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# CERTIFICATE

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International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education

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in recognition of his/her contribution as **Reviewer** on paper ID:

27320

in this scientific journal

Yogyakarta, 12 June 2023

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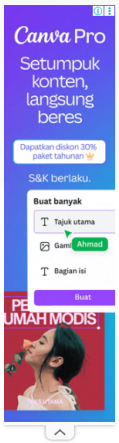

# International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education

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SCOPE

The International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE) is an interdisciplinary publication of original research and writing on education which publishes papers to international audiences of educational researchers. The IJERE aims to provide a forum for scholarly understanding of the field of education and plays an important role in promoting the process that accumulated knowledge, values, and skills are transmitted from one generation to another; and to make methods and contents of evaluation and research in education available to teachers, administrators and research workers. The journal encompasses a variety of topics, including child development, curriculum, reading comprehension, philosophies of education and educational approaches, etc.

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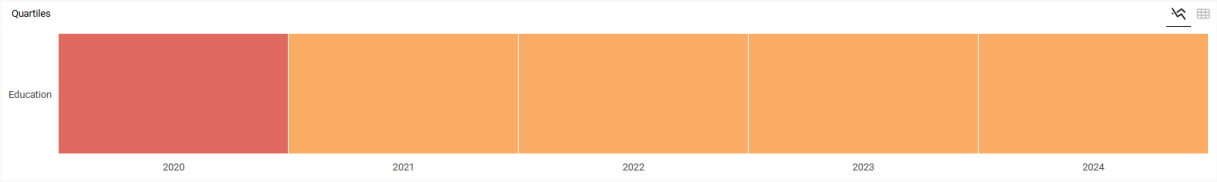


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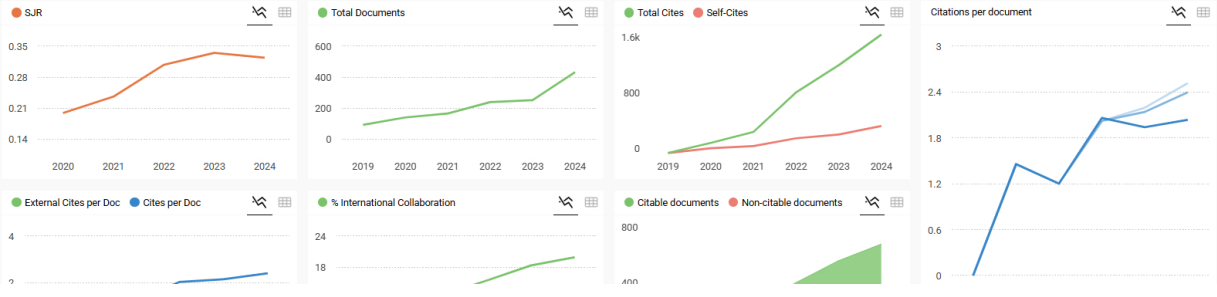

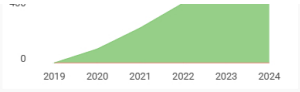


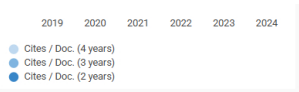


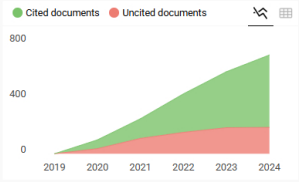


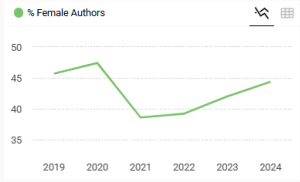


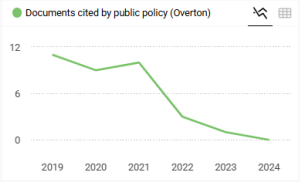


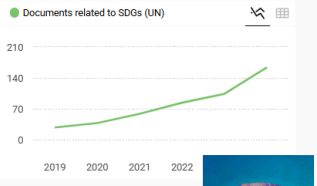


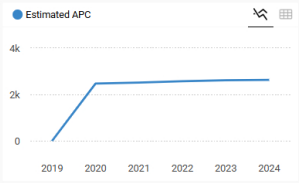


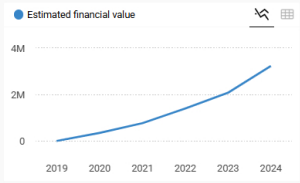

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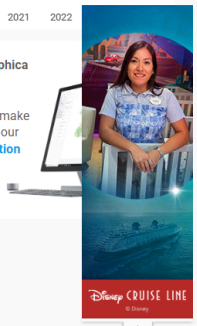

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# [IJERE] Article Review Request

1 message

**Septian Dwi Cahyo** <septian@iaescore.com> Wed, Apr 19, 2023 at 8:48 AM
To: "Dr. Khoerul Umam" <khoerul.umam@uhamka.ac.id>

Dr. Khoerul Umam:

I believe that you would serve as an excellent reviewer of the manuscript, "Starting school during and following pandemic: Voices of first graders, Central Java-Indonesia," which has been submitted to International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE). The submission's abstract is inserted below, and I hope that you will consider undertaking this important task for us.

Please log into the journal web site by 2023-04-26 to indicate whether you will undertake the review or not, as well as to access the submission and to record your review and recommendation. The web site is https://ijere.iaescore.com/index.php/IJERE

The review itself is due 2023-05-17.

If you do not have your username and password for the journal's web site, you can use this link to reset your password (which will then be emailed to you along with your username). https://ijere.iaescore.com/index.php/IJERE/login/resetPassword/kumam?confirm=a071530185d18d548db5a21619da02f70116eb069fd8f041763d73fcd1de8dbb%3A1681876001

Submission URL: https://ijere.iaescore.com/index.php/IJERE/reviewer/submission/49890

Thank you for considering this request.

Septian Dwi Cahyo
IAES
septian@iaescore.com

"Starting school during and following pandemic: Voices of first graders, Central Java-Indonesia"

Abstract
The involvement of children's aspirations is an essential part of educational research that encourages effective learning and well-being among children. Thus, this study aims to promote children's aspirations of starting schools during and following the school-from-home period amid the pandemic situation. It implemented a face-to-face interview involving 63 first graders of primary school level aged seven years, consisting of 24 boys and 39 girls, by adhering to the prevailing health protocols. The thematic analysis generated two significant findings, including children's perspectives and their preferences related to school from home. With regards to children's perspectives, this research suggests that children prefer to learn with their teachers and friends at school. Based on the findings, further research is required to explore the responses of children, parents, and teachers to obtain comprehensive data.

Khoerul Umam <khoerul.umam@uhamka.ac.id>

# [IJERE] Automated Submission Review Reminder

1 message

**Dr. Lina Handayani** <ijere@iaesjournal.com> Tue, Apr 25, 2023 at 4:04 AM
To: "Dr. Khoerul Umam" <khoerul.umam@uhamka.ac.id>

The following message is being delivered on behalf of International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE).

---

Dr. Khoerul Umam:

Just a gentle reminder of our request for your review of the submission, "Starting school during and following pandemic: Voices of first graders, Central Java-Indonesia," for International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE). We were hoping to have this review by 2023-05-17, and this email has been automatically generated and sent with the passing of that date. We would still be pleased to receive it as soon as you are able to prepare it.

