

Perceptions Of Families Towards Media Support For Their Children With Disabilities During The COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to reveal the perceptions of families towards media support for their children with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Dammam City, Saudi Arabia. The triangulation approach gives depth understanding and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers distributed a questionnaire to (78) of persons with disabilities families. A semi-structured interview was administered to (10) families participated in the questionnaire to monitor the reality and make suggestions for improving media support for children with disabilities from the point of view of their families, and the psychometric characteristics of the study tools were ascertained, the data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative results showed that there was a weakness of media support to the children with Disabilities. Their perceptions were high for proposing for improvement. The qualitative analysis showed agreement with the results obtained from the quantitative analysis. The qualitative data analysis revealed four important factors about the participants' perceptions of media support for children with disabilities, namely: the factual weakness of media support, proposals for improvement, the importance of the diversity of media programs, and the diversity preferred media platforms. The study recommended activating media support for children with Disabilities.

Keywords: Media Support; Disabilities; COVID-19; Families; Perceptions.

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1. Introduction

The United Nations defined persons with disabilities as individuals who suffer from permanent of physical or intellectual impairment that disable them to deal with various obstacles, barriers and environments and prevent them from fully and effectively participating with other members of the community (United Nations, 2007) and the term disabilities is an umbrella term that includes different forms such as deficiencies or physical disabilities that limit their participation actively in the community, (WHO,

<https://www.who.int/ar>). The persons with disabilities (henceforth PD) are those who differ from the normal or average level in one or more aspects of personality to the degree that necessitates their need for special services that differ from those provided to their ordinary peers, (Al-Quraiti, 2011).

The official and alternative media is a feature of the current era after the technological boom that occurred to media in terms of diversity (newspapers, radio, television, and internet) and the number, services, and functions that it performs for

the people of society. Each media platform has its tools, specialized staffs and methods that attract its audience (Dwikat, 2007), each media platform has its goals and challenges (Barqawi, 2015), and its impact on its audience and form their opinions (Al-Majali, 2019). The media plays a key role in society and directs its programs to meet the diverse needs of society members in general, and disabilities individual in particular, which cannot be disregarded.

Media support for the PD is varied, according to the results of previous studies during the normal conditions, Media support also varied, as the study (Williamson, Fisher, Madhavni, & Talarico, 2019) indicated to the presence of good support, while the studies of Al-Qarni, (2007) and Ibrahimi (2013) indicated to the weak support of the media to PD. The current study aims at identifying the state of the art of media support for the PD from the point of view of the families of the PD during COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers aimed to explore the role of media, from the point of view of the families of PD, as they the most worthy to recognize the role of media for their children. The official and alternative media in societies, including Saudi society, are entrusted with the task of forming and developing media support for disabilities in the community as organizations and individuals, as well as meeting the PD requirements, especially in times of crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic). The media may provide something different from what the PD and their families perceive the role of media to support their needs. The study is determined to answer this question: What are the perceptions of families of the PD towards media support for their children during the COVID-19 pandemic (the reality - proposals for improvement)? The current study derives its importance and the employment of its results in increasing the activation of the media role in its various forms in supporting, caring, and meeting PD's physical and psychological needs during the crisis periods. The study aims to explore the perceptions of the families of the PD towards media support for their children during COVID-19 pandemic and to make proposals for improvement.

2. Literature review

The United Nations states that there are nearly one billion PD, equivalent to 15% of the world's population, the United Nations committed to enable all the people to equally possess all human rights, including PD. The media can play an effective role in integrating the PD in all aspects of life, through supporting them in a way that can dismiss negative stereotypes and enhance their rights, self-confidence, and dignity (United Nations web site, 8/8/2020).

