers to parents' role to guide their children who faced difficulty in learning or doing their homework given by the teachers. Decision-making means the parents' involvement in the school's policy in parent-teacher associations, school management committees, and school patrons. Community collaboration relates to the teamwork between parents and teachers.

In line with the parents' involvement in English learning, Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, & Al-Maamari (2016) study Omani parents' involvement in their children's English education by applying two-section Likert-type response scale questionnaires. Results indicated that Omani parents are generally aware of the importance of their involvement in the development of their children and believe they should be involved in several activities based on home and school. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the English achievement of the students can be affected by the parent's involvement with the schools. Alsanosi & Alabsi (2019) study the roles of parents in English achievement as a foreign language (EFL) learners via Edmodo by employing a quantitative-descriptive research method. The findings showed a high degree of parental participation to help the development of their children. Parents were pleased when the teachers informed them of the progress of their children in English. Communication with the school and homework supervision had a positive impact on the efficiency of the learning.

Furthermore, in his study, Suizzo (2007) also reveals that children whose parents are actively involved in their schooling benefit better than children whose parents are passively involved. Specifically, if parents attend teacher conferences, accept phone calls from the school, and read and sign messages from school, they will benefit academically more than children whose parents do none of the above. Furthermore, children's achievement improves when their parents assist them at home with their homework, attending school-sponsored events, and volunteering at their children's schools. One way parents can contribute positively to their children's education is to assist them with their academic work at home. Besides, Grolnick (2016) revealed that children benefit from home-school meetings in determining their career aspirations and learning opportunities important to their interests. Consequently, the children may get higher rates of attention in school activities and eventually higher achievements if parents agree to cooperate.

Those previous studies above are generally concerned with English achievement before the covid-19 pandemic. The gap from those previous studies of this research appeared from the setting gap (private junior high school) and policy gap (the roles of parental involvement become the policy in the private school during the distance learning). Meanwhile, parental involvement in the school programs to achieve children's English learning in the distance learning amid the covid-19 pandemic is the novelty of this research. In this vein, this present study is specifically attempted to identify and examine the parents' perception of the roles and involvement in mapping students' English learning achievement in distance learning. This study, therefore, examines the parents' perception of their roles in mapping students' English learning achievement and identifying the involvements and strategies used to get involved in students' English learning achievement.

METHODS

This study used the qualitative method, which employed a case study design. Principally, a case study design had applied a holistic single case study purposed to expose the understanding of the parent's perception of their roles and involvement in a private junior high school. This study proposed to answer the two focus questions concerning the perception of the parents' roles and involvement and strategy in getting involved in the seminar and meeting held by the school in distance learning. This study was conducted in one private junior high school in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. This school is chosen because it has the policy to activate parents' roles and involvement to map good collaboration and communication between parents and school, especially in distance learning amid the covid-19 pandemic. Ten parents from ninth grade volunteered to be the participants for responding to their choices in the questionnaire. Three parents of students (i.e. p1, p2, and p3) in each grade were requested to perceive the roles and involvement in their children's education in distance learning. Also, one English teacher was recruited to give a deep opinion about the parents' roles and involvement in distance learning. The researchers chose the respondents based on their deep understanding and experience of the case being studied in selecting these participants. Since the parents have a good corporation with the school, they were all categorized as the respondents required. In this case, the representative respondents were the available parents

The questionnaires, online interviews, and documents were used to collect the data. Questionnaires were used to acknowledge and expose the understanding of parents' responses based on their roles, involvement, and strategies. The use of the Likert scale was employed to measure up the statements given by the respondents. At the same time, the in-depth interview was used to deliver some questions to the participants. The use of online interviews to collect the data is related to the interviewee's statement about parents' perception of the roles and involvement in mapping students' English Learning achievement. These instruments were validated based on six factors of parental involvement in Epstein's theory.

The transcript sheet and field notes were used to justify the data. The transcript sheet and fields note consists of interviews, questionnaires, and documents data. In analyzing the data, the descriptive technique was used after collecting the data. Then, the data obtained from questionnaires would have been analyzed by employing descriptive analysis. The Likert scale revealed the results of the percentage used to conclude. For supporting these percentages results, the results of interview transcripts were used to present parents' perception of their roles and involvement in distance learning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Parents' Roles in Children's Education

In this study, ten parents responded to the questionnaire given. The result showed that some parents strongly agreed about their roles to map their children's English learning achievement. Based on the data analyzed, the parents' roles were to motivate the children when they learned from home and control and guide them when they followed the learning process from home, especially when finishing and submitting the exercises given.

