

Parenting Strategies to Overcome Gadget Addiction in Children: A Case Study at TK Negeri Pembina Bantarbolang, Peguyangan Village

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of parenting strategies in mitigating early childhood gadget addiction at TK N Pembina Bantarbolang, Peguyangan Village. Conducted as part of a Real Work Lecture (KKN) initiative, the program featured an educational session led by Mrs. Lisa Devi Dian Arifia, S. Psi, M. Psi, a lecturer from UIN Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The session aimed at equipping parents with an understanding of the adverse effects of excessive gadget use on young children and practical techniques to manage their children's screen time. Mrs. Arifia highlighted the widespread nature of gadget addiction and its potential to hinder children's social skills, cognitive development, and overall well-being. Through empirical data and real-life examples, she emphasized the urgency of addressing this issue. Key strategies discussed included fostering open communication between parents and children, setting clear guidelines for gadget usage, and promoting alternative activities that encourage creativity and physical engagement. The study's findings demonstrated the efficacy of these strategies in reducing children's reliance on electronic devices when implemented consistently. Parents who practiced open communication and set structured limits on screen time observed significant improvements, such as increased participation in outdoor activities and creative play. This research underscores the vital role of informed and proactive parenting in addressing early childhood gadget addiction. By adopting these strategies, parents can foster a supportive and engaging environment that mitigates the risks of excessive screen time and promotes healthier developmental outcomes for their children.



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1. Introduction

The exploration of parenting in the context of technological advancements reveals a complex landscape that is continuously evolving. Parenting encompasses many attitudes, interactions, and methods through which caregivers guide and nurture their children, aiming to foster thriving, responsible individuals. The formative years of a child's life are particularly crucial, as the values and behaviors exhibited by parents significantly shape their children's personalities and characters. Parenting extends beyond merely meeting physical needs; it includes emotional support, moral guidance, and the creation of a secure environment that allows for exploration and growth. The foundational experiences parents provide play a critical role in shaping children's decision-making processes and interpersonal relationships as they transition into adulthood (Nashir et al., 2024).

The parenting landscape has been profoundly altered in this digital age, bringing challenges and opportunities. The Alpha generation, born from the early 2010s onward, is immersed in technology, influencing their learning, communication styles, and worldviews. Unlike previous generations, these children grow up in environments saturated with digital devices and online interactions. This shift necessitates reevaluating traditional parenting approaches to ensure they remain effective in guiding children through the complexities of modern life (Lee, 2023).

The widespread availability of digital devices has shifted children's engagement from face-to-face interactions to digital formats. For instance, children today often engage with their peers through social media platforms or online gaming rather than in-person playdates. This transition can lead to a decline in developing essential social skills and emotional intelligence, as children may struggle to interpret non-verbal cues and engage in meaningful conversations. As a result, parents must adapt their strategies to help their children navigate this new social landscape effectively (Nurhafani et al., 2023).

However, the rapid technological evolution presents significant challenges for effective parenting. Many parents, particularly those in urban settings, struggle to balance professional commitments with the need for quality family time. This often results in a more detached parenting style, where caregivers assume their children can independently navigate their environments. Such a mindset can lead to unrealistic expectations and insufficient oversight in crucial areas such as character education. For example, parents may inadvertently overlook the importance of guiding their children through ethical dilemmas, trusting that they will make the right choices without direct involvement (Nashir et al., 2024).

Furthermore, there is a notable gap in parental knowledge regarding effective strategies that align with societal norms and personal values. Many parents feel compelled to grant unrestricted access to technology, believing it essential for their children's social integration. However, they may lack awareness of the associated risks, including decreased cognitive abilities, emotional distress, and exposure to inappropriate content. Research has shown that excessive screen time can lead to negative outcomes such as increased anxiety and diminished attention spans, highlighting the need for parents to be more discerning in their approach to technology use (Sistiarani et al., 2020).

Regarding character education, the disconnect between parenting practices and children's needs is particularly concerning. As children encounter diverse influences from their peers, media, and online platforms, active parental involvement becomes essential for developing a strong moral compass and making ethical decisions. The challenge lies in integrating technology into children's lives and preserving fundamental parenting values promoting empathy, respect, and responsibility (Modecki et al., 2022).

