
2-27-2022

Online Learning for Children with Disabilities During the COVID-19: Investigating Parents' Perceptions

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Recommended APA Citation

Jumareng, H., Setiawan, E., Asmuddin, A., Rahadian, A., Gazali, N., & Badaruddin, B. (2022). Online Learning for Children with Disabilities During the COVID-19: Investigating Parents' Perceptions. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(2), 591-604. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.4926>

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Abstract

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Keywords

children with disabilities, parents' perceptions, online learning, qualitative method

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Online Learning for Children with Disabilities During the COVID-19: Investigating Parents' Perceptions

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This research aims to investigate perceptions from parents who have children with disabilities about online physical education classes during COVID-19. The characteristic of this research was qualitative through interviews towards 36 parents of children with disabilities from 2 provinces in Indonesia that prepared to participate in this research. Data analysis by using thematic analysis of qualitative data, including: (a) Interviews. (b) The transcribed interviews was read repeatedly by the author. (c) Given labeled. (d) Data were sorted based on categorization, coding, and highlighting. (e) A collection of similar phrases. (f) Examining. (g) Arranging the data. (h). Share themes. The study results found three main themes, namely: instructional of models learning, technical and motivational obstacles to online learning, and the advantage of online learning. In general, according to parents' perception, the success of online physical education learning during COVID-19 is determined by the participation and support from all parties including central and local governments, teachers, and parents. This study contributes to recent literature concerning physical education learning through online during COVID-19.

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Introduction

In 2020 the epidemic of COVID-19 has attacked all countries (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021), such as America, Brazil, India, Russia, Italy, Japan, Korea, France, Argentina, Spain, New Zealand, Thailand, Iran, including Indonesia. In addition, COVID-19 has impacted to all sectors, such as the economy, offices, industry, shops (Osman, 2020), sports competitions (Hammami et al., 2020), and the educational process in each level from elementary school to university could not be conducted normally (Carrillo & Flores, 2020), and it even had to be stopped temporarily in some instances (Kalloo et al., 2020; Kim, 2020b; Moorhouse, 2020). Data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization reports that 67.7% of schools have changed the system from face to face to online system (Rasmitadila et al., 2020), due to the pandemic impact. In fact, the government in some countries requires their citizen to stay at home (Djalante et al., 2020), and school from home (Bubb & Jones, 2020), it is expected that by applying this requirement, the transmission of COVID-19 could be prevented

In 2021 the Indonesian government was still implementing the online physical education learning for high school, junior high school and elementary school which are intended for children with disabilities. Online learning means that learning by using

technology, such as a computer, laptop or smartphone connected to an adequate internet network (Kim, 2020a; Ogbonna et al., 2019; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Through physical education learning based online, teachers can provide learning materials to the children with special needs virtually by using certain platforms, for example, Zoom Meeting, WebEx, Google Meet, or WhatsApp (Liu et al., 2020). However, the results of previous studies indicated that there were various issues to online learning, for example bad internet networks (Jumareng et al., 2021), expensive internet quota or a lack of willingness to learn by children with disabilities (Widyawan et al., 2020). There is some obstacles in implementation of online learning, then the role and involvement of parents for their children is a key factor of success in achieve a high academic in education (Wilhelmsen & Sørensen, 2019). According to Svendby (2020), parents also have an important role in supporting the children with disabilities to participate in physical activities inside and outside of school or online-based learning. Thus, schools (e.g., staff, teachers, headmaster) and parents have the same responsibility namely, to educate the children with disabilities so that they are ready for the challenging of adulthood.

