

Indonesian parents' perception of educational involvement during the COVID-19

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Abstract

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting closure of public institutions such as schools, it has become crucial for parents to educate their children on COVID-19 literacy. Early childhood education practices are greatly influenced by informational sources and media, making parental involvement more important than ever. This study seeks to explore the significance of parental involvement during the pandemic, particularly for preschool-aged children. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting closure of public institutions such as schools, it has become crucial for parents to educate their children on COVID-19 literacy. Early childhood education practices are greatly influenced by informational sources and media, making parental involvement more important than ever. This study seeks to explore the significance of parental involvement during the pandemic, particularly for preschool-aged children. It is imperative that capable individuals take swift action to offer comprehensive and impartial COVID-19 health guidance to both children and their guardians, with a focus on quantity, quality, and availability.

Keywords: COVID-19 literacy, Preschool-aged children, Parents perspective

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared a global crisis by the WHO on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). and has since spread to 188 countries, resulting in 155,794 fatalities and 6,037,742 cases in Indonesia as of April 14, 2022 (WHO, 2022). Studies conducted in 118 countries reveal that COVID-19 poses a significant threat to children's health, accounting for 18-23% of child deaths. These findings highlight the importance of protecting children from exposure to the virus, as even those in their own homes may be at risk. As of February 7, 2022, COVID-19 has affected 7190 children in Indonesia, with 1800 fatalities in September 2021. Given the vulnerability of children to the virus, it is imperative that extensive efforts be made to halt the transmission chain in child cases.

Parents have a crucial role in halting the transmission of COVID-19 among children (Martin & Chen, 2014) especially with the rising number of cases in remote areas and high hospitalizations in Indonesia. In order to curtail community mobility, public establishments such as schools have been subjected to closures. Hence, the imperative arises for parents to undertake the responsibility of imparting COVID-19 literacy to their children (Velardo & Drummond, 2017). The educational framework designed for young children is significantly shaped by diverse informational sources and media outlets, encompassing the internet, social networks, and e-learning models (Yildiz et al., 2023). Research findings indicate that parents with stable employment possess greater capabilities to offer adequate care for children aged three to six years (Hadzic et al., 2013). The upheaval stemming from recent alterations in their routines, encompassing school closures, curtailed outdoor activities, and assorted restrictions, has induced a sense of uncertainty among numerous children. This study aims to investigate the pivotal role of parental engagement amid the pandemic, with a specific focus on preschool-aged children. Additionally, it aims to delve into Indonesian parents' perceptions and encounters concerning educational engagement as a strategy for COVID-19 prevention.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have investigated the perceptions of COVID-19 among both parents and children (Arowoshola, 2020; Crook, 2020; Majoko & Dudu, 2022). Given that children are believed to be more vulnerable to COVID-19, it is increasingly imperative to prioritize health literacy for this population (Dong et al., 2020). Parents play a crucial role in determining the level of health literacy for preschool-aged children (da Costa et al., 2019). Parents can improve their health literacy through reading. According to a study by Harnett (2020), Enhancing COVID-19 literacy necessitates the government's provision of precise information via reputable online platforms. COVID-19 health literacy assumes critical importance, enabling individuals to comprehend their own health status and access high-quality healthcare services in the midst of the pandemic. Hence, it becomes paramount for the government to ensure ready access to trustworthy resources for the general populace (Wang et al., 2021). While it is important to recognize that online resources may not be accessible or desirable for everyone (Cho & Lee, 2017), a common practice among parents is to prohibit their preschool-aged children from engaging in this activity (Leung & Lee, 2012; Livingstone, 2003). They choose to read books together in order to provide their children with new information (Ji Eun Kim & Anderson, 2008). Differing parental perspectives on COVID-19 literacy for young children have sparked discussions surrounding the importance of promoting early literacy skills.