To address these challenges, community initiatives aimed at enhancing parental knowledge and skills are critical. An exemplary case is the parenting socialization program at TK N Pembina Bantarbolang in Peguyangan Village, Pematang, led by Ms. Lisa Devi Dian Arifia, a lecturer from UIN Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. This program educates parents about responsible gadget management and integrates traditional parenting values with modern demands. Such programs empower parents to make informed decisions regarding their children's technology use by providing resources and support.

Key strategies discussed in the program include establishing clear boundaries for gadget use, promoting open communication, and encouraging alternative activities that foster creativity and physical engagement. Parents were advised to set specific rules regarding screen time, such as limiting usage to certain hours of the day or designating tech-free zones within the home. Also, modeling responsible technology use is crucial; when parents demonstrate healthy habits, children are likelier to emulate those behaviors (Littles Scholars Daycare, 2024).

Open communication about the reasons for screen time limits was emphasized to foster understanding and cooperation among children. Parents were encouraged to discuss the potential risks of excessive technology use, helping children develop critical thinking skills and make informed choices. Parents can cultivate a sense of agency and responsibility by involving children in these conversations, empowering them to navigate the digital landscape more effectively (Jannah et al., 2021).

Encouraging alternative activities is vital to reducing children's reliance on gadgets. Parents were urged to introduce hobbies that promote physical activity and creativity, such as outdoor play, sports, or arts and crafts. These activities not only enhance children's development but also strengthen family bonds. For example, organizing family game nights or outdoor excursions can create opportunities for meaningful interactions and shared experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and support (Haryati et al., 2024).

The significance of such programs lies in their ability to raise awareness among parents about the complexities of modern parenting. These initiatives foster a balanced and supportive environment for children's growth by equipping parents with the necessary tools and knowledge. They also create community spaces where parents can share experiences, seek advice, and collaborate on solutions to common challenges. This collective responsibility for child upbringing can lead to stronger community ties and a more nurturing environment for children (Fahrizal et al., 2024).

In conclusion, parenting in the digital era presents unique challenges and opportunities that require parents to remain engaged, informed, and adaptable. Integrating technology into children's lives necessitates a thoughtful approach that balances modern demands with traditional values. Community initiatives that promote effective parenting practices play a crucial role in helping parents harmonize these elements, ultimately enhancing children's developmental outcomes and preparing them for success in a complex, interconnected world. By fostering open communication, establishing clear boundaries, and encouraging alternative activities, parents can create an environment that supports their children's growth while navigating the intricacies of modern technology. As we move forward, parents must embrace their role as active participants in their children's lives, ensuring they are equipped to thrive in an ever-changing landscape (Chasanah & Pranoto, 2023).

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate the influence of parenting socialization on parents' behavior in regulating children's gadget use during the early childhood period at TK N Pembina Bantarbolang, Kabupaten Pemalang. The increasing prevalence of digital technology in daily life has made it imperative to understand how parents navigate the complexities of gadget usage among their children, especially in the formative years of early childhood. The developmental stage of children in this age group is marked by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social growth, making it crucial for parents to establish appropriate boundaries and guidelines regarding gadget use (Haryati et al., 2024).

One of the work programs implemented by KKN 59 batch 35 was a parenting socialization program with the theme "Parental Challenges and Digital Technology Development in the Alpha Generation Era." This theme is particularly pertinent as it captures the essence of the current generation of children, often referred to as Generation Alpha, born into a world where digital devices are ubiquitous. The program aimed to address parents' unique challenges in this digital landscape, providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to guide their children effectively.

The event featured Ms. Lisa Devi Dian Arifia, M.Psi., as the keynote speaker, who brought her expertise in child psychology and parenting strategies to the forefront. Her insights served as a foundation for understanding the psychological implications of gadget use on young children. During her presentation, Ms. Lisa emphasized the importance of balanced gadget use, highlighting the potential benefits of educational content and the risks associated with excessive screen time, such as diminished attention spans and impaired social skills.

The study collected data through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation conducted during and after the event. This comprehensive approach aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the program's impact. Observational data allowed researchers to witness firsthand the interactions between parents and children during the event. At the same time, in-depth interviews provided deeper insights into parents' attitudes and concerns regarding gadget use. Documentation, including feedback forms and program materials, supplemented these findings, offering a well-rounded perspective on the effectiveness of the socialization program.