The role of the media varies according to its various forms concerning the way of providing support for PD, as well as the perceptions of their families also varied about this various media support for their children according to the type of disability, the spatial environment in which they live, the technical and electronic capabilities available to them, and the level of belief in the feasibility of the programs offered. Some studies concluded that the support provided to them is limited, as television is considered as the main tool of the media that care for PD, followed by the press, then the Internet (Al-Qarni, 2007; Khamis, Salawi, 2007; Haage & Bosse, 2017), while Ibrahimi (2013) indicated that there is no Sports Media specialized for the category of disabilities, as Al-Assouli, (2016) pointed out that media has no programs dedicated PD, and if there are programs only with some insufficient episodes.

Some studies indicated to the continuous increase in the rate of Internet access and digital uses among PD. However, there are still differences in usage with ordinary people (Lissitsa & Madar, 2018) noted that utilizing Internet may lead to many benefits for PD, the study of (Duplaga & Szulc, 2019) concluded that internet utilization by PD leads to improvement of intellectual health and polish behaviors. The term "digital disability gap" is used to refer to PD (Vicente & López, 2010), which varies according to the type of disability, as the higher degree of disability must reduce the use of internet (Duplaga, 2017). In particular, those with intellectual disabilities are less likely to access connected

devices than the normal people (Caton & Chapman, 2016). Supporting PD to use social media is considered as one of the most important steps towards integrating them into society. Governmental and civil institutions should unite their efforts to afford PD's needs, develop information technology applications, contribute to providing equal opportunities to use ICT for every member of society (Haage & Bosse, 2017). This support to PD, which is guaranteed to them by the law, and regulations and procedures, needs integration and coordination between the various media tools in their various types in normal times, and the increased need for media support in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the forms of support that may meet PD's requirements. As well as the support is in form of the endeavours to enable them to do activities that are suitable for their abilities, also to create opportunities for developing their creative and artistic talents, and setting plans to discover their athletic, artistic and cultural talents (Al-Shindawili, 2018). media should recognize the needs of the PD so that they can meet PD desires. PD just like any group in society, need to acquire skills, entertainment, and guidance (Khamis & Salawi, 2007; Shaheen & Shabelle, 2019). The studies of Carniel, Berkenbrock, Berkenbrock, Da Costa & Cordeiro, (2019); Williamson, et.al, (2019) concluded that PD are in sincere need for the great support from social media, and enhancing the usage of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) on the tablet to improve communication. This is also similar to the finding with of the studies of (Al-Qosaibi, 2007; Carniel, et.al, 2019; Lancioni, et .al, 2017; Williamson, et.al, 2019), which indicated to the need to pay attention to provide specific programs that support PD through various media platforms (mobile apps, social media, and television). In addition to inviting the media to provide opportunities for PD to enable PD to participate in preparing and presenting types of programs, in order to activate them in society, to address the issues of all PD, to create their initiatives and to rehabilitate them (Saleh, 2010).

The effectiveness of the media varies according to the type and severity of a disability, for example, the study Zaagsma, Volkers, Koning, Van Hove and Schippers, (2020) found that support is online 24/7 media contributed to enhancing the intellectual health of PD with intellectual and growth disabilities through increased emotional support, And reassurance, giving practical life advice and stimulating ideas in social situations. The study of Grace, Suzanne and Lynn, (2020) also concluded the possibility of psychological support for people with intellectual disability who have been subjected to sexual abuse and assaults. As well as the possibility of effective remedial measures for them.

Concerning the role of the media in harnessing the spare time of PD, for example, the study (Lancioni, et.al, 2017) concluded that the training of PD was successful in the use of smartphones for entertainment and communication on a large scale and that the application of digital games for persons with physical disabilities in the upper limbs which is in a form of entertainment, (Fernandes, Cardoso & Lopes., 2019). Regarding the persons with visual and movement disabilities and multiple disabilities, mobile phone applications which depend on voice interaction, and computer programs helped them to prepare their personal agenda, create an event, invite other friends to attend that event, check weather in certain areas, and monitor the impact of environmental changes in shopping centers on their participation as well as performing simple daily activities, and broadening their professional participation (Auger, Leduc, Labbé, Guay & Fillion, 2014; Calancea, Milut, Iftene, Alboaie & Iftene 2019; Lancioni et al., 2015; Lancioni & Reilly, 2014). The current study is devoted to identify the perceptions of families of PD with (intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, visual impairment) towards the media support provided to their children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. The methodology of the study and the procedures