The definition of parental involvement is not consistent, but some experts define parental involvement in general as participation or the support of parents for their children to learn (Bruin, 2018). There are several types of parental involvement in the learning based online process, including participating in virtual parent-teacher meetings, accompanying their children when researching online at home or supervised their children when doing assignments given by the teacher. Meanwhile, the parental involvement in school includes attending school events or extracurricular activities, being a resource person at school or being collected together with school committee organization (Widyawan et al., 2020). It is expected that parental involvement in the based online process, will have an impact on the development of interest and motivation to learn and reduce a negative effects on them (e.g., stress, depression; Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013). Thus, implementing physical education learning is not easy as it requires collaboration between the school and parents of children with special needs.

Parents' perceptions towards online learning are very important for school policy and research. However, the literature reflects limited research that focuses on perceptions parents of children with disabilities about physical education learning based online in the pandemic. This research contributes towards providing information for lecturers or teachers about the perceptions of parents who have children with disabilities towards physical education learning conducted through online during the COVID-19 era. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the perceptions parents of children with disabilities about physical education learning based online in the COVID-19 era.

Methods

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of parents who have children with disabilities regarding online learning carried out at home. Through these perceptions, researchers will obtain a lot of important information about the effectiveness of online learning for students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. The qualitative approach (Widyawan et al., 2020) with phenomenological methods was used to reveal the perceptions of parents who have children with disabilities about physical education learning based online in the COVID-19 era.

Participants

The participants who were involved and contributed to this research were author who were lecturers and experts on education for children with disabilities from several universities in Indonesia. All authors have the same background and expertise, namely teaching physical

education for children with disabilities. In addition, all authors have the same interest, namely, to investigate the process of learning physical education for children with disabilities which is currently often conducted through online. In this study, researcher aims to further evaluate whether online learning is effective during the COVID-19 pandemic for children with disabilities. In addition, the main participants in this research were 36 parents who have children with disabilities and registered in elementary schools from two provinces in Indonesia, namely West Java (Cianjur, Sukabumi) and Southeast Sulawesi (Kendari) and Ethnic parents come from the Sundanese and Bugis ethnic. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. There were 36 people who had been selected based on following criteria: (a) having children with disabilities, (b) being willing to contribute to this research, (c) have experienced the process of learning physical education online with their children. The selection of two provinces was based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and based on data the distribution that obtained from Indonesian agent unit of COVID-19. Before the research began, all participants in this research were asked to sign a letter of willingness to participate in all activities and the author protects the identity of participants by maintaining confidentiality with parents by given code P. All participants agreed to participate in all activities in this research.

The participation profile in this study consisted of 15 men (41.7%) and 21 women (58.3%), for the age of 35 years was 7 people (19.4%), 40 years was 27 people (75.0 %) and 45 years was 2 people (5.6). As for the occupation of the participants were 9 police officers (25.0%), 11 housewives (30.6%), 13 elementary school teachers (36.1%) and 3 lecturers (8.3%).

Procedures

This study used a qualitative approach with phenomenological method. According to Creswell (2015) phenomenological is qualitative research in which the researcher collects data with participant observation to find out the participants' essential phenomena in their life experiences. This method was chosen because it is in accordance with the existing problems, namely, to reveal how parents perceive when undergoing the physical education learning process through online.

This research was conducted in February 2021 and this research has been granted permission from Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. In addition, this research has followed by the Ethical guidelines from World Medical Association (Helsinki Declaration). Interviews with participants took place via Zoom Meeting with a duration of 30-60 minutes per person as long as four weeks. Interviews were conducted via Zoom Meeting because the geographical distance was so far between the researcher and the participants. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian language and recorded and then transcribed word by word then the authors translated the quotations that presented in the results.

Data Collection

There were two steps in data collection, namely: (a) conducting interviews with parents who have children with special needs. The purpose of the interview is to collect more meaningful data. In addition, interviews were claimed to be the most common and accurate method to find out an individual's perceptions and experiences (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Interviews were conducted from 1 to 28 February 2021 via online by using the Zoom Meeting platform for 30-60 minutes per participants. In one day, the researcher can interview 1-2 participants. (b) Documentation was carried out to support or to strengthen the results of the interviews, for example took photos when conducting interviews via Zoom Meeting.