If you do not have your username and password for the journal's web site, you can use this link to reset your password (which will then be emailed to you along with your username).
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Submission URL:
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Please confirm your ability to complete this vital contribution to the work of the journal. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Lina Handayani
International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)

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# #27320 Review

## Submission To Be Reviewed

| | |
|---|---|
| Title | Voices of first graders: exploratory study on starting school during post-pandemic period |
| Journal Section | General Education Concepts |
| Abstract | The involvement of children's aspirations is an essential part of educational research that encourages effective learning and well-being among children. Thus, this study aims to promote children's aspirations of starting schools during the post-pandemic situation. It implemented a face-to-face and online interview involving 63 first graders of primary school level aged seven years, consisting of 24 male and 39 female, by adhering to the prevailing health protocols. The thematic analysis generated two significant findings, including children's perspectives and their preferences for either face-to-face learning or online learning. With regards to children's perspectives, this research suggests that children prefer to learn with their teachers and friends at school. Based on the findings, further research is required to explore the responses of children, parents, and teachers to obtain comprehensive data |
| Submission Editor | Sagini Keengwe (Review)<br>Elina Maslo (Review)<br>Jonathan deHaan, Ph.D. (Review)<br>Yeo Jiar (Review) |
| Submission Metadata | VIEW METADATA |

## Review Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Editor's Request | 2023-04-19 |
| Your Response | 2023-04-27 |
| Review Submitted | 2023-04-27 |
| Review Due | 2023-05-17 |

## Review Steps

1. Notify the submission's editor as to whether you will undertake the review.
   Response Accepted

2. Click on file names to download and review (on screen or by printing) the files associated with this submission.
   Submission Manuscript 27320-54972-1-RV.DOCX 2023-04-18
   Supplementary File(s) None

3. Click on icon to fill in the review form.
   Review Form

4. In addition, you can upload files for the editor and/or author to consult.
   Uploaded files None

5. Select a recommendation and submit the review to complete the process. You must enter a review or upload a file before selecting a recommendation.
   Recommendation **Revisions Required** 2023-04-27

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# Review Form Response

## New IJERE Review Form

The IJERE form to evaluate submitted papers

Content *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

Significance *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

Originality *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

Relevance *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

Presentation *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

Recommendation *

- Excellent
- Very good
- (•) Good
- Fair
- Bad

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**International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)**
Vol. 99, No. 1, Month 2099, pp. 1~1x
ISSN: 2252-8822, DOI: 10.11591/ijere.v99i1.paperID



# Starting school during and following pandemic: Voices of first graders, Central Java-Indonesia

**Yuli Kurniawati Sugiyo Pranoto [1], Diana[1], Naciye Aksoy[2], Sugiyo[3], Aisyah Durrotun Nafisah[1], Anisa Utamiyanti Tri Rumpoko[1]**
[1]Department of Early Childhood Education, Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia
[2]Faculty of Education, Gazi University, Turkey
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**Article Info**

***Article history:***

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***Keywords:***

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**ABSTRACT**

The involvement of children's aspirations is an essential part of educational research that encourages effective learning and well-being among children. Thus, this study aims to promote children's aspirations of starting schools during and following the school-from-home period amid the pandemic situation. It implemented a face-to-face interview involving 63 first graders of primary school level aged seven years, consisting of 24 boys and 39 girls, by adhering to the prevailing health protocols. The thematic analysis generated two significant findings, including children's perspectives and their preferences related to school from home. With regards to children's perspectives, this research suggests that children prefer to learn with their teachers and friends at school. Based on the findings, further research is required to explore the responses of children, parents, and teachers to obtain comprehensive data.

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***Corresponding Author:***

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Department of Early Childhood Education, Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Semarang
Building C, Graduate School Office, Semarang, Indonesia
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## 1. INTRODUCTION (10 PT)

The number of international literatures highlighting the urgency of children's experiences in the first grade, as a basis for success in the later years of primary school has marked a significant growth in recent years[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8]. The phenomenon implies that the first grade is a substantial period for the next grades. Starting school is also an important experience for children and their families. However, various research findings also proved the first day of school as potential event that might cause stress to children and parents[9].

The transition from preschool to first grade is believed as the key process to children's growth. Children who have access to preschool education have a higher opportunity to success, especially in passing the first grade period[7] [10] [11]. During the first grade, children's learning outcomes are highly correlated with their preschool experiences and the types of schools they have attended [12]. The study about the transition process is considered essential for understanding children's experiences and well-being. Although the highlight related to transition to school and school readiness is no longer a new phenomenon, various studies reveal that many children are not prepared to receive adequate supports for a positive school transition period[13] [14].



**Commented [KU1]: 1. Strengthen the Opening Sentence and Purpose**
The first sentence is passive and generic. It uses a common academic phrase ("is an essential part of... research") that doesn't immediately tell the reader what your study is about. An effective abstract starts with a clear problem statement or a direct, active statement of purpose.
- **Current:** "The involvement of children's aspirations is an essential part of educational research that encourages effective learning and well-being among children."
- **Suggestion:** Start directly with the study's aim and context. For example: "This study explores the aspirations and school transition experiences of first-grade students during and following the school-from-home period in Central Java, Indonesia." This is more direct and professional.

**2. Enhance the Methodology with Key Details**
The methodology section is too brief. While it mentions interviews and the sample size, it omits critical information that is standard for an abstract. Including these details adds credibility and helps the reader understand the study's scope.
- **Current:** "It implemented a face-to-face interview involving 63 first graders of primary school level aged seven years, consisting of 24 boys and 39 girls, by adhering to the prevailing health protocols."
- **Suggestion:** Specify the type of interview (e.g., semi-structured) and the study's geographic location and time frame. A better version would be: "A qualitative, semi-structured face-to-face interview was conducted with 63 first graders (aged seven; 24 boys, 39 girls) in Central Java, Indonesia. Interviews were held during the 2021 school-from-home policy, with strict adherence to health protocols."

**3. Improve the Specificity of Findings**
Your abstract claims "thematic analysis generated two significant findings," but then presents vague categories ("perspectives" and "preferences"). The single specific finding mentioned—that children prefer to learn with teachers and friends—is too broad for a conclusion. An abstract needs to summarize the *most impactful and specific* results.
- **Current:** "Thematic analysis generated two significant findings, including children's perspectives and their preferences related to school from home. With regards to children's perspectives, this research suggests that children prefer to learn with their teachers and friends at school."

... [1]

**Commented [KU2]:** 1.Wordiness: The phrase "has marked a significant growth in recent years" can be simplified. A more direct statement like "Recent international literature highlights..." would be more effective.

2.Clarity: The links between the sentences could be smoother. You introduce the importance of the first grade and then jump to the stress it can cause. A connecting phrase like "This critical period, however, is not without its challenges..." would improve the flow.

**Commented [KU3]: Passive Voice:** The phrase "The transition...is believed as the key process" can be changed to a more active voice, for example, "The transition from preschool to first grade is a critical process..."
**Repetitive Claims:** The paragraph makes a similar point several times: that preschool experience is highly correlated with first-grade success. You can combine these ideas for better efficiency. For example, instead of separate sentences about preschool access and learning outcomes, you could write: "Children with preschool education demonstrate higher learning outcomes, with their experiences and school type strongly correlating with their first-grade success."
**Missing Connection:** You state that "many children are not prepared to receive adequate supports." This is an excellent point, but you should explain *why* this is the case or what factors contribute to this lack of preparation. This would make your introduction stronger.

During 2021, Indonesian government dealt with the second wave of COVID-19 by reintroducing the school-from-home policy through the implementation of distance learning patterns and strategies (Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020). The condition had led to a shift in children's learning and playing settings since they started to stay at home for 24 hours, including those who had just started school for few months. This kind of emergency learning program requires evaluation, especially for children who are embarking the early schooling phase. Therefore, further analysis is required to understand children's experiences when starting primary school, considering the importance of school transition and children development in general.

This research was organized in Central Java province, Indonesia. Cultural factors that influenced service provision and other aspects of the transition experiences are later included. Regarding a number of linguistic and anthropological studies, cultural discontinuity of children's experiences between home and school in diverse cultural contexts may contribute a particular impact to the period of starting school[15] [16] [17].