3.1. The methodology of the study:

The current study used the triangulation method is known as convergent parallel approach (Creswell, 2014), it was used by obtaining the same result for both quantitative and qualitative methods for participants. It was used for its ability to determine whether the two methods are converging based on the understanding of the research problem or not, as the two quantitative and qualitative methodologies were performed at the same time, and the triangulation approach gives depth understanding and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2. Instruments

The researchers used two instruments, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. The questionnaire and the interview were built after reviewing the previous theoretical literature. The questionnaire consists of two dimensions, which are the reality (6 statements) and the improvement suggestions (7 statements). The questionnaire was given to (9) expert judges to verify the relevance and the validity of the statements, then modifications were made. The questionnaire adopted 5-likert scale (Always - often - Sometimes - Rarely - Never). The questionnaire was piloted to small sample (78) of families of PD in Dammam City, Saudi Arabia. The reliability was calculated using the Cronbach alpha, and the reliability came at (0.87 for the reality dimension and - 0.7 for the improvement suggestions dimension), and the internal consistency was calculated for the correlation of the statement with the dimension to which it belongs and was confined between (0.339 - 0.559), all of which are statistically significant at the level of (0.01).

Regarding the qualitative analysis, the researcher used a semi-structured interview that was presented to (9) expert judges, and the interview items were administered through the Zoom apps, where two members of the research

team conducted the interviews with (10) families of the PD and they are as follows: (4) families of people with intellectual disabilities, (4) families with an autism spectrum disorder, and (2) families of persons with visual impairment), and they agreed to be interviewed and signed a pledge of consent to participate in the study. and the interview guide has been developed in light of the recommended procedures (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and (Sultan, 2020).

The interview form consisted of three sections; the first contains four preliminary questions; For acquaintance and preparation of the participants, the second consisted of five questions on the subject of the study, and the third consisted of two questions; To encourage participants to provide more details. To estimate the expected time for the interview, the interview form was tested with three families, who were not involved in the response to the tools, On average, each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes, and ethical approvals were obtained from the university through the ethical review board. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately.

4. The results

4.1. First: Perceptions of families of PD towards media support for their children (reality, suggested alternatives):

Table (1) shows means and standard deviation of the respondents' responses to the questionnaire on the reality of media support for PD during the COVID-19 pandemic. The means of the statements ranged between (2.24 - 2.53), and the highest level of media support of reality dimension was for the statement "definition of the needs of PD" ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.62$), and the lowest is "the Saudi family's conviction of the feasibility of electronic programs provided to PD" ($M = 2.24$, $SD = .65$).

Table (1) Means and standard deviation of the reality of media support for PD

Mean	SD	The reality of media support
2.53	.62	Defining the needs of PD.

- 2.47 .64 media must take into its account the opinions of PD to the programs provided to them.
- 2.46 .60 Announcing agreements with civil society organizations to empower PD.
- 2.42 .69 Hosting smart PD in media programs.
- 2.37 .61 Diversifying media programs offered to PD during the Covid-19 pandemic (educational, cultural, social, psychological, entertainment etc.).
- 2.24 .65 Saudi family convinced of the feasibility of electronic programs provided to PD.

Table (2) shows descriptive statistics of the respondents' responses to a questionnaire of suggestions to improve media support for PD during the COVID-19 pandemic. The means of the statements ranged between (4.17- 3.86), and the highest level of suggestions for improving media

support was for the phrase "designing (mobile applications) to support PD with specific programs" ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .52$) and the lowest level was "raising awareness the media person among groups of PD and their perceptions" ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .64$).