Data Analysis

Analysis was performed after the research data from the interviews have been collected. Thematic analysis is used to analyze participants' experiences. Thematic analysis is a method to analyze data in qualitative research with the aim of identifying patterns or to find themes through data that has been collected by researchers. According to Widyawan et al. (2020) in thematic analysis there are several steps that must be taken, including: (a) Interviews are transcribed word by word. (b) The transcribed interviews are read repeatedly by the author to get a broad understanding. (c) The texts are arranged based on a description of the experience and then each given labeled. (d) Data are sorted based on categorization, coding, and highlighting based on similarities (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). (e) A collection of similar phrases grouped and arranged into the initial theme. (f) Examining the meanings of the phenomenon being studied. (g) Arranging the data into themes with a description of each theme. (h). Sharing themes with parents to get a deeper understanding.

Results

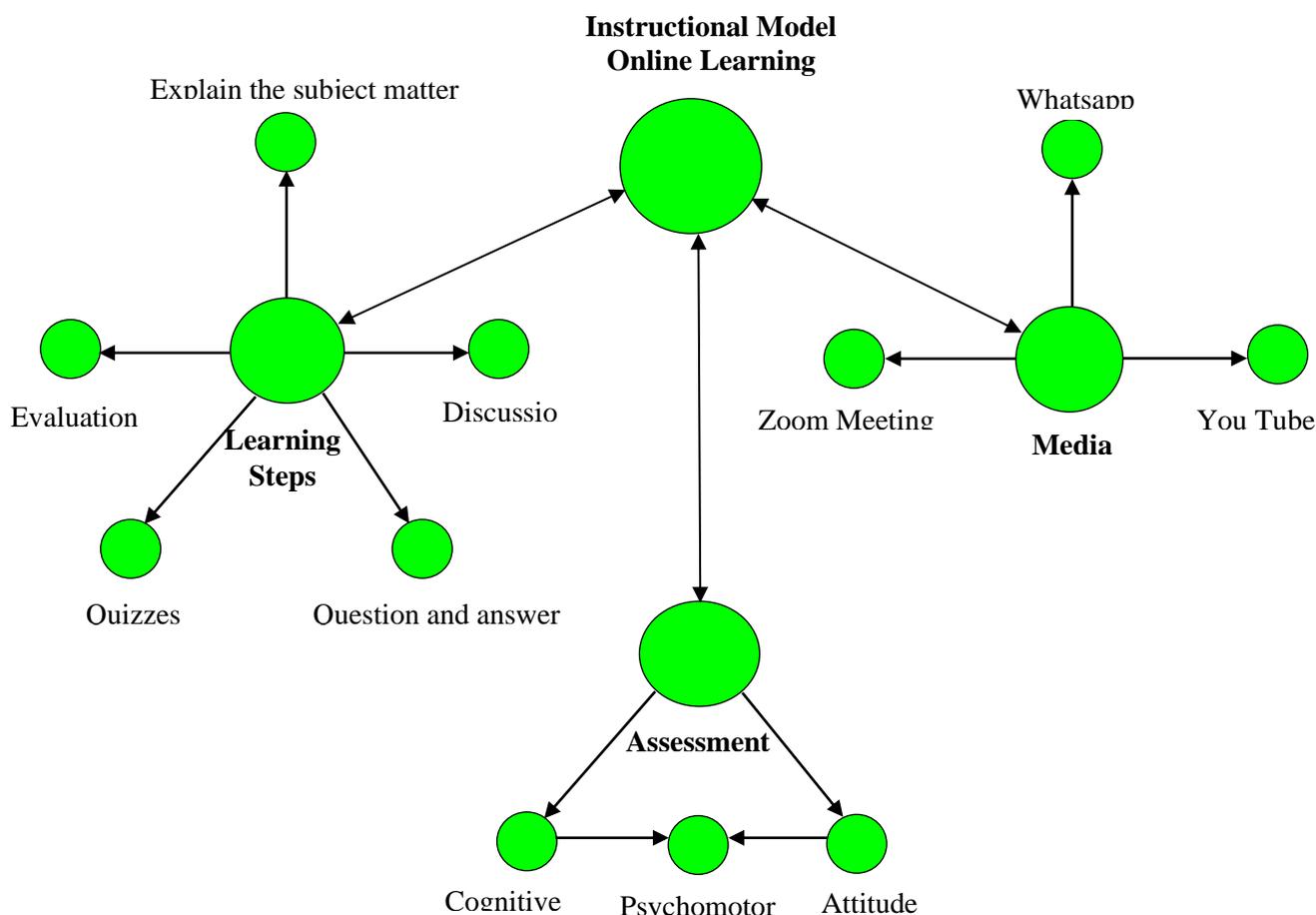
Three themes represent the parents' perceptions who have children with disabilities related to physical education learning based online: (a) Instructional of models learning, (b) technical and motivational obstacles to online learning, and (c) advantage.