During their formative years, children often inquire about the information they are exposed to (Kaderavek & Rabidoux, 2004; Magnuson et al., 2007). Parents must be vigilant about the overwhelming amount of information presented through print media, videos, reading materials, captivating images, symbols, advertisements, and TV broadcasts. Not doing so could give the impression that the parents do not care. (Moses, 2008; Reese et al., 2010; Rose et al., 2009; Velardo & Drummond, 2017; Westerveld et al., 2015). The credibility of the information is being doubted due to its lack of accuracy.

Method

Study setting

The objective of the case study was to gather insights on how early childhood media can be utilized to enhance knowledge on COVID-19 prevention. In addition, participants were requested to share their observations on children's engagement with different media to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Research Participants

This study aims to examine the impact of various factors on parents' perception of COVID-19 literacy in early childhood. Participants were recruited from parents of preschool-aged children (5-7 years old) who were concerned about their child's health during the pandemic and willing to take part in the study. The study employed purposive sampling, and a total of 40 parents with diverse characteristics were included. Participants were asked to share how they were involved in their child's education and used media to prevent COVID-19. The study highlighted the challenges parents faced during the pandemic while participating in their child's education.

Data Collection

To uphold the study's credibility, the researchers obtained informed consent from parents of preschool-aged children. The data collection process was executed via in-depth interviews, conducted either in-person or telephonically, in alignment with the mutual understanding between the researchers and the participants. This methodology is selected to secure more exhaustive and reliable data compared to the utilization of questionnaires featuring predefined responses. Each interview, spanning a duration of 20 to 30 minutes, was digitally recorded utilizing a mobile phone. Furthermore, participation member checks are employed to foster trust in the research process.

Research Instrument

The interview guide designed for parents encompasses three primary sections. The initial section encompasses crucial demographic particulars, including gender, educational background, income, and occupational status. The subsequent section centers on participants' viewpoints pertaining to the viability of accessible media as a conduit for imparting COVID-19 preventive literacy to young children. The conclusive section delves into parents' firsthand encounters concerning their assistance in utilizing early reading materials, via media, for inculcating COVID-19 prevention awareness in their children. In the context of familial leadership roles within Indonesia, this structured interview guide addresses the facets of what, where, when, and how in the context of COVID-19 preventive literacy during the early developmental stage. For a comprehensive overview of the interview guide's specifics, refer to Table 1.

Table 1. *Interview-Specific Questions and Topics*

Questions	Topics
1. What do you think of the preschoolers' COVID-19 information resources that are now available?	Participants' opinions on the kid-friendly COVID-19 reading resources offered
2. What are the COVID-19-related lessons that, in your opinion, preschoolers should learn?	
3. What do you think about parents' perspectives on the significance of providing preschoolers with information on COVID-19?	
1. What challenges do you encounter while bringing your kid to the COVID-19 preschool literacy resources?	Experiences of participants supporting kids to use COVID-19 preventive literacy for kids
2. How do you prefer to accompany preschoolers as they use COVID-19 literacy resources?	

Data Analysis

In the context of this study, in-depth interviews were conducted, with the interactions being digitally recorded and taking place either in person or through phone communication. Subsequently, these recorded interviews underwent a process of manual coding and thematic transcription, followed by a comprehensive analysis. The methodology applied for the data analysis was centered on thematic data analysis, serving as a means to thoroughly

explore participants' responses throughout the course of data collection. The analytical procedure encompassed the practice of open coding, spanning both the interviewer's notes and the transcripts of the conducted interviews. Additionally, codes formulated by the researcher prior to analysis were harnessed to provide a comprehensive elucidation of the discerned themes.

To address and reconcile any divergences, the report elucidates the outcomes pertinent to the central theme. The report accentuates a multitude of pivotal findings, notably encompassing the deficiency in media literacy concerning accurate COVID-19 information, an insufficiency of content suitable for children, and the economic challenges entailing Internet usage. The application of theme analysis facilitated the elucidation of participants' perspectives, thereby fostering a more profound comprehension of their perceptions concerning the posed inquiries. Significantly, it's noteworthy that the study protocol has received official endorsement from the Faculty of Medicine at Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Indonesia.