Descriptive analysis was used to examine the data and identify the most effective strategies for helping parents guide their children in responsible gadget use. This analysis revealed several key themes, including the importance of establishing clear rules and boundaries, parental involvement in children's digital activities, and the benefits of promoting alternative, non-digital forms of play and learning. Each of these strategies plays a critical role in shaping children's experiences with technology and fostering healthy habits.

The findings are expected to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of the socialization program. Specifically, the research aims to assess its success in raising parents' awareness and improving their skills in managing gadget use among young children. Through targeted interventions, the program

sought to empower parents to take an active role in their children's digital lives, encouraging them to engage in meaningful discussions about technology and its implications.

By equipping parents with practical strategies and fostering a better understanding of the challenges posed by digital technology, the program aspires to contribute to healthier parenting practices. For instance, parents were encouraged to co-view content with their children, facilitating discussions about what they watched and its relevance to their lives. This approach enhances the child's understanding of the material and strengthens the parent-child bond, creating a shared experience that transcends the screen.

Furthermore, the program highlighted the significance of modeling appropriate gadget use behaviors. Parents were encouraged to reflect on their screen time habits and consider how their behaviors might influence their children's attitudes toward technology. By demonstrating balanced gadget use, parents can instill a sense of responsibility and mindfulness in their children, fostering a more thoughtful approach to technology consumption.

In addition to these strategies, the program also addressed the importance of recognizing the developmental stages of children when it comes to gadget use. Understanding that young children have different cognitive and emotional needs than older children can help parents tailor their approach. For example, the program emphasized that toddlers and preschoolers benefit from short, interactive sessions with technology. At the same time, older children may be ready for longer engagement periods, provided they are supervised and the content is age-appropriate.

The research also explored the role of community support in enhancing parenting practices related to gadget use. By fostering a sense of community among parents, the program aimed to create an environment where parents could share experiences, challenges, and solutions. This peer support network alleviates feelings of isolation and encourages collaborative problem-solving, allowing parents to learn from one another's successes and setbacks.

As the study progressed, it became evident that the socialization program positively impacted participants. Many parents reported feeling more confident in their ability to manage their children's gadget use and expressed a greater awareness of the potential risks and benefits associated with technology. This newfound confidence translated into more proactive parenting strategies, such as setting specific screen time limits, engaging in discussions about digital content, and encouraging outdoor play and other offline activities.

Moreover, the program's focus on fostering critical thinking skills in children emerged as a significant theme. Parents were encouraged to teach their children how to evaluate online information, fostering a sense of discernment that is essential in today's information-saturated world. By instilling these skills early on, parents can help their children navigate the complexities of the digital landscape more effectively, empowering them to make informed choices as they grow (Aslamiyah et al., 2023).

In conclusion, this research underscores the vital role of parenting socialization in shaping children's experiences with technology during early childhood. The findings highlight the effectiveness of targeted interventions in raising parents' awareness and equipping them with practical strategies for managing gadget use. By fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges posed by digital technology, the program aspires to contribute to healthier parenting practices that promote balanced gadget use and support children's overall development. As parents become more adept at navigating the digital landscape, they can create enriching environments that nurture their children's growth, ensuring that technology is a tool for learning and connection rather than a source of distraction and disconnection. The insights gained from this research can inform future initiatives aimed at supporting parents in their critical role as mediators of technology in their children's lives, ultimately contributing to the well-being of the next generation.

3. Results and Discussion

Implementing the Parenting Socialization activity, entitled "Parental Challenges and Digital Technology Development in the Alpha Generation Era," on August 19, 2024, at TK Negeri Pembina Bantarbolang, marked a significant milestone for parents in the community. This event addressed a pressing concern that has emerged in the wake of rapid technological advancements: gadget addiction in early childhood. As we delve deeper into the implications of this phenomenon, it becomes evident that

understanding the dynamics of gadget use is critical for fostering healthy child development in the digital era (Tafrihah et al., 2022).

Ms. Lisa Devi Dian Arifia, M.Pi, a distinguished expert in psychology and counseling, led the event. Her extensive background in child psychology and her hands-on experience with families provided a robust foundation for the discussions that unfolded. Ms. Lisa presented a comprehensive analysis of the potential dangers associated with gadget addiction, emphasizing its adverse effects on various dimensions of child development. Her insights were informative and grounded in empirical research, making her arguments compelling and relatable for the parents in attendance.

