

Improving the Intimacy in Mother-Child Communication in the Middle of COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing and Reading Activities

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Abstract

Intimate communication between mother and child is very important for optimal and mature child development in the future. This communication can be built when the mother as the main actor in child care takes enough time to involve in various activities carried out and needed by the child in its development. Nowadays, the existence of a corona pandemic requires everyone to stay at home, no exception for mothers who usually work in the office. Thus, this condition has an important role in fostering intimate communication between mother and child. This study aims at determining various activities that can be carried out by mothers and children while they are at home and the implementation of these activities so that the intimacy of mother and child communication that was constrained could be reawakened. The method used in this study is a survey method with a quantitative approach. The stages include condition analysis, literature review, research instrument making, google form creation, data processing, soliciting responses, writing reports, and conclusions. The results of the study showed that most respondents engaged in reading and playing activities with their children at home. Those two activities were made to vary according to the interests and development of the children. Reading and playing activities required mothers to be creative, innovative, and directly involved in children's activities. This has an impact on the rebuilding of intimacy communication between mother and child.

Keywords: communication, Reading, Playing, early childhood

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Introduction

In this unprecedented period, the world is on alert for a corona virus pandemic (COVID-19). Local governments have acted aggressively to limit the spread of the virus through social distancing. Since March 15, 2020, Indonesian President Joko Widodo has asked the public to increase the awareness of COVID-19. One form of the effort to increase awareness is to reduce activities outside. As stated by President Joko Widodo, “It's time for us to work from home, to learn in school from home, and to pray from home.” The WFH (work from home) policy for employees and SFH (school from home) for students were also implemented. Based on this policy, the Governor of West Java also applied WFH and SFH in West Java. The female employees mostly get the opportunity to WFH (work from home), which is as much as 53.45%. For male employees, although the percentage is not as much as female employees, the opportunity for WFH is also quite large, which is 42.82% (Widiastuty, 2020). In this case, West Java as a center of activity during the COVID-19 pandemic is illustrated through this data.

All members of the house do all their activities at home. The fathers worked from home. Working mothers also completed work at home obligations. Children learned from home with the guidance of parents. If the family size is quite big, it can be a challenge since all activities were centered at home. Based on West Java socio-demographic data, 31% of the family has four members of the house. That means one family consists of father, mother, and two children. There is also a member of the house of more than ten people, which is as much as 1%. The following is a description of the data on family size found in West Java.

On March 24, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Anwar Makarim issued a circular concerning the implementation of educational policy in the emergency period of COVID-19. From the circular, there are six important points, which are (1) the implementation of the national exam; (2) learning from home; (3) school exams; (4) grade promotion; (5) acceptance of new students; and (6) school operational assistance funds. The second point, which is the learning process from home is in line with the WFH (work from home) policy that is undertaken by working mothers. Therefore, it can be understood if, in the period of preventing the spread of COVID-19, all activities of family members are carried out at home.

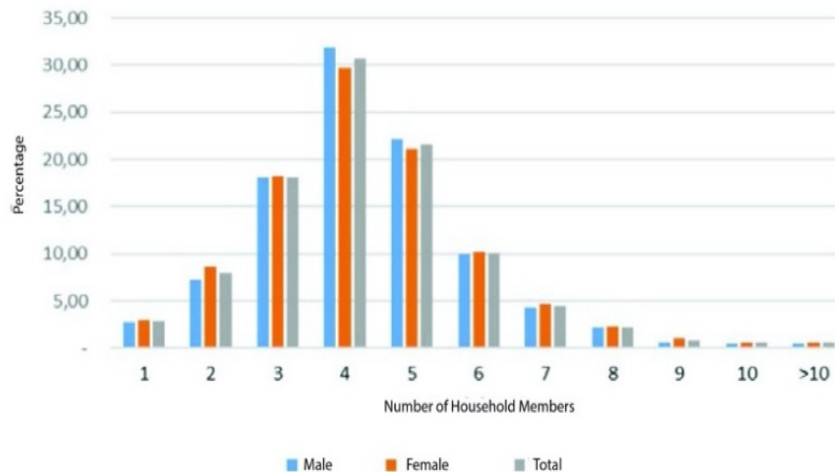


Figure 1. Socio-Demographic Data of Household Members (ART) in West Java (Source: Results of Socio-Demographic Survey of COVID-19 Impact in West Java during the Period of April 13-20, 2020).

When all the anxiety about uncertainty is felt by everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is family momentum that is difficult to find in the pre-pandemic period. When the activity moves to the house, each family member has their respective duties brought home. The condition of the house is busier than before, but it is this togetherness that is difficult to find in the days before the pandemic so that each family member tries to work together to create harmony between members in the family during WFH (work from home) and SFH (school from home) (Subarto, 2020).