Theme 1: Instructional Model in Online Learning

The first theme is discussed about an instructional model so that the physical education learning based online process can create more innovative, fun learning and most importantly can develop all the children's abilities. According to Metzler, (2011) models for planning, implementing, and teaching will provide us with the most effective way to achieve a balanced goal of learning with the variety of content that is now in school physical education programs.

The theme of this learning model was chosen because it is a very important topic to know when carrying out online in the COVID-19 era. The learning model is a pedagogical tool used by teachers to create a physical education learning process that is much more innovative, creative, and fun for students with special needs. If a teacher applies a learning model that is in accordance with the conditions and characteristics of the child, the learning outcomes from them will increase and vice versa if the learning model is not appropriate, it will lead to low learning outcomes for children with disabilities while attending online learning. The instructional of model learning found in this research includes the stages of learning, media, and assessment (See Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Instructional of Model Learning Used by Teachers in Online Learning



Based on Figure 1, the application of learning stages serves to make it easier for teachers when carrying out of physical education learning based online. With the learning stages the teacher will understand what he must do from the beginning of learning, the process to the end of the learning activity. Meanwhile, learning media is a pedagogical tool that aims to make it easier for teachers to deliver subject matter to the children and make it easier for children to understand subject matter (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). According to Li & Lu, (2020) technology media is an important approach in physical education to help improve students skills. There are several technological media that can be used in the physical education learning process, including: computers, smart phones, watching television or you tube (Mundy et al., 2020). In this research, it was found that teachers often use Whatsapps, you tube and Zoom Meetings. Some parents of children with disabilities argued that:

Online learning provides convenience for our children to carry out physical education learning, because they can avoid from the transmission of COVID-19. In addition, teachers often conduct lessons through the Whatsapp media and Zoom Meetings, which are some media that are easy for our children to use. (P1, P4, P7, P10, P16, P17, P18, P25, P30)

Then some parents also argued about learning media that:

When implementing online learning Whatsapps media and Zoom Meetings are often used by teachers and the media are familiar to the children and parents

ourselves, so that children can better understand the subject matter. Apart from that, the teacher also often gave assignments by instructing the children to look at You Tube. (P2, P5, P6, P12, P14, P19, P31, P36)

Most of the parents argued that:

Parents could not supervise their children who have disabilities every day at home because they also have another work that should be carried out, so we think you tube media, Zoom Meetings, especially WhatsApp is a suitable media for our children to access at home to learn. (P3, P8, P9, P11, P21, P23, P24, P26, P28, P29, P32, P34)

The assessment system generally that was often used by teachers at online learning was to direct the assessment of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains that owned by children (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Parents children with disabilities argue:

Assessment that leads to the cognitive and affective domains of children can be done easily by teachers in the COVID-19 era even though online learning, but in our opinion for the psychomotor domain it is difficult to do because children are learning at home virtually, so the teachers must be more accurate for to give an assessment of the psychomotor domain. (P13, P15, P20, P33)

