



## An Analysis on the Dual Role of Working Mothers in the Era of Pandemic Covid-19

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### Abstract

*The Covid-19 pandemic has suddenly changed the order of life of the global community. One of them is the family environment, where working mothers experience an increased dual role while at home. This study aims to analyze the dual role strategies of working mothers in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. This type of research is qualitative research using a case study approach. The results show that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes in the family environment. Working mothers not only experience an increase in workload, but also an increased risk of emotional disorders such as stress or fatigue due to activities everything is done at the same time as the impact of the implementation of work from home and study from home which makes home the main basis for its implementation. The dual role strategy of working mothers to deal with these conditions is to divide roles with husbands, apply a priority scale by compiling detailed items work systematically, and rearrange or reschedule all activities carried out while at home.*

**Keywords:** Working Mother; Pandemic Covid-19; Strategy.

### A. Introduction

The year of 2020 will be an unforgettable one. In that year, the global world was shocked by the emergence of an infectious disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Indonesian reported its first case on 02 March 2020. Cases are increasing and spreading rapidly throughout Indonesia. The spread of Covid-19, which has almost reached all provinces in Indonesia, with the number of cases and / or the number of deaths increasing and having an impact on political, economic, social, cultural, defense and security aspects, as well as the welfare of the people in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government has implemented various policies, including by issuing Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Distance in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Covid-19 which results in restrictions on various activities. Some of them that are quite phenomenal are the rules and policies for carrying out work from home (WFH) activities and learning from home (SFH) activities. Experts and epidemiologists agree that physical distancing or quarantine is a necessity to reduce the spread of this deadly virus. Changes also occur in almost all aspects of human life and only in a matter of months (Vibriyanti, 2020)

The policy taken as a preventive step in reducing the rate of increase in Covid-19 cases has created a new situation and new challenges. Online survey data on the emergency impact of the corona virus on workers/employees shows that as many as 51 percent of employees continues to work but only from home/not to the

office/workplace (Dewayani, 2020). Work and study activities at home occur in one place setting, namely the house. Currently, many parents who work at home at the same time have to assist their children in study from home. These conditions can add to the many negative stressors that a mother who works at home may feel, which includes the pile of work that has to be done by the mother for many reasons, adaptation to the use of work media which may be most suitable if you work from home virtually, needs and caring to their increasing children and husbands at home, and other things that every mother may feel differently when her office work has to be done at home (Marliani *et al.*, 2020).

Sun *et al* (Luh *et al.*, 2020) said the Covid-19 outbreak urges testing of distance education almost as never before for all elements of education, namely students, teachers and parents. Considering that during the pandemic, time, location and distance are big problems right now (Kusuma & Hamidah, 2020). Most parents are not ready to fully assume the role of teacher education even under favorable circumstances. Teaching is already a complex task requiring professional judgment and skills that most parents do not have.

Most of the parents cannot just take the role of teacher and do it effectively. Parents are struggling as a result of school closures in different ways given the impact of different pandemics on their ability to work. Most parents of school-age children who have not lost their jobs continue to work. But now they must do so while balancing full-time childcare - a challenge that has led to the reported decline in family well-being within a week of stay-at-home requirements (Jacob, *et al.*, 2020).

Women experience twofold increase in working time at home, due to the additional task of accompanying children to study at home, which is usually done at school. The stay at home policy forces women to learn online learning technology for their children, the need for a healthy and clean life and service the need for food with sufficient nutritional intake during the COVID-19 period, forcing women to give extra time for domestic work (Komnas Perempuan, 2020). The experts predict that the pandemic will have a disproportionately negative effect on women's workload at home, but there is also speculation that it may force men to take on more responsibilities (Auðardóttir & Rúdólfssdóttir, 2020).

This research is related to what was also previously researched by Euis, Dina and Fitri (2021). The title of the research studied is an analysis of the role of parents in accompanying children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of the research conclude that in general the roles that appear are as mentors, educators, carers, developers and supervisors. In particular, the roles that arise are: maintaining and ensuring children to adopt a clean and healthy life, accompanying children in doing school work, doing joint activities while at home, creating a comfortable environment for children, establishing intense communication with children, playing with children, be a role model for children, provide supervision to family members, provide for and meet family needs, and guide and motivate children, provide education, maintain religious values, make variations and innovate activities at home.