Moreover, some parents were giving positive responses on English learning in distance learning. Some of them strongly agreed about their roles and involvement in children's English learning.

Table 1. Questionnaire of Parents' Roles in Children's Education

Statements	Participants' Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents' roles in children's education can give a good effect on students' learning achievement in distance learning.	60%	30%	10%	-	-
With the cooperation between parents and teachers, children will get good learning outcomes in distance learning.	70%	30%	-	-	-
Parents and teachers must provide information to each other to know the students' learning process in Distance Learning.	80%	20%	-	-	-
Children's learning achievement in remote learning is influenced by some factors, such as the school, teachers, and parents.	80%	20%	-	-	-
Parents must motivate children so that they are enthusiastic in learning.	80%	20%	-	-	-
Parents give praise/rewards to children if they get good learning outcomes.	50%	40%	10%	-	-
Parents must attend the program (Workshop, teacher-parent association) held by the school to know children's learning progress and ways to help and motivate their children.	50%	40%	10%	-	-
Parents have to control children's learning process when they learn from home.	80%	20%	-	-	-
Parents give information about students' activities when they are at home.	70%	20%	10%	-	-
Parents play an important role in accompanying and giving attention to children when they are learning from home.	50%	40%	10%	-	-

Table 2. Questionnaire of Parents' Roles in English Learning in Distance Learning

Statements	Participants' Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents provide motivation to children when they are learning English.	60%	30%	10%	-	-
Parents should assist children if they are confused in doing English assignments.	50%	40%	10%	-	-
Parents should provide direction to children if they do not understand the meaning of English assignments.	50%	40%	10%	-	-
Even though the understanding of English is still lacking, parents should try to guide the children by communicating/asking the English teacher related to the assignment is.	50%	30%	10%	10%	-
To further support children's English learning outcomes, parents provide additional English tutoring to them at English courses.	30%	40%	20%	10%	-

In line with these results, some parents have been giving their perception of their roles in their children's education.

Parent 1

"Yes. This is the role of parents, so we send our children to school and are also taught by the teachers. But are we not giving up our most important responsibility as parents, right? So, no matter what, as parents, we also have a big share.

Especially in a pandemic situation, well, in this pandemic situation it is 70%, if I may say, parents, have a huge role. Because children spend more time at home, and as a parent, I admit that the role of parents is paramount of importance because I see that when my children learn from home, of course, we as parents must support by controlling them to do the task, make sure they did it. We have to remind them about the assignment given because we are not always at home, some parents work too, so I don't just a reminder, but when I am home I control again, have they done it or not, because every day, we always have communication with class mentors, we always build communication to check whether our children have done the tasks or completing their responsibilities and so on, so that's it, so for me, the role of parents is vital because they spend more time at home".

Parent 2

"For me, it is essential. The problem is that if there is no good cooperation between parents and schools, the child cannot improve because for example, with our support, it means that we can provide full support to the child, so finally he feels ohhhh I am supported by my parents, so in my opinion, it is very important for the development of my child".

Parent 3

"It is essential, because without our support, of course, the children cannot understand whether they follow the education process properly, right? Parents are as encouragement and support, so parents' role is very influential and essential in children's education".

English Teacher

"In my opinion, junior high school students have not had a learning system like higher education. But indeed in school, we are continuously taught to be independent, obedient, disciplined, responsible for their duties. However, since this pandemic, children need parents to help, assist them completely with their duties, but our school has acquired the parents to guide, direct, and the children make decisions, such a response".

With these perceptions of parents 1 to 3, it can be concluded that these parents did agree about their roles in children's education in distance learning. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, children spent about 70% at home. So, the role of parents is vital to help the children's education. Although, if parents were not at home because they had to work, they had to control and check their children's exercises, whether their children had done the tasks or not. This result also maintained the positive choices of the parents in the questionnaire. The result in table 1 showed that 80% of 10 parents strongly agreed, and 20% of 10 parents agreed about controlling children's learning when they learn from home. They also believed that by having good cooperation with the school, the children would feel that they were not alone. They had parents and teachers who always helped and motivated them to enhance their learning achievement. The English teacher also said that the school needed support from parents for the students, especially in junior high school. They acquired the parents' roles in controlling, supporting, and guiding them. To sum up, parents did agree about the importance of their roles in children's learning achievement.