During WFH (work from home), working parents were working at home. Although they are working, they are physically at home. With the existence of SFH (School from home), parents are also required to accompany their children to learn online. During this pandemic, parents must be able to carry out their role as educators to improve children's knowledge, abilities, and skills.

The obligation to accompany children when they study and educate children is not a new job for parents. With or without this pandemic situation, the task is inherent for parents. It cannot be denied since the parents are the ones who shape the character of a child. Parents also become the first role model for a child. In child development, parent and child interaction is an irreplaceable factor, they are a communication system and the development

environment of the child from the earliest years (Marilena, 2015).

During this pandemic situation, in addition to accompanying their children to learn, parents also must be able to accompany their children to play and to do other activities they like. That way, children can be comfortable staying at home. In early childhood, the activities that are most preferred by the children are the activities of storytelling, singing, and playing (Permatasari et al., 2019). The involvement of the father and mother in these activities can certainly stimulate the child's development, in cognitive, emotional, and social. The involvement of the father in early childhood activities will develop children's cognitive, emotional, and social abilities (Lismanda, 2017). The mother is a protector for the children both physically and emotionally. The mother takes care of the child's health and physical hygiene. Mothers also provide emotional security to children (Marui, 1952).

The involvement of parents in educating their children has always been proclaimed by Ki Hajar Dewantara in the concept of "Three Centers of Education," namely family centers, college centers, and community centers. The family is the best place to teach morality and sociality to children. For character education, the family is the most appropriate place to study (Jailani, 2014). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of "Three Centers of Education" was realized.

The intensity in accompanying children when learning and playing creates togetherness. There are qualities and bonds that are created. Intense togetherness will further strengthen ties in the family (Triwardhani & Chaerowati, 2019). If the bond gets tighter, the relationship between family members becomes stable. This will create intimacy.

There are four types of family communication patterns as follows (1) Equality Pattern, (2) Balanced Split Pattern; (3) Unbalanced Split Pattern; and (4) Monopoly Pattern. Equality pattern means each individual shares the same rights in communication opportunities. The role of each person is carried out equally. Communication runs honestly, openly, directly, and free from power sharing. All people have the same rights in the decision-making process. Families get the highest satisfaction when there is equality (De Vito, 2013).

Balanced split pattern means equality of relations is maintained, but in this pattern, each person has a different area of authority from the others. Each person is seen as an expert in a different field. For example, in a traditional family, the husband is trusted in business or political matters and the wife is trusted for matters of child care and cooking. However, the

division of roles based on gender is still flexible. Conflicts that occurred in families are not seen as a threat because each individual has their own area and expertise (De Vito, 2013).

Unbalanced split pattern means one person dominates and is considered more expert than the others. This one person is the one who is in control and usually has higher intellectual intelligence, wiser, or higher income. Other family members compensate by submitting to the person, allowing the dominating person to win their own arguments and decision making (De Vito, 2013).

Monopoly pattern means one person is seen as the holder of power. This person tends to give commands than communicating. The person has the full right to make decisions so that the person rarely or never asks for opinions from others. The person in power instructs others what may and may not be done. Then, other family members ask for permission, opinions, and make decisions based on the decisions of the person in power (De Vito, 2013).

There are several ways to strengthen ties and create quality intimacy between mother and child during this pandemic, namely by playing and reading together. When playing, the mother and child will be involved in the empathic conversation (John, et al., 2013). Although the academic elements such as arithmetic, reading, etc., are included, the empathic element in the process of communication between mother and child when playing is becoming solid.

For young children, playing also makes them physically active. Physical activity is something that is loved by children. As a result of this pandemic, parents, in this case, mothers, are required to create indoor activities that can still provide flexibility in physical activity for children. Through playing, children can express themselves freely and can explore various things (Kepper, et al., 2020).

Besides playing, reading is an activity that can be used by mothers to establish intimate communication with their children. By reading, children enter a new world. Also, mothers can help children develop the ability to process messages conveyed in a book, and can observe and analyze the contents of the books they read (Lysaker, 2006). The ability to communicate will develop with reading activities for young children (Moody, et al., 2010).

There are several previous studies related to mother and child literacy activities. The first study was entitled "Mother-Child Interactions during Shared Literacy Activities: Education in a Fractal Bilingual Environment." This study stated that a mother's literacy ability can be transferred to a child if the mother is directly involved in literacy activities with the child.

In the USA, there are families whose native language is not English. From this study, it was also found that the English language abilities of children from families who did not speak English as their mother tongue increased when the mothers were involved in learning. The children have difficulty in learning English if it is only taught in school. However, with mother-child interaction through reading books together and helping children with school work, children's abilities in English are also slowly improving (Quiroz & Dixon, 2012).

