

The Role of Parents with Javanese Cultural Background in Helping the Learning of Mentally Impaired Children During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This work points to illustrate the implementation of the role of parents with Javanese cultural backgrounds to support learning in children with intellectual disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is a qualitative approach using the case study method. There are 3 research subjects, namely one mentally retarded child and one father, and one mother who has a mentally retarded child. Subject selection by purposive sampling. The research placement is in Al Hikmah Islamic Elementary School, which is located in Kajar Gadingwatu Hamlet, Menganti District, Gresik Regency. Gather information through interview techniques and documentation. This study produces data that parents of mentally retarded children have several roles, namely as motivators, educators, facilitators, directors, and supervisors.

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1. Introduction

Parents are the main component in educating children and they are responsible for the development and progress of children's education. The responsibility of parents is not only to educate, but also to meet the needs of the school, teach children according to their abilities, care for, and raise children well. Parents raising children is certainly not easy, particularly for parents who have children with disabilities or children with special needs, where they require special treatment and different treatment of children in general. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, children with special needs who initially studied at school switched to studying at home, thus requiring adjustments in learning. The process of adapting online learning also applies to children with intellectual disabilities, namely mental retardation. Mental retardation are children with an intelligence level of 70 and below and experience adjustment disorders in behavioral, academic, and social development (Idhartono, 2020). Seeing the condition of mentally retarded children who experience these mental barriers, they need special assistance and supervision because they are not able to regulate themselves.

The difficulties that occur to parents of mentally retarded children in assisting learning for the Covid-19 pandemic are the limited ability of parents to control the technology, unstable internet, the emergence of boredom in mentally retarded children so that children do not focus on learning (Fahturochman & Mahmudah, 2020). In line with the results of Fahturochman & Maheasy's research, according to Afkarina and Faradis (2021) explained that in the process of escorting children's learning for the Covid-19 pandemic, parents had difficulties because they were not proficient in technology so they were not optimal in going side by side children in their learning.

From these difficulties, the role of parents is greatly needed to develop all abilities possessed by mentally retarded children to the maximum even during the Covid-19 pandemic. This condition is a new challenge for parents in ensuring their children don't miss online learning (Amirudin et al., 2021). The participation of parents in providing support and enthusiasm for learning activities will have an influence on children's learning success (Afkarina & El-Faradis, 2021)(Utami, 2020). The uniqueness of Javanese cultural parenting influence the care and assistance of parents of mentally retarded children in providing learning. This conforms to Lewin's belief that children's interaction with their environment affects children's behaviour (Lewin, 2013). Where in this context the assistance of parents to mentally retarded children is related to the cultural values they have, namely Javanese culture.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, parents, especially mothers, receive an additional task, which is to assist in overseeing children's learning activities at home. The roles of parents when overseeing children's learning from home include: 1) the role of educators, namely parents become teachers at home by guiding children to participate in online learning; 2) the role of the facilitator, namely that parents provide children with facilities and infrastructure during online learning; 3) the role of motivator is that parents always provide encouragement, motivation, and support for children so that they continue to follow online learning in an orderly manner; 4) the role of the director, meaning that parents are tasked with directing and influencing children to want to take part in online learning (Winingsih, 2020).

The aim of this work is to explain how to implement the roles or duties of Javanese cultural parents in order to oversee the learning process of mentally retarded children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus of this research is to identify the role of parents with Javanese cultural backgrounds in assisting the learning of mentally retarded children for the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Methodology

This research approach is a qualitative research model using a case study method. Case studies are studies that discuss a particular case that is studied in depth (Creswell, 1998). The subjects of this study were 3 people (1 mentally retarded child and a pair of parents who had a mentally retarded child). The technique for determining the research subjects was selected through a purposive sampling technique that met the criteria, namely mentally retarded children and parents (mother and father) who have mentally retarded children who attend public schools. The location of this research was carried out at Al Hikmah Islamic Elementary School in Kajar Gadingwatu Hamlet, Menganti District, Gresik Regency. This research took place over a period of four months from February to May 2022. The data collection technique was through interviews and documentation. Research tools or instruments make use of interview guidelines and checklists. Interviews were conducted with an open-ended question system using an interview guide. Meanwhile, documentation is done by collecting notes in the form of photos and documentation about the implementation of the role of parents in assisting learning for mentally retarded children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The steps of data analysis through the Miles and Huberman model include the process of eliminating unnecessary data and then organizing the data, displaying data in the form of descriptions, making conclusions and re-examining the data. The cogency of the data is done by triangulation, which means, of digging and combining information obtained from various existing data sources. The following describes the research steps in detail in Figure 1.