This research focuses on analyzing the dual role strategies of working mothers carried out in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and what strategies mothers are taking to prevent Covid-19 transmission in their family environment.

## B. Literature Review

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus2 (SARS-CoV-2). Common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection include symptoms of acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. In severe cases of COVID-19, it can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death (Kementerian Kesehatan, 2020). Indonesia reported its first case on March 02, 2020. Cases are increasing and spreading rapidly throughout Indonesia. Indonesia has adopted a policy to implement Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), which are principally implemented to suppress the spread of the increasingly widespread Covid-19. Several forms of action in implementing the PSBB are working from home and studying from home.

Work from home (WFH) is a government policy to limit the movement of people to interact directly with each other in their activities and all work activities are carried out from home. Work from home is carried out not because the office as facilities provided by the employer are inadequate, but it is done to prevent the spread of Covid-19 which is currently developing (Mustajab *et al.*,2020). This policy is also the same as the prohibition to carry out learning or school activities openly, and implementing learning from home program or who is familiarly called study from home (SFH). The study from home (SFH) policy can mean delegating the duties of teachers to parents, especially mothers.

The daily life of women is in a context of double burden. In families and households, women basically often play multiple roles. This is reflected in the first place by her role as a housewife, who does household chores (cooking, raising children, etc.), a productive work that does not directly generate income. The second role is as a breadwinner (Kelompok Studi Wanita Fisip UI, 1990). It is important for mothers to plan what strategies to carry out these dual roles. And also carry out various strategies and efforts to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 in order to protect his family. In general, we define strategy as a means of achieving goals (Yunus, 2016). Strategy formation is a combination of the main processes, namely analyzing the situation and how the objectives are formulated. By knowing the strategies and management carried out by the mother in carrying out all these dual roles, later effects or impacts will be obtained as a result of every activity that occurs in the family, especially for the period and adjustment in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## C. Methodology

This type of research is qualitative research using a case study approach. The place or location of this research is Somba Opu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The informants in this study were working mothers who under go the demands of work from home, both mothers who work in the formal and informal sectors. Meanwhile, the dual role of working mothers in accompanying children who are level. The selection is based on the consideration that children at the primary school level still need a lot of mentoring, guidance, and direction from parents (especially mothers), when compared to school children at the first and higher levels (junior and senior high school).

This study targets several informants who work in various fields of work (both formal such as civil servants, office employees or informal workers such as laborers and so on), but, in fact, some of these types of work are not available to the researcher. The informants in this study consist of five (5) mothers, with the types of work including two (2) teachers, one (1) government employee and one (1) entrepreneur. The data were collected using various techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis used was data analysis in the Miles and Huberman model field which consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015).

#### **D. Results and Discussions**

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or more commonly known as Covid-19 is one of the infectious diseases that are currently taking the world by storm. The Covid-19 pandemic is not just a health problem. More than that, a lot of turmoil was present due to the pandemic. Economic, social, cultural and religious issues also felt the impact during the Covid-19 pandemic. The formulation of policies to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic has also caused many polemics in the community. Limitation and even elimination of various activities have been carried out to anticipate the increase in the number of Covid-19 infections. Every region in Indonesia plays an active role in harmonizing national regulations issued by the central government to support measures to prevent Covid-19. One of them is Gowa Regency.

Gowa Regency is one of the districts in South Sulawesi which is included in the red zone category. Gowa is ranked second under Makassar City with quite high cases of transmission. Data from the task force (task force) handling covid-19 in South Sulawesi province revealed to date (November), there were 1571 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Gowa Regency, with details of 131 people being treated, 1410 people being declared cured, and 30 others being declared dead.

