

## PARENT'S LEVEL OF STRESS ON CHILDREN'S ONLINE CLASSES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

*The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting people's lives. One of the sectors hampered by the pandemic is education. During the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Emergency, the teaching and learning process must be replaced by online methods. The role of mothers is very important in ensuring that children's learning targets are achieved during distance learning. This can cause stress conditions for the mother. This study aimed to determine the perceptions and various problems that occurred in mothers with children aged 7-15 years old who attended online schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a descriptive study by distributing questionnaires via google form with 67 respondents. Based on the results, the majority of respondents were 35-45 years old (49.3%). Over 85.6% of respondents accompanied their children in online learning activities during the pandemic. The majority of respondents experienced an increase in emotions (70.1%) and felt stressful when accompanying online school children during the pandemic (62.7%). As many as 40% of respondents felt a moderate level of stress. There were 27 mothers (40%) who had difficulty assisting their children in online schooling and 24 mothers (36%) felt that their professional job was abandoned while their children were having online school.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) first appeared in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) had officially declared that the Covid-19 pandemic was global and affected the survival of many people around the world at the same time. One of the sectors that could not be abandoned during the outbreak was education. To stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the Minister of

Education and Culture (Mendikbud) issued Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Emergency Period, one of which stated that the teaching and learning process must not be done face-to-face. Teachers must use the remote method or another adapted method.<sup>1</sup>

Learning that is usually done face-to-face in schools was done with learning from home using communication media. Students still met their teachers and their friends, but the

meeting was only limited to visualization on the cellphone or laptop screen, as well as the teaching and learning process was also carried out through online meetings. Online learning was learning that eliminates time and distance with the help of an internet-based digital platform that can support learning to be carried out without any physical interaction between educators and students.<sup>2</sup> The use of this new method in the learning process requires a long adaptation, even now there are still many obstacles that occur, including limited knowledge of the use of technology by parents and the limited ability of the parents, especially in teaching children.<sup>3</sup> The results of previous simple interviews showed that several mothers complained about the difficulty of teaching and supervising children studying at home, starting from filling out school assignments, supervising children while learning was taking place, plus if the children did not obey their parents because the atmosphere of learning at home was different from studying at regular school. It was also stated that not everyone was ready to become a substitute teacher during online learning from home.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this pandemic, schools and workplaces were closed so that all activities were carried out from home and the parents must balance work and childcare responsibilities. Adaptation in learning at home was not only done by children but also by the parents, especially mothers who became substitute teachers during online school.<sup>5</sup> Parents were forced to be able to accompany children to learn from home so the role of parents in achieving online learning targets and accompanying children during the teaching and learning process was very important.<sup>6</sup> The house became the center of activity for the whole family. This could be positive because the activity center

returned to its origin. However, because all activities were only carried out at home, this could lead to psychosomatic disorders, ie. physical disturbances due to psychological factors and emotional burdens that triggered shocks in a person in society. Anxiety, negative thoughts that are influenced by the social environment, and stress, can occur.<sup>7</sup>

Lee, et al. conducted a study with 405 respondents, consisting of parents with children who attended online schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of Lee et al. study showed that 78% of parents accompany their children to study at home online. Two out of every 5 parents (40%) met the PHQ-8 criteria for severe or very severe depression. This showed that the mental health of parents is an important factor related to home education and child welfare during the pandemic.<sup>8</sup> Stress is caused by a mismatch of perceptions between environmental demands and abilities. The difference between expectations and the reality they face creates a pressing situation for individuals.<sup>9</sup> This study was conducted to find out the perceptions and various problems that occurred in mothers with children who went to school online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study used a descriptive method by distributing questionnaires given to participants of the 'TETRAGON' webinar via google form at the time of registration. The webinar was held virtually through the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and invited 2 experts in the field of mental health and child health as speakers.

The targets of this study were mothers with children who attended online schools during

the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire regarding the problems of mothers with children attending online schools consisted of 8 questions. Then, the data were processed with Microsoft Excel and the respondent distribution was interpreted by using the table.

## RESULT

The total number of respondents in this study was 67 people. Mothers with children who attended online schools during the Covid-19 pandemic were given 8 closed questions concerning the problems and the stress level while their children attended online school activities.

**Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondent**

Age	N (%)
N25-35 years old	14 (20.9)
35-45 years old	33 (49.3)
>45 years old	20 (29.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents aged 35-45 years (33 people, 49.3%), followed by those aged over 45 years (20 people, 29.9%), and aged 25-35 years as many as 14 people (20.9%).

**Table 2. Distribution of Respondents who Accompany Their Children's Online School Activity**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	58 (85.6)
No	9 (13.4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

According to Table 2, it can be seen that almost all respondents, as many as 58 respondents (85.6%) accompanied their children in online learning activities during the pandemic. On the other hand, there were 9 respondents (13.4%) who did not

accompany their children in online learning activities.

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents who experienced an increase in emotions while children were studying**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	47 (70.1)
No	20 (29.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

Based on the answered question, it was found that most of the respondents experienced an increase in emotions when accompanying their children, comprising 47 respondents (70.1%). While the remaining 20 respondents (29.9%) did not experience an increase in emotions (Table 3).

**Table 4. Distribution of Respondents with Mental Health Affected by Children's Online School**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	42 (62.7)
No	25 (37.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

According to Table 4, the majority of respondents, as many as 42 (62.7%), felt stress when accompanying the children's online school activity during the pandemic, while 25 respondents (37.3%) did not experience stress.