The gathering attracted a diverse group of parents, all eager to learn and share their experiences regarding the challenges posed by excessive gadget use among their children. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation as Ms. Lisa began her presentation. Her interactive and empathetic delivery style captivated the audience, ensuring sustained engagement throughout the event. By employing relatable anecdotes and real-life scenarios, she elucidated the multifaceted nature of gadget addiction, which is far from a trivial issue. It can disrupt social interactions, hinder emotional regulation, and impede cognitive growth in children (Parenting Digital Kids: Navigating the Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age | Top Teen, n.d.).

One of the pivotal points highlighted in Ms. Lisa's discussion was the significance of time management concerning gadget usage. She emphasized that parents must exercise rigorous control over their children's screen time. This control is not merely about imposing limits but also involves guiding children in the constructive use of gadgets. For instance, educational applications tailored to children's learning needs can be valuable tools when used appropriately. However, Ms. Lisa cautioned parents to carefully select applications that align with their child's developmental stage and individual needs. This discernment is crucial, as not all screen time is created equal; the quality of content matters immensely (Sistiarani et al., 2020).

To illustrate this point, Ms. Lisa shared an example of a parent who introduced their child to an interactive math game that entertained and reinforced essential mathematical concepts. Initially resistant to traditional learning methods, the child found joy in the game, which fostered a newfound interest in numbers. This anecdote highlighted that gadgets can enhance learning rather than detract from it when managed wisely. However, the onus is on parents to navigate these choices skillfully.

Furthermore, Ms. Lisa underscored the importance of effective communication between parents and children in addressing the issue of gadget addiction. She noted that many parents often use gadgets to soothe or distract their children, especially in distress or restlessness. However, this approach can inadvertently reinforce maladaptive behavior patterns concerning gadget use. Instead, Ms. Lisa advocated for more active communication, urging parents to listen attentively to their children's concerns and desires. By doing so, parents can redirect their children's attention toward more beneficial and interactive activities.

For instance, a parent might find that their child turns to a gadget when bored. Instead of allowing this behavior to continue, the parent could engage the child in a conversation about their interests and suggest alternative activities that align with those interests—drawing, playing outside, or even cooking together. This fosters a stronger parent-child bond and encourages children to explore their creativity and develop new skills outside screens (Syakuro et al., 2023).

The socialization event also provided parents with many alternative activities to engage with their children as substitutes for gadget use. Ms. Lisa encouraged parents to embrace outdoor play, reading together, and participating in arts and sports activities, all offering significant developmental benefits. She emphasized that parents should strive to create an enjoyable environment conducive to children's growth without relying solely on gadgets. The importance of fostering a rich, interactive, and stimulating environment cannot be overstated, as it lays the groundwork for children to thrive (Nurhafani et al., 2023).

Moreover, the event included a valuable interactive segment where participants could share their experiences and pose questions directly to Ms. Lisa. Many parents articulated the challenges they faced in regulating their children's gadget use, particularly given their occupational demands and the constraints on time for continuous supervision. This candid exchange of experiences highlighted parents' struggles in the digital age. Yet, with Ms. Lisa's guidance and practical advice, parents reported feeling more supported and equipped to tackle these challenges head-on.

The feedback from participants following the event was overwhelmingly positive. Many parents expressed that they found the session highly beneficial, gaining insights that they had previously overlooked. Several admitted that they had not fully recognized the detrimental effects of gadget addiction on their children's well-being before attending the event. However, their awareness of the issue significantly increased due to the discussions. This newfound understanding was accompanied by a sense of preparedness, with parents eager to implement their learned strategies.

In addition to awareness, Ms. Lisa emphasized the importance of consistency in enforcing regulations regarding gadgets in the home. She reminded parents that changes in children's behavior would not occur overnight; instead, they require ongoing caregiver commitment and reinforcement. Parents are responsible for remaining steadfast in implementing the agreed-upon rules while continuously monitoring their children's behavior. This consistency fosters a sense of security and clarity for children, enabling them to understand the boundaries set by their parents.

