

## TEACHERS AND PARENT SOCIAL INTERACTION THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PERIOD

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find various problems of social interaction between teachers and parents in Learning from Home (LFH) during the Covid-19 pandemic. The method used is a case study conducted in 21 elementary schools in the JABODETABEK area. The data was collected through interviews with 21 teachers, distributing questionnaires to 241 parents and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with elementary school teachers and education experts. The result shows that there are social interaction problems that occur during LFH. The existing problems are those that are directly related to social interaction or indirectly but affect social interactions between teachers and parents, such as: curriculum, media and technology, psychology, and parental involvement. This study recommends several important things that must be considered during online learning namely; trust, openness, positive thinking, online communication skills, motivation, cooperation, flexibility and standar operational procedure.

**Keywords:** Teacher, Parents, Social Interaction, Distance Education

### I. INTRODUCTION

The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted health systems around the world and cannot run effectively, due to the rapid increase in demand for health facilities and health care workers (World Health Organization, 2020). Apart from having an impact on the health side, various sectors of life are also affected, including in the field of education, where face-to-face learning in schools is not allowed. It is recorded that more than 91% of students around the world cannot study at school (Tim Peneliti Satgas Penanggulangan COVID-19 IPK Indonesia, 2020). The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, instructs the Distance Education, based on the Minister of Education and Culture's Regulation on the Implementation of Distance Education at the Primary and Secondary Education Levels. Distance learning (Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh/PJJ) or Learning from Home ( Belajar dari Rumah/BDR) is learning that is given to students without face to face, which is clarified through a circular letter of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020 concerning PJJ (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020).

The implementation of PJJ during the sudden covid-19 period, on the one hand, there were various obstacles and negative effects, one of which was socialization, where interactions were very limited (Aksoğan, 2020), thus making teachers and students lose togetherness (Sutarto et al., 2020). The other side of social interaction through technology has a positive impact, including making interactions between teachers and parents increase in quantity. Teachers and parents regularly communicate every day through the WA Group or other digital platforms. Unusual things happened in the previous era, where communication between teachers and parents was only when there was a certain need or special activity. Social interaction between parents and teachers is very important in the process of children's education because it will improve academic abilities and children's psychological and social development (Pirchio et al., 2013). In this pandemic era, digital platforms allow information exchange and interaction to be made faster, broader, and more personal (Kuusimäki et al., 2019).

Parents welcome communication through online media, this is known from some research on social interaction in online learning before the pandemic (Leenders et al., 2019; Palts & Kalmus, 2015). The use of digital communication tools makes communication between teachers and parents efficient and effective (Ellis et al., 2015). The advantages of using online media include; no eye contact, without sound that seems instructive, more effective and efficient, especially for parents (Patrikakou, 2015). Parents constantly receive various information from teachers and teachers can monitor parental assistance to their children (Pirchio et al., 2013). Obstacles in establishing social interactions through online media were also encountered. Bullying in cyberspace, without eye contact, sometimes creates conflict and unpreparedness of educators and parents (Patrikakou, 2015). Other obstacles occur in parents who work when there is no support from other families, trauma from digital use, inadequate skills (Pirchio et al., 2013). Besides, there are also problems with internet access, not having adequate gadgets, privacy issues, and teachers having difficulty delegating tasks to parents with children who have special or special handling (Leenders et al., 2019).

Based on research conducted by researchers on research with the theme of social interactions between teachers and parents during the pandemic, several relevant studies were found. In their research, Dwivedi and colleagues reviewed a little about the changes in social interaction patterns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Darling and friends' research resulted in recommendations for a school redesign in the pandemic era to strengthen social interaction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Kim and colleagues found 6 important themes in their research on online learning during a pandemic, one theme is the importance of good relations between teachers and parents (Kim et al., 2020). Other research discusses PJJ problems in general in Indonesia, and identifies problems with facilities, internet access, learning processes and collaboration between teachers and parents and other stakeholders (Fauzi & Sastra Khusuma, 2020). All of these studies do not specifically address the problem of social interaction between parents and teachers.