This research enriches theoretical and empirical studies on the concept of school transition experienced by children in Central Java, Indonesia during the pandemic. Previous studies, including Pangestuti, et al. [18] and Nurhayati [19] only discusses the transition process during the prepandemic period. This research also serves as an evaluation material for the government, schools, teachers, and parents in responding to the upcoming transition period, especially during the time of uncertainty amid the COVID-19 alert.

***School-from-home policy in Central Java, Indonesia***

During the pandemic, primary schools in Central Java implemented asynchronous learning using WhatsApp application (https://radarsemarang.jawapos.com), in which the learning activity only covered assignments distributed through the parents' WhatsApp group (https://edukasi.kompas.com). Through a survey involving 384 respondents (bbpmpjateng@kemdikbud.go.id), The Central Java Education Quality Assurance Institute (LPPM) highlighted WhatsApp as the most popular application (93.2%) among the respondents. WhatsApp was the most favored application by teachers for conducting class activities, including distributing practice tests (93%). However, using this application, teachers rarely organized face-to-face sessions since they only relied on video-based explanation and messaging during learning periods.

The implementation of online learning model using WhatsApp is the first choice favored by teachers (100%)[20]. The use of WhatsApp Group as a learning media for primary school students is common [21] [22] [23]. In this scenario, teahers provide materials and assignments, while students have to download and learn the learning content through the application. In addition to WhatsApp, teachers normally use Zoom once in a week, considering that the majority of parents are working, while not all students have personal devices.

During the online learning, it is common for parents dominate the activities instead of their children [20]. Students demonstrate less participation in the learning process due to one-way interaction that posits the students to focus on the screen when doing their tasks or exams online [21]. With the distribution of video-based learning material, teachers rarely provide detailed explanations of the lesson[24].

**Starting school: from students' perspectives**

"Starting school" is a concept associated with the discussions of "preparation" in terms of physical, social, and cognitive skills that children must possess to meet school requirements[25] [26]. Children's readiness is one of the components of school readiness that focuses on the children's development and abilities. A number of studies have examined the relationship between certain types of preschool experiences and children's subsequent success rates after getting admitted to school[27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32] [33].

Numerous research focusing on the quality of child care and the impacts of Head Start and other similar programs are included in this category[34] [35] [36] [37] [38] [39] [40]. Many literatures deal with the home-school correlation, yet the main highlights only discuss after-school attendance period [41] [42] [43] [44] [39].

It is believed that children start to witness various positive things at school since the first grade, despite limited research that have proven the transition process. School is perceived as a place that makes them happy, where they can meet their friends and teachers to learn and play with. School is also a place to study and work (do schoolwork). Children's first impression emphasizes these characteristics and signifies a positive attitude towards school. However, several factors can also trigger children's disliking about school, for instance, bullying, quarrel, and punishments from teachers.

In addition to grow happiness among children, school has a role in its realization. Noddings [45] mentioned "the best home and school" are happy places. A happy school environment is essential to promote effective learning and boost students' talents [46]. Bird and Markle [47] revealed the advantage of a happy school environment to boost students' academic success and enhance their life skills. In contrast, the declining quality of school happiness may lead to the lower academic success, loneliness, stress, depression, and drug

**Commented [KU4]:** **Clarity:** The sentence "Cultural factors...are later included" is a bit awkward. You can rephrase it to "We also consider the influence of cultural factors on the transition experiences..."
**Integration of Sources:** You cite a few linguistic and anthropological studies. This is great, but you should briefly explain *how* these studies are relevant to your own. What specific insights do they provide about cultural discontinuity in the context of school transitions?

**Commented [KU5]:** **Specificity:** The statement "This research enriches theoretical and empirical studies..." is good. You can make it even better by briefly mentioning what specific aspect of the theoretical and empirical studies it enriches.
**Clear Contribution:** You successfully differentiate your study from previous ones by highlighting its focus on the pandemic period. This is a very effective way to establish your paper's unique contribution.
**Audience:** You mention that this research serves as an "evaluation material for the government, schools, teachers, and parents." This is an important detail that highlights the real-world value of your work.

**Commented [KU6]:** The phrasing "School-from-home policy in Central Java, Indonesia" is a little informal; consider rephrasing it to something more academic like **"The Implementation of School-from-Home Policy in Central Java, Indonesia."** Additionally, the links to news articles are unusual for a formal paper and should be replaced with proper academic citations. You state that learning "only covered assignments," which seems like a strong claim. You need to be careful to present this as a finding from your sources, not as a blanket statement.

**Commented [KU7]:** The phrase **"it is common for parents dominate the activities instead of their children"** is a crucial point that needs to be supported with more specific data from the cited sources. "Students demonstrate less participation" is a good point, but it's important to explain why. You mention "one-way interaction," but you should clarify what that means in this specific context. Also, the claim that teachers "rarely provide detailed explanations" should be phrased carefully to reflect the findings of the study you're citing, not as a general truth.

addiction [48]. The lack of happiness significantly influences children's personalities, intelligence, thinking skills, creativity, and educational achievement [49].

Research on children's attitudes towards school (happy/unhappy emotions and positive/negative impressions) should analyze these challenges. The lack of happiness at school may cause a major problem in education systems [50] [51]. Attention to students' emotions and impressions should be emphasized since the early childhood and no later than adolescence, considering the children's cognitive and emotional aspects.

This study highlights different learning conditions experienced by Indonesian children, especially during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of studies revealed that students experienced boredom during the situation [21]. This research will contribute to providing necessary inputs for the government, education institutions, and parents to ensure fine process of starting school among children. The quality of a school institution should be determined not only based on the accreditation status but also the rate of students' positive impressions and experiences.

## 2. METHOD

### Research objectives and research questions

The study is directed to illustrate the first-graders' experiences in starting school during and following the school-from-home policy. It aims to explore: (1) children's attitudes; and (2) children's experiences in starting school during and following the lockdown. The following research questions are addressed:

- How do children describe their attitudes when starting school at home and school (feelings, impressions, preferences for learning settings and partners) most of the time?
- How do children describe their experiences in starting school during the first grade (liking and disliking) at home during the lockdown?
- How do children describe their experiences in starting school during the first grade (liking and disliking) at school/classroom following the lockdown?

### Research method

Clark, et al. [52] emphasized several methods to record children's aspirations, such as interviews, questionnaires, group work, and participatory games. This current research is designed as a basic qualitative research and employes interview for the data collection. A number of previous studies also used an interview approach to describe children's experiences in starting school individually [53] [54] [55] [56] [57].

### Participants

A total of 63 primary school children including 24 boys and 39 girls (grade 1, age 7) who were studying from home during the COVID-19 pandemic were involved in this study. Participants lived in suburban and rural areas in Central Java, Indonesia. The distribution of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants

| Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|
| n | % | n | % |
| 24 | 38.095 | 39 | 61.90 |

### Data collection

This study took two forms of consent of participation from parents and children. The first consent was related to the children's availability to allow the researchers to inquire about their first grade experiences through homeschooling. The second agreement was related to the students' behavior towards school-from-home activities that was followed up through the interview sessions and relevant activities.

The interview sessions were conducted online and on-site to capture the children's experiences in starting primary school during the pandemic. The questions consisted of: (1) How do you think and feel about school from home? Can you tell me something fun/hard about school?" (2) Who would you prefer to study with? Do you like studying at home or at school/classroom? (3) During learning from home, what activities do you like and dislike the most? (4) Following the pandemic, what activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like and dislike the most?

### Interview setting

The data were collected by visiting participants' homes. Researchers were allowed to collect the data according to the parents' consents. Researchers also contacted children via video call platforms.