At the beginning of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, people in Gowa district also felt a panic reaction that was almost the same as that of people in various parts of Indonesia in general. The atmosphere suddenly became very quiet, crowds of residents were rarely encountered, many shops were closed, and vehicles that were usually busy passing were also not as crowded as usual. Everything suddenly changed since Covid-19 began to spread in various places. Not only that, office activities in several sectors were initially closed temporarily, until the work from home policy was issued.

This appalling condition lasted for about three (3) months. It was only after the celebration of Eid al-Adha in June that slowly the movement of community activities began to return to its previous state. Even though the PSBB regulations are still being enforced, people are starting to look relaxed and seem to think that the Covid-19 pandemic was not as scary as it was at the beginning. Surprisingly, the spike in cases of transmission actually seems to be increasing, although this is accompanied by an even better recovery rate.

On several occasions, it was found that many people did not adhere to health protocols. Like not wearing masks, not doing social distancing, and there are lots of crowd activities. The community seems to no longer care about the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of them do not believe the truth about the existence of

Covid-19. Apart from being bored with the absence of activity for several months, the community has also begun to ignore the potential for transmission. They began to fill the city center, shopping centers and entertainment centers. Public places have also begun to loosen up and open up access to be visited.

### **1. Work from Home and Study from Home**

The real change that has resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic is the implementation of work from home and study from home policies. These two policies have only been implemented for a long period of time because before, even though several outbreaks had occurred apart from Covid-19, it has not had a significant impact on changes in human activity in it. These cultural changes are then referred to as a new normal (Wahyu & Sa'id, 2020).

Work from home can simply be interpreted as moving all work activities that are usually carried out in a special place (office), moving and being carried out from home. By relying on access to information technology (online), work from home activities will continue to run as usual. This condition emphasizes the importance of smooth operation, reliability, and mastery of information technology in the process of accessibility and service work.

Home as the center of all activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially for work from home and study from home, has created a new and different atmosphere from before. The difference in these conditions occurs due to changes in household work patterns and interactions among family members. The existence of work from home and study from home makes the family rearrange the agendas that had previously become routine in daily life.

In general, there are similarities in the experiences of informants in carrying out all their roles and activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Wahidah, a mother who works in a government office revealed that working from home makes it difficult for her to serve the community because many people are not proficient in using technology as the main basis. Many people visit their homes to carry out the service process. In addition, their children also need assistance while studying from home. It's different with a mother named Yanti.

She is a teacher who is required to work from home due to school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic. She admits that her workload is getting heavier because all the work is done at home at the same time. She has a child in elementary school levels who are also studying from home. She also has a baby. She felt tremendous trouble. She looks tired and usually easily emotional when dealing with these various activities. What was experienced by Wahidah and Yanti also did not escape the experience felt by Fadilah, Darmawati, and Lisnawati. Conditions that are centered in one place, namely the house, make it necessary to be able to divide time efficiently so that no work is neglected or forgotten to be done. Even though all the informants felt almost the same conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic with the implementation of work and study from home policies, the aim was to prevent families from being infected by the virus as the main reason for carrying out all their roles for the safety of family members.

### **2. Strategy for Mothers to Work in the Middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The demand for work from home as a government policy to limit human movement in direct interaction aims to reduce the rate of spread and become a

measure to prevent Covid-19. In line with these demands, a similar policy aimed at controlling the spread of Covid-19 is the enactment of study from home activities. Both of these activities will make the home the main basis for the implementation of work and education (school) activities. It sounded fun to be able to carry out these two activities simultaneously. However, working mothers have a different experience from what many think. The daily life of women is in a context of double burden. The burdens of providing unpaid care in the services of domestic work, as well as the burden of providing economic survival through wage work, provide the norm for women (Ollenburger & Moore, 2002).

Mothers work to assume a dual role which is quite difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who are required to undertake work from home will be faced with another role that is no less important, namely assisting children to learn from home, which was previously done at school. Mothers must also be ready to fulfill various household needs such as cooking, washing and other tasks, and all of these roles must be performed at the same time. Energy, thoughts, and energy will be very influential in this condition.

