

# Parents' Participation in Strengthening FAST Character through Learning from Home program

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**Abstract.** Character education for elementary school students was initially implemented through learning at school, extracurricular activities, school culture and community participation. However, when the world was hit by Covid-19 outbreak and became a pandemic, learning activities in school were stopped. Automatically, character education programs in school also stopped. In such conditions, parents' participation is highly needed in character strengthening programs through learning from home programs. This research was using quantitative descriptive methods by observing and distributing questionnaires to 40 respondents, namely parents of students who participated in the program. The characters targeted by this program are FAST characters (Fathonah, Amanah, Shidiq and Tabligh). Results showed that 65% of respondents admitted that it was difficult to run this program because there are no manuals, while 32% of respondents had their own designed guidelines. As many as 90% of respondents were able to run the program according to the expected target while 10% of respondents had not reached the target. Meanwhile, 98% of respondents wish that this program can continue even after learning in schools has been recovered, while 2% of respondents would leave the affairs of childrens' education to schools. Thus, it can be concluded that with parents' participation, the character education program was successfully carried out through a learning from home program.

**Keywords:** Parents' Participation, Character Education, FAST, Learning from Home

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**INTRODUCTION** ~ The presence of Covid 19 in the midst of human life has had a huge impact on everyday life. It is not only concerning health problems, but also has an impact on human activities in general. The corona virus spreads from person to person through droplets that come out of the mouth or nose toward a person or fall onto the surface of objects around them and then touched by other people (Marzuki, 2021). As social beings, it is common for humans to always interact with each other, however Covid 19 has forced people to limit their physical interaction, keep a distance from each other, reduce mobility and minimize events that involve many people in order to break the chain of spread fo Covid 19.

One of the events that was limited during the COVID 19 pandemic was face-to-face

learning activities in schools because it involved a lot of people and created a crowd that could increase the spread of Covid 19. The national government issued a Learning From Home (BDR) policy for all students in Indonesia, starting from the early-age education level (PAUD) to college (Dini, J. P.A.U., 2021). All learning activities as well as extracurricular activities at school were suspended for an unpredictable period of time and still in the dark about when it will return to normal.

Education is a very important effort in order to create high quality human resources. The progress of a nation is determined by the quality of its people. Therefore, education should not be stopped for any reason. Time and era will not wait until humans are really ready

and only those who can adapt well will be the winners. For this reason, the education world should adapt quickly toward all existing situations, including

ever implemented this system, especially those located in remote areas or in villages (Ameli, 2020).

Based on the above conditions, schools create learning programs that can be applied during the pandemic which is called learning from home. Although students can no longer study at school, they can still learn from home. Schools will build learning management systems (LMS) for long distance learning tools that can connect teachers and students. Schools will also create virtual classes, create digital materials and other programs that support the implementation of learning so that learning objectives can be reached (Paksi, H.P., 2020).

Learning from home program was indeed considered as the most suitable program for current conditions, but that does not mean there were no obstacles. In a whole year, researcher observed and conducted interviews with teachers, students and parents, especially for elementary school students. From these activities, researcher assessed that there were still many teachers who have difficulties in implementing long distance learning. Teacher performance indicators can be seen from their success in teaching, guiding and directing students in accordance with the learning goals that have been agreed previously (Sudrajat, J., 2020). Other than poor human resources quality particularly in mastering the latest technology, factors such as facilities, signals and funding also make it

Covid 19 pandemic. In Indonesia, the e-learning system is no longer a foreign concept, it's just that not all schools have

difficult for teachers to seek proper education for their students.

Several elementary students who were interviewed admitted that they were not ready for long distance learning. Most elementary students did not have tools for online learning. Communication tools are things that are most needed in this era. With communication tools, people can obtain the information they need from various sources (Daulay, 2020). So far, elementary school students do not have smartphones because they were underage and thus not allowed to have their own smartphones, nor do they have laptops. For learning purposes, students must share with their parents' smartphones or laptops. If parents have to go to work and bring their smartphones and laptops with them, students will not be able to study.

From the parents' point of view, this is also the case. Some parents who were interviewed by researcher admitted that they had difficulties in assisting their children to study at home. Not all parents have educational backgrounds and know how to teach. In addition, due to the busy work schedule of parents, they do not have enough time to accompany their children to study, especially if both parents were working. In the end, most parents would handover their smartphones and laptops to their children and let their children learn on their own without assistance and supervision.