Then, there was a study entitled "Mother-Child Story Book Interactions: Literacy Orientation of Pre-Schoolers with Hearing Impairment." This study was conducted on preschoolers students who have limited hearing. The results of this study mentioned that (1) children must be given frequent opportunities to explore and interact with books; (2) children can demonstrate their introduction to various types of book genres through three types of interactions; and (3) there is no need for special modifications to the book to make the child wants to read. Besides, this study also emphasized how mother-child interaction in reading activities is very influential on the reading ability of children with hearing impairment (Kaderavek & Pakulski, 2007).

Reading activity is very important for children because it is related to their ability to retell something. In a study entitled "The relationships between children's spontaneous utterances during joint book reading and their retellings," it is said that when doing the reading activity, children often make spontaneous utterances or babbling. The ability of children to say something spontaneously when reading is closely related to the ability to retell something they have read, heard, or seen (Kim, et al., 2011).

The interaction between mother and child, be it when reading, playing, eating, or bathing can increase intimacy. A study entitled "Child temperamental anger, mother-child interactions, and socio-emotional functioning at school entry" stated that when children internalized the anger that comes from their parents, this will risk the difficulty of children in adapting or regulating and placing themselves when they start entering school (Sirois, et al., 2019). From this research, it appears that any interaction that occurred between mother and child can greatly influence the children in each stage of their development. Therefore, the mother needs a positive activity that can improve the intimacy between the mother and child. Based on the previous studies, the purpose of this study is to obtain information about the intimacy of communication between mother and child at home during the COVID-19

pandemic and how reading and playing together can improve the intimacy of mother and child.

Method

The method used in this study is a survey method with a quantitative approach. This study attempts to describe the behavioral tendencies of a population by examining a sample of the population quantitatively (Creswell, 2009).

Research Location and Participant

The location of this study was carried out in the province of West Java. The sample in this study were 420 parents who had children in early childhood education, consisting of 93.3% or 392 women and 6.7% or 28 men. The educational background of the respondents were high school education by 46.6%, junior high school by 31.9%, undergraduate by 12.4%, and junior high school by 9.3%.

Research Procedure

This research was carried out with the following steps; (1) analysis of field conditions related to learning during COVID-19; (2) literature review; (3) making research instruments or questionnaires related to mother and child intimacy communication, and playing and reading activities at home with children during a pandemic; (4) Google form creation; (5) selection of respondents; (6) processing data by coding or selecting information that already exists in the Google form; and (7) writing reports and conclusions.

Research Instrument

The indicators used as instruments in this study were divided into three parts. The explanation is detailed in the Table below:

Table 1. *Instruments of Mother and Child Intimacy during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

No.	Indicator
1	What does intimacy with family members mean to you?
2	How much time do you have with your child before the COVID-19 pandemic?
3	How much time do you have with the child when doing the social and physical distancing due to COVID-19?
4	What is done to build closeness and fill time with children during social and physical distancing due to COVID-19?
5	What is done when reading stories to children to build intimacy during the social and physical distancing due to COVID-19?
6	One month has passed, mother and child are still doing activities at home, what are the visible changes from the child?

Table 2. *Intimate Communication of Mother and Child during COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing Activities*

No.	Indicator
7	What games do you usually do with your children during social and physical distancing due to COVID-19?
8	When playing, what is done to build intimate communication with children?
9	How many times do you play games with your children in a day?
10	What kind of activities that are carried out?
11	Will the activities of the mother and child have an impact on the health of the child?
12	Why do you do this activity?

Table 3. *Intimate Communication of Mother and Child during COVID-19 Pandemic through Reading Activities*

No.	Indicator
13	What kind of reading activities that are carried out?
14	How many times a day do you read?
15	What readings do children often read at home during the pandemic?
16	Do you always provide literacy artifacts or reading material at home during the pandemic?
17	Does reading include children's choices to fill time during social and physical distancing due to COVID-19?
18	In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, what are the routine activities that can be done for mothers with small children (3-6 years old) while staying at home?

Data Collection Technique

The data of objectivity conditions of improving intimacy in communication between mother and child, and playing and reading activities with children during a pandemic obtained through a questionnaire that was analyzed quantitatively. This questionnaire used Google forms that is distributed online using social media to capture respondents who are relevant to this study.

Data Analysis Technique

Data obtained from the field is tabulated and presented. The data is encoded directly from the Google form that is adapted to the study. Data is displayed as a percentage of each indicator.

Results

The number of respondents who answered the questionnaire was 420 parents who had children who were attending early childhood education, consisting of 93.3% or 392 women and 6.7% or 28 men. The educational background of the respondents was 46.6% with high school education, 31.9% with junior high school education, 12.4% with undergraduate education, and 9.3% with junior high school education.