**Timeline, recording, field notes**

The research was completed within six months. During the process, the researchers were assisted by trained research assistants to lead the interviews session with two or three children daily based on their availability and their parents' consents. The meetings were set twice, in which the first meeting aimed at gathering the big picture of the children's daily lives and make them familiar with the presence of the researchers, while the second meeting aimed to collect all necessary data through offline and online interviews. The interview session required around 20 to 30 minutes for every child.

This study only managed to cover one interview session due to the strict health protocols during the pandemic. Follow-up sessions should be considered for future research to ensure the reliability of the responses. The researchers also used field notes to record the details.

**Confidentiality**

Parental consents, children's identities, field notes, and interview transcripts were stored safely and only accessible to the researchers. After completing the data collection, the researchers copied the recordings and recorded the interview/conversation points regarding the drawings made by children. To ensure the security of the respondents' data, this research utilized coding for the analysis.

**Researchers as instruments**

Researchers carefully assessed the information from the children and avoided rush conclusion. Researchers actively engaged with the children to gather their opinions. When the conversation ended, the researchers continued to observe, review, and stimulate further discussions with the children.

**Data analysis**

It should be noted that the decision of uninvolvement is a freedom of expression [58]. Children's responses from the interview were identified using thematic analysis by examining patterns or themes based on the organization of the data description [59]. This technique is more complex compared to content analysis that only explores the implicit or explicit meanings of textual materials.

**Trustworthiness**

To demonstrate trustworthiness (transferability, dependability, credibility), the thematic analysis adopted Guba's [60] theory. In accordance to Silverman's [61], the researchers read the entire data set to generate the overall picture of the content through observations, questions, and ideas to increase the credibility of the recursive analysis. An additional measure of credibility was implemented with coding to capture all relevant and representative codes from the whole data.

Research team members met at two critical points during the coding process. The coders consisted of a Master's student and an Associate Professor from different university departments expertised in educational theory and child development.

This study did not involve direct interaction between participants and coders. During the reflexive approach, coders constantly communicated during the coding process to ensure the coherence of the data. The final procedure of ensuring trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability used the theme descriptions by inviting the readers to examine the data and clarify the relationships between the selected categories in the data set as a whole [61] [62].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic analysis, this study provide some theme as follows: attitudes (impression, learning settings, and learning partners preference), activities at school during and following the pandemic.

### 3.1. Attitudes

#### 3.1.1. Impressions

Table 2. Children's Attitudes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Attitudes | Positive | Happy |
| | Negative | Boring, annoying |
| | | Displeased |
| | | Sad |
| | No response | No answer, no response, passive |

Some students demonstrated positive and negative attitudes (impressions and emotions). A positive attitude was reflected by the responses of happiness towards the school-from-home activities.

Mn, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At school with my friends and teacher*

Sab, 7 yo, boy
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At school. More friends*

Ptri, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At home with my parents.*

Aurl, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At home with my mom*

#### 3.1.2. Learning settings and learning partners

Based on the finding, 48 out of 63 students preferred studying at school due to the presence of friends, teachers, activities that could improve their skills, and food stalls. A total of 13 students preferred learning from home due to the presence of their family members (parents, siblings), freedom to play, the quiet atmosphere, safety from viruses, and good marks.

Table 4. Preferences for learning settings and learning partners

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Learning settings | Home | The presence of family members (parents, sibling) |
| | | Quiet atmosphere |
| | | Freedom to play |
| | | Safety from viruses |
| | | Good marks |
| | School | The presence of teachers |
| | | The presences of friends |
| | | The presence of teachers and friends |
| | | Many activities to improve skills |
| | | Snacking time |
| | | No reason |

Prl, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At school with teacher. My teacher is kind and caring.*

Zav, 7 yo, boy
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At home with my parents. Teacher often scolds me at school because I don't understand the assignments. Mom never scolds me.*

Mn, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At school with my friends and teacher.*

Aum, 7 yo, girl
R : Which one do you prefer, learning at school or at home?
*At school with teacher. There are a lot of friends too*

### 3.2. School-from-home activities during the pandemic

Children's responses varied from positive to negative sentiments related to school-from-home activities during the pandemic. They preferred a number of activities, including playing with gadgets, watching television, playing mobile games, playing with friends, helping parents, getting involved in positive activities

(searching for eels, cycling, watering flowers), studying with family members (parents, siblings), learning new skills, learning online, and reciting the Koran.

In the other hand, there were several situations that they disliked, including the quiet and boring condition of the house, the unpleasant treatment from relatives (messing around with toys, mischief), the prohibition from playing outside due to the virus, household chores (sweeping, babysitting), lack of attention from parents, too much napping, and the time when they had nothing to do. A total of 18 children liked any kinds of activities at home.

Table 6. Preferences for home activities during the pandemic

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preferences for activities at home | Higher interest | Helping parents |
| | | Learning with family members (parents, siblings) |
| | | Positive activities (searching for eels, cycling, watering the flowers) |
| | | Playing with friends |
| | | Playing mobile games |
| | | Playing with pets |
| | | Online learning |
| | | Learning new skills |
| | | Reciting the Koran |
| | | All activities |
| | | No activity |
| | Lower interest | A lot of homework, private lessons |
| | | Boring situation |
| | | Lack of attention from parents |
| | | Prohibition from playing outside due to virus |
| | | Playing undesired activities |
| | | Napping |
| | | Household chores (sweeping, babysitting) |
| | | Doing nothing all day |
| | | No activity |
| | | Unpleasing treatment from siblings |

Alv, 7 yo, boy
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like playing with my smartphone.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*It is boring because I cannot meet my friends and my teacher.*

Njw, 7 yo, girl
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like playing.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*I am bored because I cannot meet my friends.*

Rcp, 7 yo, girl
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like watching TV.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*I do not like babysitting my sibling*

Rdt, 7 yo, boy
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like reciting the Koran at home, helping mom to sweep the floor, and playing with my sibling.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*I do not like it when my sibling asks for money to buy snakcs.*

Mn, 7 yo, girl
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?

*I like karawitan (Javanese music) extracurricular at school.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like Friday exercise. It is tiring.*

Alf, 7yo, boy
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like playing soccer at school.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like school if there are many assignments.*

Kai, 7 yo, girl
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I can study with mama at home.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*It is quiet at home.*

Khaf , 7 yo, girl
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like playing with my sibling.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*Home is boring. I do not like it when I fight over the phone with my sibling.*

Ridw, 7 yo, boy
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?*I like watching TV and playing games using my phone.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*It is boring at home without friends.*

Kev, 7 yo, boy
R : During learning from home, what activities do you like the most?
*I like playing better than studying at home. I like playing games using my dad's phone.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like?
*Mom is scary. She will scold me if I do not do my homework.*

### 3.3. First-day activities at school following the pandemic

Children responded to the researchers by explaining their liking and disliking about school in the following pandemic period. The researchers considered that this question could reflect the children's experiences during the transition of the policy when they were still required to implement health protocols.

Based on the analysis of the interview, children generally preferred doing several activities at school, such as sports, free plays during recess, arts (drawing and dancing), thematic learning (language, math, science), snacking time, learning with fun teachers, studying with friends, having extra activities, and helping teachers. A total of nine students chose to not respond to this question.

In the other hand, they also experienced some unpleasing moments at school, such as the difficulty in making friends, uncomfortable treatment, lots of tasks and assignments that required long duration of learning, sanctions from the teachers, lack of fun in certain events, noise, napping, art learning, and absence of fun activities during free time. A total of six students chose to not respond to this question.