English Teacher

"If I was studying during this pandemic, being honest for the manatee children I taught in English, some were still self-taught, their parents helped some because they didn't understand English very well, but I tried to find a solution through YouTube, PowerPoint, well later on the parents too, for example, if the child is

missing or doesn't understand from my class, the parents also help their children because there have also been parents who texted me via WhatsApp. "Mis, I'm sorry, my child doesn't understand this yet, how about it, Mis, can you explain to me so I can help my child".

This statement of the English teacher meant that parents who had obstacles in English sometimes informed the teacher if their children were missing the learning process or did not understand well what the teacher said in the class. It was because parents did not want their children to ignore the subject learned. This also corresponded to the result on the questionnaire, especially in the choice of parents should guide their children by communicating or asking the English teacher. It was shown that 50% of 10 parents strongly agreed, 30% of 10 parents agreed, 10% of parents neutral, and 10% of 10 parents disagreed.

English Teacher

"I agree if parents help children because during the experience I faced in teaching the students in this junior high school, why do I still need parents in terms of providing understanding and knowledge if the child does not understand. Because to be honest, virtual learning is not our language in terms of English lessons, so this is frankly if there is no help from parents. Because there are some that I found in 7th grade that still really need the help from parents, there are also 8th-grade students who still really need the role of parents, in this case providing understanding or re-explanation with the material".

This result showed that English teachers expected the parents to help children by providing more understanding and knowledge if they were difficult doing the homework. This is also supported by the results in table 2 of English teacher responses, which showed that 50% of 10 parents strongly agreed, 40% of 10 parents agreed, and 10% of 10 parents were neutral about providing help to the children when they were confused about English assignments. Corresponding to these results, Miles (2016) agreed that the parents' idea of their roles was an occasional visit to the school or helping their children control and guide their homework. The difference with this study was in the situation. In Miles (2016), the parents were directly visiting the school, but the parents joined the study's online seminar and meeting amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Epstein (2011, p.4) said that children's school success is also the consideration and responsibility of family and community. According to Arends (2015, pp. 501), the schools are also called the social system. The teachers influence the schools and the larger community or society, such as their family and environment. To sum up, parents are one social factor that helped teachers enhance students' learning achievement in general and became the part that cannot be separated to help students' English learning achievement.

Parents Involvement and Strategy in Children Learning Achievement

To map students' learning achievement, the parents were always involved in the school program and activities. Since the pandemic of Covid-19, the parents had to get involved via online seminars and meetings.

Parent 1

"I did that because, as I explained earlier, parents and schools, in this case, the homeroom teacher, who is closer to the children, cannot be separated. Therefore, I regularly communicate to find out about children's development. We know what kind of school it is, and from that school, we also know what the house is like, as two sides of a coin that cannot be separated".

Parent 2

"Yes, participation usually involves attending seminars or meetings with the school. Now, there usually we as parents and teachers give each other suggestions or

questions on how to help, support, and motivate them when they are down or have started to down or maybe give up, because with a situation like this, where everything has switched to online".

Parent 3

"Yes, it is very important. Because the institution determines a child's success, then we as parents, the child itself, and also the community. That is the most important".

Based on the parents' perception of their involvement, they agreed that their involvement in school activities could help them to know their children's learning achievement. Parents believed that the success of their children's learning is determined by the involvement of parents in school activities. Because in the meeting, parents could be asked for some suggestions on how to help, sustain, and motivate the children if they were feeling down in the distance learning. Similar to the result in table 1 of the Likert scale responses, it showed that 50% of 10 parents strongly agreed, 40% of 10 parents agreed, and 10% of 10 parents were neutral about attending the online meeting with the school. Other parents also said that institutions, parents, students themselves determined the success of their children's education. This was maintained by the results of choices in the questionnaire. The results in table 1 showed that 70% of 10 parents strongly agreed, and 30% of 10 parents agreed about the factors that influenced children's learning achievement in distance learning. This result was supported by Epstein's (2011) framework of volunteering and communicating, in which parents volunteer and communicate at the school's activities to sustain the students' learning. In line with that, Al-mahrooqi et al (2016) also gave their result on parents' participation in schools' even in Oman. They agreed that parents should be interested in a range of home and school-based events, such as visiting their children's schools even when they are not in trouble and engaging actively in other school activities, despite their limited participation in their children's English language studies. Therefore, by attending the meeting and seminar, they could share information to find a solution to sustain and motivate their children in the remote learning situation.