Table (2) Descriptive statistics for suggestions to develop media support for PD

Mean	SD	suggestions to develop media support
4.17	.52	Designing (mobile applications) to support PD with specific programs.
4.09	.67	The attractiveness of media programs offered to PD to meet their needs.
4.01	.54	Providing appropriate weekly informational programs for PD.
3.95	.72	Applying measurement tools for assessing and diagnosing PD, via an informational platform
3.94	.63	Training several PD to carry out the informational work.
3.90	.71	Agreeing with community institutions regarding funding awareness-raising campaigns for PD.
3.86	.64	Raising the level of media awareness among groups of PD and their requirements.

One-way ANOVA test was used to examine the differences between families of PD with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and visual impairment in their perception of the reality of media support for PD during the COVID-19 pandemic. These disabilities were measured by the Media Support Questionnaire for PD - prepared by researchers - the test results revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between the perceptions of the families of PD with three disabilities regarding the reality of media support

for PD during the COVID-19 pandemic ($p = .848$ ($p > 0.05$ $F(2,75) = .165$).

A one-way ANOVA test was used to test the differences between families of persons with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and visual impairment, in their perceptions of proposed alternatives to improve media support for PD during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was measured by the Media Support Questionnaire for PD - prepared by researchers - Test results revealed that there are statistically significant differences between the viewpoint of families of PD in their

perceptions of the proposed alternatives to improve media support for PD ($p < 0.05$ $F(2,75) = 19.31$, $p = .000$). Moreover, the Tukey post-test indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the perception of PD families towards the proposed alternatives to improve media support for PD $p < 0.05$.

The general comparisons of Tukey's test showed that the mean of perceptions of the families of persons with intellectual disabilities (group1) ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .27$) was significantly different from the mean of families of persons with visual impairments (group3) and families of autism spectrum disorder (group2), which are respectively ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .26$), ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .21$). Also, the mean of the perceptions of families of persons with autism spectrum disorder statistically differs from that of families of persons with visual impairments. Therefore, the participants had a high level of perceptions proposed to improve Media support for PD among families with intellectual disabilities, followed by families of autism spectrum disorder, and families with visual impairment.

4.2. Qualitative analysis of the interviews:

Regarding the analysis of the interviews with parents of PD: The majority of participants stated that they have great reservations about the reality of the support provided by the media to PD during COVID-19 pandemic. the general purpose of the interview questions was to determine the reality of the support provided by the media to PD and their families during this pandemic, as well as identifying the most important alternatives that they propose to support their children with disabilities.

Eighty percent of the participants stated that reality providing media support in different media (traditional and alternative) is weak, and the diversity of media programs offered to PD is also not well varied to cover the needs of the PD, while (20%) of the participants felt more confident in the existence of media programs, but they acknowledged of its inadequacy.

It was found that (90%) of the participants showed a great desire to be provided with stronger

media support in different media (traditional and alternative) for PD, and the participants emphasized the necessity of diversifying the media programs offered to PD. The importance of these programs came in this order (Psychological, entertaining, skill development). The participants also stated that the need for these programs to be attractive and diverse in order to attract the interest of their children with disabilities, while (80%) of the participants felt more confident that electronic applications should be designed to support children with disabilities and that they would be very useful to them. The qualitative analysis of the respondents' responses in the interviews to the total sample ($n = 10$) revealed four elements that the researchers will deal with as follows;

The first element: the reality of media support for PD :

Participants indicated that the media support provided to the disabled during the COVID-19 pandemic was weak, as the media focused on ordinary students, and after the end of the school year, attention to PD began to a small degree through electronic programs and applications. For example, the responses were, "I had more need for media support for my son (P5), and another participant stated, "I learned more ways to interact with my son through YouTube but it is not enough"(P2).

Another participant stated, "I feel confident in the current media platforms for ordinary children, but they are not the same as for children with disabilities", (P9). Other participants confirmed that they have received such programs in the various media platforms but they are not sufficient in dealing with their children. For example, one participant stated, "I had a problem dealing with my son, especially after he stopped going to the centre, (he went to before), and I hoped to be provided with training courses on how to care for the child and teach him life skills." (P6) Another participant was more clear about his experience, saying, "I was missing any software to improve my son, even the mobile apps weren't enough and some were paid" (P4).

