Parental Guidance for Gadget Use during Early Childhood

Naila Chasanah¹*, Yuli Kurniawati Sugiyono Pranoto²

¹,²Early Childhood Teacher Education Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: nailachasanah8@gmail.com

Abstract

Excessive use of gadgets and lack of assistance and parental supervision have a negative impact on early childhood. This research is a qualitative type with a research design approach, namely a case study. The study involved 4 primary subjects with the characteristics of mothers of children in the age range of 5-6 years. The purpose of this study is to analyze the habitual activities of parents in providing assistance to children, efforts to form a communication relationship with children, to the impact on the use of gadgets. Data collection using the questionnaire method with google forms, interviews and documentation which are then analysed with a qualitative approach. The results show that parents play an important role in assistance starting from granting permission to use, monitoring, to providing a safe duration/time. This research found that parents are overwhelmed to fulfill the assistance authority due to various factors: (1) busy parents are overcome by giving gadgets to children; (2) limited knowledge of the introduction of safe gadgets; (3) the characteristics of children who are already comfortable with gadgets; (4) the belief that the need for gadgets is not a bad thing, but rather a single solution to various problems including child development (e.g. gadgets help increase the vocabulary of children with speech delays). Meanwhile, the lack of assistance from parents results in excessive use of gadgets. The implications of this research are used as readers' future views regarding the importance of assistance and supervision in the use of gadgets in early childhood.

Keywords: Parental Guidance, Gadget Use During, Early Childhood

1. INTRODUCTION

Gadgets play an important role in everyday life, and their use is increasingly sophisticated even among children. In Semarang, in the midst of the globalization era, many young children also use gadgets. This phenomenon is increasing along with the COVID-19 pandemic (Hendayani, 2019; Pebriana, 2017). A survey conducted by previous study from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021 revealed that the pandemic has been significant in spreading virus variants since 2019 (Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020; Putra et al., 2020). This is according to other study state has an impact on limiting daily human interaction, including the learning process and the work of parents who turn online to
suppress the spread of the virus (Ihwanah et al., 2022). In response, by the statement also argument about many parents who are busy working tend to give gadgets as communication aids to their children (Ihwanah et al., 2022). However, it is important for parents who provide gadgets to children to consider the impact on children's development.

However, according to previous study excessive gadgets can be bad for children. Children spend time with gadgets, which can affect their emotional character (Puji Asmaul Chusna, 2017). They will feel unhappy and rebel when they are not given a gadget while enjoying it. Based on a survey conducted that found the influence of gadgets on children continues to increase every year and becomes a problem when there is no guidance from parents (Rahmawati, 2020). This increase is due to the influence of digital technology or gadgets that are easily accessible at affordable prices. There is study explains that the use of gadgets in children can have negative impacts, such as eye health, motor development in children, and emotional disturbances, especially delays in communication or speech and lack of concentration and hyperactivity or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder) (Novianti & Garzia, 2020; Purwati, 2022).

Gadget facilities are problematic because children do not understand the function of gadgets, compared to parents who do not understand what features are in gadgets (Mardiyana, 2022; Mu’awanah et al., 2021). Even if parents are more aware of technology, there will be a positive impact on children's development through the use of gadgets (Sukitman & Ridwan, 2016; Taştan et al., 2018). For example, there are educational applications that have been filtered for children, which can help them access information that is easily obtained through gadgets. To get these benefits, parental involvement in considering and supervising the use of gadgets in children has an important role (Alamiyah, S. et al., 2021; Kartikasari & Nuryasana, 2022). This role can only be performed when parents are fully responsible for accompanying children when they are introduced to the features available on gadgets (Alamiyah, S. et al., 2021; Christina, R. E., Mingkid, E., & Londa, 2020).

The importance of parental supervision in giving gadgets to children, as well as the need for effective guidance so that children do not experience obstacles in their development (Antina & Qomari, 2022; Korosidou et al., 2020). This is in line with the opinion of previous study parents need to monitor children’s activities when interacting with gadgets as part of their mentoring role (Hamidah & Listiyandini, 2022). The importance of collaboration between parents and children is beneficial in assistance especially regarding gadget use policies. In contrast to other study states that in the use of gadgets, parental discipline to limit the use of gadgets is needed (Leila Asparini, 2023). Therefore, an agreement between parents and children to limit excessive use of gadgets and spending time with children is important and must be done. These restrictions, such as the duration of use, can be an effective form of coaching (Sugiarti & Andyanto, 2021; Zulfahmi, Dian Putriana, 2022).

Base on those problem that state before the researcher are interesting in conducting research with aims to analyze the habitual activities of parents in providing assistance to children, efforts to form a communication relationship with children, to the impact on the use of gadgets. It is hoped that this research will be able to provide insight to practitioners and parents regarding parents providing assistance to children in gadget use.