In this study, three assessment indicators were constructed. It includes mother and child intimacy communication, playing with children during the pandemic, and reading with children during the pandemic. The results on the first indicator, namely intimacy of mother and child are as follows:

Table 4. *Intimate Communication of Mother and Child During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

No.	Number of Question	A	B	C	D
1	Item 1	77.6% 12-24 hours/day	3.6% 6-8 hours/day	18.6% 2-5 hours/day	0% < 2 hours/day
2	Item 2	63.6% 12-24 hours/day	27.1% 6-8 hours/day	8.3% 2-5 hours/day	1% < 2 hours/day
3	Item 3	89.3% Listen to children's daily stories	6,9% Read stories that children like	3,3% Recite Koran with children	0,5% Playing together
4	Item 4	48.6% Invite children to reflect the contents of the story read	11% Ask what children likes and dislikes from the story read	21.7% Listen to the children's version of the story after they hear the story	18.8% Other opinions
5	Item 5	21.2% Mother and child intimacy are increasingly intertwined	21% Children become eager to recite Koran	50.2% The mother knows the kind of stories children like	7.4% Children always ask their mother to accompany them while playing
6	Item 6	65.7%	3.3%	8.6%	22.4%

Description:

A = Have lots of time with family

B = Carry out the duties and functions of each other without disturbing each other

C = Have a good quality meeting without much time

D = Other opinions

Then, the following is the results of the second indicator of the survey, which is the playing activities of mother and child during a pandemic as follows:

Table 5. *Intimate Communication of Mother and Child during COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing Activities*

No.	Number of Question Item	A	B	C	D
7	Item 7	69% Follow the rhythm of the child's game so that parents can appreciate when the child feels happy in the game	3.4% Arrange the game so that there are good messages that children can take	3.7% Just let the children play under surveillance without us participating	17.9% Let the children play without surveillance
8	Item 8	56.4% 1x	11.7% 2x	31.4% 3x	0 Letting children play as they wish
9	Item 9	12.4% Mothers design games and do them with children	15.5% The children are free to choose the game and the mother is involved	10.2% Children are free to choose the game and the mother does not pay attention	61.9% Children play with their own initiative
10	Item 10	6.2% Yes, 50%	58.6% Yes, 80%	0 Yes, >80%	35% Less impactful
11	Item 11	23.3% So that children enjoy activities at home	35.7% Keep children away from gadgets	13.8% So that children stay healthy	27.1% No reason
12	Item 12	61.9%	31.9%	3.6%	2.6%

Description:

A = Games using existing tools at home (plasticine, Lego, snake and ladder, etc.)

B = Physical games

C = Games made from nature (creating something from natural materials)

D = Other games

Then, the following is the results of the third indicator of the survey, which is the reading activities of mother and child during a pandemic as follows:

Table 6. *Intimate Communication of Mother and Child during COVID-19 Pandemic through Reading Activities*

No.	Number of Question Item	A	B	C	D
13	Item 13	32.1 1x	61.7% 2x	2.4% 3x	3.8% >3x
14	Item 14	70.7% Legend	25.2% Fiction	3.1% Literature	1% Textbooks
15	Item 15	25.5% Always	10% Often	0.7% Sometimes	64% Never
16	Item 16	20% Always	12.1% Often	63.3% Sometimes	4.5% Never
17	Item 17	21% Playing	11.9% Reciting Koran	66% Reading	1.2% Free activities
18	Item 18	47.4%	17.1%	21%	14.5%

Description:

A = Read story books with children

B = Children are free to read books and the mothers accompany them

C = Children read books by themselves

D = Children read books accompanied by their brother or sister

Discussion

Mother-Child Intimate Communication

The meaning of intimacy in a family is doing activities together while each member feels comfortable, safe, pleasant, and full of compassion. This can be seen from 77.6% of

respondents who answered that intimacy for them is togetherness in various activities carried out with the family. During this pandemic situation, a lot of time can be used to improve intimacy between family members. However, if life has returned to normal, intimacy can still be realized by still giving attention to family members even if it is only at a low intensity. This can be seen from the 18.6% of respondents' answers that stated that they had a good quality meeting even though not much time could be spent together. According to Triswardani & Chaerowati (2019), the similarity of objectives in the activity will build the involvement of communicating parties. Intimacy is the closeness that is built up in communication.

Intimacy manifests in the form of established relationships, dyadic primacy, and dyadic coalition (De Vito, 2004). Intimacy also takes the form of mutual attention in exchanging feelings, thoughts, and actions (Masters, et al.,1992).