Then the others argue:

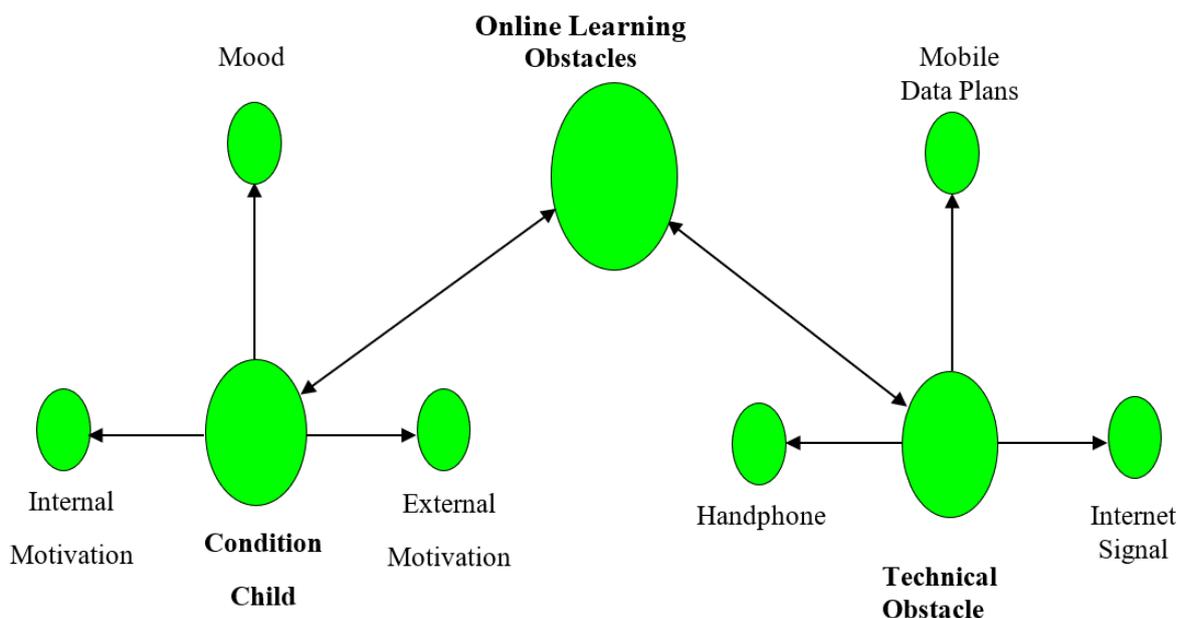
The assessment during COVID-19 that conducted by teachers according to our opinion has been appropriate to the curriculum, for example, teachers conducted assessments in the cognitive domain by holding multiple choice tests, while for assessments in the affective domain, teachers often look at children's behavior when participating in learning activities, for example listening to the teacher, they do not disturb the other friends or not noisy. Meanwhile, according to our opinion that is difficult to assess is the psychomotor domain, because teachers have to assess children's movements virtually via handphones or laptops which have relatively small screens. (P27, P35, P22)

The quote above is the result of interviews conducted by researchers with parents who have children with disabilities regarding instructional model learning. The instructional model learning implemented by teachers at online learning is to be a parameter of success in achieve the physical education goals. Therefore, the using of models learning and involvement or the role of parents for children with disabilities is the main key to developing their abilities for the better.

Theme 2: Technical and Motivational Obstacles to Online Learning

The second theme discussed was the obstacles when implementing online learning for children with disabilities including technical constraints and students' conditions. Figure 2 below illustrates the obstacles when implementing of online learning.