The importance of knowing the problems of parent-teacher social interaction is in order to anticipate an unharmonious relationship between teachers and parents that will affect the student learning process. Therefore, this study takes this position by examining the social interactions between teachers and parents through PJJ which was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic on UHAMKA Primary Education students who work as teachers in schools. This study aims to determine the problems of social interaction that occur between teachers and parents of students during distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, this research answers the following research questions: What are the problems in PJJ? What are the teachers' efforts in overcoming PJJ so that there is good interaction between teachers and parents? What are the important things that need to be considered in social interaction in online learning, both during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new normal era?

## II. METHOD

We adopt a case study method to achieve the research objectives. A case study is qualitative research that is appropriate to use because data collection focuses on understanding the problems under study by exploring in detail the perceptions of the participants (Creswell, 2011). In this study, the problem raised is the social interaction between teachers and parents during PJJ during the covid-19 pandemic.

This case study will try to dig in-depth and then explain comprehensively from the data taken from various sources (Yin, 2012). We used interviews, questionnaires, and FGDs for data collection. This study involved 21 postgraduate students with a major in basic education at a private university in Jakarta. All of them have worked and worked as elementary school teachers in the Jakarta area and its buffer areas. A total of 17 schools are Public Elementary Schools and 4 Private Primary Schools. Other participants are the parents of the 21 students. 241 parents participated in providing data by filling out a questionnaire.

This research was conducted with a research flow that was divided into several stages. The first stage of planning by selecting locations and samples. 21 students work as elementary school teachers in JABODETABEK. The second stage, data collection through semi-structured interviews with 21 teachers who carried out PJJ to obtain more in-depth data. Researchers make interview guidelines based on literature relevant to social interaction problems. The purpose of the interview is to get more meaningful data. Interviews were conducted online through zoom meetings. The second stage, data from parents was carried out through an online survey consisting of 22 questions given via Google Form. The questions are arranged according to the research objective, which includes 22 questions. Furthermore, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted which was attended by a team of researchers, teachers and education professors. The FGD was conducted through a zoom meeting which was held

for 2 hours. Discussions were carried out with themes drawn from the important points found in interviews and surveys.

Reference collection and processing (data analysis) using procedures suggested in literature such as Braun & Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and Creswell (Creswell, 2011). Data processing is done by coding. Researchers categorize various incoming data from respondents, use important categories and themes by the research problem (Saldana, 2011). Use of investigator triangulation involving all researchers at all stages of the study with regular conferences added to dependence (Patton, 2014). Triangulation of investigators also helps researchers to reduce bias because triangulation facilitates cross-checking the integrity of participant responses (Anney, 2014).

### III. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

PJJ program was established during the Covid-19 pandemic as a substitute for face-to-face meetings at school, giving rise to various problems. Not only students, parents, and teachers also experience it. Based on the data obtained through teacher interviews and parent surveys, it can be classified as existing problems that cause social interaction problems. Curriculum, media and technology, and aspects of psychology, are 3 major themes that emerged in interviews with teachers.

#### Curriculum Problems

PJJ during the pandemic was implemented without adequate preparation, either by the government or schools. Based on interviews with 21 teachers, all stated that in the first 2 months, PJJ was not running optimally. This is because they don't understand. Entering the second month there were several directions from the school leadership, but not yet in the form of a guide.

Teacher A from a public school:

"The principal gives general directions regarding changes to the curriculum and the media to be used."

Only 1 teacher from a private school stated that in the second month the PJJ guide from the school had been completed. Stepping into the new academic year 2020/2021, schools are starting to have a pattern of PJJ implementation, although it is still not perfect.

Teacher B from a public school:

"We get PJJ guidance based on the emergency education curriculum of the Ministry of Education."

Teacher C from a private school

"We make our guide to refer to the emergency curriculum but enrich it with our plans based on the close work of leaders and teachers."