- a. Intimacy involves a sense of belonging, which is the need to make strong, stable, and close relationships.
- b. Intimacy is an emotional element in a relationship that involves self-disclosure, which will produce an attachment, warmth, and trust.
- c. Intimacy is a strong relationship with other people. It is when individuals can sacrifice for each other's welfare without losing the identity of each individual (Masters, et al.,1992).

Acceptance and understanding of information are also influenced by intimacy. Intimacy also influences the awareness of each other's role, achieving targets and goals, understanding self and other people's concepts, and accessing intertwined messages that are influenced by intimacy (Trenholm & Jensen, 2004).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents who normally go to work or do activities outside home every day, now spend a lot of time staying at home. This can be seen from the answer of 63.3% respondents who usually stay at home for 12 hours and while in this pandemic situation, 89.3% of respondents answered they now live at home for 12-24 hours. Time spent by parents with children is important and irreplaceable (Sullivan, 2005; Arnold, 2008; and Stašová & Serbousková, 2012). Parents should know how important it is to develop relationships to spend time with children, so that children can feel the love from their parents

(Havigerová, et al., 2015).

Intimate communication between families, especially mothers and children can be improved and become more intimate. Based on research conducted by Nurlaeli & Nurwanti (2020), the level of trust of children to their mother is high so that children can still carry out their routine activities amid the spread of COVID-19. It also affects children's motivation in learning, so this pandemic situation cannot disrupt the learning process in children but provides space to increase creativity and bonding with mothers.

Mother and child communication are very important because with communication, the mother can recognize children better, know the interests of children, explain knowledge easily, and the children will be more confident in communicating with others (Adrianto, 2011). The first and foremost education for young children is with their parents. The indicators are (1) parents are the people most responsible for the development of their children; (2) parents are the first people to interact with their children before they interact with others; (3) family environment is the closest environment (microsystem) which is very influential on the child's personality; and (4) children spent more time at home with parents (Zahroh & Unasiansari, 2010).

This COVID-19 pandemic caused everyone to stay at home and all activities are done at home, no exception for children. They must spend time learning and playing with family at home, so parents are required to be able to provide a variety of fun activities that can stimulate the optimization of growth and development of all aspects that exist in the children. This can be seen from the response to the activity that many parents do, especially mothers and children during this pandemic situation. The activities are reading and storytelling activities with 49% and reciting Koran with 22%.

Storytelling is an activity that is very liked by children because from the story, children can know a lot of knowledge and many interesting things. Through storytelling, children can get information about the world, a situation in various regions, diverse human characters, and the habits and values of a culture (Permatasari, et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the Koran activities are carried out by the mother because it is the main thing for the provision of children's lives especially during disasters, children must be given a lot of knowledge so that they get closer to the ruler of the universe namely God so that they feel comfortable and calm in living life. Childhood is the most fertile period to instill a sense of religion in children, so that good

habits that are in accordance with religious teachings can be fostered, and this is conveyed by parents in the activities of educating children at home and school (Mulyani, et al., 2018).

During the pandemic situation, various positive activities can be carried out by the mother and child to fill spare time while they stay at home. Then, all activities carried out can become a habit for children who will continue even if later the mother returns to work and the child returns to school. This can be seen from the impact of mothers and children who carried out positive activities during COVID-19 that improve the intimacy of mothers and children by 66% based on survey results. Then, 22% of children enjoyed playing with their mothers and the rest, the children liked the storytelling and recitation activities that were conducted with their mothers. The results showed that mothers spend more time focusing and engaging in children's activities than their fathers (John, et al., 2012).

Mother and Child Playing Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

A mother will try to provide the best for her children as well as in designing games that are fun and in accordance with the needs and development of children during a pandemic. Many kinds of games to develop physical aspects of motor, cognitive, and all other aspects of development can be done at home. Based on survey results, the type of game that is mostly done during this pandemic situation by mothers and children is a game that used existing tools at home such as Legos, and snakes and ladders. This can be seen from 69% of respondents who answered 'yes' to the game. Then, 7% of respondents used natural materials, and the remaining 17% answered with various other games available around the house. According to research conducted by Pamungkas, Inten, and Mulyani (2018), through playing activities, children can capture learning session more quickly because learning conveyed through games created a connection between the brain, nervous system, and real experiences done by children.

To build intimate communication between mother and child, the mother designed the game based on the wishes of the child and then the mother followed the game. This is indicated by data that showed 56.4% of respondents did this and the rest only supervised their children when they play and let them play their games. The results of the research of John, et al. (2012) showed that during playing interactions with their preschoolers, the mothers tend to guide,

teach, and engage in empathic conversation, whereas the fathers tend to engage in physical play, behave like friends, follow directions from children, and challenge children to do the game they like more.