Results

The study's discoveries shape parents' viewpoints. As per parental perspectives, adequate COVID-19 awareness for preschoolers in Indonesia remains limited, the content is unsuitable for young children, and the availability of access points is quite restricted (Table 2).

Furthermore, unanimous agreement (100%) was observed among respondents hailing from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, indicating that COVID-19 literacy resources accessible to preschoolers were insufficient and lacked a child-friendly approach. Moreover, this investigation unveiled that parents possessing a high school diploma alone (90.6%), those belonging to middle-class households (90.9%), and those from less privileged backgrounds (87.5%) encountered challenges in accessing suitable COVID-19 literacy tailored for children (refer to Table 3).

A prevailing viewpoint among participants is that the presence of COVID-19 information on the internet poses obstacles for parents seeking accurate information for their children. The issues cited encompass the cost implications, signal accessibility difficulties, and challenges associated with navigating internet usage.

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Table 2. *Themes and Categories for COVID-19 Literacy for Preschool-Age Children in Indonesia Based on Parents' Responses*

Themes	Categories
Covid-19 prevention literacy in early childhood is not massive	There is not a lot of information provided to kids regarding COVID-19.
	Parents who are still unsure of the best ways to teach their kids about COVID-19 prevention, transmission, and treatment.
	Availability of kid-friendly literacy resources for COVID-19 remain challenging.
	COVID-19 literacy for children still receives less attention from the government.
Covid-19 Prevention Literacy in early childhood is not child-friendly	The majority of them are associated with frightening and unsuitable news concerning COVID-19 victims.
	Even with the availability of literacy in the form of kid-friendly films, there is still no age-appropriate explanation of certain facts.
	Many food commercials do not follow the guidelines for children's healthy food.
Early childhood Covid-19 prevention literacy access is limited	Parents decide that children should not access the internet alone because the majority of COVID-19 information for kids must be obtained over the internet network.
	Parents without sufficient funds to purchase internet bundles
	Parents lack the time and specialized online site navigation skills.
	Parents who worry about their kids becoming internet addicts

Table 3. *Parental Response Categories to COVID-19 Literacy for Indonesian Preschool-Age Children by Education Level and Economic Class (n = 40)*

Criteria	Not massive		Unfriendly		Limited Access	
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Education Level*						
Basic	32 (100)	0 (0)	32 (100)	0 (0)	29 (90.6)	3 (9.4)
High	8 (100)	0 (0)	8 (100)	0 (0)	4 (50)	4 (50)
Economy Class**						
Low	21 (100)	0 (0)	21 (100)	0 (0)	16 (76.2)	5 (23.8)
Middle	11 (100)	0 (0)	11 (100)	0 (0)	10 (90.9)	1 (9.1)
High	8 (100)	0 (0)	8 (100)	0 (0)	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)

*The level of education is categorized into: 1) Basic, if you have elementary, middle and high school education; 2) High, if having Bachelor's degree or higher (Astuti, 2015).

**The economic class is categorized into: 1) Low, if earning ≤ Rp. 2.200.000; 2) Average, if earning Rp. 2.200.001-5.000.000; 3) High, if earning > Rp. 5.000.00,00 (Noerhidajati et al., 2021).

Lack of media literacy for the right information about COVID-19,

Within the context of Indonesia, parental perceptions reflect a relatively low COVID-19 literacy level among preschoolers. Typical behavior exhibited by children adhering to COVID-19 protocols can be categorized into two patterns. For instance, children often engage in excessive handwashing without provocation, and while they might wear masks at home, they tend to leave them improperly positioned when in public settings. This behavior is attributed by parents to the limited exposure their children have to comprehensive information concerning COVID-19. An informant said:

I remain uncertain about COVID-19. For example, various sources assert that the virus can spread through handshakes, airborne transmission, or even through dining in restaurants. Especially in the current scenario of COVID-19, individuals who seem healthy might still be able to transmit the virus. Given these uncertainties, someone inquired about the risks associated with COVID-19, and that's why I'm unsure whether I should permit my children to interact with their friends, ma'am. (Informant 1, Female, Master Degree).