Figure 2
Technical and Motivational Obstacles to Online Learning



In carrying out learning activity by face-to-face in schools as well as in online learning, there will its obstacles. The obstacles that are often found when implementing online learning are technical constraints which include mobile data plans, internet signal and handphone as well as obstacles related to the children's conditions which include mood, external and internal motivation. Mobile data plans are a problem that to be factors of hinders in online learning for children with special needs because some parents who are experiencing financial difficulties. Some parents argued that:

Mobile data plans are one of the inhibiting factors when implementing of online learning, because mobile data plans cost is relatively expensive in Indonesia with a price range of 80 to 100 thousand. Although the Indonesian government currently provides mobile data plans for free, only some people get it. So, if we haven't money to buy mobile data plans then our children can't be joining of online learning. (P3, P5, P7, P11, P12, P13, P17, P22, P30)

Then there are some parents argue:

In the COVID-19 era, many parents have difficulty in earning money, even most of us have to work from home. By work from home resulted in a significant reduction in our financial income, while the prices of goods as well as desserts in Indonesia were getting higher. Therefore, according to us those mobile data plans are a problem for parents with low economic incomes. (P2, P4, P9, P10, P16, P19, P25, P35)

The next obstacle is related to the internet signal which is often disrupted due to extreme weather. Parents children with special needs argue:

Another inhibiting factor in implementing of online learning is the internet network, which is often interfered, so that our children cannot clearly obtain lesson material from the teacher. In addition, an interference in internet network

cause difficulties for children to access YouTube and Zoom Meetings. (P1, P6, P8, P15, P18, P21)

Handphones were the next obstacle found, for example handphones owned by parents with special needs could not access YouTube or Zoom Meetings. About handphones some parents argue:

Handphone is the most important tool to follows of online learning, without sophisticated and contemporary handphones, such as smartphones with the Samsung, Xiaomi, or Apple types, it is certain that our children will never be able to follow of SFH. (P14, P20, P23)

Thus, for the optimal implementation of learning at online learning, parents must provide data packages and internet networks, and having a handphone that is unconditional.

The second obstacle found that often arises when implementing of online learning is the condition of children with special needs who often have an unstable mood and lack of external and internal motivation. According to Rasmitadila et al. (2020) the condition of students greatly affects learning activities to run smoothly. Some parents' children with special needs were given their opinion:

When the first time to implemented of online learning, our children didn't want to learn, they tended to be angry and looked in the unmood to take part in online learning. That's because of they are used to doing face to face learning with teachers at school. However, because of a good cooperation situation between the school, namely the headmaster, teachers, and parents, then thank to the God that our children want to learn via online. (P24, P27, P28, P32)