In a day, a game can be done many times, especially if the game being played is very interesting for the children. Children will never be reluctant to ask parents to repeat the game. Children will be inclined to do the things they like and will like things that are challenging them to explore various things around them. Playing games is very important in building the interaction between children and parents, especially during the preschool stage, when children need activities to develop and hone gross motor skills (Berk, 2012). 62% of respondents answered that they play games many times in accordance with the wishes of the child. Inten (2017) stated that children will be able to communicate various ideas through games because they will feel comfortable and not feel afraid.

Children are very fond of physical activity, therefore playing is very important for their development. Children will choose to play compared to other activities that are more focused on academics and organized activities because through playing, they can express themselves freely and can explore everything around them (Barnett, et al., 2016). This is indicated by the response of 62% respondents which stated that the game is used as an activity when staying at home because it is liked by their children and the children will feel comfortable staying at home.

Another advantage of games is that children can feel comfortable and become physically and mentally healthy. This is in accordance with 36% of respondents which stated that playing affects the health of children by 80% and the remaining stated that it affects the health of children by 50%. While 27% of respondents stated that playing had less impact on children's health. Therefore, mothers should arrange playing activities that can give effect to the development and growth of children as the results of research revealed that in playing with mothers, children always try to arrange themes or activities according to certain topics. This can be seen with several questions posed by the mother to the child, such as 'What did you draw?' or 'What did you make?' This is done by the mother so that the game is more directed and structured and it will have a good impact on children's development (John, et al., 2012).

Mother and Child Reading Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Reading is a simple activity that contained a million meanings. It can find out new things and can deepen existing knowledge. If children are introduced to reading activities as early as possible, they will feel the pleasure and enjoyment of reading. According to Inten (2017), if reading and writing are the main things in family life, then naturally children will get used to reading and writing.

The effort that must be done by parents in fostering children's interest in reading is to give a strong impression that reading is important through habituating children to be introduced to reading material in order to get the impression that one letter contains millions of secrets and meanings (Permatasari, et al., 2019). Ideally, reading activities for children should be fun, without coercion and pressure, but rather with repetition, slowly, and provide a variety of things that are closely related to reading (Permatasari, et al., 2017).

In reading activities while staying at home, respondents gave the most answers in 'free reading activities that children like accompanied by mothers' which is 61% while 'reading activities together with children' statement has 32.1%. From that, it can be seen that in the beginning, the mother gave their children the freedom to read books they liked and the mother only accompanied them. This is done so that a child's first impression will be good given the freedom to choose books. Whereas for the second answer which stated 'the book is chosen by the child or mother and then the book is read together by the mother and child', the mother can freely explain the contents of the book even better if the mother uses a language that the child understands. The main purpose of literacy education is to develop reading skills outside and inside the school. Mother tongue or local language has an important role to develop the ability of children in terms of literacy (Thomas, et al., 2020).

In one day, the mother and child can do storytelling activities once or twice. This can be an alternative so that children do not get bored easily, so mothers and children can vary it with other activities that can be done at home. This is proven by 70% of respondents who answered doing reading activities once a day, while 25% answered doing it twice a day. In reading activities, there are many books that can be read by mothers and children from just a thin book that is outdated but contained interesting stories, books of fairy tales, literary books such as poetry or children's songs, and even science books or textbooks.

In this pandemic situation, because mothers must play a dual role at home where mothers must carry out their main duties as a mother to caring for and educating children so that children grow optimally, on the other hand, mothers must also be able to convey a variety of subject matter that should be delivered by teachers at school. Therefore, the highest response of 64.4% was in the choice of reading a science book or textbook and 25.5% choose to answer reading a legend storybook. There are several ways to foster children's interest in reading, namely (1) reading a book from birth; (2) encourage children to talk about what they have heard and read; (3) take children to bookstores or libraries; (4) buy books that interest children; (5) create a family library; (6) remove obstacles to reading activities; (7) make your own book; and (8) make reading daily activities. The main purpose of literacy education is to develop reading skills outside and inside the school. The children's mother tongue or local language has an important role in developing children's ability in literacy (Thomas et al., 2020). The effect of developing early literacy, in addition to developing children's language skills, is to develop other aspects of development and to influence children's care and attachment (Guevara, et al., 2020).

Parents need to know the importance of children's cognitive and language development, in the form of children's abilities in drawing conclusions and giving reasons or arguing from books they have read. This helps develop children's abstract thinking abilities that are needed when they continue to elementary school (Ribner, et al., 2020).

Lewis, et al. (2011) stated there are five main teaching practices for early childhood that teachers can convey to parents to do at home, namely; introduce how parents can understand activities suitable for children's development, teachers build good communication with parents, create a conducive classroom climate, involve parents in the teaching process, and teachers create programs that can involve parents and the community in early childhood learning.