Table 5. School activities following to the pandemic

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preferences for activities at school | Higher interest | Free plays |
| | | Art learning (drawing and dancing) |
| | | Language, math, science learning |
| | | Physical education |
| | | Snacking time |
| | | Learning with friends |
| | | Extracurricular activities |
| | | Helping teachers |
| | | All activities |
| | | No preference |
| | Fun learning with teachers | |
| | Lots of tasks and assignments | |

**Commented [KU8]:** This paragraph sets up the research method but lacks some crucial detail. The statement that "researchers considered that this question could reflect the children's experiences" is weak. It sounds like an assumption rather than a deliberate research design choice. You need to explain the rationale behind your qualitative approach. What was the purpose of asking about likes and dislikes? How did this question help you gain a deeper understanding of their experiences?
A more effective way to phrase this would be to state that this open-ended question was used to **elicit qualitative data on the children's subjective experiences** during the transition period. It's not about what you "considered" but what you **aimed to capture** with the question. The current phrasing feels speculative rather than intentional.

**Commented [KU9]:** This paragraph lists the children's preferred activities, which is a good starting point. However, it reads more like a bulleted list in prose format. For a high-quality paper, you need to **synthesize these findings** into a coherent narrative. The list of activities is good, but what is the overarching theme? The activities they enjoy are all **social** and **interactive**, such as "free plays during recess" and "studying with friends." This is the core finding you should highlight. The fact that nine students didn't respond is an interesting data point, but it's presented without context. Why do you think they didn't respond? Did they not have a preference, or was there another reason?

**Commented [KU10]:** Similar to the previous paragraph, this section lists dislikes but doesn't interpret them. The "unpleasing moments" you describe, like "difficulty in making friends" and "lack of fun in certain events," all point to a common theme: **social and emotional challenges**. The list also includes **academic stressors** such as "lots of tasks and assignments." By grouping these themes, you can create a more impactful argument. Also, "uncomfortable treatment" is a very vague term that could refer to many things. You should clarify what this means with a brief example or more precise language.
The fact that "napping" and "art learning" are listed as dislikes is unusual and warrants some explanation. Why would a child dislike these activities? This is a great opportunity to show a deeper understanding of your research subjects.
For the students who didn't respond, the same question applies as in the previous paragraph: why do you think they didn't respond? This could be a significant finding in itself.
To improve, you could say, "Conversely, the children's negative experiences were linked to social difficulties and academic pressure. They reported challenges with peer relationships and a perceived lack of engaging, creative outlets. Academic-related dislikes centered on the volume and duration of tasks, suggesting that the children struggled with the demands of the online learning curriculum." This interpretation makes the data more powerful and directly relevant to your overall study.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Lower interest | Exhaustion due to long activities |
| | | Sanctions from the teachers |
| | | Difficulty in making friends that resulted in unequal treatment |
| | | No activity |
| | | Napping |
| | | Unpleasing expriences (losing belongings, feeling unconfident when doing presentation in front of the class) |
| | | Noise |
| | | Art class |

M. Alv, 7 yo, boy
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like sports.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like studying.*

Ryt, 7 yo, girl
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like dancing.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*There is nothing that I do not like.*

Arg, 7 yo, boy
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*Playing soccer.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like quarrelling with friends*

Njw, 7 yo, girl
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like drawing.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like mischievous friends*

Khr, 7 yo, boy
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like sports at school and I also like talking to my friends.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like when I have a lot of homework..*

Ary, 7 yo, boy
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like sports and drum band at school. I like gathering with my friends.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like having a lot of homework. It makes me sleepy.*

Syf, 7 yo, girl
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like drawing, writing, reading.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*I do not like naughty friends.*

Njw, 7 yo, girl
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like drawing.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?

*I do not like mischievous friends.*

Aml, 7 yo, girl)
R : What activities do you have at school? Which activity do you like the most?
*I like playing with friends at school. We play marbles, hide and seek, and many more.*
R : What is the activity that you do not like the most?
*But sometimes I do not like school. I am still sleepy but I have to go to school early.*

### 3.4. Discussion

A number of research explored children's perspectives on different aspects of their everyday lives [63], such as children's experiences in schools [64], children's perspectives on good school meals [65] (Bruselius-Jensen, 2014), children's perspectives on interior decoration of schools [66] (Clark, 2005), children's experiences about bullying [67] [68] [69] [70], children's experiences about outbreak in their community Denis-Ramirez, Sørensen, & Skovdal, 2017); chronically ill children's interpretations of their own symptoms [71] [72] [73], children's experiences about important situations at home, day-care institution, and school [74] [63], as well as how children's participation in learning communities and their hopes for the future [75].

Several research mentioned that children were able to communicate with adults to talk about their lives, experiences, and concerns for people close to them and their immediate environment[76] [77] [78] [79] [80]. Regarding the studies, the researchers directly spoke with the children and invited them to express their experiences about the respective topics.

The exploration of children's perspectives during school transition is a relatively new practice, marking only a few research that cover this area of discussion. The highlight on children's perspectives related to school transition provides valuable overviews on how first graders experience school transition, especially during the school-from-home learning amid the pandemic situation. Although it does not include certain strategies or activities that work best with them, the research reflects a considerable consistency in its broad findings, especially related to young children's capacities in sharing valid and valuable information, in addition to mentioning some issues that they witness.

This study explores the experience of children during the school transition period in starting primary school remotely. Positive experiences were inferred based on positive verbal expressions. Children's readiness is marked by the highlights of fun experiences.

#### 3.4.1. Attitude (Impressions and feelings, preferences for learning settings and learning partners)

Male and female students demonstrated a balance in conveying positive and negative impressions. A positive impression is indicated by the responses of happiness with the school-from-home policy. Both boys and girls tended to prefer studying at school, as they could meet their teacher and friends.

Among female students, their teacher became the driving force for their anthusiasm about school. A small number of children, with the majority of girls, chose to study at home, as they could spend more time with their families. The dialog from Ptri (7 yo, girl) and Aurl (7 yo, girl) are the excerpt of dialogue involving two female students.

Children's sense of well-being and positive engagement in learning depends on positive relationships with their educators. A number of studies in different countries revealed various children-educators relationships. Several projects in Singapore (N = 340), Ireland (N = 47), and Australia (N = 311) found that children were motivated to create impressions of their educators and parents [56] [81] [82].

The conversations from Prl (7yo, girl) and Zav (7yo, boy) illustrate a goof relationship between children and their educators (teacher and parent) marked by the preference for learning partners. The first dialogue, Prl (7 yo, girl) stated her preference for studying at school with her teacher. She considered her teacher as a kind and considerate figure. Meanwhile, Zav (7 yo, boy) stated that he preferred studying at home with his parents, as he thought that teacher often scolded him at school, especially when he did not understand the lessons and assignments. On the other hand, he informed that his mother never scolded him.

In South Australia (N = 311), a good relationship between students and their educators influenced their experiences at school. Based on studies in Singapore and Australia, children were mostly unhappy, especially when their teachers yelled and shouted at them [56] [82].

Several studies mentioned the substantial roles of the education system (students, teachers, parents, principals, and support staff) in creating a good atmosphere at schools. A happy school is reflected by the positive attitudes among teachers, especially in promoting kindness, enthusiasm, fairness, inspiration, creativity, and the ability to appear as role models for students [83]. School institutions should consider these criteria for teacher recruitment and evaluation (e.g. personalities, attitudes, and ethics) [84] [85].



**Commented [KU11]:** Results and Discussion
Strengthen the Analysis and Synthesis with Comparisons and Contributions to Science and Technology. Expand the paragraph above in bold but do not change it. Expansion will improve your analysis and synthesis sections; focus on several key points:

Comprehensive Comparison:
Clearly compare your research findings with other studies, both domestic and international. Include research from other countries as comparisons to enrich your analysis and provide a global perspective on your findings.