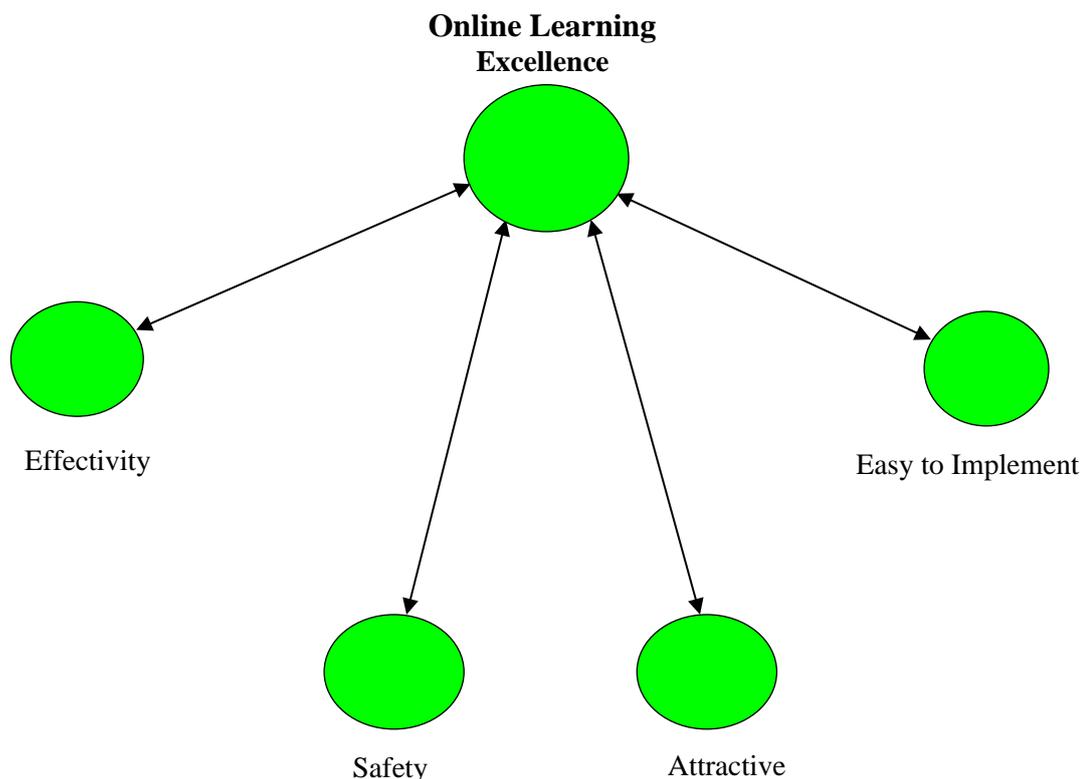
Furthermore, some parents give their opinion:

Mood aspects, internal and external motivation are obstacles that we often find to the children when implementing of online learning. If our children seem to have a bad mood, low internal and external motivation to learn, the teacher and parents work together by using a strategy that is giving rewards, for example giving them beverages and desserts that they like or promising to bring them stroll after finishing their learning. (P29, P31, P33, P34, P36)

Theme 3: The Advantages of Online Learning

The third theme discussed was the advantage when implementing of online learning, included being easy to implement, attractive, safe, and effective. Those four big points are the advantages of online learning found in this research. Figure 3 below illustrates the advantage when implementing online learning.

Figure 3
Online Learning Excellence



The first advantage that found at online learning that it is easy to implement. A learning that will be applied by the teacher should be easy to implement, so that children will find it easy to gain knowledge. About this first excellent that parents' children with special needs argue:

According to us as parents with moderate economic income, online learning during the COVID-19 era was an easy lesson to implement, because we only provide smartphones and the internet, then learning can be carried out at home. (P6, P8, P15, P20, P25, P27, P30, P32, P33, P36)

Attractive is an important factor in the physical education learning process, because if a learning is unattractive then the children will feel bored and cause their learning outcomes to be not optimal. Parents children with special needs given an opinion:

Attractive aspects are the main key to obtaining high learning outcomes. Online learning is proven to be interesting learning for children with special needs, because the teacher presents videos from YouTube and pictures related to the subject matter. (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P12, P14, P19, P24, P26)

The safety aspect is one of the excellent of online learning, safe means that learning carried out by children do not cause of the risky activities or cause the children to be in a dangerous situation. Parents given an opinion:

Online learning can be said that to be one of the learning activities that have a high safety level, because learning of physical education via online at home can

keep the children from transmission of COVID-19. (P7, P10, P11, P13, P16, P17, P22, P29, P35)

When carrying out the learning then main factor that must be considered by a teacher is whether the learning can provide effectiveness in the development of children's abilities. Effectiveness is the main excellent that can be found when implementing of online learning. Below are outlines the opinions of parents' children with special needs about the effectiveness of online learning:

According to us that online learning has a fairly good effectiveness, because the children have increased in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, for example our children that initially did not find out about health to became understand of how to maintain health in the COVID-19 era. Then they seem to have a high level of discipline and responsibility to do their research assignments. Even that our children want to do sports without any instructions from the teachers or parents. (P18, P21, P23, P28, P31, P34)

Thus, based on these three advantages of online learning, it is expected that teachers can apply them continuously in learning physical education for children with special needs during the COVID-19 era.