In all the schools surveyed, it was found that none of them had made a PJJ guide for the elderly. Public schools only provide information through the WA Group. Private schools hold online meetings for socialization and motivation with parenting webinar activities. The lack of understanding about what and how to teach at home creates interaction problems between teachers and parents. Teachers Parents who are active will continue to ask the teacher, even at night where the teacher should rest. Inactive parents tend to be silent and some are ignorant.

#### Media and Technology Issues

During PJJ, there is no face-to-face school, all learning is carried out online. The main problem felt by teachers and parents was mastery of technology and various existing applications, all the teachers interviewed conveyed.

Teacher D from a public school:

"We are not used to using some media such as zoom and google drive, nor are parents. Sometimes problems arise because the written language is not understood or not quite right."

All teachers complained about this PJJ, unscheduled communication. They have to be ready whenever parents or students ask questions.

Teacher L from a private school said that he did not encounter any significant obstacles in using various applications because he was used to using them before the pandemic. Their school already has several online learning activities. Another thing related to media and technology, all teachers from state schools stated that there had been no special training from the school for both teachers and parents, only suggestions from school leaders to study independently or take part in training outside of school. Meanwhile, teachers from private schools claim to have received training from the school. What is interesting is the story of a teacher from a public school that they help each other, one example is; teachers who are elderly and are reluctant to learn IT are assisted by young teachers. Information was also obtained, there are only 2 schools out of 21 schools that help teachers by making communication guides through online media, the rest is left up to the abilities of each teacher.

Another problem that can be concluded from the results of interviews with state teachers is that not all families have enough cellphones or laptops for PJJ for all children, because they are used by working parents, limited internet quota due to economic factors. Finally, the teacher tries to overcome this by reducing online learning using Zoom, YouTube, or other platforms that use a lot of quota. Guru tries to optimize the use of some relatively affordable applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Google Drive.

### **Psychological Problems**

Psychologically, the changes that have occurred so rapidly throughout this pandemic affect the mental condition of teachers and parents. Based on the information from the teachers interviewed, it is known that both teachers and parents are worried and anxious about the uncertain pandemic.

Teacher E from a public school:

"Studying online at a glance is short-lived, not like face to face at school, but the fact is we have to serve students and parents all day long."

Teacher F from a state school revealed during an interview that he was more comfortable running PJJ, but what he was worried about was how long this PJJ would end, given the uncertain pandemic conditions. Also, one teacher from a private school shared that what was bothering her was the problem of working time erratically. He and his partner must be ready to serve parents or students who ask questions at any time. This certainly makes other homework, such as accompanying PJJ children themselves, difficult.

He also revealed; "There are parents who protested, they still pay but they teach. They are also confused about how to teach their children."

The psychological stability of teachers and parents triggers problems in their interactions. 18 out of 21 teachers stated that at the beginning of PJJ they felt shocked and anxious because they had to do completely unthinkable things. And what worries the teachers, even more, is when the response of most of the parents stated that they are not ready and do not understand how to assist their children at home. After walking for 4 months of PJJ, all the teachers felt used to it.

### **Parental Involvement Issues**

Before the pandemic, the involvement of parents in children's education at school was still limited to certain activities such as assisting in making homework (homework) for children and attending invitations to school activities such as giving report cards at the end of the semester. During PJJ, the involvement of parents varies and duration every day. Teachers and parents interact online every day because parents have to assist children to learn from home during PJJ. Most of the social interactions between teachers and parents have not encountered any significant problems according to the teachers obtained from the interviews. The problems that exist are generally caused by the conditions and characteristics of certain teachers or parents who have personal problems.

Teacher F from a public school:

"Parents with problems, usually before the pandemic, had problems."