Furthermore, the participants revealed their concerns about the poor care of their children with disabilities due to their lack of experience due to the lack of educational training, pedagogical and educational expertise and the lack of media support in all its forms. One participant expressed great concern about caring for his disabled son without receiving a previous or current training program, saying, "I feel less confident in caring for my autistic son because I have not attended a course on how to deal with him before. Therefore, it will be difficult to teach or introduce something because I have never learned it before"(P8). Two of the participants also expressed their concerns about this topic by saying, "we need to know more about caring for our sons, and it will not be achieved except by formal and informal media support, and we are at this stage. we will attend more training programs or obtain more information about them as possible" (P1, P7).

Another participant said, "I feel that the pressure of work in addition to caring for my children made me look for media programs that occupy my son's spare time during home quarantine, and I found that media is not sufficient and not varied" (P9), while one participant summarized his educational experience that the most annoying thing is the lack of interest in the media programs (television, radio, social media) in providing appropriate support for PD", (P4). We conclude from the foregoing that all participants from the families of PD provided important responses and insights about the reality of the support provided to PD and their families.

The second element: proposals to improve media support for PD:

The participants indicated that they felt the necessity to find such alternatives that must be available in the media support provided to PD due to the nature of these individuals, which they described as having great privacy in dealing with them. For example, one participant suggested, "I think that there should be various media programs in different platforms that make it easier to understand", (P5). Another participant suggested

the reason for the difficulty of dealing with children with disabilities, is that it is necessary to understand how to deal with them and thus it is necessary to facilitate the task of parents, and families to deal with their families and train them through the various media and provide the necessary support to them. Another participant suggested the necessity of having media support programs available because this will give us more support in teaching and developing it during this period, and I will not find it difficult to deal with him if the appropriate media programs are available (P7). Another participant suggested, "Providing applications via mobile or social media can provide my son with information that is easy to remember and apply" (P2). In addition, two of the participants suggested that they "have a good understanding of the necessity of the availability of mobile applications because they stimulate good feelings in children (P1 and P3). another participant suggested that the use of targeted YouTube and Zooming programs are appropriate for visual impairment situations. It operates automatically to facilitate integration, focusing on the senses of hearing and touch (P9). Contrary to the aforementioned views, one participant had a different view. He said, "Electronic applications are difficult to understand and work with and it would be good to provide training on them" (P10). One of the participants was more clear in describing this main concern, saying, "If families PD have programs to support their children, this will lead to their development and development of their capabilities, which may help them to be self-reliant" (P6). Generally speaking, the participants' responses highlighted their desire to be provided with various media alternatives to support their children.

The third element: arranging the importance of media programs according to the need.

The responses of the participants showed the importance of media that focus on supporting their children with intellectual health programs and increasing their interaction with the surrounding environment, and the importance of this support (intellectual health programs) comes in the first

place, which they say, it leads to increase self-confidence, which is reflected in other personal aspects. In the second position comes the entertainment programs that suit every PD, and they agreed on the importance of providing entertainment programs which are appropriate to the child's disability, as they will be very appropriate and useful. For example, several participants stated, "If that information programs are provided for people with disabilities, it is necessary to arrange them according to the needs of the children with disabilities, such as (intellectual health, entertainment, skills development) (P2, P6, P7, P8, P9, P1). Another participant stated, "I feel the need for media support for my son, which supports his abilities and skills and makes him happy in his coexistence with life, for arranging the importance of the support he put it in the order (entertainment, psychological, and skill development), and it will be very supportive for my son if it is available through mobile applications, (P4). One of the participants explained more broadly, saying: It is difficult for my son to have the skills of interaction, and it is necessary to have media programs, which are according to their importance (development of psychological, entertainment, and physical skills), which develops his skills during quarantine ",(P5). Two of the participants pointed out the importance of media support for the visually impaired people through access to external activities in supportive programs and focusing on the senses of hearing and touch, especially programs that focus on supporting their feelings because they have good intellectual capabilities, as they need psychological programs followed by entertainment programs and programs for developing skills (P9, P10).