My child often poses questions like, "What's COVID like beyond what we see on TV? When will COVID go away? When can I return to school and resume other activities, Dad?" I respond in a clear and simple manner, as I'm still in the process of educating myself about COVID and its intricacies. (Male Informant 2 with a master's degree).

Parents hold the view that the inadequate dissemination of COVID-19 information through both traditional print media and online platforms is responsible for the limited understanding of the virus among preschool-aged children. The existing information is often challenging for children to grasp. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of socialization in terms of how parents educate their children about preventive measures, transmission, and treatment protocols. According to research informants:

Regrettably, there isn't a television show dedicated to my method of teaching kids about COVID-19. However, there's an active Facebook group and a WhatsApp group where continuous information exchange takes place. I'm consistently searching for COVID-related information online due to the abundance of contradictory details available. I need to be highly discerning in my selection because the perplexities surrounding the topic still leave me uncertain. (Informant 4, Male, Doctoral Degree)

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I frequently tune into television programs, actively seeking guidance for parents on instructing my children about COVID. Despite scanning through numerous channels, I haven't come across any relevant information thus far. (Informant 5, Male, Magister Degree).

In their endeavor to enhance their children's understanding of COVID-19, parents have also attempted to find reading materials related to the virus. However, this quest has presented challenges.

I came across a television segment featuring a mother who had authored a children's book about COVID-19. Regrettably, my son and I couldn't find the book during our bookstore visit. Eventually, I managed to locate it online. (Informant 6, Female, Bachelor's Degree; Informant 7, Male, Master's Degree).

Parents additionally hold the perspective that the government's attention toward children's COVID-19 literacy is inadequate due to their low scores. This belief stems from the fact that the number of infected children is relatively small, and the available COVID-19 materials are still primarily targeted at parents. This leads parents to speculate that this could be a contributing factor.

Only a small number of children are affected, possibly due to school closures. This has led the government to allocate less emphasis on disseminating information about the virus specifically for kids. As a result, children often raise inquiries about COVID-19. (Informant 8, a female with a Bachelor's Degree.)

While there is an abundance of COVID-related information available, the resources dedicated to children are limited. It's plausible that the government assumes parents should have access to specialized resources without extending the same to their children. (Informant 10, Male, Senior High School).

In accordance with the prevailing agreement among the majority of respondents, it is deemed imperative to provide preschool-aged children with comprehensive education regarding the origins, modes of transmission, and repercussions of COVID-19. Parents espouse the perspective that the scope of information pertaining to COVID-19, as

communicated to children, should be confined to instilling the significance of frequent handwashing and adherence to indoor settings. Parents express apprehensions that allowing children to engage in outdoor activities while wearing masks might lead to a potential decline in their consistency in adhering to mask-wearing practices.

The imperative of disseminating knowledge to children concerning COVID-19 is rooted in its scientific and societal significance. I undertook the didactic endeavor of elucidating the etiological origins, clinical manifestations, and inherent risks associated with COVID-19 to my offspring. This proactive pedagogical intervention was prompted by a well-founded apprehension arising from the potentiality of their susceptibility to viral exposure. (Informant 10, Male, Senior High School).

I opted to imbue my children with the significance of consistently practicing hand hygiene and refraining from engaging in outdoor play activities while the prevalence of COVID persists. Initially met with resistance, this stance was met through a consistent approach wherein I encouraged him to discern the adverse consequences of contracting COVID-19 via online sources. As a result, he has developed a comprehensive understanding of the matter. (Informant 8, Female, bachelor's degree).

Lack of content appropriate for children

Respondents hold the viewpoint that the COVID-19 literacy material currently available is unsuitable for children, as it predominantly emphasizes alarming news regarding casualties related to the virus.