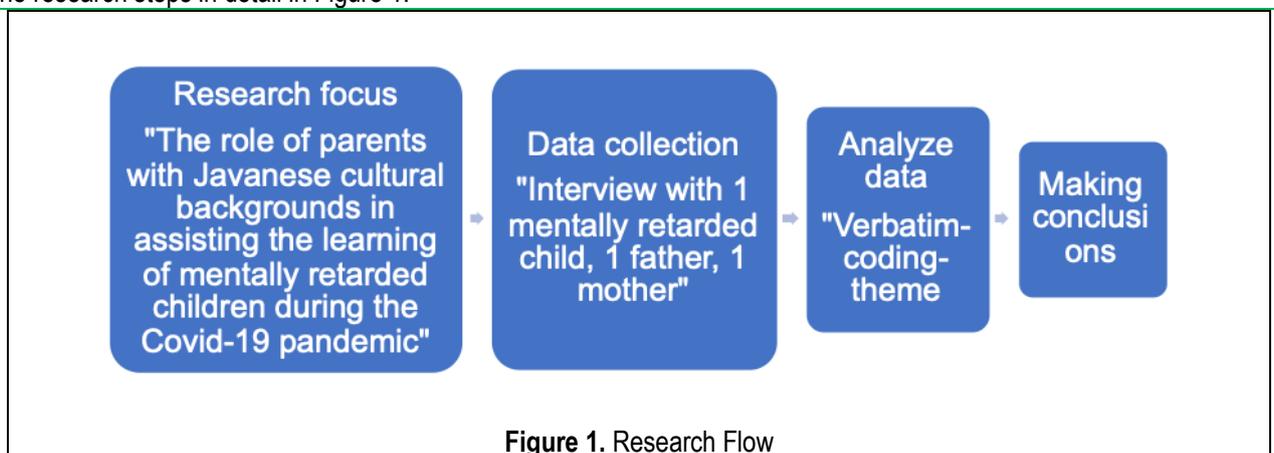


Figure 1. Research Flow

3. Result

Grounded on the results of the interview, information was obtained that parents, especially mothers, have a primary role to encourage enthusiasm for learning for mentally retarded children during the Covid-19 pandemic, both when assisting in online learning and offline learning at school. Sourced from interviews with parents of mentally retarded children who said: "It must be encouraging, such as encouraging him to be independent, and being told to study hard so he can be like the other friends, to be smart, so he won't be ostracized by other friends. I give encouragement with words and deeds as if I was given a good example." (May 2, 2022 interview)

Giving motivation by parents of mentally retarded children is carried out not only verbally but also in the form of behavior, for example, giving gifts as a sign of appreciation to mentally retarded children for having followed learning and doing their job well.

As well, the upshots of the interviews also found that parents, especially mothers, played a role in assisting in assisting the learning of mentally retarded children, both at home and at school. The parents explain to mentally retarded children using their own delivery techniques and try to ascertain information for teachers about how to deliver material to children. According to what was conveyed by the mother of a mentally retarded child in the interview, it was as follows.

Entering school there must be a companion, because ordinary public schools are not inclusive schools. And I accompany. W was accompanied to guard against pranking his friends, for example the teacher explained that he didn't understand right away. Because IQ W is below standard. To explain to W I thought to myself, I set it myself. And I'm the one looking for info from the teacher on how to convey it to the child. (March 17, 2022 interview)

In the procedure of learning, parental mentorship during the PTM, mentally retarded children face barriers such as delay in writing when dictated by the teacher. In addition, parents need extra patience while accompanying mentally retarded children during learning for the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents try to make children not feel bored, that is by means of half an hour of study, then given a break filled with playing, then continue to study again.