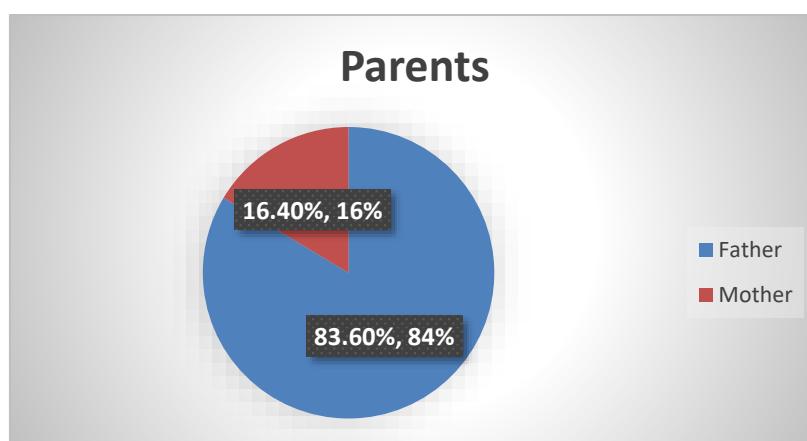
Teacher J from public schools:

"Parents who care about their children's education during the pandemic are trying to get involved properly. Meanwhile, parents who have always been ignorant, during this PJJ event, their involvement was minimal."

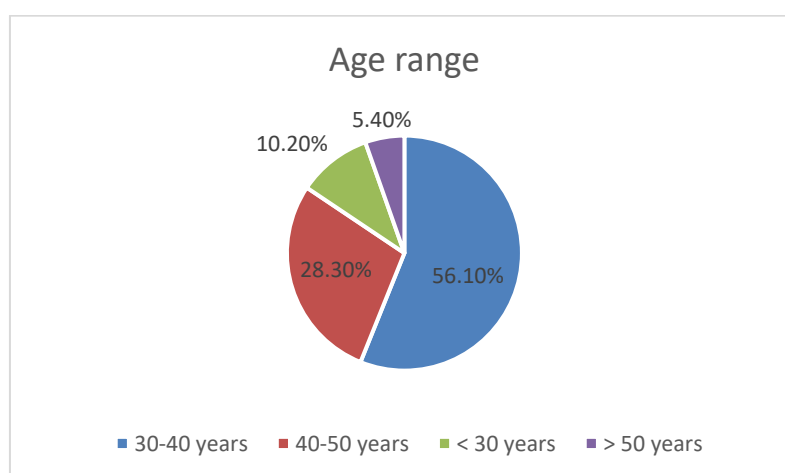
In general, the teachers interviewed said that parents inevitably got involved, because elementary school children indeed need assistance when learning. This further confirms that another positive thing during this pandemic, the involvement of parents in the educational process of their children is increasing.

### Parents' Perceptions of Online Social Interactions

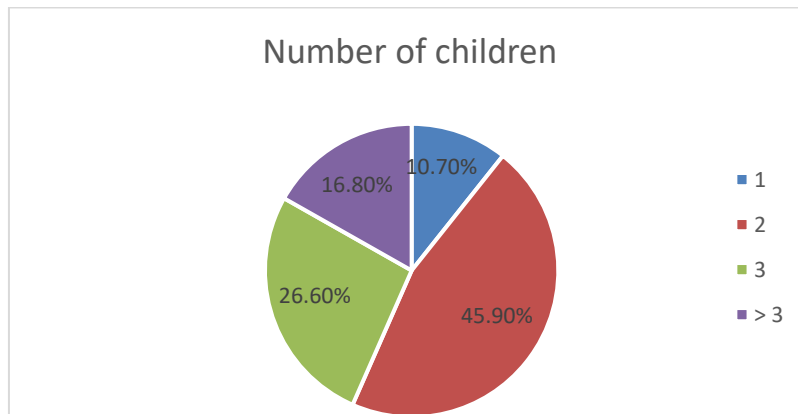
In particular, the problems of social interaction during PJJ experienced by parents can be described by 241 parent respondents. The questionnaire distributed to 241 parents of 21 primary schools was filled with 83.6% mothers, 16.4% fathers.