The prevalence of inaccurate information pertaining to COVID-19 on television is a source of disquiet for me. The dissemination of COVID-19-related data often leans toward inducing fear among children and generating unease within the broader populace. A prevalent narrative insinuates a lack of survivability upon contraction of the virus. With a dearth of a definitive cure, the prevailing perception conveys a high mortality rate. Consequently, my apprehension revolves around the potential psychological impact of instilling fear in children due to these circumstances. (Informant 12, age 21, female, senior high school)

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My son frequently raises queries regarding the significant number of COVID-related fatalities depicted on television and expresses concern about the possibility of succumbing to the virus (Informant 9, Male, Senior High School)

A small subset of respondents also indicated the availability of COVID-19 prevention videos featuring content suitable for children. Nonetheless, the predominant sentiment among participants was dissatisfaction, as they noted a lack of age-appropriate elucidation of substantive subject matter within these videos.

Following the viewing of a COVID-19-associated video, which the school shared through the parents' WhatsApp group, my son exhibited heightened engagement with water-based activities, leading to frequent handwashing. This increased hygienic practice inadvertently resulted in a minor upper respiratory infection. In response, I conducted an online search and provided clarifications that stipulated the appropriate instances for handwashing, including before and after meals, after restroom use, post-handling of waste materials, and subsequent to coughing or sneezing (Informant 23, Female, Senior High School).

Due to the absence of precise directives regarding the appropriate instances for handwashing within the handwashing video, my son has developed a habitual tendency to engage in activities involving soap and water (Informant 24, Female, Senior High School).

To avert the potential for misinterpretation of acquired information, parents advocate for co-viewing of COVID-19-related films or advertisements with their children. Additionally, parents perceived a lack of child-friendliness in snack advertisements broadcasted during the COVID-19 period, attributing this perception to the presence of colors, preservatives, or sweeteners in the promoted snacks.

I consistently find myself compelled to prepare the meals depicted on television due to a sense of apprehension associated with the task. (Informant 26, Female, Senior High School).

Based on specific criteria, parents evaluated COVID-19 literacy content as inadequate for children. The factors contributing to this assessment encompassed information that did not align with parental requirements, presentation styles unsuitable for the child's age, and

the presence of food advertisements that diverged from established guidelines for promoting healthy nutritional choices for children.

The economic difficulties of using the Internet

Parents are informed that a significant portion of COVID-19 educational content targeting children is predominantly available online, encompassing platforms like YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp Groups, Telegram, and blogs. However, this presents a concern for parents, as a substantial majority of them harbor the belief that children should not independently utilize the internet. This prevailing perspective curtails children's access to COVID-19 literacy resources. As one informant put it:

I persist in supervising my child's interaction with COVID-19 information on platforms such as YouTube due to apprehensions that they may inadvertently encounter content that is unsuitable. (Informant 17, Male, Senior High School).

I am in agreement with the notion that children should not autonomously access the internet. (Informant 35 years old, Male, Junior High School).

In cases where parental financial resources are constrained, stemming from factors such as parental unemployment, preschool-aged children encounter limitations in their access to COVID-19 literacy due to potential difficulties in acquiring internet plans. A father shares a story:

Although in possession of a smartphone, I have recently experienced a loss of employment, resulting in a lack of financial means to procure an internet service. (Informant 40, Male, Senior High School).

I am currently unable to secure the necessary financial resources to acquire a smartphone or data package, despite the existence of considerable COVID-related information available online that could be suitable for my child. (Informant 34, Male, Elementary School).

Limitations in access can also be attributed to insufficient familiarity and time required for proficient utilization of online resources. Among the informants, one said:

I possess limited proficiency in navigating the online space and utilizing the internet. Moreover,

my current circumstances are characterized by a scarcity of time, as I have transitioned to home-based food sales following my departure from formal employment. This endeavor entails a sequence of activities encompassing sourcing ingredients, culinary preparation, and vending, predominantly undertaken during the morning hours (Informant 33, Female, Junior High School).