Furthermore, performing the role of a parent to accompany a child with retarded mental is to become a facilitator. Where parents of mentally retarded children provide facilities for children's needs in participating in online learning processes such as gadgets, internet, books, stationery, coloring tools, and so on. Based on interviews with mothers of mentally retarded children, the following information was obtained.

The school needs, what is needed is facilitated, for example books, writing utensils for anything if you are coloring, the tools are given. There are no special facilities, you just have to be disciplined about what time, what time to sleep, you have to sleep, it's time to study, you have to study. You have to be disciplined so that you remember it at the right time.

Then, parents are also responsible for carrying out their role in carrying out good supervision of mentally retarded children, especially in adjusting to learning for the Covid-19 pandemic, both online and offline. Parents must continue to supervise their children in order to remain disciplined to always learn and follow learning even during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely by providing understanding and understanding to mentally retarded children. In addition, parents also continue to communicate with the school, especially the homeroom teacher of mentally retarded children.

So that from this, the role of parents with Javanese cultural backgrounds in assisting mentally retarded children includes the role of motivator, educator, facilitator, director, and supervisor.

4. Discussion

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, parents have the most important role in educating their children, especially the role of being a teacher for their kids. Parents have a major impact on student success in learning because often the encouragement and enthusiasm from parents makes children become confident and work hard in learning. Parents need to be actively involved in mentoring children's learning is needed so that children are able to learn according to the demands of education, especially for the Covid-19 pandemic so that children experience changes both in terms of concept and implementation. In addition, parental involvement in the learning process makes a significant contribution to children's learning development (Hasgimianti, Nirwana, & Daharnis, 2017).

Based on study findings, it was concluded that the concern and participation of parents from Javanese cultural backgrounds in mentoring the learning of mentally retarded children during the Covid-19 pandemic had several roles, namely as motivators, educators, facilitators, directors, and supervisors. The following is the documentation when conducting interviews with research subjects.



Figure 2. Interview with mentally retarded children and their parents

First, parents become motivators, meaning that parents play a role in providing encouragement to mentally retarded children so that they have the enthusiasm to do everything, especially in learning. In line with this, in principle, children will be motivated to do something because they have received encouragement from the people around them, one of which is encouragement from parents (Kurniati, Nur Alfaeni, & Andriani, 2020). In line with Hayati's research, which describes parents who are enthusiastic about motivating their children to learn, it has a positive impact on their child's development (Hayati, 2020).

Parents from a Javanese cultural background will give the spirit of teaching, not easily give up when doing various things, especially for their children in the hope that the child will progress in their development. The form of giving motivation from parents with Javanese background can be verbal and behavioral. Motivation in verbal form, for example, reminding mentally retarded children at all times so as not to neglect their duties and be disciplined in participating in learning. While motivation in the form of behavior is expressed by giving gifts to children if they have succeeded in doing their jobs well (Wahib, 2021). Below is a documentation of parents in motivating mentally retarded children when practicing movements and reading prayers in front of the teacher.



Figure 3. Parents motivate mentally retarded children in praying in front of teachers during PTM

Second, parents act as educators, namely conveying knowledge, knowledge, and skills to mentally retarded children based on the material provided by the teacher. Parents from a Javanese cultural background in becoming a teacher (educator) apply several principles, namely patience (patience), constancy (consistency), and being a good role model for their children in accordance with the Javanese expression "*Guru digugu lan ditiru*". That is, as a teacher, he must be able to instill commendable character values and set a good example for students to be trusted by them so that they can act as role models. In delivering material, parents of mentally retarded children should be patient by not scolding and forcing children's abilities when they cannot or do not understand the subject matter (Nirmala, Medida, & Widiati, 2020). So that these conditions have a good impact on the growth and development of children. The following is a photo documentation when parents set an example for mentally retarded children to pray in congregation at the mosque.



Figure 4. Parents give examples of praying in congregation at the mosque for mentally retarded children

Another skill needed by parents when learning online is the ability to use technology as a medium and learning tool for mentally retarded children. Because parents will teach the ability to operate the technology to their children so that they can improve the quality of their children (Utami, 2020)(Prasojo, Diat, & Riyanto, 2011). As long as mentally retarded children are home learning, the role of parents includes helping children complete school assignments, carrying out varied and innovative activities with children while at home, and explaining to children how to complete tasks as exemplified by the teacher (Rohita & Krisnawati, 2021).