Relationship to Previous Research:
Explicitly explain whether your findings align with or contradict the research findings you mentioned in the Introduction (State of the Art). You can use phrases such as, "This research aligns with research from A (Year), B (Year), C (Year), etc." Remember, focus on comparing your research data with previous research findings from reputable international journals.

Contributions and Implications:
Each section of your analysis and synthesis should conclude with an explanation of the implications, impact, or contribution of your research results. Make sure to be clear in showing contributions to the development of science and technology (IPTEK).

**Commented [KU12]:** This paragraph serves as a broad literature review on the topic of exploring children's perspectives. It presents a long list of research topics without a clear focus. While demonstrating the breadth of existing research is good, this approach can make your argument feel unfocused. The paragraph should lead the reader toward a specific gap in the literature that your study aims to fill. Instead of listing every possible topic, you should strategically select and group the most relevant studies to build your case. Additionally, the mix of in-text citations with parenthetical author-year citations is inconsistent and should be standardized according to the chosen style guide.

**Commented [KU13]:** This paragraph highlights that children can communicate their experiences and that direct conversation with them is a valid research method. This is a crucial point, but it's presented passively. You should frame this section as a defense of your own methodological approach. The current phrasing, "the researchers directly spoke with the children," is generic and could be strengthened by explicitly linking it to your study's methodology. You're not just reporting on what other researchers did; you're justifying your own choice to engage children directly.

**Commented [KU14]:** This is the most critical paragraph, as it attempts to establish the novelty of your work. The statement that "The exploration of children's perspectives during school transition is a relatively new practice" is a very strong claim that should be directly and explicitly supported by the literature. The final two sentences of this paragraph are a little redundant and should be combined for conciseness. For example, instead of stating it reflects "a considerable consistency" and "also mentioning some issues," you could say it "reveals consistent findings on young children's capacity to share valuable information, including challenges they witness." This makes the statement more direct and impactful.

**Commented [KU15]:** This final paragraph is meant to be a summary of your study's scope, but it's the weakest part of the text. It's abrupt and contains a key methodological flaw. The statement that "Positive experiences were inferred based on positive verbal expressions" is an oversimplified and unscientific way to describe qualitative analysis. You need to explain the systematic process you used to analyze the children's responses (e.g., thematic analysis, content analysis). Simply saying you "inferred" based on "positive verbal expressions" suggests a lack of rigorous methodology. The phrase "Children's readiness is marked by the highlights of fun experiences" is also a significant logical leap and lacks a clear theoretical basis. It's a statement that requires strong evidence and a more nuanced explanation, not a simple assertion. This part of the text must be re-evaluated to reflect a more scientifically sound approach to data interpretation.

Various psychological, social, economic, physical, and organizational factors are associated with children's positive experience at "school". Moral qualities, such as gratitude can add value to increasing happiness [86]. Schools that can promote a "supportive community" will offer children a higher rate of satisfaction and motivate them to complete their academic goals [87] [88] [89]. Creativities and initiatives from school components in providing specific workshops for students, such as games, group sports, an attractive school environment, and good reading materials will elevate happiness at schools [90].

Functioning as learning environments during the pandemic situation, schools and/or home should be able to manifest an ideal conduct of education. A learning environment marks a context that supports the required learning processes toachieve desired learning results. It is important to perceive home as a space that motivates and stimulates children to learn by supporting their learning activities. The basic requirement for a learning space should promote a space that students can sit on [91].

During learning from home, children's interactions with people mark an important feature for the provision of affection, security, encouragement, conversations, and positive role models to help them thrive. A good home learning environment encourages children and young people to have positive attitudes to learning, grow their curiosity, and boost their confidence [92].

### 3.4.2. Favored activities among children during school-from-home

Children described the activities that they liked and disliked during the school-from-home period. Several favored activities consisted of playing with gadgets, watching television, playing mobile games, free playing with friends, helping parents, doing positive activities (searching for eels, cycling, watering flowers), studying with family (parents, siblings), learning new skills, learning online, and reciting the Koran. Meanwhile, the undesired conditions included the quiet and boring atmosphere at home, the unpleasant treatment from relatives (fighting over toys, mischievous acts), prohibition from playing outside due to the virus, household chores (sweeping, babysitting), lack of attention from parents, napping, and free time. A total of 18 children stated that they liked all activities.

The boredom of learning in children was reported, as children spent their time without the companionship of friends. Studying with peers is different from studying with parents. Positive competition between peers encourages children to learn better. In addition, peers have a considerable influence on various children's behaviors [93]. Kim, et al. [94] revealed that children who received greater affection and emotional support from friends have a better quality of life compared to those who were constantly bullied.

When children play and learn new activities, partners also determine the quality of experiences. In this study, children were inquired about their preferences for learning settings and learning partners. Children tended to choose outdoor activities for their favored learning area to enable them to socialize with their friends. Sugiyo Pranoto and Hong [95] found that Indonesian children preferred learning with their friends. In particular, girls also mentioned teachers as their favorite learning partners. It is confirmed that children enjoy social interaction while playing to encourage positive impressions and emotions.

In the school-from-home context, teachers should enlighten parents on how they can become good learning partners for their children. Parental assistance will facilitate a successful school transition [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103].

Machmudah, et al. [104] evaluated the distance learning activities during the pandemic in Surabaya, Indonesia and concluded that the approach was no better than face-to-face learning due to the lack of learning interaction and organization. Parents required assistance in preparing their children's readiness for school, in which the guidance could employ learning videos. Kluczniok and Roßbach [105] emphasized the importance of parental supports, involvement, and collaboration with the teachers in optimizing the stimulation given to children during the learning process at home.

Family involvement is an essential support in providing various learning facilities and stimuli for children's development prior to school transition [106]. In order to achieve quality services for early childhood education and care, the involvement of parents and the surrounding community is substantial for designing, implementing, and evaluating these services [107]. After all, parents are the key players who decide whether or not their children should attend preschool services.

Cowan, et al. [108] marked several factors that might hinder children's adaptation during the first year at school, such as authoritative parenting, children autonomy issue, low quality of parental relationships (parent-parent and parents-children relationships), and children's perceptions about the relationships. Other research also focused on several aspects of home environment that might determine the transition to school [109] [110] [111] [112] [108].

Most likely, children are more interested in activities outside home, which are not related to schoolwork, for instance, playing during leisure. Friendship is related to the quality of children's life since peer influence is considered significant. Lee and Han [113] noted that children who received high-quality support

**Commented [KU16]: 1. Improve Narrative Flow and Data Integration**
The first two paragraphs present a mix of your findings and general statements. It's confusing to read about a "balance" of positive and negative impressions and then immediately find that both boys and girls "tended to prefer studying at school." A better approach is to state your key finding directly and then use your quotes as evidence. The current structure is choppy, with quotes dropped in without enough context or analysis.

- **Suggestion:** Start with a strong topic sentence that synthesizes your findings. For example: "Our findings indicate a general preference among students for in-person schooling, primarily driven by the desire for social interaction." Then, use the anecdotes from Ptri and Aurl not as standalone points, but as specific examples that illustrate this larger theme. This transforms your writing from a simple report into a compelling analysis.

**2. Connect Your Findings to the Literature**
You cite a good number of studies in the following paragraphs, but they often appear as standalone facts. The reader has to work to find the connection between what you found and what others have published. A strong discussion section uses the literature to support, contrast, or elaborate on your own results.