Smartphones, laptops and other gadgets connected to the internet can display any content, not only education but also entertainment, games, politics and other millions of content, both positive and negative. Elementary students who tend to play will tend to look for game content. Their high level of curiosity will make them look for any information that appears on their smartphone screen. If this was allowed to get out of control, students can fall into negative content and gradually change their character. Yunus, 9th grade student of SMP Negeri 3 Mappedeceng states that his result in learning Islamic religious subjects in grade IX has greatly decreased due to negative effects of social media and thus affect his grades in PAI (Yunus, 2019).

Such problems regarding character cannot be underestimated. The destruction of a nation was not only caused by the lack of education, but also because of the damaged character of its people. Corruptors were actually smart and intelligent people, but due to their bad character, their intelligence was misused to deceive people. In the educational world, examples of poor character among educators can be seen from an educator who leaks test materials, gives scores that were not in accordance with students' achievement, write thesis for his/her students and others (Soedarsono, 2013). This is an illustration concerning the importance of character in one's life. Therefore, if students were not equipped with good character, no matter how high their education was, it would be in vain.

Considering the situation where teachers will not be able to reach all students when students were at home, the presence of parents was highly needed to assist

children's learning at home. Teachers might still be able to provide subject matter and assignment through LMS and online learning, but character is something that cannot be taught. Character building needs assistance, supervision and example. In this case, it was the parents who must participate in character building. Parents play more roles in children's character education. In addition to the form of supervision and assistance that must be provided, parents have more responsibilities in facilitating and ensuring the continuity of online learning process so that the predetermined learning objectives can be reached properly (Prabowo, S., 2020).

To build good character based on religious values, researcher created a character strengthening program through learning from home by involving parents' participation. Characters being developed were characters that come from characteristics of the Prophet Shallallahu Alaihi Wassalam, namely the characters of Fathonah, Amanah, Shidiq and Tabligh (FAST). Related with the program, researcher formulated research problems as follows:

1. What was the role of parents in the FAST character strengthening program through learning from home program?
2. What were the obstacles faced by parents in running the program?
  1. What was the success of the FAST character strengthening program through learning from home?

## METHOD

This study involved 40 parents as respondents. Since the number of respondents was eligible to be used

entirely, there was no sampling so this study was a population study.

The data taken in this study were parental response data, interview, observation and documentation data. More specifically, author would like to obtain these following data:

1. Parents' response in implementing the program
2. Overview of program implementation
3. Data on constraints during program implementation
4. Data on the success of the program

To obtain such data, the author used a

7. Does the program need to be continued?

Questions used in the interview guide were as follows:

1. Tell us about your experience in implementing the program.
2. Tell us about the obstacles you face while implementing the program.
3. Tell us about your efforts in overcoming problems or obstacles that arise during the program.
4. In your opinion, who should carry out this program in the future?
5. What were your expectations regarding follow-up of this

Question in Gutman scale	Yes		No	
	Q	%	Q	%
Did you fully implement the program?	36	90	4	10
Did you have difficulty in implementing the program?	26	65	14	35
you have a solution to your problem?	32	80	8	20
Did you have guidelines in implementing the program?	13	32	27	68
Did you create your own program guidelines?	4	10	36	90
Did this program the expected target?	36	90	4	10

questionnaire instrument, interview guide, observation instrument and documentation instrument. Questions used in the questionnaire were as follow:

1. Did you fully implement the program?
2. Did you have difficulty in implementing the program?
3. Do you have a solution to your problem?
4. Did you have guidelines in implementing the program?
5. Did you create your own program guide?
6. Did this program achieve the expected target?

program in the future?

Observation questions were as follows:

1. Observing respondents' condition during implementation of the program
2. Observation in increasing FAST character in children

Documentation points were as follows:

1. Daily notes (log book)
2. Documents from questionnaire, interview and observation results

Results were analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods. Researcher describes the event used as the center of this study without giving special treatment to the event. Researcher took pictures of

the events and any incidents that were taking his attention then described them as they are, therefore results of this study would only be valid for that particular time and not necessarily relevant to be used in the future time (Soendari, T., 2021). The main research data was in the form of quantitative data obtained through questionnaire and documentation. Collected data was processed using the percentage technique and presented descriptively. Data obtained from interviews and observations would serve to complement the quantitative data.