Working from home can impact family functioning through time spent with children, quality of relationships, home environment and other family obligations. This has an impact on work-life balance when work interferes with family responsibilities, when overwork affects workers' social networks, and balance between work and personal life (Dockery dan Bawa, 2014).

Mothers who are busy with office work must also be ready to accompany their children who are studying. Learning activities from home really depend on the mother's readiness to receive any information conveyed by the teacher online. That means that mothers must also be proficient in the use of information technology, at least able to operate social media such as the WhatsApp application to access the development of children's school information. However, in reality, there are many parents who have difficulty and do not even know how to build communication with teachers about their children's learning assignments.

The dilemmatic condition in every dual role faced by working mothers demands the need for various ways or strategies that are applied in carrying out all of their roles while at home. The increased workload during the Covid-19 pandemic amid the demands of work from home and study from home requires a strategy that can organize all the work of mothers. This strategy is important so that mothers can complete all their roles even though they are carried out at the same time.

The experience of working mothers in carrying out all their dual roles during the Covid-19 pandemic is generally divided into three strategies. First, the strategy of sharing roles. This strategy will really help working mothers to stay optimal in each role. The step taken in this strategy is to give some of the roles that mothers usually do, to be carried out by fathers. This division requires a father to be involved in the role played by the mother. The role of the father is a solution when the mother experiences limited energy and thoughts in managing all her roles at the same time. Second, the strategy applies a priority scale by systematically compiling details of work items in order to avoid neglecting another job if it is carried out at the same time. This strategy focuses on the ability of mothers in time management. Working mothers must be good at managing their time so that all of their roles can run quite

well. Third, rearrange or reschedule all activities carried out while at home to maximize the dual role of mothers while maintaining the physical and emotional side of mothers and family members. This strategy plays an important role for mothers with so many types of work to do, especially if the implementation time is the same.

### **3. Mother's Strategy in Prevention of Covid-19 in the Family Environment**

Working mothers generally interpreted that the presence of an epidemic of infectious diseases such as Covid-19 was very vulnerable to children. Children who are still in the developmental stage still tend to be confused or reluctant to carry out health protocols because they think that this method is unpleasant and troublesome.

First of all, mothers prepare all the necessities related to the process of taking care of them, such as providing masks to protect the face area (mouth and nose) which is one of the places where Covid-19 is transmitted. Furthermore, providing soap or hand wash inside or outside the home. The next step is to provide nutritious healthy food to maintain the immune system of family members. This step is quite important because maintaining body immunity means protecting oneself so that germs or viruses can easily be resisted by the immune system that has been well built in it. Taking vitamins or other body supplements can also help keep your body strong and healthy.

Always limit yourself by keeping your distance outside the house, when interacting with anyone, and avoiding various gatherings that invite large crowds. If necessary, always provide hand sanitizers to protect your self through physical contact (hands) with various objects that are touched while doing various activities. Washing your hands still has to be done every time you finish doing something.

Maintaining emotional self is also needed in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic conditions which are prone to triggering a heavy mind load due to an increased workload. A mother with a lot of workload can be one of the most prone to feel emotional changes while at home. Positive thinking is very necessary to go through difficult times like now. Doing all activities in the house always enjoy and take advantage of quality time with family.

### **E. Conclusion**

The dual role strategy carried out by working mothers in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic consists of two (3) namely; first, to divide roles with husbands in order to maintain the balance of mother's work while at home; second, applying a priority scale by systematically arranging the details of work items in order to avoid neglecting another job if it is carried out at the same time; third, rearrange or reschedule all activities carried out while at home to maximize the mother's dual role while maintaining the physical and emotional side of the mother and family members.

The strategy taken by mothers to prevent Covid-19 transmission in the family generally refers to the health protocol established by the government as a reference in protecting themselves from Covid-19 transmission. In simple terms, mothers carry out several strategies such as educating children about basic knowledge about Covid-19, using masks, teaching and reminding children to always wash their hands, maintain a personal hygiene routine, use hand sanitizers, prepare nutritious food and body supplements such as taking vitamins to maintain endurance, and not traveling outside the house or visiting crowded places for a while.

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