



# Learning Community For Parents Of Children With Down Syndrome To Increase Mother's Awareness In Educating Their Children Better

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The research purpose is to reveal the benefits of learning communities for parents of Down syndrome in increasing mother's awareness in educating their children better. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of five parents with Down syndrome children participating in learning communities. The instruments used in this study include questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, self-reflection, and documentation, which are used to collect data from research subjects. The NVIVO 14 was used to analyse the data and overviews the methodology. Learning communities can provide a platform for parents of Down syndrome children to raise mother's awareness in educating their children better and advocating greater inclusion and acceptance in the community. Participating in learning communities for parents of children with Down syndrome makes a solution to increase mother's awareness in educating their children better. This study can potentially be an essential contribution from educational institutions in providing participation to parents of Down syndrome children in accompanying their children to learn. In the context of education policy, this study highlights the importance of providing opportunities for parents of Down syndrome children to learn and engage in learning communities outside the school environment.

**Keywords—** Learning Community, Parents of Children with Down Syndrome, Increase Mother's Awareness, Educate better

## I. INTRODUCTION

Physical and mental barriers that hinder the growth and development of children with special needs, such as Down syndrome children, require special attention and support to meet their developmental and educational needs. One of the problems with a prevalence of 0.21% in Indonesia is Down syndrome (Balitbang Kemenkes RI, 2018). According to research that has been released by the World Health Organization states that Down syndrome has attacked one in 700 babies, while in total accumulation worldwide this disorder has been felt by more than 8 million babies (WHO, 2018). In Indonesia, this disorder is estimated to have attacked more than 300,000 people (3,75%)(Article, 2021)

Children with special needs, such as Down syndrome, have different needs than children in general. Down syndrome is caused by chromosomal abnormalities, either the number of chromosomes is excessive or less, causing differences in children's physical and cognitive development (Budiman et al., 2018). In general, people with Down syndrome are easily recognized by the physical differences that look more prominent, such as often seen is the presence of a rather small head shape, which is a typical face with narrow eyes that stretch upwards. The distance between the eyes is far apart with a flat and flat nose (mongol). The image of the palm looks abnormal, where there is one transverse outline. Not only that, the distance between your thumbs and toes (Zharfan et al., 2019)

The approach strategy carried out by people and the surrounding environment for children with Down syndrome also needs to be considered, because the treatment given to Down syndrome children with children in general is certainly different, the need for special handling. Children with Down syndrome require different approaches in their education and upbringing, such as those that are stimulative, and

responsive (Slaná et al., 2020). Therefore, the role of all parties in providing special attention and support for children with Down syndrome is very important in meeting their developmental needs, as well as improving their quality of life in the future.

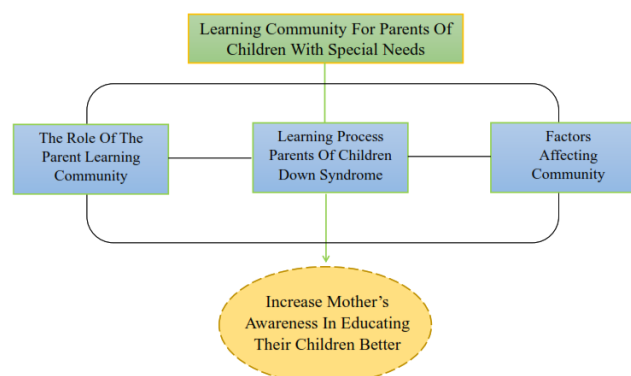
Parents are the biggest contributors in a child's life.(Fuc et al., 2022). An example on how to nurture, raise and educate children, the impact of parents on their children. The role of parents is important in helping that children do every day (Fuc et al., 2022). However, if to raise children's parents are not good will have a bad impact on their children, especially Down syndrome children. Parents have many ways to show relationships by paying attention to children's physical and mental needs to survive (Permatasari, 2020). Parenting includes education, nutrition, healthy lifestyle, school, social interaction, emotions, as well as behavior and discipline.

Several educational institutions have begun implementing inclusive education to provide educational opportunities for children with special needs. Teachers, psychologists, therapists, and companions of children with special needs are responsible for inclusive education in educational institutions.(Evans et al., 2021) Through sharing experiences and knowledge in learning communities, parents of children with special needs can gain new perspectives and strategies to manage challenges in supporting their child's growth and development to help inclusive education institutions. Learning communities can provide emotional support for parents of children with special needs, as they can connect with others who share similar experiences and challenges. Learning communities of parents of children with special needs provide increased insight and positive paradigms. Since the 1990s there has been attention to the concept of professional learning communities (Lee et al., 2019).

Lack of awareness about the benefits of learning communities for parents of children with special needs, such as children with Down syndrome, is a significant obstacle to increasing the parent's awareness to educate the down syndrome better. Many parents of Down syndrome children are not yet aware of the benefits that learning communities can provide, such as emotional support, access to resources, and opportunities for advocacy. Without access to learning communities, parents of Down syndrome children will fend for themselves to cope with their challenges, impacting their well-being and ability to support their child's development (Huiracocha et al., 2017). The self-stress of parents of children with special needs, especially parents of Down syndrome children, is very low, so they are more susceptible to their children's rejection. Many parents of Down syndrome children limit socializing with the surrounding environment, and some even close themselves, so the learning community can be a safe and supportive place for them to connect with others experiencing similar things and share experiences and knowledge.