The participants agreed that programs that focus on psychological health are very important, as psychological aspects during COVID-19 pandemic come first, followed by entertainment programs, then by skill development.

The Fourth Element: Preferred Media Platform:

The responses of the participants showed the importance of the need for media programs in general and through all means, but they differed in determining the most effective media that meets the needs of their children, which focuses on supporting the intellectual health of their children, entertainment media programs, and skills development programs. It was found that mobile applications come in the first position, which is preferred to focus on emotional support, communication skills, musical rhythm programs, as well as the programs that focus on auditory perception and sensory communication, followed in the second position by YouTube programs about (70%), where they showed that they watch several clips that address different groups, but it is not continuous and unorganized because most of its sources are channels for people and not institutions with clear plans. Television programs come in in third position (50%) due to their ease of access and availability of some programs with specific timing.

All participants also pointed out the importance of mobile applications as one of the media platforms that provide media support for PD. Television contributes to developing their skills and abilities and makes them happy in their coexistence with life. Three participants also stated, "The Zoom application is very useful during the COVID-19 pandemic for children's skills development programs (P4, P6, P9). Several participants also stated, "YouTube channels are an important form of media to provide appropriate services for PD as a preferred platform for them" (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9). two of the participants said. "The (Toyor Al Janah) Birds of Paradise channel programs are one of my son's favourite TV channels" (P10, P5).

5. Discussion:

The purpose of the current study is to explore the perceptions of families of PD towards media support for their children during the COVID-19 pandemic (reality - proposals for improvement) using a multi-method research approach. The results of the study showed the weakness of the dimension of the reality of media support for PD

from the viewpoint of the participants, as the means of the statements ranged between (2.24 - 2.53), which dealt with: introducing PD, taking their opinions, and concluding agreements with civil society to enable them, hosting smart PD, diversity of provided programs, and the Saudi family's conviction of the usefulness of the media support provided. These results are consistent with (Al-Qarni, 2007), where he concluded that the media's concern for PD is limited, as television came at the forefront of the media that care for PD, followed by the press, then the Internet, and that attention to persons with motor disabilities is more than attention to people with other disabilities.

The results of the study also showed an increase in the focus of suggestions to improve media support for PD from the point of view of the participants. The means of the statements ranged between (3.86 - 4.17), which dealt with proposals to improve media support for PD which represented by mobile applications, providing attractive programs to meet their needs, and applying evaluation tools and remote diagnosis. It is important to training several PD in the media and raise the media awareness of different groups of PD and their requirements. These results are consistent with (Khamis & Salawi, 2007; Shaheen & Shabelle, 2019), which concluded that the media must recognize the needs of PD, in order to be able to meet their demands and satisfy their desires. PD, just like any other group in society need to acquire skills, entertainment, and guidance.

The results also indicated that all disability groups from the point of view of their families during the COVID-19 pandemic have a high need to be provided with media programs and alternatives to support their children with disabilities, but the results of the one-way ANOVA test showed a greater need for media support for the persons with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and the visually impaired, respectively. This result can be explained by the lower need of the visually impaired compared to the intellectually disabilities and autistic people as a result of their higher intellectual abilities, and the provision of special features that facilitate social

interaction and social media follow-up, and this is consistent with (Shaheen and Shabelle, 2019).

The qualitative data revealed four important elements of the participants' perceptions of media support for PD.

The first element: the reality of media support for PD.