Discussion

The impact of COVID-19 that has attacked all the countries in the world, including Indonesia, has caused the education system switch to online learning. Not only that, the teachers in Indonesia must change the instructional of model learning from face to face into an online system by utilizing several technologies such as laptops, handphones, computers or using several platforms such as zoom meetings, YouTube or WhatsApp connected to the internet network (Jumareng et al., 2021). However, previous researches claimed that online learning could work effectively if there were mutual support between teachers, headmaster and parents, thus online learning can achieve its goals, namely to increasing of cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities of children with special needs (Guo & Li, 2020; Kaup et al., 2020). According to Rasmitadila et al. (2020) the main factor that support the success of online learning was the support from teachers, parents and the government (central and local). For example, of teacher support, is the changing models or learning strategies that are more innovative, attractive by involving the using of technology, both of online use (learning of internet TV, radio) as well offline (e-modules, printed textbooks) which function to support the success of online learning. Meanwhile, the parental support, for example, by participating and supervising children with special needs to study at home via online or from TV programs. Meanwhile, the support from the government, for example, to develop teacher potential by holding trainings about online learning or models learning in the COVID-19 era. According to Rasmitadila et al. (2020) to provide the support of online learning for normal children as well with special needs from elementary school to university levels, then the Indonesian government carried out a TV program term called "School from Home" and generated learning applications Online called the "Teacher's Room," which supports by the government to support children in obtaining education (Vlachopoulos, 2020), even though the world is currently to be up against a deadly global pandemic.

Thus, to ensure online learning can be continue and to show its effectiveness sustainably, then several action must be carried out by the Indonesian government. First, establishing a special curriculum program for physical education learning during the global

pandemic for all levels of education including for children with special needs. Second, increasing the teacher's ability by arranging training, seminars, webinars about online learning and the application of technology. Third, providing the internet quota for all people including teachers, schools and most importantly for parents who have children with special needs. Fourth, establishing free online programs for teachers and parents. Fifth, increasing the synergic cooperation between the central government (e.g., president, minister) and local governments (e.g., governors, regents), schools (e.g., headmaster, teachers and staff) and families, especially parents who have children with special needs (Borup et al., 2019). Sixth, minimizing the obstacles that often occur in the implementation of online learning.

Implications

This research focuses to investigating the parents' perceptions who have children with special needs about physical education learning through online in Indonesia during COVID-19. The results of this research indicate that there is a positive and negative point of view from parents' perceptions on online learning during COVID-19. Most of parents consider online learning as a highly effective education system during the COVID-19 era to increase children's learning outcomes in physical education subjects.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study focuses on qualitative research by interviews regarding to the parents' perceptions children with special needs about online physical education classes during COVID-19 which had been carried out for 1 month in 2021. Several limitations to this study need to be acknowledged. This researched used parents who comes from two provinces in Indonesia, so this research is a small representation of parents and children with special needs from Indonesia. Therefore, the future research needs to be carried out by adding more participants which comes from several provinces in Indonesia or using a mixed between qualitative and quantitative research. Another possible area of Future research would be to instigate is regarding the perceptions of teachers, students, headmaster and even local governments about physical education through online learning during COVID-19.

Conclusion

The perception of parents who have children with special needs regarding of online physical education classes during COVID-19 got various answers. But, in overall they have the similar perception that online learning is an effective education to develop the children's abilities during COVID-19. In addition, according to parents, learning physical education through online continuously has own benefits, then all the obstacles that often occur in the implementation of online learning could be minimized, then the role of government, teachers and parents is indispensable.

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Article Citation

Jumareng, H., Setiawan, E., Asmuddin, Rahadian, A., Gazali, N., & Badaruddin. (2022). Online learning for children with disabilities during the COVID-19: Investigating parents' perceptions. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(2), 591-604. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.4926>