This research is necessary because by participating in the learning community, children with special needs will get information on how to be a companion for their children in facing their future and increase the awareness of mothers to educate their down syndrome better. There has not been much research on Learning Classes Parents of children with special needs can increase the awareness of mothers who have children with special needs. Parental stress of Down syndrome children is critical to ensuring that their children will receive the support and care they need to grow and develop (Pradnya et al., 2020).

These learning communities of parents of children with special needs can meet the unique needs of children with Down syndrome by tailoring community content and formats to address specific issues or providing access to specialized resources and expertise (Dingyloudi & Strijbos, 2020). The purpose of the research is to reveal the benefits of learning communities of parents of children with special needs in increasing the awareness of mothers to educate their down syndrome better.



Picture 1. Research Framework

### A. Learning Community Concept

The concept of a learning community refers to a framework in which individuals with similar interests, goals, or interests work collaboratively together to share knowledge, experience, and resources to achieve better learning. In a learning community, members support, motivate, and facilitate the learning process together (Rahmat et al., 2020). Where on, the concept of social constructivism is emphasized that learning occurs through. Then on the concept of active participation, a learning community promotes the active

participation of all members. Each member has a responsibility to contribute, share knowledge, and interact with fellow members. In addition to the involvement of resources, there is also the concept of cooperative learning which emphasizes that community members work together in creating knowledge (Darwish, 2019). The next concept of a community is diversity and inclusion, where a successful learning community facilitates diversity of views, backgrounds, and experiences (Fathy, 2019). This creates an environment where multiple perspectives can contribute to enriching learning. Then the concept of technology and online learning communities, in the digital age, technology allows the formation of online learning communities. Online communication platforms and tools can be used to communicate.

A parent learning community is a group or network of individuals who have a common goal to support each other, share knowledge, and learn together related to education, parenting, and child development (Desyanty et al., 2021). These communities are usually made up of parents, guardians, or caregivers of children who want to improve their understanding of different aspects of a child's education and development. The primary goal of parent learning communities is to create an environment where parents can interact, exchange information, share experiences, and discuss the challenges they face in educating and caring for their children. (Mckinley et al., 2021) Activities in these communities can include regular meetings, online discussions, and other events that focus on topics such as teaching methods, children's emotional and social development, child health, positive parenting strategies, etc.

### ***B. Adult Education (Andragogy)***

This non-formal education approach has an important role to play in creating wider accessibility for learning in the community and meeting diverse educational needs. Learning activities in adults in the perspective of non-formal education have several types, there are four types of learning in non-formal education (Djamaluddin, et al 2019) as (1) types of skill learning activities; (2) knowledge learning activities are the basis for all learning activities; (3) attitude learning activities; and (4) problem-solving learning activities.

Adult education alone is not enough to provide additional knowledge but must be given a strong sense of confidence to do what you want to do. Life experience is not limited to pursuing a degree. Experience is the richest source of learning, so adults have the experience and motivation to strive for a better life. Adult learning styles are personal and unique, thus motivating adults to strive to improve their learning to achieve the expected results. According to the view of Nesbit et al., (2020) in their book entitled "Teaching Adults" there are six principles and practices of adult learning that must be applied effectively, namely: 1) voluntary participation, 2) respect, 3) spirit of cooperation and collaboration, 4) practice and reflection, 5) opportunities for critical reflection and 6) learning climate that makes learning independent. This principle is closely related to the characteristics of adults who are independent and have many experiences.

Experience is invaluable learning for adults. Each participant has different experiences, levels of education, maturity, and environment. Therefore, learning must pay attention to the following: 1) participants as learning objects, so that the learning process applied is based on access to their experiences; group discussions, reflections, music, learning, reflections, presentations, group discussions, competitions, 2) tend to useful understanding, new knowledge, new ideas and experiences can be explained through practical experience (Hardika et al., 2018). Learning outcomes can be used directly in their lives, 3) learning materials are designed according to the experiences and circumstances of learning residents.

### ***C. Bandura's Theory***

Social cognitive learning theory can create learning where a person can observe and imitate the behavior experienced by others. In other words, the information received is by paying attention to events obtained from the surrounding environment where the individual. The fundamental principle of this cognitive social learning theory is that what individuals learn, especially in social and moral learning, will occur through imitation or known as imitation and the presentation of examples of behavior or known as modeling (Bandura et al., 2018) In other words, a person learns to change his own behavior by watching the way others respond to a certain stimulus. The view put forward by Bandura & Evans, (2006) calls his theory a social cognitive theory based on several premises, not only considering humans to have cognitive abilities that contribute to motivation, affective and actions of people but also how they motivate and organize. their behavior and create social systems to organize and restructure their lives. Therefore, it can be concluded that according to Bandura, learning outcomes are not only seen in terms of cognitive, but can also be seen from behavioral changes that will have an impact on the environment found by the individual himself.

