



Parents' Strategies in Dealing with Children's Stress Symptoms in Kindergarten during Online Learning

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Received 18 March 2022;

Accepted 18 April 2022;

Published 25 April 2022

Abstract

Online learning causes children's stress symptoms, specifically for the preschoolers during COVID-19. This makes parents seek a method in overcoming the difficulties that are faced by students while studying. Therefore, this study aims to examine the parents' strategy in dealing with children's stress symptoms during online learning. A total of 27 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of parents and children that are involved in e-learning during COVID-19 in the Batulayar group B kindergarten, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Furthermore data were collected using a survey method. The results showed that most of the children experienced behavioral and cognitive stress symptoms. This critical condition is comprised of three categories including the low, moderate, and the high level that has 15%, 81%, and 4% of children respectively. Moreover, there are 67%, 22%, and 11% of parents prefer to give gifts or rewards, allow play and have recreation, as well as understand their children learning style to deal with stress symptoms while studying at home during COVID-19. Parents have to be more sensitive to their children's conditions to prevent boredom during online learning.

Keywords: *Parents' Strategy, Learning Stress.*

Introduction

For two years, COVID-19 greatly affects the educational system of the world including Indonesia. This causes the Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud), issue Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in the Coronavirus Disease Emergency Period to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Learning from home is one of these policies in which the activities and assignments given to students differ due to the available facilities (Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020). According to Muhdi & Nurkolis (2020), online learning is also called e-learning or computer-based. This learning style does not involve any physical interaction between teachers and students because it uses an internet-based digital platform that helps in eliminating time and distance (Putra & Irwansyah, 2020). In line with government policies, Early Childhood Education (PAUD) needs to adapt to this change by using the available information technology. This is to ensure that the educational system is continually run based on the curriculum and the goals, hence, it becomes a new challenge for teachers, students, and parents in PAUD. Therefore, guardians are required to know the strategies in dealing with this condition due to the stress it causes for children.

Academic stress is caused by the pressure attached to achieving educational goals (Palupi, 2020). Also, it indicates the inability of students to adapt to programs at school (Barseli, et al.,

2017). Several assignments given to children and a monotonous learning atmosphere tend to promote a cynical and apathetic attitude because they cause a lack of self-confidence and a low process in understanding the material received (Arirahmanto and Sutam, 2016). Students with low and moderate stress overcome all challenges and easily control themselves during online learning. Meanwhile, children at a severe stress level perceive academic demands as pressure because they find it difficult to cope with the condition that was experienced (Barseli, et al., 2018). Stress is caused by pressure that arises from the environment that can only be dealt with through a skeptical strategy. This critical condition affects early childhood students due to the changes in the educational system to online.

The success of this learning process is not only the responsibility of schools, teachers, and students but also involved guardians' support. Therefore, it is important to examine parents' strategies or efforts in assisting children to overcome boredom while studying at home (Agusriani & Fauziddin, 2021). Families are expected to help students in solving educational problems by using effective coping methods (Sheidow, et al., 2014). Previous studies showed that parents make efforts such as inviting children to play and recreation during holidays, providing psychological support, and rewards/gifts to deal with stress symptoms (Trisnani and Astuti, 2021). According to Ahsani (2020), they need to understand the learning style to support their children during e-

learning (Ahsani, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to determine the parents' strategies in dealing with stress symptoms for Kindergarten B children in online learning during the pandemic.

Method

This study used a purposive sampling technique to select parents and children that are involved in online learning activities during COVID-19 in the Batulayar group B kindergarten, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Sugiyono, 2019:133).

Data were collected using a questionnaire that contained the personal information of parents and children from the State Kindergarten schools. Teachers helped to distribute these written questions to select the right participants and continued with direct interviews about the parents' strategy in dealing with children's

stress symptoms in online learning during COVID-19. Data were analyzed and presented using the results obtained from the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The results showed the employment status of 27 parents during COVID-19 at Batulayar State Kindergarten 1 and 2, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (TK 1 and 2). This data was obtained to know the time guardians have in accompanying their children at home during online learning. Therefore, this study shows parents' strategies to deal with stress symptoms of students while receiving a computer-based lecture. The data obtained indicates categories of parents including full-time at home, full-time working, and freelancers.

