

Parents' Perceptions of “Caring Children” During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic period presents its own challenges for parents, especially in providing care for their children. Parents and children must always carry out various activities at home because they will be very vulnerable to being exposed to the Covid-19 virus if they force their activities outside the home. This study was conducted to find out the perceptions of parents in providing care for their children and what obstacles parents experience in providing care for their children during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study uses a case study research design with a research sample of three participants in a Kindergarten in Purwakarta Indonesia. The data were gathered through interviewing the research participants. The result of the study indicates that parents provide care to children during the Covid-19 pandemic, in general, including the type of permissive parenting. Parents tend not to be involved in regulating their children's behavior. The obstacles experienced by parents are difficult when accompanying children in doing school assignments. The results of the study found that children play with gadgets all day without parental control, and children will be angry and cry if they are not given gadgets. Special education is needed regarding the type of good parenting and a variety of fun activities with children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Parenting, COVID-19 pandemic, Early childhood, Parents' perception

1. INTRODUCTION

Family is the first social environment that children will know from birth into the world. In the family environment, the main thing is parents, namely father and mother [6]. The family as the child's first environment will be a benchmark as well as a model in the development process [5]. Therefore, from the family environment, the child will imitate the attitudes and habits carried out by his family, especially his father and mother.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many families have been affected both economically and in terms of health throughout the world [20]. These problems started from the loss of livelihoods and cases of death victims which increased significantly [1]. In addition, with this virus outbreak, children and adults will always be required to always carry out various activities at home [16]. In other words, parents have their own challenges in terms of caring for and providing care for their children.

Parenting plays a very important role, especially the care provided by parents. Each family will have a parenting pattern that is not the same from one another in terms of educating a child [2]. Parenting is an effort made by parents for their children to support the process of child growth and

development from an early age to later ages [19]. Parenting is the way parents love, care for, educate, nurture and develop their children's social behavior [10]. Therefore, parents have a big responsibility to provide the right pattern of care for their children during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the description above, it has been explained a little about the role of the family, parenting patterns and problems during this covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, researchers are very interested in further exploring the perceptions of parents regarding parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a case study research design. This case study research design is used to reveal the phenomenon in detail and comprehensively from an object to be analyzed [4]. Therefore, this method is very appropriate to reveal how parents perceive parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The subjects of this study are parents who have early childhood children aged 4-6 years, totaling 3 people, namely the initials DC, UR, and NL who are parents of children who attend a private kindergarten in Purwakarta region. This research was conducted in one of the kindergartens in the district. Purwakarta on 26-28 July 2021. The data collection

techniques used in this study were interviews related to parental perceptions of child care during the COVID-19 pandemic and by using thematic analysis data that was integrated using data coding, so that the themes arranged could match the questions at the time interview.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Parenting Provided By Parents During The Covid-19 Pandemic

The care provided by parents to their children during the COVID-19 pandemic from 3 research participants has one thing in common in terms of providing care. The results of the interviews conducted are as follows:

"Parenting during this pandemic is very difficult, because we as parents have to accompany our children to study online, sometimes children like it difficult if they are told to do it, so sometimes I do it myself because if forced, my child likes to cry".

(D.C. interview, July 26, 2021)

"If I give care in this pandemic, it is more demanding that parents have to accompany their children to study because they study online, so I like being in trouble because I have to take care of household matters. In addition, my child can't stay away from his cellphone if he wants to eat, he can't get out if he takes his cellphone, the child cries and asks to play outside. Meanwhile, taking it out is dangerous, during this pandemic period".

(UR interview, 27 July 2021)

"Providing care during this pandemic has become quite difficult in my opinion because I have to accompany children to learn online, such as other tasks. And also since online my child can't be separated from his cellphone, surfing the internet, watching cartoons, playing games. For example, if the cellphone is taken, the child likes to cry because if I play outside, I forbid it because the situation is too dangerous. So HP is used as a solution for me instead of my child being exposed to the virus".