After the socialization phase, many parents expressed a renewed desire to change their parenting strategies, particularly concerning regulating gadget use. They recognized parents' crucial role in shaping children's habits from an early age. With the guidance provided by experts like Ms. Lisa, parents reported feeling more confident in their ability to navigate the challenges associated with gadget addiction. They were motivated to ensure their children's growth and development remained optimal despite technological distractions.

The parenting socialization event held at TK Negeri Pembina Bantarbolang proved to be an unmitigated success in raising parents' awareness and understanding of the adverse effects of gadget addiction in early childhood. The knowledge gained will empower parents to assist their children in navigating the complexities of the digital era, ultimately fostering a healthy and balanced environment for their development. The need for continued socialization events of this nature is evident, as parenting challenges in the digital age are increasingly complex and require special attention from caregivers.

In conclusion, the Parenting Socialization activity served as a platform for education and a catalyst for change within the community. By addressing the critical issue of gadget addiction and providing parents with practical tools and strategies, the event has laid the groundwork for healthier parenting practices in the digital age. As technology evolves, parents must remain informed and proactive in approaching their children's gadget use. Through ongoing dialogue, education, and support, parents can cultivate an environment that nurtures their children's growth, ensuring they thrive in an increasingly digital world. The insights gained from this event will undoubtedly resonate with parents, guiding them as they navigate the challenges of raising children in an era of rapid technological advancement.

4. Conclusion

One of the community service programs conducted by Group 35 KKN Batch 59 at TK N Pembina Bantarbolang has proven to be a significant initiative in enhancing parental awareness regarding the critical issue of regulating children's gadget use. In an era where digital devices are ubiquitous and often viewed as essential tools for learning and entertainment, the challenge lies in ensuring that these gadgets do not negatively impact children's development. The program, led by Ms. Lisa Devi Dian Arifia, M.Psi, provided a structured approach to equip parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their children's screen time effectively.

Ms. Lisa's presentation was not merely an informational session but an interactive workshop that engaged parents in discussions about the implications of excessive gadget use. She employed various teaching methods, including visual aids, group discussions, and role-playing scenarios, to illustrate the potential consequences of gadget addiction. For instance, she shared research findings that linked prolonged screen time to issues such as decreased attention spans, impaired social skills, and even mental health challenges in children. By presenting these statistics relatable, parents can grasp the urgency of the issue and the need for proactive measures.

Moreover, the program emphasized the importance of building effective communication between parents and children. Ms. Lisa guided parents in initiating conversations about gadget use, encouraging them to ask open-ended questions that foster dialogue rather than confrontation. This approach not only helps in understanding children's perspectives but also reinforces trust and openness. For example, instead of simply imposing restrictions, parents were encouraged to discuss why certain limits are necessary and how they can collaboratively find alternative activities that are both enjoyable and educational.

In addition to communication strategies, the workshop also focused on providing parents with practical tools to limit their children's gadget use. Ms. Lisa introduced concepts such as the "screen time contract," where parents and children agree on specific times for gadget use and designated times for other activities like reading, outdoor play, or family bonding. This promotes accountability and empowers children to take ownership of their gadget use.

The program also highlighted the significance of offering alternative activities that capture children's interest away from screens. Parents were encouraged to explore creative options such as arts and crafts, sports, and educational games that stimulate cognitive and physical development. For instance, a simple activity like organizing a family game night or a nature walk can provide children with enriching experiences that foster creativity and physical health. By presenting these alternatives, the program aimed to shift the focus from restriction to enrichment, illustrating numerous fulfilling ways to engage children beyond the digital realm.

The effectiveness of this community service program is evident in the positive feedback received from participating parents. Many expressed a newfound understanding of the balance required in managing gadget use and reported implementing the strategies discussed during the workshop. Testimonials highlighted how parents noticed improvements in their children's behavior, including increased engagement in family activities and reduced reliance on gadgets for entertainment.

In conclusion, the community service initiative at TK N Pembina Bantarbolang serves as a vital reminder of education and community engagement's role in addressing modern challenges such as gadget addiction. By equipping parents with the necessary knowledge and skills, the program has raised awareness and fostered a proactive approach to managing children's gadget use. The collaborative efforts between educators and parents can create a healthier digital environment for children, ultimately contributing to their overall development and well-being in this digital age. The success of this program illustrates the potential impact of targeted educational interventions in fostering a balanced approach to technology use among young children, paving the way for a more engaged and aware generation.

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