In order to prevent their kids from becoming internet addicts, parents also restrict their kids' access to online media. Explained by a father:

I refrained from allowing my child to utilize electronic devices for the purpose of watching movies or accessing online literature regarding COVID-19, driven by my apprehension that such engagement might foster dependency. (Informant 37, Female, Junior High School).

I've come across information suggesting that children should minimize their usage of electronic devices due to the potential for addiction. Consequently, I refrain from permitting my children to engage with my phone for play activities to mitigate this risk (Informant 28, Female, Elementary School)

In the context of this investigation, parents adopted measures to restrict their children's access to COVID-19 information on online platforms. This precautionary approach was attributed to several reasons, including the necessity for parental oversight due to internet usage, financial constraints, apprehension about potential addiction, the intention to shield children from unsuitable content, limited navigational proficiency, absence of a smartphone, inadequate signal availability, or financial incapacity to afford an internet package.

Discussion

All participants of the survey identified three interconnected factors associated with COVID-19 literacy among young children, namely limited accessibility, content tailored for children, and a manageable scope. They are of the opinion that an extensive understanding of COVID-19 is crucial for preschool-aged children to safeguard themselves from potential exposure to the virus. Participants underscore that due to the innate curiosity of young children about COVID-19, they frequently pose inquiries regarding the topic.

Consequently, a substantial volume of information is required to satiate the informational needs of these children, which goes beyond mere curiosity. Survey respondents further opined that the requisites of children are met through the availability of COVID-19 literacy across various formats, including print media, videos, and reading materials. (Reese et al., 2010), intriguing images and symbols, or commercials or television programming (Moses, 2008).

Nevertheless, consensus among parents exists regarding the considerable difficulty encountered in identifying resources that adequately cater to their children's COVID-19 literacy requirements. Despite children being categorized as susceptible demographics vulnerable to COVID-19, the existing resources predominantly focus on adults and the elderly. Ghia elaborated that public health education endeavors continue to disproportionately target preschool-aged children, a perspective reinforced by the findings of this dataset (Ghia et al., 2020). The deficiency in the efficacy of COVID-19 literacy media targeting preschool-aged children is prominently shaped by the formidable obstacle of sourcing COVID-19 literacy content suitable for this specific demographic.

To surmount the hurdle of accessing child-appropriate COVID-19 information, online media emerges as a potential solution. Nevertheless, participants have expressed reservations regarding the quality of content encountered in online media sources. Their apprehensions revolve around the possibility of their children acquiring erroneous COVID-19 information, particularly in cases where the parents possess a limited understanding of the subject matter. This concern stems from the heightened susceptibility for misinformation and hoaxes to proliferate through the internet due to the ease of information accessibility (Novitasari et al., 2021). Divergent levels of public health literacy among both children and parents can result in misinterpretation of online content, potentially leading to the dissemination of misinformation by certain individuals (Harnett, 2020). Survey respondents reached a consensus regarding the necessity for parental training, enabling them to effectively communicate the intricacies of the COVID-19 virus to their children. This training should equip parents with the competence to address their children's informational requirements concerning health practices and protocols while fostering self-sufficiency in responding to and mitigating COVID-19-related concerns.

Survey participants align with the suggestions posited by Velardo and Drummond (2017),