For the strategy, the results showed that seminars and meetings with the teachers are some strategies to get involved in school activities. The results are seen in the interviewees' perceptions and questionnaire choices below.

Parent 1

"Eeh the strategy used is, we have our parent group, yes, we have our parent group, for example, my child is in grade 7 B, so we created our group. So, any information must be through the group, we know it, there is information that maybe children have not done the assignment, so before 4 pm, usually from the mentor, they will remind the names of children who have not sent the assignments, so if we are parents, read the meaning. We also have duties, we also have the responsibility to remind or convey our children, or we ask why they haven't collected, where are the obstacles, so it's like that. The strategy is, we are active in groups too, actively ask questions, actively communicate".

Parent 2

"Eh, what kind of strategy is that, well, it's just following along. I have nothing to make a strategy or what, it means we stay involved, as much as possible for us to take part".

Parent 3

"Eh, if we are usually, if now in a pandemic situation, we are via telephone, or WhatsApp chat like that. Because we can't meet, face to face".

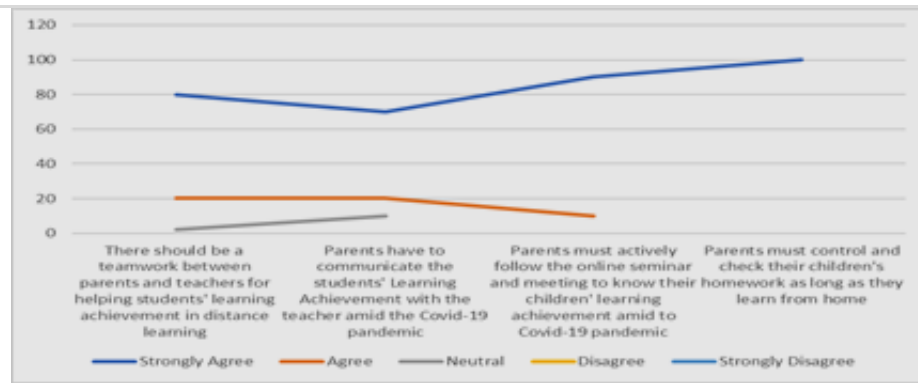


Figure. 1. Parents' Strategy in Getting Involved to Students' Education in Distance Learning.

The parents' statements showed that the parents' strategy in this study was getting active in parents WhatsApp group chat and call with the teachers and as much as possible taking part in school's activity to have good communication with the teachers to help students' academic development.

Epstein (2002), in his six forms of parental involvement, communicating and collaborating are the ways for the parents and teachers share about the students' learning development and relates to the teamwork between parents and teacher. Their cooperation might help students in better learning achievement and development abilities, this is in line with Castro, Expósito-Casas, López-Martín, Lizasoain, Navarro, & Gaviria (2015) where the results showed that by the teamwork of parent-teacher, there were closely related to high achievements of students in education. And also, parents expected better communication positions between school and home so that the parents who work knew what was happening. Grolnick (2016) said that when the parents have good teamwork with the teachers and schools, they could help children advance values and motivations through their contribution to increasing interest rates in school activities and eventually higher achievements.

CONCLUSION

The parents gave positive responses and perceptions of their roles at home when their children had to do distance learning. They believed that motivation would affect children's learning achievement, especially English learning achievement. Moreover, parents approved that teachers are not the only factor influences learning achievement, but the parents' roles could also influence the English learning achievement in distance learning. Those roles are, such as; controlling their children's homework and motivating their children to do not get bored and stressed amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The responses to the questionnaire showed that the strategy used by the parents was always active attending the online meeting and seminar had good communication with the teachers. Because this study was concerned with the roles and involvement of parents in children's learning achievement in distance learning, especially in English learning achievement, the researcher expected to further research about how teachers manage in doing the teamwork with the parents during distance learning. As the implication of this study, it is of paramount importance for the school to engage the parents in multiple activities to get more support until they can have a sense of ownership of the school. In this vein, parents could have more effective and productive communication about schoolwork with their children to improve children's learning achievement, especially English.

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