Third, parents play a role as facilitators, meaning that parents prepare facilities, both facilities and infrastructure or needs that support mentally retarded children in the learning process (Iffitah, S. L., & Anawaty, 2020). Parents with Javanese cultural background will provide the best facilities for their children. This is because parents' efforts to meet their children's needs consistently and unconditionally are a form of positive educational care for functioning in the family (Kurniati et al., 2020). Furthermore, parents become facilitators to bridge between teachers and children when participating in online learning as well as children's mentors (Anggraeni, Fakhriyah, & Ahsin, 2021).

Fourth, the duty of parents to be directors means that parents direct and guide mentally retarded children in the ongoing learning during the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents with Javanese backgrounds direct their children to always consistently participate in learning both online and PTM during the Covid-19 pandemic. Referring to the results of a study (Nugroho, Hawanti, & Pamungkas, 2021) which suggests that parents provide direction to children during the online learning process, either in the form of orders, advice, or prohibitions if the child is lazy or when the child does not collect assignments. Below is a documentation of the efforts of parents in guiding mentally retarded children by providing additional exercises to learn to write using the dictation method.

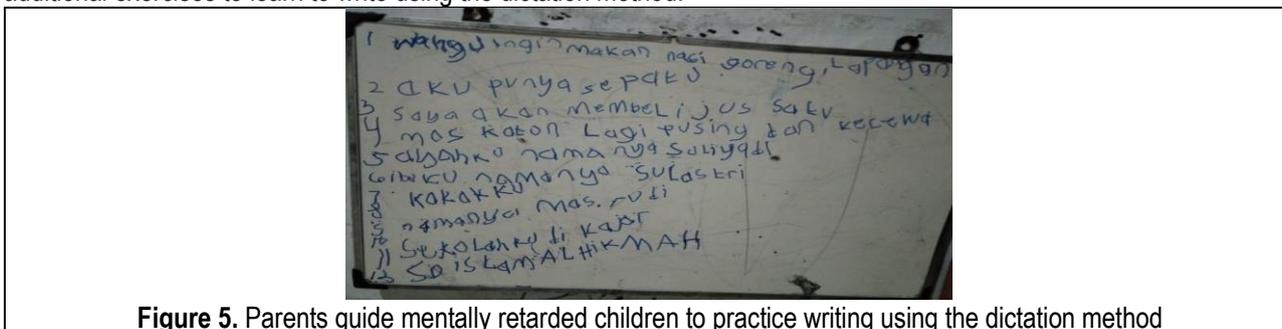


Figure 5. Parents guide mentally retarded children to practice writing using the dictation method

Fifth, the role or duty of parents to supervise (supervisor) children during the learning process in the midst of a pandemic. Based on data of the study (Hasegimianti et al., 2017) it is explained that supervision in the form of attention from parents with Javanese cultural backgrounds on the process of academic development of their children is classified as good. This is proven, for example, parents ask questions about whether they have studied or not, whether the child has received an assignment or not, and how the score is. In addition, parents also need to supervise so that children do not abuse gadgets to play games or access other content that has nothing to do with learning (Prabowo, Fakhruddin, & Rohman, 2020). Good parental supervision can be done by applying elements of communication and openness, providing motivation to learn in children, and directing children's desires (Ratiwi & Sumarni, 2020).

To increase attention to the role of parental assistance, it is necessary to have the role of guidance and counseling teachers. Guidance and counseling teachers and parents can work together to monitor student progress, BK teachers can organize home visits, provide information services to parents and mentally retarded children, and so on.

5. Conclusion

The existence of Covid-19 makes parents have dual roles, including as educators (educators), motivators, facilitators, directors, and supervisors (supervisors). The attention, involvement, and assistance from parents support the smooth learning of mentally retarded children, both online and offline for the Covid-19 pandemic, thus determining the success of their learning. The importance of parental responsibility to ensure the comfort of their children when learning will determine the readiness of children to learn for the Covid-19 pandemic.

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