## RESULTS

FAST character strengthening activity through a learning from home program involving parents' participation was carried out within a period of 3 months. Result of the study were as follow:

### Questionnaire Results

Processed questionnaire results was presented in the following table 1. Results from the questionnaire suggest that there were 36 respondents or 90% who implemented the program for 3 month while 4 respondents or 10% admitted to implementing it but not fully. Regarding the level of difficulty in implementing the program, 26 respondents or 65% said they had difficulties in implementing the program, while 14 respondents or 35% said they had no difficulties. Concerning the difficulties faced by respondents, 32 respondents or 80% had a solution for their problems while 8 respondents or 20% admitted that they did not have any solution. While implementing the program, 13 respondents or 32% already have their guidelines and 27 respondents or 68% did not yet have guidelines. Of the

respondents who have guidelines, 4 of them developed their own guidelines.

Furthermore, related with how the program reached the expected target, 36 respondents or 90% claimed to have reached the target while 4 respondents or 10% have not reached the target. Moreover, 39 respondents or 98% stated that this program needs to be continued and 1 respondents or 2% suggested that this program should not be continued.

### Interview Results

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with respondents to explore further information, especially to confirm and clarify the results of the questionnaire. In this case, not all respondents get the same questions. The questions were adjusted to the needs so that the data obtained was more accurate to the actual conditions. The processing of the interview results were as follows.

In general, the FAST character strengthening program through the learning from home program involving parents' participation was successfully implemented. All respondents implemented the program well. Most of the respondents completed the program in the assigned period while a few others did not.

In carrying out the program, respondents faced several obstacles. From interviews conducted by researchers, these obstacles were concerned with the unavailability of manuals or instructions in implementing the program so that respondents find it difficult to determine what activities should be carried out. The programs under implementation were not uniform since respondents create their guidelines according to their own understanding. In

addition, obstacles also arise during the mentoring program because most respondents were working and thus they have difficulties in allocating the time.

To overcome the obstacles, respondents make the necessary efforts according to their respective needs and abilities. Some made their own guidelines, some looked for guide references from various sources and some collaborated with other respondents and made joint activities. As for the problem in mentoring, parents generally share tasks between husband and wife. Respondents generally provide time to gather with their families and give moral messages according to the character program under implementation.

Respondents hope that this program can be implemented in the future by involving schools, teachers, students, parents and the community so as to obtain more optimal results. However, there are also respondents who have difficulty implementing this program and hand over the character education of their children to schools.

Respondents wished there would be guidelines or modules that can be used in strengthening FAST characters so that parents did not feel confused. The presence of modules would make it easier for parents to understand characters, develop mentoring programs, implement programs and carry out monitoring and evaluation.

### **Observation Results**

Observation was used as additional data to find out the real situation in implementation of the FAST character strengthening program through learning from home which involves parents'

participation. There were 2 aspects that became the focus of observation, namely respondents' condition during implementation of the program and FAST character improvement in children. Observations were carried out by directly observing respondents' condition and taking notes of the things that were found in the observation. In this case, researcher made random observations to the respondent and only took 3 respondents to observe.

Observation results showed that respondents have implemented the program as expected. However, the program carried out between one respondent and another was not the same. Generally, respondents implement their own programs according to the needs and characteristics of the family. There were families who were already religious from the beginning, so it was easy for them to implement FAST programs. But there were also less religious families who still try to instill a religious character through their own program.

Results of this FAST strengthening program after 3 month began to show positive signs. Researcher observed that the children had begun to apply FAST characters such as able to tell the truth, willing to help parents, willing to be responsible and also able to make decisions at the right time. However, researcher observed some characters were still classified as weak, meaning that sometimes children were still unable to take responsibility and were not being honest. But overall, there were positive developments compared to before.

### **Documentation Results**

Documentation was conducted to complement research data so that results from questionnaire, interviews and observations became more accurate. Thus, researcher took documentation over parents' daily notes (Log Book), questionnaire results, interview and observation documents. In addition,

researcher also add several activity pictures where respondents were carrying out activities with their children during implementation of FAST character strengthening program.