(NL interview, 28 July 2020)

Based on the results of interviews with the 3 participants above, during this pandemic period it becomes a challenge for parents because parents and children must always be at home. In addition, parents are not ready to accompany their children to study, so many parents find it difficult to provide care. Seeing from the interview above to the 3 participants, it is very contrasting that parents are more applying permissive parenting. Permissive parenting is a style in which parents are not very involved in regulating the behavior or lives of children [11]. This is evidenced by all the rules following the child's request for fear of his child crying and asking to play outside the house.

Based on the results of the research findings above, it is very clear that the three research participants have a perception that parenting of children during this pandemic tends to lead to permissive parenting. Evidenced by parents tend not to be

involved in regulating the behavior or lives of children [12]. For example, parents prefer to let their children play with gadgets all day following the child's wishes as long as the child is not angry and crying. This is in accordance with research results [18] that during this covid-19 pandemic there are still some parents who use gadgets as friends of children when children feel bored. This is what makes it dangerous for children's development because parenting that should be done by parents focuses on caring for gadgets without parental involvement.

3.2 Obstacles Faced by Parents Regarding Child Care During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The obstacles faced by parents in providing care for the children of the 3 participants almost have one thing in common. The obstacles that arise are that parents are not used to or are not ready to accompany their children all day from playing to doing school assignments. This is evidenced from the results of interviews with UR, NL, and DC they find it difficult when they have to accompany children to study because children like to be bored and when forced to do assignments, children tend to get angry and cry. As a result, children's work is sometimes done by their parents. Not to mention that parents have to do homework that is completed together with their children's assignments at school.

In addition, the obstacles that arise are that parents have difficulty in accompanying their children when they want to play. Parents feel confused about choosing a variety of games that can be played with their children. In addition, parents do not seem to pay much attention to the games that will be played with their children. As a result, gadgets become an alternative in providing parenting as a medium to accompany children to learn and play. Almost all day gadgets accompany children to play and that is allowed by parents. Because if children are not given gadgets, children tend to feel bored at home and will force them to play outside the house. In addition, if the gadget is not given, the child will be angry and cry to the parents. So that gadgets are considered as a solution so that children don't get angry, cry and stay at home.

The habit of parents who let their children play with gadgets all day will have a negative impact on children's development. Among them can be at risk for attention deficit disorders and hyperactivity in children [15]. Besides that, it can also have an impact on discipline, children become lazy to do anything, leave their obligations to worship, and reduce study time due to playing games and watching YouTube too often [17].

Responding to the problems of parental care for children during this pandemic, it is necessary to take preventive efforts or actions before children experience obstacles in their development. Parents must realize that the best parenting for children is the type of authoritative parenting, namely parenting that encourages children to always be independent but still sets limits and controls over children's actions [11].

With an authoritative parenting pattern, parents together can do fun activities during this covid-19 pandemic. The types of activities according to [7] include:

- a. Accompanying Children in Doing Schoolwork

- b. Doing activities with children with great fun such as cleaning the house, playing, cooking etc.
- c. Creating a comfortable environment for children so that children will be more confident to create a safe environment so that the process of caring for children can feel safe and fun.
- d. Establishing intense communication with children, parents will be able to know the wishes of children and parents can convey what they want or hopes and support for children.
- e. Accompany children to play.

By doing these activities, parents can monitor the growth and development of their children and children will feel comfortable when they require their children to be at home during this COVID-19 pandemic.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out on 3 research participants, the researchers can conclude that parents' perceptions of parents in providing care for their children are more permissive. As for the problems that arise in the context of parenting during this pandemic, parents tend to give gadgets to children so that children don't play outside the house and don't get angry and cry when their parents forbid their children to play outside the house. In addition, other problems that arise are the lack of readiness of parents in accompanying children throughout the day, both in playing with children to accompanying children in learning. Therefore, there is a need for special education for parents regarding fun activities with children while they have to be at home and education is also needed regarding good parenting for child development.

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