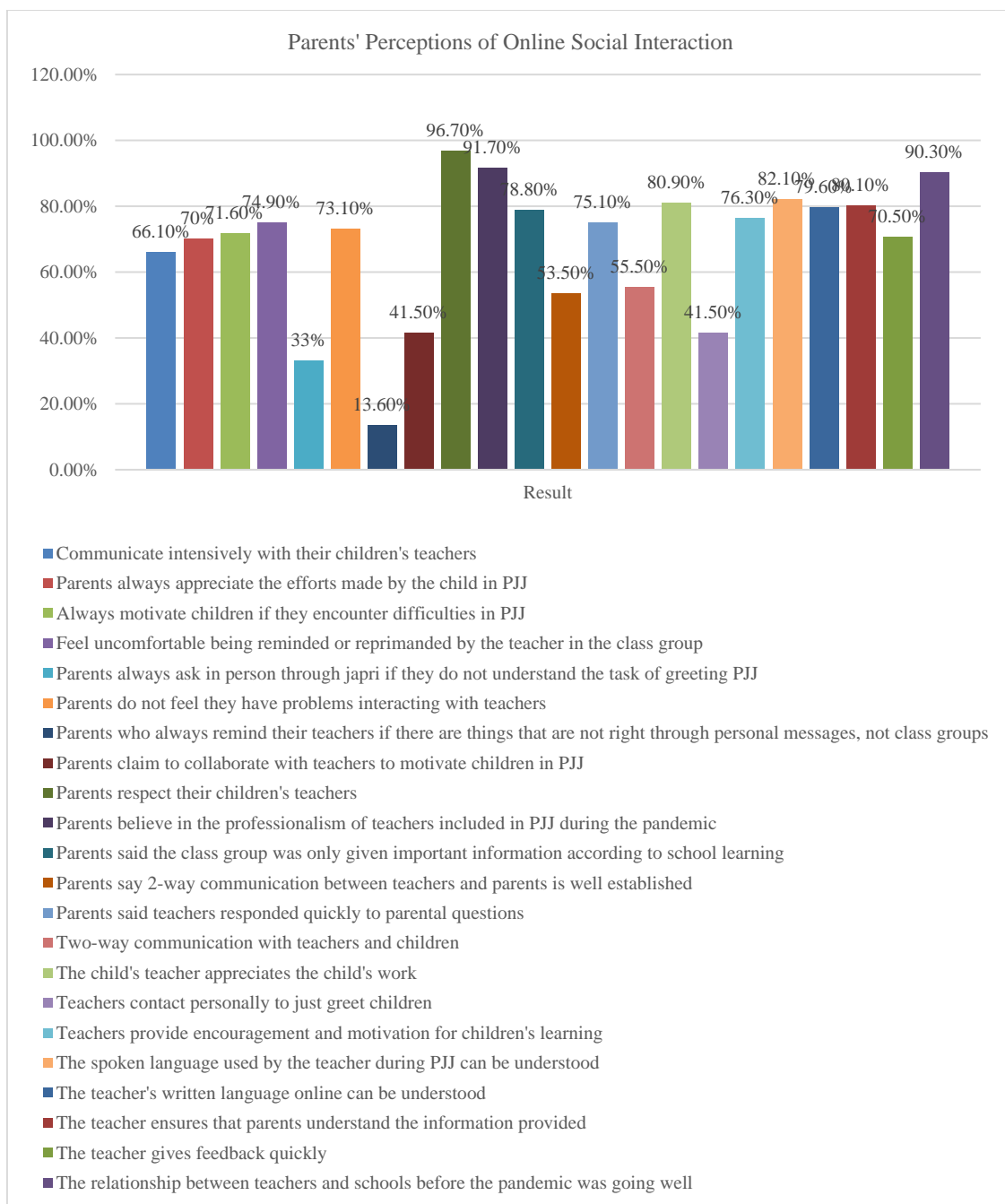
The age range was 56.1% aged 30-40 years, there were 28.3% respondents from parents aged 40-50 years, while respondents aged under 30 were 10.2%, the rest were over 50 years.