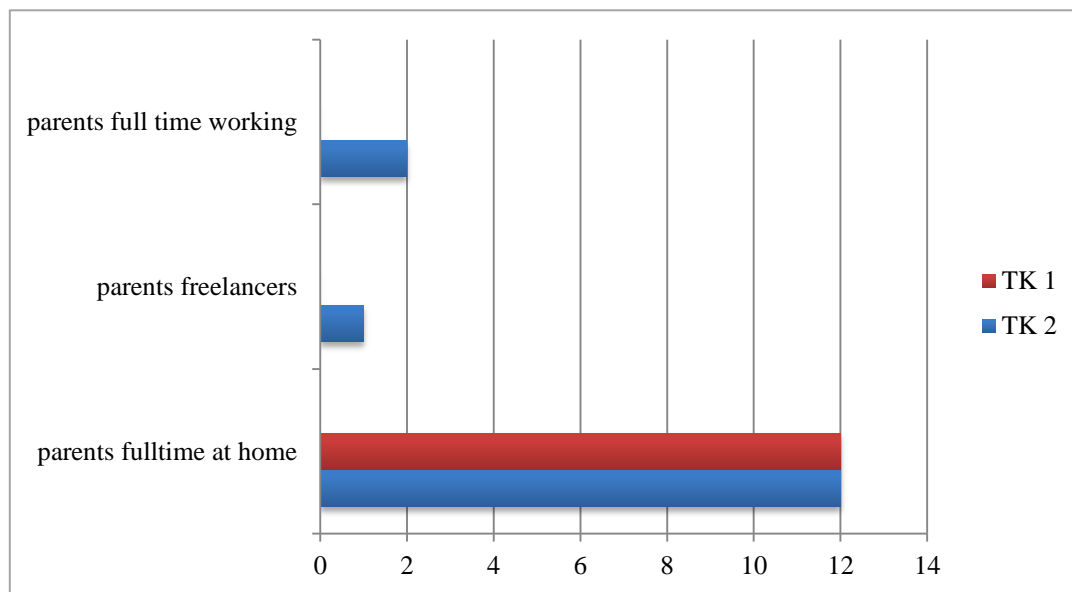


Figure 1: Bar diagram of parents' employment status

The above data is used to determine the parents' strategies in dealing with stress symptoms of students while studying online. Figure 1 indicates that 89% of guardians always accompany their children during e-learning because they are full-time at home. Furthermore, 3.7% and 7.3% of parents are freelancers and full-time workers who only have less time for their children and fully entrusted them with caregivers while studying online.

The two kindergartens held a meeting with parents and teachers before the implementation of online learning from home. These two parties agreed to conduct semi-online learning by allowing guardians to take student worksheets to school every Monday through the Whatsapp application. The results of questionnaires and interviews about parents' strategies in dealing with children's stress symptoms in online learning during COVID-19 include the following.

Stress Symptoms of Learning in Children

The interviews conducted for 20 days in TK 1 and 2 showed that children's stress symptoms during online learning are cognitive and behavioral. Subsequently, the most dominant behavioral stress symptoms experienced by Kindergarten B students include refusing to learn, complaining, crying, whining, fighting with their

siblings, disturbing people at home, and delaying doing assignments. The result of the parents interviewed include the following.

“This may be because he was used to studying with many friends at school and doesn't feel motivated at home. The child always complains of being tired and delays doing his schoolwork.”

Meanwhile, students who experience cognitive stress symptoms find it difficult to concentrate and understand the subject matter. The following showed the interview result.

“My child had difficulty in understanding the subject matter during the online learning because I need to be patient while teaching him. Occasionally, I do seek for the teacher's help via WhatsApp while finding it difficult to explain.”