Participants explained that the reality of receiving media support for PD during COVID-19 pandemic was weak. As they indicated the focus of media interest was to cover the news of the COVID-19 to a large extent, less attention was paid to electronic learning and health care for community members. As a result, the participants reported of the lack of support provided to them before the pandemic and the weakness of house activities dedicated to investing the energies of PD to develop their skills and support them psychologically. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of (Ibrahimi, 2013), which indicated the lack of a specialized sports media for PD, and the lack of offering special programs for them.

Many participants in this study indicated that they are upset about the lack of media support for PD. For example, one of the participants said: "I think the most thing that bothers me is the lack of interest of media programs (television - radio, social media) in providing appropriate support for PD," (P4). another participant expressed, "I feel confident in the current media platforms for ordinary children, but they are not the same for PD" (P9). This finding is in the same line with (Al-Assouli, 2016) who indicated that there are no media programs specialized for PD, with some insufficient episodes. Therefore, it is very important to suggest for improving and organizing plans to provide media support for PD continuously in times of crisis, and this is consistent with (Al-Qahs, 2007) in the importance of forming of a new culture in which the media deals with issues of PD.

The second element: suggestions to improve media support for PD:

The participants suggested several alternatives as important suggestions to improve the role of the media in supporting PD during

COVID-19 pandemic. The media support for disabilities must be increased due of the nature and type of disability and their needs in normal situations compared to ordinary people, and therefore the need for media support services must be more provided in times of crisis, and it can be said that the lack of supportive media alternatives for PD may reflect negatively on them and their families. It is very important to create various media alternatives to commensurate with the difference PD groups, and this is consistent with the finding of Saleh's, (2010) which indicated on the importance of inviting the media to provide opportunities for PD to enable them to participate in preparing and presenting various types of programs, in order to support them to integrate actively into the society, and to address the issues of all groups of PD, and to develop their skills and rehabilitation.

Many participants in this study also indicated that they felt the importance of providing suitable alternatives media for their children with disabilities, for example, one of the participants suggested: "it is very necessary to provide media support programs to PD, this will give us more support for educating and developing PD during this period, and I will not find it difficult in dealing with him if appropriate media programs are available", (P7). Another participant expressed his opinion, saying, "Providing mobile applications or social media can provide my son with information that is easy to remember and apply" (P2), and this agrees with the studies of Carniel, et.al, (2019) and Williamson, et.al (2019) who indicated to the need of support to use social media for PD, and promote Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) on the tablet to improve communication.

Although most of the participants agreed on the importance of social media and mobile applications as important alternatives for developing the skills of PD, there is a discordant opinion of one of the participants, who said, "It is difficult to understand and deal with electronic applications and it would be good to provide training on them" (P10). It can be said that the difference in the type and degree of disability play

an important factor in the variation in their preferences towards the appropriate media for their needs, and this is what the quantitative results of the analysis of variance indicated, which indicated the existence of differences in families' perceptions towards suggestions to improve media support for PD.

The third element: arranging the importance of media programs according to PD needs:

The responses of the participants revealed their agreement on the importance of the need for media programs that focus on supporting the intellectual health of their children and increasing their interaction with the surrounding environment, and its importance comes first, as the participants indicated that these programs may lead to an increase in their children's self-confidence, which will be reflected positively on the aspects. This is in line with (Zaagsma et al., 2020), where they found that online support contributed to enhance intellectual health by increasing emotional support, reassurance, giving practical life advice, and stimulating ideas in social situations.

Many of the participants in this study indicated that they felt the importance of providing specific programs that suit the needs of PD, according to the order (intellectual health, entertainment, skills development) (P1, P2, P6, P7, P8, P9). In second place is the need for entertainment programs for PD. Entertainment programs reduce the feelings of anxiety, stress and the effect of a long time of home quarantine, PD in need to entertainment programs to spend enjoyable time and feel comfortable, happy and reassured, this finding is consistent with the conclusion of Lancioni, et.al, (2017) which states that it is successful to train PD on the use of the smartphone in entertainment and communication on a large scale. One participant stated: "I feel the need for media support for my son, which supports his abilities and skills and makes him happy in his coexistence with life and he puts it in the order (entertainment, intellectual health, skills development) and will be very supportive for my

son if it is available through mobile applications,” (P4).