When a pandemic spread and all people are required to remain at home to stay safe, parents must rack their brains to provide education and activities that are interesting to young children. With makeshift facilities, parents try to make learning strategies that are fun for children. So, it is natural that most parents conduct pre-reading and pre-written activities at home even with minimal media or resources. This can be seen from 63.3% of respondents who answered that they did not always provide media or literacy sources at home, they just prepared the

media occasionally when needed. However, 20% of respondents who are already accustomed to reading at home answered that they always provide a source of literacy at home.

Children love physical and challenging activities while reading activities are done by sitting or before going to sleep, even though there are many strategies that mothers can use while reading. Therefore, most respondents chose activities that children and mothers do at home are playing activities, which is as much as 47% while reading activities has 21%. This is comparable to the answer which stated 'mothers and children sometimes do reading activities during a pandemic' at 21%. In her research, Inten (2017) stated that parents are currently required to be able to package a variety of creative and innovative literacy activities so that literacy activities do not become boring for children.

From the survey results above, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic requires parents to stay at home with children so it has an impact on establishing excellent mother and child intimate communication. With enough time to be at home, mothers can understand the development, interests, and talents of the children. Various activities can be arranged and designed by mother and child. Parents are required to be able to design a learning activity that is fun and meaningful for children so that even though they stay at home, mothers can wholeheartedly care for, nurture, and provide the best education for their beloved children.

Conclusion

Intimate communication between mother and child can be built through activities designed by parents creatively, innovatively, and prioritizing interests and based on the child's development. The children will feel comfortable and calm when their mother accompanied them, involved in various daily activities, and always willing to listen to their complaints. Peace of mind and comfort of children is the basic capital of building good communication between mother and child. Playing and reading can be an alternative activity chosen by mother and child. Through playing and reading activities, children can get to know new things and can feel the beauty of a mother's love. Mothers can also feel the precious times of being together with children.

Recommendation

During a pandemic situation, parents are required to be able to design various activities at home that are meaningful and in accordance with the child's development. From this research, other activities that are still closely related to playing and reading can still be developed while emphasizing on approaches, methods, techniques, and media that can be chosen by parents to package children's learning to be comfortable at home and still full of meaning.

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SUBMISSION AND CHECK STATUS

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Journal Publication

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Guide for Authors

Paper Submission

✓ Article Info

Submission Date	2020-07-14
Journal Title	Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education
Manuscript Number	APJ-22-223
Title of Manuscript	Improving the Intimacy in Mother-Child Communication in the Middle of COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing and Reading Activities
Abstract (Limit 200 words)	Intimate communication between mother and child is very important for optimal and mature child development in the future. This communication can be built when the mother as the main actor in child care takes enough time to involve in various activities carried out and needed by the child in its development. Nowadays, the existence of a corona pandemic requires everyone to stay at home, no exception for mothers who usually work in the office. Thus, this condition has an important role in fostering intimate communication between mother and child. This study aims at determining various activities that can be carried out by mothers and children while they are at home and the implementation of these activities so that the intimacy of mother and child communication that was constrained could be reawakened. The method used in this study is a survey method with a quantitative approach. The stages include condition analysis, literature review, research instrument making, google form creation, data processing, soliciting responses, writing reports, and conclusions. The results of the study showed that most respondents engaged in reading and playing activities with their children at home. Those two activities were made to vary according to the interests and development of the children. Reading and playing activities required mothers to be creative, innovative, and directly involved in children's activities. This has an impact on the rebuilding of intimacy communication between mother and child.
Keywords	communication, Reading, Playing, early childhood

Issue Type	regular issue
Review Category	Parenting / Building partnership with families
Manuscript File	APJ-21-223.REV.docx Download
Revised Manuscript File	Improving_the_Intimacy_in_Mother-Child_Communication_in_the_Middle_of_COVID-19_Pandemic_through_Playing_and_Reading_Activities.pdf Download
Revision Table	Bismillah [FINAL] LST-1220-11 1 .docx Download

need to state that this quantitative answer trend is then discussed descriptively to explain how the activity of reading and playing together can form intimacy between mother and child as a form of home learning assistance?
 In general, the results of the study submitted by the author can be accounted for because based on the instruments disseminated. Unfortunately, the presentation of the findings with research instruments is less presented in the table that can provide fairly accurate information. It is good that the data table is corrected to provide easy-to-read structured data by giving an introduction to the data to be presented or at the end of the data the author gives an easy-to-understand explanation of the reader especially associated with the description of the choice of answers.