The following result indicated children who do not experience stress symptoms during online learning.

“I am a housewife and always accompany my child to study daily. However, he has never been faced with any strange symptoms while learning online. Occasionally, the child asks about the subject matter because he likes to study with me at home.”

The strategies used by parents help to produce differences in the level of children's stress symptoms.

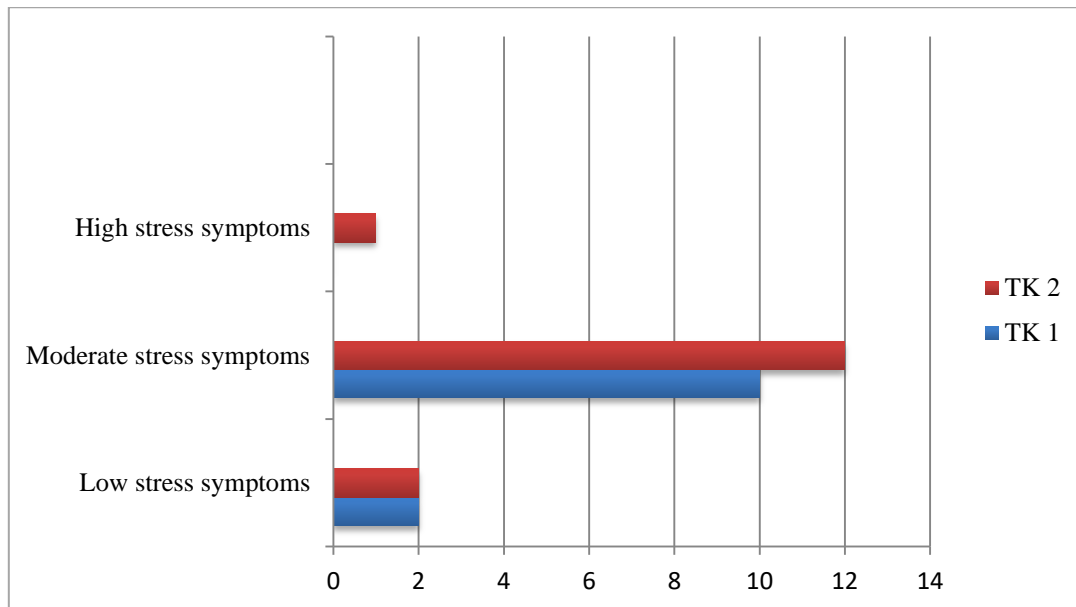


Figure 2: Stress symptoms level of learning in children

Figure 2 shows that there are three categories of stress symptoms for kindergarten B children and they include: 1) the low level with a percentage of 15%, which means that parents tend to make a comfortable atmosphere at home during online learning, 2) the moderate stress symptom level with a percentage of 81%, which implies that guardians can handle children by using different strategies or methods, and 3) the high level with a percentage of 4%, which indicates that parents feel they need the help of doctors and psychologists to handle the children. Therefore, it is necessary

to determine the right strategy considering the different difficulties faced by each guardian in dealing with students who experience stress symptoms during online learning.

Parents' Strategies to Handle the Children's Learning Stress Symptoms

Parents need to provide good treatment with appropriate strategies to deal with children's personalities while experiencing stress symptoms. The interview results showed different efforts made by guardians in handling the students during online learning.