- **Suggestion:** Instead of just listing what other studies found, directly connect their findings to your own. For example, in the paragraph about the good relationship between students and educators, explicitly state: "Our findings on the importance of educator-student relationships align with the 'Starting School Project' in Australia, which found that positive interactions are crucial to a child's school experience." This makes your argument more authoritative. Similarly, the anecdote from Zav is a perfect opportunity to discuss the concept of "good relationship" in more detail and how the teacher's behavior affected the student's preference.

**3. Consolidate and Refocus Vague Paragraphs**
Some of the paragraphs are too general and could be consolidated or removed to improve the paper's focus. The paragraphs on what makes a "happy school" (e.g., positive teacher attitudes, community, etc.) and the benefits of a "good home learning environment" are too broad for a focused discussion. While they provide context, they don't directly analyze your specific data.

- **Suggestion:** These ideas are better woven into other paragraphs. For instance, the paragraph about a happy school could be integrated with your discussion of positive educator-student relationships. The paragraphs on home learning could be combined with your discussion of children's attitudes toward studying at home, offering a deeper analysis of why some children might prefer to stay home. This streamlines your argument and eliminates unnecessary repetition.

**4. Strengthen Your Language and Professional Tone**
Your writing is clear, but it can be more formal and precise. Phrases like "a goof relationship" and "a small number of children, with the majority of girls" are informal and can be easily improved.

- **Suggestion:** Use more professional language. Instead of "a goof relationship," use "a positive relationship." Instead of "a small number of children," be more specific, or if you can't, use a phrase like "a subset of children." Also, ensure you are presenting your findings with the correct nuance. For example, when you use a quote, briefly explain what it illustrates about the child's feeling or impression. This turns a simple quote into meaningful evidence.

from their peers had fewer social problems and dissatisfaction along with the enhanced feelings of psychological well-being.

Another possibility of school happiness offers a smooth transition to primary school. Previous positive experiences during Early Childhood Education will leave a good impression on children, where a positive school experience promotes happiness. The positive correlation between school experience and happiness confirms the previous findings by considering other variables [114] [115].

This study as a research on children's perspectives related to school transition, this study could provide an important statement in determining further school policy. Two studies in the US [39] [116] offer a strong evidence that children's learning outcomes depend on their perspectives about their educators and their schools, suggesting that schools should acknowledge children's points of views and emotions, including their perspectives about school transition.

This study apllied a technique where students answering questions on the broad which have been used effectively by researchers to elicit children's perspectives [117]. There is an evidence of consistency between children's comments on their experiences based on their drawings [117]. This approach could be adopted regularly throughout the school years to promote the acknowledgments on children's aspirations, to explore the changes of their experiences of schooling gradually [118] [57], and to address any losses of competencies and skills that some children may experience in the first year [53]. Finally, this study encourages all stakeholders to include multiple perspectives, including children's aspirations in the learning process [57].

### 3.4.3. Favored activities among children at school following the pandemic

Male and female students emphazised different activities in first-day at school. Boys tended to favor sports-related activities. Meanwhile, girls preferred free play activities with their peers, such as drawing, painting, and dancing. Referring to several conversations with Arg (7 yo, boy) and Njw (7 yo, girl), both students reflected indifference towards quarrelling and negative treatments from their peers.

Other relevant studies emphasized friendship as an essential factor affecting all samples (boys and girls). The "Starting School project" in Australia (N = 300+), in addition to studies in New Zealand (N = 23), Singapore (N = 310 + 340), and Europe (N = 48) highlighted the importance of friendship at school [82] [55] [56] [57] [119] [120] [121]. A very small ethnographic research project (N = 23) in New Zealand found that friendships were important to support children's school transition [122] . In several countries, children were concerned if they could not start friendships [121] [120] [119] [118] [117] [56] [123] [82] in addition to being unhappy when they did not have friends (Dockett & Perry, 2002b).

A study in the UK (N = 50) discovered a higher rate of happiness among children who started school with friends compared to those who did not. Moreover, they found it easier to settle into a class with long-term friends (Fabian, 2000); A study in Hong Kong study (N = 32) mentioned that children were happy when they learned something new and play with their friends. However, the unstructured plays were reduced once they had settled into school even though their peer relationships played a significant role throughout the year [124].

In this research, boys mentioned several negative responses related to school following the pandemic, including loads of work and studies. Meanwhile, girls mentioned several issues, such as difficulty in starting a friendship, uncomfortable treatment by their friends, and long-term activities.

Some children found it hard to deal with the long-term activities and their responsibilities when starting school. Singaporean children (302 out of 340) mentioned long-hour learning as a difficult challenge during their first year, but 40% (142 out of 302) of these children saw school as a place for serious learning [82]. The children also complained about the unavailability of napping time and food at school unlike at the kindergarten [82]. In Singapore, children attended kindergartens for two to four hours daily. In contrast, they had to spend around five hours in the first year of their formal schooling, either in the morning [7.30 am – 1.00 pm] or in the afternoon (1.00 pm – 6.30 pm).

The two dialogues from Mn (7yo, girl) and Alf (7yo, boy) illustrate something in common. When children started the first day in their first grade, their impressions highlighted tiresome activities at school due to a lot of assignments. This study does not report the differences in the learning duration between preschool and primary school. Children preferred free play to formal activities, as they tended to associate formal learning with school. Kindergarten children in Iceland (N = 48) perceived 'schoolwork', consisting of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In terms of learning, organization, size, and structure, they saw school as a more serious and difficult period compared to kindergarten [125].

Several studies mentioned that children associated school with formal learning, such as a study involving children in Ireland (N = 47) that revealed free play as the dominant activity at school, while the rest of the time was perceived as 'working' or 'listening' time [81]. The play-work dichotomy also emerged in Australia, in which 83 out of 100 children disliked 'work' due to limited choices or interests [56]. Children in Germany [126] and Italy (N = 21) (Corsaro & Molinari, 2000) saw kindergarten as a place to play and school as a place to learn. Children in the UK (N = 70) associated school with 'work' and 'hard work' [57], while children in New Zealand (N = 23) complained about the limited time allocated for play activities at school (Peters, 2000).

**Commented [KU17]: 1. Synthesize Your Findings Instead of Listing Them**
The first paragraph begins by listing the favored and unfavored activities of the children. This is a great starting point, but it reads like a simple restatement of the results. The discussion section's purpose is to *interpret* those results. Instead of a list, you should group and analyze the themes. For example, your list of favored activities includes "playing with gadgets," "playing mobile games," and "watching television," while the unfavored activities include "household chores" and "babysitting." A more insightful discussion would observe a pattern here, such as: "Our findings suggest that children preferred activities that offered a sense of autonomy and entertainment, as evidenced by their preference for screen time and gaming. Conversely, they disliked activities that felt like work or responsibility, such as chores and looking after siblings." This goes beyond the data to reveal an underlying truth about their experience.
**2. Create a Clearer, More Logical Flow**
The paragraphs jump from one topic to the next without smooth transitions. You move from children's boredom to the importance of peers, then to learning partners, then to the role of parents, and so on. A good discussion section builds a coherent argument. Start with your most significant finding and connect it to the literature. For example, if your most important finding is the children's preference for social interaction, you should group all paragraphs related to peer relationships, friends, and learning partners together, and use them to build a strong case about the importance of social learning. This will prevent the discussion from feeling like a series of disconnected facts.
**3. Strengthen Claims with More Nuanced Language**
Some of your claims are very broad and could benefit from more specific and nuanced language. For example, the statement "It is confirmed that children enjoy social interaction while playing to encourage positive impressions and emotions" is too definitive. A more academic phrasing would be, "Our findings align with existing research confirming that social interaction during play is a key contributor to children's positive emotions and school impressions." You're not confirming a universal truth; you're showing how your findings fit into the existing body of knowledge. Similarly, the claim "Another possibility of school happiness offers a smooth transition to primary school" is vague. It's not a "possibility"; it's a known correlation. Use stronger language like, "A positive correlation between school happiness and a smooth transition to primary school has been well-established."
**4. Integrate Your Unique Context More Effectively**
You have a unique and valuable context: children in Central Java, Indonesia, during the COVID-19 school-from-home period. While you mention this, much of the discussion is based on studies from Singapore, Australia, and the UK. While these are relevant, your discussion should consistently tie back to the specific cultural and policy context of Indonesia. For example, when you discuss parental involvement, you could analyze what this means specifically in Central Java, given the economic and cultural factors you mentioned in the introduction. How do your findings differ from or align with research from other countries? This adds significant value and originality to your paper.
**5. Conclude with a Powerful Summary and Future Direction**
The final two paragraphs of your discussion are good, but they could be more impactful. The final sentences feel a bit like an afterthought. You can strengthen your conclusion by creating a summary that ties together the main themes of your discussion. You've presented a great deal of information on the importance of social interaction, parental involvement, and children's autonomy. Your conclusion should restate these key findings and then clearly lay out the practical implications for policymakers, parents, and educators in Indonesia. What should be done next? Your statement about the need to "promote the acknowledgments on children's aspirations" is a perfect concluding point, but it should be part of a broader, more powerful summary that encapsulates the entire discussion.