Several pictures during activities were obtained and presented below:



Figure 1. Fathonah character strengthening



Figure 2. Fathonah character strengthening



Figure 3. Ai



Figure 4. Shidiq character strengthening



Figure 5. Tabligh character strengthening

## DISCUSSION

In accordance with the results of the study as described above, it can be seen that in general, parents can be involved in character strengthening programs, especially when children are at home. Family was the first and main educational path for children and was the first place where children receive education and teaching from their parents (Sutriyanti, N. K., 2016). Therefore, schools need to establish communication with parents in relation to school programs so that good cooperation is established in order to educate and assist students in learning. In providing learning facilities for children, it is necessary to develop programs and guidelines as well as the division of tasks between schools, teachers and parents so

that there is no overlap in program implementation.

The results showed that there were still parents who had difficulty implementing the FAST strengthening program because there were no manuals available. This is natural because not all parents have an educational background and have religious experience. (Setyowati, E., 2019). Families who are not too religious will certainly find it difficult to make FAST character strengthening programs compared to families with religious backgrounds. Some of them even admit that they don't have solutions to the problems they face.

Most parents develop FAST character strengthening programs independently,

armed with the knowledge and skills they have. This is a very good effort because by making the guidelines independently, parents can easily measure and evaluate the results. According to the author, it would be better if the respondents could interact and cooperate with each other in making guidelines and programs for strengthening the FAST character, so they could help one another particularly if there were any parents having difficulty in developing their own program. Respondents could also exchange programs with each other so that there are many variations of programs that can be implemented in the family. Schools could also invite parents to discuss about mentoring students while learning at home so that they continue to behave like in school and completed their assignment well (Nurjanah, R., & Ali, M., 2019)

This study obtained that 90% of respondents were able to achieve the expected target, namely the formation of FAST characters in their children. From this result, according to the researcher, there is enough data to conclude that this program is successful. However, the author was also interested to dig further into the 10% of respondents who did not succeed in reaching the target. Furthermore, results of the study also obtained data that 1 respondent suggested to discontinued this program. This respondents prefer to leave the affairs of character education of their children to schools and teachers because parents feel they do not have enough knowledge about religious character. Plus they were so busy and they felt it wouldn't be optimal for them to accompany their children at home.

According to researcher, parents cannot entirely give their responsibility for educating their children to schools. This is because children's time at school is very limited, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic like now. Children spend more time at home than at school. If children were in a school environment, then character strengthening can be done by schools. Usually character strengthening programs in schools were carried out through 3 activities, namely classroom learning, extracurricular activities and strengthening school culture. However, when children are at home, cooperation and parental participation are certainly needed. One of the success factors for character education is the consistency between school and home regarding the implementation of instilled character pillars (Megawangi, R., 2010). Therefore, parents and schools should work together in character education.

To strengthen the questionnaire data, researchers conduct interviews with respondents while providing education and motivation. On the one hand, the researcher feels proud because respondents were still enthusiastic about implementing the program until the end in the midst of their busy schedule, but on the other hand, their busy schedule also has an impact on the quality of mentoring and strengthening of FAST character. With the limited time that parents have to accompany children to study at home, it should not become a barrier for family momentum (Wardani, A., & Ayriza, Y., 2020). If only one person works in the family, then the implementation of mentoring for children can be done by sharing tasks between the father and the mother. But zif both parents work

together, of course they will find it difficult to divide the time. If both parents work from morning to evening, then they only have time at night to gather with their children, and at that time the children might already be sleepy. This is a challenge for parents in developing the character of their children. With this condition in mind, it is natural that there were respondents who cannot fully implement the program.

In accordance with interviews results, respondents wished there would be program guidelines that they could use as a reference in assisting and strengthening FAST character to their children. Researcher felt that this expectation was reasonable and not necessarily excessive. Researcher recommends to conduct study regarding development of FAST character strengthening module so that parents could use it as a resource in developing their program to strengthen FAST character. With this kind of guidelines, it is expected that parents will find it easier to implement the program and be able to adjust their time, energy and thoughts according to the guidelines. (Lickona, T, 2009)

## CONCLUSION

In accordance with research problems formulation and results of this study, data processing, data analysis and discussion, researcher can conclude things as follows:

1. The FAST character strengthening program through the learning from home program involving parents' participation was deemed successful.
2. The problems faced by parents while implementing the program are natural because not all parents have

religious backgrounds, so adaptation is needed.

3. Parents' expectations for the availability of guidelines or modules need to be considered and it was recommended to conduct another research in terms of developing FAST character strengthening modules.
4. A systematic follow-up plan was needed by involving several elements such as school, teachers, students, parents and community participation so that the strengthening of FAST's character can be implemented in an optimal manner and have a better positive impact in the future.

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