**Table 5. Stress Level Distribution of Respondent**

Stress Level	N (%)
1	20 (30)
2	18 (27)
3	27 (40)
4	1 (1.5)
5	1 (1.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

From a total of 67 respondents, there were 27 mothers (40%) who experienced a moderate stress level, followed by very low stress that occurred in 20 mothers (30%), and low stress that occurred in 18 mothers (27%). There was 1 respondent (1.5%) who experienced a high and very high level of stress (Table 5).

**Table 6. Distribution of Respondents who Felt Disappointed with Themselves in Assisting Children during Online Class**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	19 (28)
No	48 (72)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

This study showed that the majority of respondents, namely 48 mothers (72%) were not disappointed with themselves in accompanying their children to learn online during the pandemic. Meanwhile, there were 19 respondents (28%) who felt disappointed in themselves (Table 6).

**Table 7. Distribution of Respondents who Felt Difficult To Accompany Their Children during Online Class**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	27 (40)
No	40 (60)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

Based to Table 7, as many as 40 mothers (60%) had no difficulty in accompanying online school children, but as many as 27 mothers (40%) still found it difficult to accompany their children to learn online during this pandemic.

**Table 8. Distribution of Respondents Who Feel That Their Work is Neglected**

Yes/No	N (%)
Yes	24 (36)
No	43 (64)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 (100)</b>

In this study, it was found that as many as 24 respondents (36%) felt that a lot of work was neglected while their children were learning online. However, as many as 43 respondents (64%), or the majority of the parents, did not feel that their work is neglected while their children are studying online during the pandemic (Table 8).

## DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents were aged 35- 22 years (33 people, 49.3%). According to Ramadhany's (2017) study, there was a relationship between a mother's age and stress levels in parenting. This might have happened as the older the age of the mother, the greater the decrease in the level of the mother's work productivity. In addition, the older a person, the easier they were to experience stress.<sup>10</sup>

This study showed that almost all respondents (85.6%) accompanied their children in online learning activities during the pandemic. According to Citra, et al study, the assistance of a mother to her child when participating in online school activities was important. The parenting job, which mostly focuses on the role of the mother, made mothers get additional tasked during online learning to always supervise their children. In addition, the patriarchal culture that has been spreading so far was also considered to be a reason that mothers seemed to have more responsibilities to assist their child's online learning activities. The high demand for the mother's role during the pandemic also raised the possibility of increased stress on mothers, since mothers also have other roles in the household as well as professional work.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the respondents experienced an increase in emotions when accompanying their children (70.1%). In April 2020, when the pandemic had just started, there was an increase in cases of violence against children, namely 368 cases that occurred in 407 children in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> According to the Raihana study, the mother's negative emotions arose due to the difficulty of teaching and supervising their children while at home, especially if the child did not want

to obey his parents and gave her tantrums. Negative emotions can include depression, rejection of children, and other inappropriate attitudes. The negative emotions that occur can affect the mentality of the mother and the mentality of the child. This happens when the mother cannot manage her emotions properly. Some things that can happen include screaming, pinching, hitting, and even killing the children.<sup>13</sup>

This study stated that over 62.7% of respondents felt stress when accompanying the children's online school activity during the pandemic. This result was similar to a study conducted in the United States, where 55% of parents experienced an increase in stress levels during the pandemic. The changes in children's routines during the pandemic, concerns about the Covid-19 virus, and the online schools' demands are the reason why parents are stressful more these days.<sup>14</sup> According to a research in Italy, the stress phenomenon on parents can also be caused by parents being doubled-job to independently take care of their children's education as school teachers as the impact of face-to-face closure of schools. Therefore, the government should be able to consider the effect of school closures on parents' stress by finding ways to help them handle their children's learning during the online period, while parents also have to manage their primary job.<sup>15</sup>

The majority of mothers (40%) were experienced a moderate stress level. This was in line with research conducted by Palupi regarding the stress level of parents in accompanying children's online school during the pandemic, which stated that the majority of parents experienced moderate and low-stress levels when accompanying their children.<sup>16</sup>

The majority of the respondents (72%) were not disappointed with themselves in accompanying the children to learn online during this pandemic. During the pandemic, to impede the spread of the Covid-19 virus, we were required to stay at home as well as the teaching and learning process is also carried out online. In this online learning, it was the parents who felt the responsibility for their child's safety, especially the mother.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of respondents did not feel difficult to accompany their children during online learning. However, there were 40% of respondents found it difficult to accompany their children. The online class activities were quite challenging for the mother. According to Raihana's (2020) study, online class methods during this pandemic period had been going on since March 2020 and many parents had tried to follow the learning methods implemented by schools, but there were still many parents, who accompanied their children while studying, found it difficult to teach their children. Especially when children were just glued in front of their laptops to did virtual meetings, there were moments when children felt bored with the monotonous activity. Many children were more motivated to play games, and watched cartoons or movies than study. The parents who found it difficult to use the technology were also one of the difficulties during the online class activity.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of the parents (64%) did not feel that their work was neglected while their children were studying online during the pandemic. According to a previous study, the parents were doing their work while accompanying their children to do online school. Hence, it was a challenge for parents to manage their time. Parents should remember that their role at home is not to

replace the overall role of teachers at schools.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The online learning system during the Covid-19 pandemic process challenges various parties, including mothers. The majority of mothers were trying to accompany their children during online school. This study found that most participants experienced increased emotions and stress while accompanying their children during online classes. Most participants stated that online classes had affected mothers' mental health and well-being.

This study was expected to provide an overview to the government, schools, and other relevant agencies regarding the perceptions and problems of mothers who accompany their children during online schools. This study's result could be used as evaluation material for children's learning programs during the Covid-19 pandemic to create an optimal and secure environment.

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