A study in Hong Kong revealed that children (N = 32) were eager to learn at school, yet they were not fond of the structured lessons and the quantity of homework [124]. A total of 38 out of 340 (14%) Singaporean children complained about more works at school and found it difficult to complete the assignments [82].

In Australia, 31 out of 100 (31%) children said that they liked school when educators let them select their activity preferences, yet 83 (83%) children said that they did not like the assignments given by the teachers, which were considered boring, while they had no other choices [56].

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, Some students demonstrated positive and negative attitudes (impressions and emotions). Based on the finding, more than half students preferred studying at school due to the presence of friends, teachers, activities that could improve their skills, and food stalls. Children generally preferred doing several activities at school, such as sports, free plays during recess, arts, thematic learning, snacking time, learning with fun teachers, studying with friends, having extra activities, and helping teachers. Children experienced some unpleasing moments at school, such as the difficulty in making friends, uncomfortable treatment, lots of tasks and assignments that required long duration of learning, sanctions from the teachers, lack of fun in certain events, noise, napping, art learning, and absence of fun activities during free time.

During the school-from-home, children's preferred a number of activities, including playing with gadgets, watching television, playing mobile games, playing with friends, helping parents, getting involved in positive activities (searching for eels, cycling, watering flowers), studying with family members (parents, siblings), learning new skills, learning online, and reciting the Koran. There were several situations that they disliked, including the quiet and boring condition of the house, the unpleasant treatment from relatives (messing around with toys, mischief), the prohibition from playing outside due to the virus, household chores (sweeping, babysitting), lack of attention from parents, too much napping, and the time when they had nothing to do.

Referring to the previous literatures, this research suggests potential practices regarding the children's perspectives on school transition, including the exploration of children's reactions to the changes in their physical environment (e.g. pandemic situation), the provision of assistance to support their adaptation to school norms, the support to encourage them start friendship, the encouragement to establish positive relationships with their new educators and peers, the exploration on how children cope with changes throughout school routines, the provision of support to ensure that children. know whom to talk to if they experience bullying during school transition period, the facilitation of formal learning process, the assistance to educate children confidently adapt with their morning routines before going to school, and the involvement of parents as learning partners during the school transition process.

Based on this current study, we provide some components of transition for determining relevant school policy. As a research on children's perspectives related to school transition, this study could provide an important statement in determining further school policy.

*Getting the children prepared*

This study encourages the children's perspectives about starting school and aspirations about their parents, friends, and teacher. Eliciting children's views during the transition period and the first year of school could provide them an understanding on their responsibilities. Children tend to perceive what they find hard, easy, or fun in relations to start learning at school and home, the school day, and their learning partners, their experiences on starting friendships, and their attitude for school from home.

*Preparing for school and home*

The findings could assist educators to acknowledge children's views on the first year of their school transition during pandemic. An interview technique by asking starter questions, may generate the big picture on the students' needs. Research show that children could provide clear and substantial responses regarding their first-year experiences at school. This study offers an overview when children started their first grade at two learning settings, school and home.

*Preparing the education system*

This study encourages all stakeholders to include multiple perspectives. Children can identify specific physical, social, cultural, and academic aspects of school that they perceive as challenges or supports. Meanwhile, schools can use this information to acknowledge different needs among children. This information should also be shared with the children's families to provide them clarity on how school can respond to the needs of every child as a unique individual.

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**Commented [KU18]: 1. Integrate Your Findings and the Literature**
The first paragraph presents your findings about boys and girls' favored activities but then immediately jumps to a general finding about friendship from other studies. This creates a disconnect. Instead of presenting your data and then a list of external findings, you should **integrate your findings directly with the existing literature**. For example, after stating that boys prefer sports and girls prefer free play, you can transition by saying something like: "These gender-based preferences are an important component of a broader theme, as other studies highlight the critical role of peer relationships and friendships in successful school transitions." This approach makes your findings part of a larger, coherent argument, demonstrating that your data confirms or extends previous research. The section on indifference to quarreling also feels out of place; you should either explain its significance or move it to a more relevant section.
**2. Strengthen Your Claims with More Specifics and Analysis**
The later paragraphs, especially the fourth, fifth, and sixth, are heavy on data points from other studies without a strong analytical voice connecting them. For example, you list a series of negative responses from boys and girls, but you don't interpret what these differences mean. Are the differences significant? Do they reflect different coping mechanisms or different expectations? Similarly, when ... [2]

**Commented [KU19]:** These two paragraphs effectively summarize your key findings. However, they read more like a simple restatement of your results section rather than a concluding analysis. A conclusion should go beyond just listing findings; it should interpret them and synthesize the major themes.
- **Suggestion:** Combine these two paragraphs into a single, cohesive one. Instead of separate lists of likes and dislikes for school and home, identify the core themes that emerge from both environments. For example, your findings suggest a common thread: children strongly prefer activities that offer **autonomy, social interaction, and fun**, whether in person or at home. Conversely, they dislike activities that feel like **work, isolation, or a lack of freedom**. This analytical approach is much more powerful than a simple list and demonstrates a deeper understanding of your data.

**Commented [KU20]: 2. Implications & Recommendations (Paragraph 3)**
This paragraph is a strong attempt to translate your findings into practical recommendations. However, the list format and the use of the word "suggests" make it feel a bit weak and informal. A conclusion should be more authoritative in its recommendations.
- **Suggestion:** Rephrase this into a more assertive, prose-based section. Instead of a list of bullet points, group related recommendations under subheadings. For example, recommendations about making friends and building relationships with educators could be grouped under a heading like "**Fostering Social-Emotional Development**." Recommendations about formal learning and routines could be under a heading like "**Structuring the Learning Environment**." This organization makes your suggestions more professional and easier for the reader to digest.

**Commented [KU21]: 3. Framing the Contribution (Paragraphs 4-7)**
These paragraphs, under the headings "Getting the children prepared," "Preparing for school and home," and "Preparing the education system," are the most important part of your conclusion. They clearly state your study's contribution and its practical applications. However, the current headings and prose are a bit clunky and could be more precise.
- **Suggestions:**
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- **Revise Headings:** The current headings are a bit awkward. Consider rephrasing them to be more direct and action-oriented, such as **"Implications for School Policy," "Practical Guidelines for Educators,"** and **"Engaging All Stakeholders."**
- **Strengthen the Language:** The first sentence of the fourth paragraph, "Based on this current study, we provide some components of transition for determining relevant school po ... [3]

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