2. METHODS

This research is a qualitative type with a research design that is a case study. This study analyze a case or phenomenon that exists in people's lives and is carried out in a comprehensive manner to study the background, circumstances, and interactions that are appropriate to the actual situation (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers found that the lack of
assistance from parents was the reason for giving gadgets to early childhood, to the tendency to use gadgets excessively. The focus of research is on the use of gadgets in early childhood. Meanwhile, through the case study design of this research can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Concept Map Parent Assistance](image)

The subjects of this study were four mothers who had children aged 5 to 6 years. The selection of informants was based on the close relationship between early childhood and mothers and other data sources, such as teachers and other supporting sources, were used to strengthen the results of interviews with parents.

In collecting field data, researchers collected relevant data regarding the phenomenon of parents giving technological devices (gadgets) to children with a research duration of three weeks. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to parents of students using the Google Form. The questionnaire involved questions about parental guidance on children's use of gadgets, both in terms of approval, duration of use, to the level of assistance. Respondents as many as 31 parents gave responses to the questionnaire. In addition to the questionnaire, data was also collected through interviews with parents and teachers. Interviews are used to obtain in-depth data through a question and answer dialogue. Documentation is also taken in written and oral form. Data obtained from various sources are used to validate the results of interviews with parents, as well as to support the process of analyzing gadget use in early childhood.

In this research analysis begins with data collection using the questionnaire method with google forms, interviews and documentation which are then analyzed with a qualitative approach which aims to explore a deep understanding of the complexity of a phenomenon, involving participants as the main source of information in this case parental assistance and supervision on the use of gadgets in early childhood.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Circumstances that really allow children to be exposed to the world of technology are because parents allow them to get to know gadgets that are usually owned by adults. Based on field observations, early childhood often use gadgets at home, most of which are owned by their parents. There are various reasons why parents allow their children to be exposed to technology. AAHW's parents allow the use of gadgets as an alternative when they cannot accompany AAHW directly, because AAHW is only 2 years old.
Meanwhile, MDS parents introduced electronic devices to MDS from the age of 5, as a response to educational needs in the pandemic era which required restrictions on interaction and online education. SNA parents allow gadget exposure to SNA since SNA is 1.5 years old, which is considered as a means of developing and learning SNA. Meanwhile, AD's parents have introduced technology and electronic devices to AD since they were 3 years old. Electronic devices or gadgets are a frugal choice because children are starting to find it difficult to calm down and difficult to manage, while parents are busy with work and have many responsibilities.

As a result of being too dependent and comfortable with technological sophistication, parents often escape the fact that technology only functions as a means of communication. For example, AAHW's parents allow AAHW to access gadgets in lieu of their parents' presence, and often the duration or time used to access gadgets is not noticed by parents. The same goes for AD parents who are busy with other tasks outside of the (work) parental role. Since he was three years old, AD has been used to using gadgets for more than an hour every day without parental supervision. AD household assistants or relatives are given the task of supervising AD, but this is not necessarily enough to limit AD's use of gadgets.

Limited knowledge of parents about age limits and how long it is safe to use gadgets for children is the main problem. In fact, excessive use of electronic devices can pose a risk of hampering the growth and development of children. Therefore, at an early age, exposure to technology is only allowed in the range of 1 hour to 2 hours a day. However, the reality on the ground shows that children easily use gadgets for more than two hours, even more if they help overcome problematic behavior.

Efforts to assist and screen the use of gadgets in early childhood are carried out by MDS parents and SNA parents. In PC, MDS parents, gadgets are used as learning tools with active help from parents in the process. Specifically, the learning device in question is related to increasing vocabulary in children. The duration of using the gadget is also limited to only around 15-30 minutes every day. In line with the habits of MDS parents, SNA parents also monitor the use of gadgets by SNA and make selections to use them only as a tool for SNA so that they can communicate smoothly.

Not only related to differences in efforts to monitor and screen the use of gadgets from each informant, this study also found that the openness to use of gadgets occurs due to a positive view of gadgets as a solution to various problems, including child development. Parents who were the subject of this study stated that the use of gadgets as media can help reduce hyperactivity symptoms in children who have ADHD and increase language vocabulary in children with speech delays. This opinion is reinforced by the results of interviews with MDS parents.

However, this situation only occurs when effective mentoring is provided, as MDS parents do. Conversely, the use of gadgets without adequate assistance from parents actually triggers the emergence of ADHD and speech delays. FN S, which is the parent of AA HW, has revealed this.

Through research conducted, it can be seen that the use of gadgets in early childhood has a double effect. On the one hand, gadgets can help parents in facilitating children's development. However, if not used wisely, gadgets can cause problems for children's development, such as speech disorders and ADHD. Meanwhile, those who establish good communication relationships with children have proven successful in providing effective authorization for assistance, including in implementing fair use restriction policies. Empirical evidence of this opinion can be exemplified by the case of SNA parents, which shows the success of mentoring by building cooperation with children regarding limited time for use, including not delivering gadgets just because children want to cross these limits. As a result,
children understand that the rules they set cannot be broken just because the child cries or throws a tantrum.