From the data above, it is known that the number of children owned by respondents is 10.7%, namely, respondents who have 1 child, 45.9% of respondents have 2 children, 26.6% of respondents have 3 children and 16.8% have more than 3 children.



From a survey conducted of 241 parents from 21 schools studied, it is known that their perceptions of the social interactions that occur during PJJ are as illustrated in the graph from the survey results to parents below:



From the survey results above, the highest result appears in the aspect of respecting teachers, reaching 96.7%. The problems that stand out are visible in several aspects. As many as 74.9% of parents feel uncomfortable being reminded or reprimanded by the teacher in the class group. It was found that 53.5% of parents stated that 2-way communication between teachers and parents was well established. Meanwhile, related to the collaboration of parents and teachers to motivate children in PJJ, it is known that 41.5%. The same percentage for items teachers contacted personally to simply greet children. Also, there are 33% of parents who during PJJ always ask personally through Japri if they do not understand the duties of the teacher. And only 13.6% of parents always remind the teacher if there is something that is not right through personal networks, not class groups.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Social interaction is what is needed so that relationships between people who are working together run well. Problems that trigger disruption of social interaction between teachers and parents during PJJ can be minimized by trying to overcome existing problems, both those that are directly related to social interaction or those that are not directly related but affect the quality of social interactions. The current category of feedback is also important, with due regard; mutual respect and trust, parents need positive communication, intense feedback on each task performance (Leenders et al., 2019).

The other side of social interaction through online media requires a process, time, and commitment from all parties (Pirchio et al., 2013). Of the parents who experienced positive things from the experience of using digital communication, 94% said their child had benefited from the media (Bosch et al., 2017). What is interesting and special now is that PJJ is carried out in a pandemic condition which is certainly different from the previous conditions, where PJJ is not implemented every day but only occasionally or just a few hours a week.

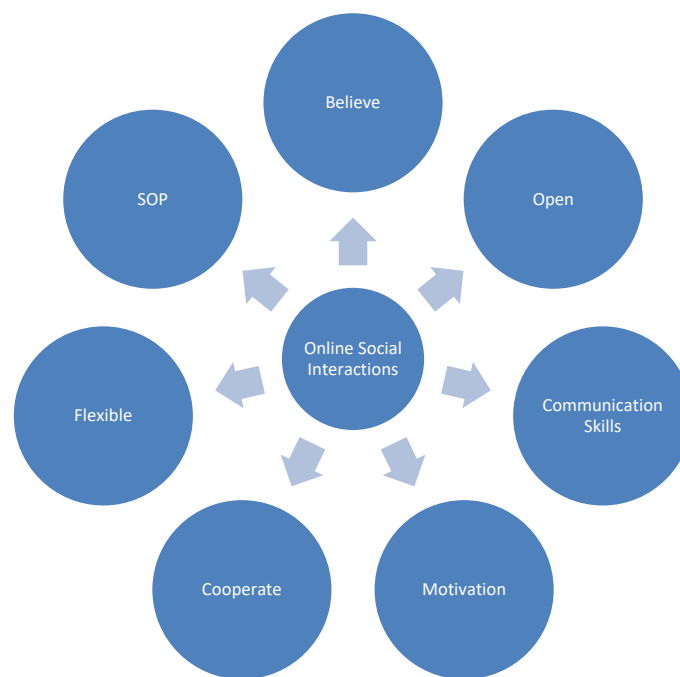
The first issue is related to the curriculum. The curriculum in this pandemic period must of course be selected and redesigned, including learning materials and learning approaches. In essence, the curriculum is made based on existing needs and conditions (Kelly, 2004). In a pandemic era, with all its limitations, the curriculum must change (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Schools can simplify the curriculum independently, by referring to the emergency curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The learning materials provided are adjusted to the basic competencies that have been specifically determined during a pandemic (GTK DIKDAS, 2020). For learning materials that require special understanding, such as mathematics, for example, the teacher must first educate parents before giving assignments to students. Education can be in the form of video recordings of teaching tutorials and modules.