While the need for media support for skills development programs comes in the third position, and regarding the varied training needs related to the type and degree of disability, it was clear from the views of some participants that the needs of the visually impaired were to develop sensory communication skills and auditory perception, while the needs of persons of intellectual disabilities were represented in: life skills, speech and language, whereas, the needs of persons with autism spectrum disorder are: communication skills, and this is consistent with studies of (Carniel, et.al, 2019; Williamson, et.al, 2019; Zaagsma, et.al, 2020). One participant stated: “My son’s possession of interaction skills is difficult, and it is necessary to find suitable media programs, including (skills development, intellectual health, and entertainment), which will develop his skills during quarantine,” (P5).

The Fourth Element: Preferred Media Platform:

The responses of the participants revealed that there is more than one preferred media platform for their children, but they differed in determining the most effective media platform that meets the needs of their children. Children with disabilities's preferences for the platforms came in the following order (mobile applications, YouTube clips, TV programs), and this result is consistent with (Al-Qosaibi) 2007; Lancioni, et.al, 2017; Carniel, et.al, 2019; Williamson, et.al, 2019), which indicated the interest in providing specific programs that support PD through various media platforms (mobile applications, social media, & television).

All participants agreed on the need for media support for PD, which supports their abilities and skills and makes them happier in their coexistence with life via media platforms such as mobile applications (all participants). Three participants said, “The Zoom application is very useful during this period for developing children with disabilities skills programs (P4, P6, P9). A number of participants also stated, “YouTube channels are a

very important form of media to provide appropriate services for PD as a preferred platform for them (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9). two of the participants said. “The (Toyor Al Janah) Birds of Paradise channel programs are one of my son's favorite TV channels” (P10, P5).

Finally, the majority of the participants (P9, P10, P1, P2, P4, P5, P6,) stated that they would feel more confident in caring for their children if the appropriate media support was provided, and they are more able to care for their children. they added some suggestions to activate this media support. It is summarized in developing entertainment programs, varying them, publishing and expanding the scope of programs for all categories of the disabled, including new educational alternatives, presenting them through effective media and strategies, developing the skills of workers and those in charge of these media programs, developing the skills of parents in supporting their children, and announcing summer camps, and conducting interactive meetings during vacations and crises.

Therefore, it is proposed to conduct another study with a greater focus on developing media support for PD that contribute to providing them with different skills, and it is also suggested that more studies would be conducted to verify the impact of different media platforms to support PD of various kinds.

6. Conclusion

The current study aimed to investigate the perceptions of families of PD towards media support (reality - suggestions for improvement) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of quantitative data showed that the participants have a low level in their perception of the reality of media support for PD, while they have a high level in their perception of suggestions to improve media support for PD. The qualitative data supported quantitative statistics. Four elements were developed related to families' perceptions of media support for PD: the reality of media support, suggestions for improvement for media support, arranging the importance of media programs

according to PD's needs, and the preferred media platforms.

To sum up, qualitative data supported quantitative statistics. The results indicated that the majority of families of PD, despite the different ages of their children, their disabilities and the degree of disability, need various media to support, especially programs that provide support through the platforms circulated at homes such as WhatsApp application, various mobile applications, and YouTube clips. they agreed on the necessity to provide such programs which focus on intellectual health, followed by entertainment and skills development programs.

There is a recommendation related to the results obtained, which is that developers of media programs for PD should provide specific programs that suit different disability categories. The current study is limited to the following reasons:

- 1- The number of participants who willed to be interviewed to contribute to this study was limited to 10, in four families of intellectual disabilities, the same number of persons with an autism spectrum disorder, and two families of persons with visual impairment.
- 2- The time of the study was limited, the researchers only were able to interview participants about media support for PD, it is proposed to conduct extensive research that addresses the perceptions of families of all disability groups.

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