Whereas in the case of MDS parents, they chose a different approach with the aim of limiting children's use of gadgets. MDS parents have the belief that children have an unlimited source of energy. They try to channel positive energy to their children without relying on technology by introducing various physical exploration activities as an alternative. Meanwhile, parents who give open permission for their children to use gadgets, but do not have an effective monitoring strategy can have a negative impact on children. In general, children have tantrums easily and find it difficult to stop using gadgets, as happened with AD. AD parents give more freedom to children, with the hope that children will understand the wise use of gadgets as they get older, and ignore that adults have a major influence in providing this understanding. Communication that occurs between parents and children regarding the use of gadgets also tends to be negative and ends in fights.

Then, in the situation of AAHW parents, they have to face the fact that their child is diagnosed with ADHD and has a speech delay due to neglect of guidance. This difficult experience eventually prompted AAHW parents to implement the accompanying authorization strategy, even if only for the time of use.

Discussions

Based on the results of the study, it shows that parents have an important role in accompanying the use of gadgets by early childhood. This assistance is not only related to learning, but also when parents give permission for children to use gadgets (Alamiyah, S. et al., 2021; Rahmawati, 2020). The use of gadgets in early childhood requires duration and limits so that parents can control them, avoiding negative effects such as Speech Delay and ADHD. Research shows the results of a questionnaire survey conclude that most parents (90.3%) allow their children to use gadgets, and around 88.6% of children use the YouTube Kids application. The results of this study are supported by other study which found that children in this era are exposed to the use of gadgets, at least for a duration of 15 minutes to more than 60 minutes with various situations and conditions (Isa Wahyuningtyas, Rochanah, 2022). In using gadgets for a long time, around 88.6% of children use the YouTube Kids application as the application most often used, while the remaining 11.4% spend their time playing entertainment games on gadgets. In addition, the results of the study also concluded that to find strategies that work, the most important thing for parents in this study is to understand how to use gadgets that are safe for children (Azmin, 2022). That way, children can continue to experience the positive benefits of modern technology without disrupting their growth and development.

The factors that hinder the effectiveness of the parental assistance authorization in this study Parents who are busy working tend to give gadgets without paying attention to their effects on child development (Halim et al., 2018; Mardiyana, 2022). Limited knowledge about the use of safe technology devices for early childhood. For example, parents do not limit the time they use electronic devices. Characteristics of children who feel comfortable with excessive use of gadgets. In this study, parents had difficulty stopping their child's tantrums because of their great need for electronic devices. In fact, tantrums are a negative impact for children that must be avoided immediately so they don't become addicted to gadgets (Chinomona et al., 2013; Mardiyana, 2022). The belief or perception that the need for gadgets is not a bad thing, but a single solution for various problems, including child development. Electronic devices are used as the only way to solve problems in children. As a result, parents lose their role in encouraging more effective child development and providing stimulation without using gadgets (Hamidah & Listiyandini, 2022; Ihwanah et al., 2022).
However, this study also found that some parents began to set limits on using gadgets, which was accompanied by a decrease in the intensity of excessive use of gadgets and the benefits of using gadgets. This effort is in line with research which shows that parents play a role as companions in reducing gadget use (Miranti & Putri, 2021). This form of assistance can be in the form of limiting the duration of using gadgets, as well as being actively involved in building emotional closeness with children, such as spending time together as a form of affection, giving children opportunities to play with their peers so that children can interact with the surrounding environment, and introducing habits to children to don't use gadgets or digital technology too often (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020; Lau et al., 2011; Sembirin et al., 2020).

The results of this research can help in developing guidelines or guidelines for parents to manage their children's use of gadgets. Such a guide can be a useful resource for many families. This research can increase public awareness about the risks and benefits of using gadgets in young children. Parents and the general public can better understand the positive and negative impacts of gadget use on children's development. However, this research has limitations, external factors such as the school environment, peers and the media can also influence children's use of gadgets. This study may not be able to isolate all these factors.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of parents in providing adequate education and proper stimulation to children is very crucial. Especially when children use gadgets, effective assistance from parents is needed. The use of gadgets can have a positive or negative impact, depending on the extent to which parents can regulate and supervise their child's use of gadgets. Negative impacts that can arise, such as speech delays and ADHD, emphasize the need for parents to play a role in ensuring the wise use of gadgets. Parents are also advised to build close relationships with children through two-way communication, with the aim of increasing children's vocabulary and concentration. They should provide time with their children without gadgets to reduce dependence on technology, while limiting the duration of using gadgets to 1 to 2 hours according to the child's age, as a preventive measure.

5. REFERENCES