Media is a means or vehicle that can be chosen to achieve learning objectives. The choice of media determines whether the interaction will be effective or not. Choosing the medium that all parents are most likely to use is wise (Sutarto et al., 2020) (Dong et al., 2020). The media commonly used during PJJ are WhatsApp (WA), Telegram, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Kazela. The WA digital platform is used by all schools as a medium of communication and teaching. WA is considered the easiest, cheapest, and is commonly used by anyone. The Zoom application is mostly used by private schools whose parents can afford it. There are those who every day have one or two times a week. Public elementary schools hardly use this facility, because it takes up quite a large internet quota, and burdens both teachers and parents. Teaching is completed by asking students to watch educational shows according to their class on TVRI. The use of this television media can be optimized, along with the improvement of learning shows that must be carried out by the government.

Obstacles related to the online interactive media used, such as the problem of not having a cellphone or cellphone being used alternately and internet pulses, can be assisted by teachers in various ways. Constraints like this also occur in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan (Adnan, 2020). One solution, teachers regularly conduct home visits or visits to students' homes or vice versa, students come to schools or teachers' houses while maintaining health protocols during the pandemic. For close locations, home visits have proven effective (Supena et al., 2020). Another solution taken by the teachers is to involve the coordinator or class administrator, who is also the parent of the student, to convey messages to other parents near their house, or to send a photocopy of material or information from the school. The alternating use of cellphones between one child and another at home is given a solution with the flexibility of communication time. Another obstacle is the ability to buy internet quota, which schools can try by giving internet credit to underprivileged teachers and parents, either using school funds or working with the school committee. Sharing between parents, capable to poor.

Social interaction problems can also be influenced by the psychological conditions experienced by parents and teachers. From the discussion on the Focus Group Discussion, it was concluded that schools could help teachers and parents to overcome this problem by providing online counseling services (e-counseling). E counseling can be facilitated by schools that have a counselor or psychologist. If not, the school can work with a counseling or psychology agency. During this pandemic, several institutions under the auspices of the government, universities, and social or private institutions provided free e-counseling services. Schools can also organize programs such as parenting studies (parenting), emotional self-training, and other types of education for parents and teachers that will help them maintain mental stability. Nick Yoder (Yoder et al., 2020) stated, social and emotional learning is needed in online learning during a pandemic.

Curriculum design that is suitable for pandemic conditions, appropriate and effective learning media, and the psychological condition of teachers and parents who are maintained will minimize conflicts that arise in social interactions. Furthermore, social interactions in this Pandemic need to be reformulated. Social interaction during PJJ is dominated by online social interactions. Without meeting face to face as usual. The following are recommendations for important things that need to be considered in social interactions between teachers and parents when online learning is produced based on Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted by researchers with 21 teachers and education experts:



### **Believe**

Believing is the basic capital in establishing social interactions. Parents and teachers trust each other that each has the same goal, namely to provide the best educational services for children. In communication practice, building trust will reduce anxiety about a pandemic situation (Leask & Hooker, 2020). Parental trust in the school will increase the involvement of parents in their children's education at school (Strier & Katz, 2016). For this reason, a system needs to be built to build parental trust in the school (Safari et al., 2020).