which underscore the necessity for content catering to children's health literacy in a manner that is child-friendly (Velardo & Drummond, 2017). Regrettably, the existing COVID-19 literacy material has not been presented in a manner conducive to being comprehended by young readers (Rose et al., 2009). The informants conveyed that a plethora of advertisements promoted unhealthy dietary habits among children, and the information being propagated was characterized by inducing fear rather than offering practical insights. In essence, the current COVID-19 information available lacks a child-friendly approach, thereby impeding the engagement of children as proactive participants in matters of health (Stålberg et al., 2016). However, parents still generate their own media content, albeit less captivating for children, in an effort to compensate for the scarcity of COVID-19 media tailored to the needs of children. Survey participants held the belief that the constrained access to COVID-19 literacy is rooted in their reluctance to allow independent access to this information via cellphones, driven by the understanding that children might lack the ability to filter required information based on their cognitive development. Consequently, the majority of the acquired COVID-19 literacy originates from online sources, thereby resulting in limited accessibility (Cho & Lee, 2017). Due to concerns about the potential for internet addiction among children (Leung & Lee, 2012), They opt for both printed and digital media for enhancing children's COVID-19 literacy (Ji Eun Kim & Anderson, 2008). This dataset provides corroboration for the proposition posited by Velardo and Drummond (2017) advocating for accessible health literacy for children. Parental perspectives concerning limitations on access exhibit variability (Velardo & Drummond, 2017). According to Livingstone (2003), Lee (2013), Holloway (2014), Green and Love (2014), and Shin (2015), Parents with high and middle income levels curtail independent internet access to COVID-19 information, emphasizing the need for parental supervision. Conversely, parents with low income levels limit internet access owing to financial constraints and the limited navigational capabilities of their children (Holloway et al., 2014; Lee, 2013; Livingstone, 2003; Shin, 2015), opting for alternatives, they instead depend on television broadcasts or information shared through verbal communication. (National Academies of Science et al., 2016).

In summation, the outcomes derived from this investigation underscore the imperative for the provision of child-friendly literacy materials encompassing COVID-19 prevention,

accessible through both print and digital platforms. While the current study's sample size is limited to 40 parents, the results are deemed to possess broader applicability, as efforts were made to ensure a representative selection of participants. Factors including gender diversity, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and occupational diversity were taken into consideration during participant selection. In this context, it is essential to acknowledge that imparting knowledge to children regarding sensitive subjects demands robust pedagogical expertise and facilitation of accessibility (Ghia et al., 2020), hence, the selection of suitable media is of paramount importance. For instance, it is impractical to anticipate that a preschool-aged child would grasp the notion of a virus, an imperceptible microorganism. Thus, simplification and enhancing the content's appeal for children are critical strategies to facilitate comprehension. Utilizing media formats, such as comic books, holds potential in the realm of health education, as they offer an avenue for rendering complex concepts more accessible and engaging to young audiences. (Fajriannor T.M. et al., 2017; Nafee et al., 2021; Pongoh, 2022). Comics serve as a widely employed form of media, owing to their visually appealing and easily comprehensible illustrations. These attributes render comics an adaptable tool, facilitating the simplification of intricate concepts or themes for the purpose of enhancing children's understanding (Gabaron, 2017; Ghia et al., 2020; Tatalovic, 2009; Yang, 2003). It is intriguing to observe that within the context of Indonesia, several entities have taken the initiative to utilize comic books as a medium for disseminating child-friendly COVID-19 preventive literacy (Direktorat Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Pelaku Usaha Pangan Olahan, 2020; Lusmilasari, 2021; Snider et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Parents' proficiency in media literacy serves as an exemplar for guiding their children's engagement with media and information. This proficiency equips children with the skills to discern accurate information and navigate potentially harmful content. Furthermore, parents inclined towards media education possess the potential to supplement the curricula delivered by schools or online programs, thereby augmenting the efficacy of media

education. Future investigation is warranted to delineate the capacity of parents and students in implementing and supporting online media resources within the education system. Enhancing school preparedness could potentially involve strengthening the learning ecosystem for schools, parents, and students alike. Strategies encompass offering informative literature tailored to children regarding COVID-19, as well as furnishing resources and training opportunities to enhance parental media literacy. Inclusive attention must be directed toward the distinctive challenges that families with pre-schoolers may encounter. These challenges necessitate tailored hands-on support and guidance. By addressing these unique considerations and furnishing requisite parental support, the continuity of comprehensive education and care for young children during these exigent circumstances can be more effectively assured.

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