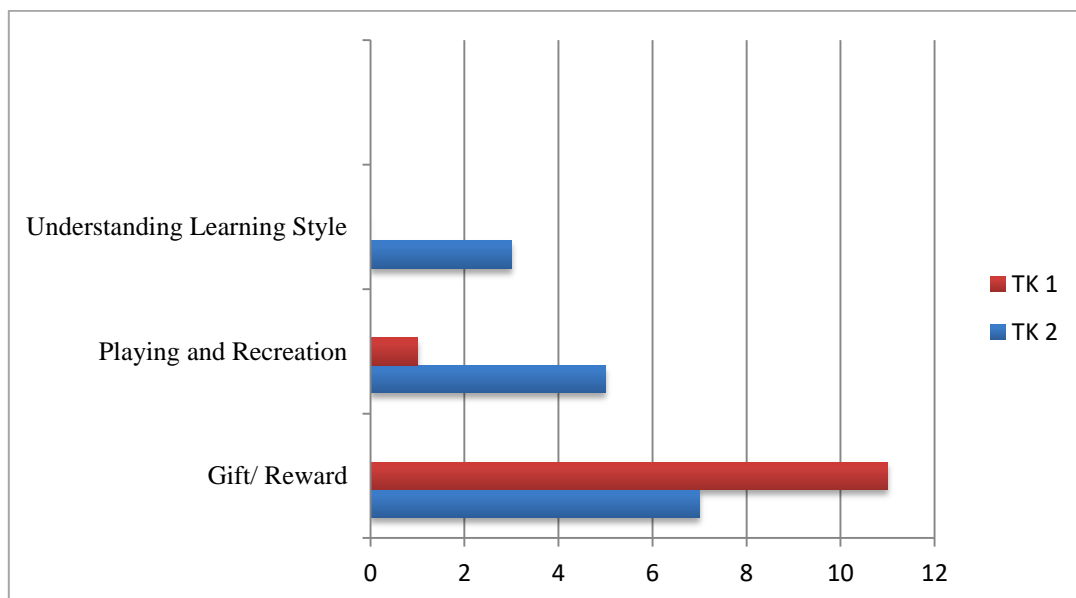


Figure 3: Parents' strategies in dealing with children's stress symptoms

Figure 3 illustrates that there are 3 strategies including understanding learning style, play and have recreation, and providing gifts or rewards while dealing with children's stress symptoms. Parents apply the gifts or rewards method by using verbal encouragement with words to motivate students to complete their assignments. The guardians ensure that children easily understand the subject matter by inviting them to play and having recreation outside the home to relieve a moment of fatigue from studying.

Furthermore, there are 67%, 22%, and 11% of parents prefer to give gifts, allow playing and have recreation, as well as adjust their children learning style to deal with stress symptoms while studying at home during COVID-19 in the Batulayar area, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

Most parents believe giving motivational words is an effective way because it raises students' enthusiasm for learning. Also, some of them perceive that providing favorite food, toys, and items helps to prevent children from experiencing stress symptoms. Most parents believe inviting students to play outside including

going to the beach, playgrounds, and other entertainment places tend to relieve their fatigue. Therefore, parents need to study the method that becomes easy for children to understand. The following is one of their confessions.

“I realized that my child comprehends the subject matter better if he is given examples in the form of pictures or videos during the online learning. The child failed to understand every time I explain verbally and do always complains about being tired and wish to go back to school. Therefore, I searched for examples of pictures or videos that match the assigned subject matter and it makes him understand faster.”

Parents need to use words of motivation and adequate learning facilities at home to increase students' interest in learning. Also, they are required to understand the studying stress symptoms and provide assistance in handling the condition. Based on the results, parents create awareness in reducing the risk of stress because of their strategies in dealing with it. Furthermore, those who provide children's favorite items tend to make them feel appreciated and more active while undergoing online learning.

Conclusion

The stress experienced by children at home during online learning is unavoidable, specifically for early childhood that needs explorations because their studying activities are carried out while playing. Therefore, parents have to pay attention to this critical condition and continue to collaborate with teachers to achieve better goals. Several strategies are needed by guardians to overcome children's bad behavior during online learning. These strategies include providing gifts or rewards, inviting children to play and have recreation, as well as understanding the learning styles that assist in preventing the adverse effects of stress symptoms. In conclusion, parents and teachers need to be more sensitive to children's conditions and attend to the right method in conveying learning.

Data Availability

Not applicable

Conflicts of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest

Funding Statement

None

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