In the formation of learning communities for parents of children with special needs, Bandura's theory can help in understanding and optimizing the role of parents in educating their children. Parents can learn from the experiences of other parents, reinforce the child's positive behavior, and increase the child's self-efficacy and adaptability in the social environment (Mufidah et al., 2022). In addition, Bandura's theory can also help in designing effective learning and intervention programs for children with special needs and their families. Learning communities can be a means to share experiences and knowledge, as well as improve the adaptability and social skills of children with special needs. In addition, it is also important to pay attention to other factors that can influence the formation of learning communities, such as social support, time

management, and access to adequate educational resources.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of parents with Down syndrome children in participating in learning communities. The study subjects consisted of five parents with Down syndrome children from a total of 80 participants in the parent learning community who had children with special needs at LKP Quali International Surabaya. The instruments used in this study include questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, self-reflection, and documentation, which are used to collect data from research subjects. The validity of the data produced in this study is ascertained by using several techniques, such as triangulation, verification, internal validity, external validity, and objectivity, to ensure the collected data is in accordance with the observed phenomena.

Basically, phenomenological research focuses on two main things, namely, descriptive studies: what the research subjects observe about new things. Where the available data are objective data, real data, real facts. In the structural description it is put forward how the subject lives and interprets her experience. Therefore, research questions in phenomenological studies include questions such as how the subject experiences the event. (Crozier et al., 1994) The use of this type of phenomenological research is based on the consideration that the focus of this research is classified as a phenomenon that needs to be explored and unique, where the role of the learning community of parents of Down syndrome children to encourage efforts to reduce stress of mother who has Down syndrome children.

Using NVIVO for analyzing the data for the research (Wiltshier, 2011). NVIVO is a qualitative data analysis software widely used for organizing, coding, and analyzing qualitative data (Allsop et al., 2022). The specific methodology for NVIVO analysis are data import, data organization, coding, tree nodes and child nodes, attributes and annotations, relationships, queries, frameworks, constant comparison, visualizations, memoing, and team collaboration.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

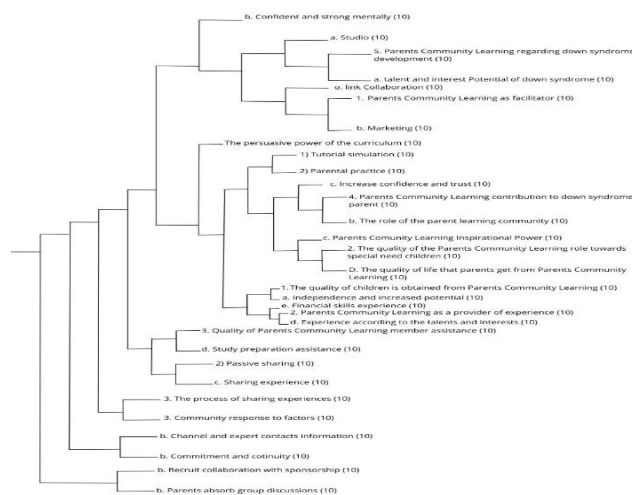
Mothers of Down syndrome children who are participants in the learning community of parents of children with special needs no longer reject the existence of their children. They are willing to accept freely to encourage them to continue learning. Learning communities can provide in increasing mother's awareness to educate their down syndrome children better.

Also learning communities can provide opportunities for mothers of Down syndrome children to learn about new developments in research, therapy, and technology that can benefit their children's development.

Through learning communities, mothers of down syndrome children can also develop skills and knowledge to advocate for their child's needs in the education and health care systems. Learning communities can also provide a platform for parents of children with special needs, including mothers of down syndrome, to raise awareness about the needs and experiences of individuals with down syndrome and advocate for greater inclusion and acceptance in the community.

Mothers of children with special needs with Down syndrome children begin to be able to socialize with the surrounding environment and have even dared without shame to bring down syndrome children to activities in a broader environment. Awareness of participating in learning communities for parents of children with special needs makes a solution to increase mother's awareness to educate down syndrome children better.

Many mothers of down syndrome children eventually realize the benefits of joining a learning community, such as emotional support, access to resources, and opportunities for advocacy. With access to learning communities, mothers of down syndrome children will struggle together to overcome the challenges they face, which can impact their well-being and ability to support their child's development. The self-stress of mothers of down syndrome children becomes better at accepting their child's existence. Mothers of down syndrome children can socialize with the surrounding environment better.



Picture 2. Items clustered by similarity

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research shows that learning communities of parents of children with special needs, such as parents of Down syndrome children, can increase mother's awareness to educate their children better through various supports and resources provided.

This study can potentially be an essential contribution from educational institutions in providing participation to mothers of down syndrome children in accompanying their children to learn. In the context of education policy, this study highlights the importance of providing opportunities for parents of down syndrome children to learn and engage in learning communities outside the school environment.

Therefore, research on learning communities of parents of children with special needs, including mothers of Down syndrome children, must continue to be developed to uncover the benefits and potential contributions in increasing mother's awareness to educate their down syndrome children better.

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