✓ **Review Info 2**

Reviewer A	Result	
	Comments(for author)	
Reviewer B	Result	
	Comments(for author)	
Reviewer C	Result	
	Comments(for author)	

✓ **Final Review Sanction Info 1**

Editor	Result	Accept as it is
	Comments	Thank you very much for your submission to APJRECE. We are pleased to inform you that your manuscript, "Improving the Intimacy in Mother-Child Communication in the Middle of COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing and Reading Activities" will be published in APJRECE Journal (Print ISSN: 1976-1961/Online ISSN: 2233-5234) Congratulations on this accomplishment.

✓ **Final Result Registration Info**

Accepted Date	2021-03-22
Result	Publication Accepted
Comments	Thank you very much for your submission to APJRECE. We are pleased to inform you that your manuscript, "Improving the Intimacy in Mother-Child Middle of COVID-19 Pandemic through Playing and Reading Activities" will be published in APJRECE Journal (Print ISSN: 1976-1961/Online ISSN: 2233-5234) Congratulations on this accomplishment.

List



Review Info 1

Reviewer A	Result	Accept with Minor Revisions
	Comments(for author)	Please add main findings in abstract
Reviewer B	Result	Reject
	Comments(for author)	<p>An fascinating topic explored by the researchers. However this paper needs could not be published as it is in the journal. The following are recommendations from the examiner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the abstract: starting with a research statement to direct the reader to the focus of this study. Have the conclusion and recommendation of the analysis in the abstract as well. • In Introduction part: please mention the source of socio-demographic data for household members (the researchers only mentioned it from a survey, which survey? Where is the reference?) Some of the data does not make sense, or is used to illustrate the topic of the study imprecisely. For example, with regard to the Implementation of the Learning Regulation of the Minister of Education during the period COVID-19 as the background to the study. Researchers could use the law of the Minister of Employment, which specifically regulates how workers function at home, as the reasoning. Isn't that the focus of research? • In the background, the researchers should explain the conditions of communication and intimacy prior to COVID-19 and now while mothers are working from home. Discussion of patterns of family contact, behaviours and relationships between children and mothers is left as a mere description, the researchers have failed to explain how all these theories have become a precedent or are used to clarify the context of the analysis. • Previous research presented do not relate to the current situation of the pandemic or even to the relationship and intimacy of mothers and children. The researchers should look for more important studies related to his or her research. • The researchers did not offer a clear explanation of the research statement. In fact, the problem statement was not stated at all. The researchers stated that the objectives of this study is to obtain information on the intimacy of communication between mother and child at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how reading and playing together can improve the intimacy of mother and child. What's meant to get the information? Did the researchers ask a question, yes or no, or how or why. This will have a significant effect on the study design. • The research methodology is not well explained, there is no description of the validity, reliability, ethics, sampling technique and population of the methods used. The survey questions posed by the researchers are more like exploratory questions that should be asked using qualitative methods. How to measure quantitatively When the questions posed are open-ended and the range of answers is very wide. Many questions seem futile, because researchers don't understand/explain explicitly what the problem statement is. Since data collection has been carried out what the researchers should do is re-open the answers from the respondents and not compel them to quantify them. • Since the design is not accurate, the findings will not be true either. The reviewer therefore recommends that researchers rewrite the article.
Reviewer C	Result	Accept with Major Revisions
	Comments(for author)	<p>Review :</p> <p>In general, the article is reviewed by following the domain of Early Childhood Education, but the writing does not follow the existing format template. The title of this study how the current situation that occurs in learning in early childhood education. The study also has novelty with factual conditions that occur related to the COVID-19 pandemic period, which is the basis of many countries to carry out learning from home. However, after further looking at the results of the study, it seems that improvements are needed, especially in the conceptual exposure</p> <p>In the introduction, it seems that the authors have not presented exactly the problems that were reviewed even though the purpose of the study has been stated. In the background, the authors have stated several times that working from home (WFH) or school from home (SFH) leads to increased activity at home, especially educating children. But accurate data on previous studies on changes in the atmosphere of learning from home with the assistance of parents as teachers has not been seen. The authors only show indirect evidence about the importance of stimulation the child development task</p> <p>The literature study is a section that is not specifically written as required by the journal. The author included the library study in the introduction so that it can be a theoretic discussion that should indicate the novelty of the theme being reviewed. Some previous research studies failed to establish a conceptual framework as the basis for developing research instruments. The theory studies given by the authors seem to need to be more in line with the themes studied. The author takes the basis of the Vito's theory relating to communication patterns in the family but does not specify which pattern the author is the basis for explaining the meaning of intimacy between mother and child.</p> <p>As a quantitative study, population presence and sampling techniques require accurate methods to avoid bias in research. The authors only mention the number of respondents studied without providing accurate data about the population. The authors mention that these respondents are parents who have children who are attending school in early</p>