### **Open**

Be open to informing each other's conditions, quota constraints, for example, causing children to be unable to participate in today's activities. Teachers are also open to informing if, at certain hours, they cannot respond quickly to answers because they have to accompany their children to study at home. Through openness, each other will know and be able to understand and understand. Comfortable communication according to parents if you want to tell specific things openly, namely by direct telephone (oral), written communication channels are more appropriate for formal information only (Lyubitskaya & Shakarova, 2018)



### **Communication skills**

Schools seek training in the use of online media for teachers and parents to minimize conflicts due to incomprehension in media use (Kufi et al., 2020). In particular, teachers need to be given oral and written communication training, so that miscommunication does not occur. Create operational and technical guidelines for the implementation of PJJ, especially those related to communication through online media. This can include, communication ethics, time to communicate, way of writing, and others. The written language in online interactions is more widely used. For this reason, it is necessary to have good writing skills, so that there is no misunderstanding as a result of choosing incorrect words or using punctuation and even emoticons that provoke conflict.

### **Motivation**

Related to personal things. Communication is made with private networks, via WA, SMS, or direct telephone. Some things are more effectively done over private networks than in groups. Giving appreciation, for example, can be done occasionally in a group to motivate others, but not always because it can lead to demotivation for others. Personally, it can be done by messaging on private networks. You can give words on voice notes for their work. Or send a response as soon as they send the PJJ results in WA, make a video summary of the photos of their activities and give a series of words of praise and encouragement. Also, by giving thanks to parents and children who have carried out PJJ duties properly and on time. Gives emotion in the form of stars and others. Also, give a verbal appreciation. Likewise to remind or reprimand. There is a reminder that can be done in the group, for example, information that has collected the task. However, some should go through private networks so as not to offend the reprovved person. Interaction through digital platforms requires strategies to motivate each other (Bakhtiar, 2019).

### **Cooperate**

Cooperation between all related parties needs to be established. At home, the collaboration between father and mother and other family members supports the ongoing PJJ process. In schools, all existing human resources need to work together, starting from school leaders, teachers, and staff. Next is the collaboration between schools and parents. Cooperation between parents is also needed. Support from various parties, parents, teachers and the government will contribute positively and significantly to the academic pressure experienced by students (Pajarianto et al., 2020).

### **Flexible**

If there are parents who ask questions because they do not understand, the teacher usually explains it again until the parents understand using private networks even by telephone. In addition to asking for assistance from Korlas to help coordinate parents who do not understand the assignment given. Here the teacher must be flexible. Some teachers allocate special time to specifically interact through private networks only for students who have problems in PJJ. Usually the teacher contacts the parents directly and if there is no news, they will come to the house to find out the problems that have caused the parent to be inactive in participating in PJJ implementation. Usually the teacher contacts Japri if there is no change then come to the house. Also, ask other parents for help to find out the cause of this. Agile Education is a mindset to be ready to face changes that occur in the world of education (Reimers & Innovation, 2020).

### **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**

Users of social media need to be regulated and made rules (Greenhow et al., 2019). The interaction between teachers and parents is carried out in groups and individually. If the form is general information, it is done in groups. The teacher makes SOP for interaction on social media which is used such as WAG, this is to anticipate the emergence of conflict. SOPs made related to communication time, materials or information that can and cannot be shared. When using a Zoom meeting, they are also given SOPs for the procedures and ethics. This SOP is needed so that interactions through online media can run well, at a time when its current intensity is increasing. Technology, like a double-edged sword, can connect but sometimes blur the boundaries of work and life which have implications for physical and mental health (Adisa et al., 2017).

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Social interaction between parents and teachers is one of the keys to the success of a child's education. The pandemic is making face-to-face interactions online. This Distance Learning raises various problems that trigger disruption of social interactions, such as; the problem of sudden and unclear curriculum changes, media and technology problems that must be owned and mastered, psychological problems for both parents, teachers, and children during an uncertain pandemic, the problem of parental involvement in accompanying learning at home, and interaction problems social via online. Through this research, not only problems were found but also recommendations for online social interaction models that could be applied during PJJ or in post-pandemic online learning.

Researchers suggest that teachers and parents be provided with knowledge and training on social interaction online. This is not only useful during PJJ during this pandemic, but in the future, wherein this digital era, communication via digital media is commonplace and needed. Schools as educational institutions specifically make online social interaction guides, so that teachers and parents have the same paradigm of how to build good social interactions.

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