
The Role of Parents in Assisting the Use of Gadget in Alpha Generation

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Abstract: This research is aim to know the information about the role of parents in assisting the use of gadget and parental supervision in generation alpha. The generation alpha are children born from 2010-2025. They are also known as the children of the millennials who is born along gadgets such as tablet, computer and smartphone. The sample of this research are 250 parents who had children from age 0-9 years old in Pekanbaru. The methodology used is descriptive quantitative approach. Result that can be concluded from the data analysis, 86% of parents supervise children in using gadgets and 81% set rules for their children. Parents gain knowledge about the negative effect of gadgets overuse in children 37% from social media and 45% parents see the gadget as the source of information for their children. Parents can't avoid children from gadgets, what they can do is to set rules and supervise the use of it to get the positive effect of this technology. Social media is the most effective media to share information about parenting in digital age, so the stakeholder such as government, campus and parenting institution, may use it to reach more parents and share information about gadgets awareness for generation alpha.

Keywords: Parenting, Digital Age, Gadgets for Children

1. Introduction

Nowadays the technology develop rapidly and the children as the digital natives grows in media-rich environment. The generation alpha are children born from 2010-2025. They are also known as the children of the millennials who is born along gadgets such as tablet, computer and smartphone.

Many aspect in our lives has changed. People talk less to each other as they spent more time to look on screen. Most people can't leave house without the smart phone and willing to return home to take it from the office. The scream and laugh of children playing together in an open area just like the generation before them, are rarely to find because they prefer to stay inside of the house to play gadgets. They're finger and concentration glued to the screen which offer not only entertainment, but also information and adventure.

Technology is the number one reason parents believe raising kids today is more complicated than in the past (Crouch, 2017). Roles of parents are changing and become more challenging. To know more about parenting in the digital age, we need to understand the online behavior of young children because the activities that children engage in with digital technologies can lead to experiencing different kinds of outcomes (Livingstone, Mascheroni, & Staksrud, 2017). But what we also need to know is how parents adapt to the digital era which will give influence to their way of assisting their children in using gadget.

Most of parents as the urban digital adapted the changes happily, for the most parts, to the convenience and connectivity of the digital era (Steiner-Adair, 2013). The connection between human and the technology become stronger each day. It brings so much different in the daily life and one of it

is the child rearing. In the past parents played and spent a lot of time with their children, now as we can all watch that activity mostly substituted with gadget such as tablet or smartphone. These changes the way parents communicate and interact with their children and affect children development.

The temptation to use gadget to entertain babies and toddlers is hard to resist. Living in the house with facilities such as television, computer and smartphone, makes the children surrounded by media. But, the less exposure the children has to the screens, the better. The American Academy of pediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents avoid television viewing and screen time for children under the age of two, because it is believes the negatives effects of media us far outweigh the positive ones for this age of group.

As the children grow, they are naturally discovering the world by using their senses. Every stimulation is important for their development. They need to experience a three-dimensional world of people and things they can taste, touch, see, hear and smell. This foundational exploration can't happen if a baby or toddler spends too much time using gadgets (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). In early age, it is the role of parents to decide the activity for their children. Playing hide and seek outdoors, building legos or using gadgets to watch youtube is depend on the activity choosen in family. Children will be familiar and enjoy the kind of games and activity which are introduce the closest person. Because of that, the use of gadgets in children is mostly influence by the role of parents.

2. Methodology

The methodology used is descriptive quantitative approach to give information and to describe the role of parents in assisting the use of gadget and parental supervision in generation alpha. Sample for this research are 250 parents who had young children age 0-9 years old. For data analysis, score percentage of each indicators is a result of comparing ideal score and actual score.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Parents Supervision

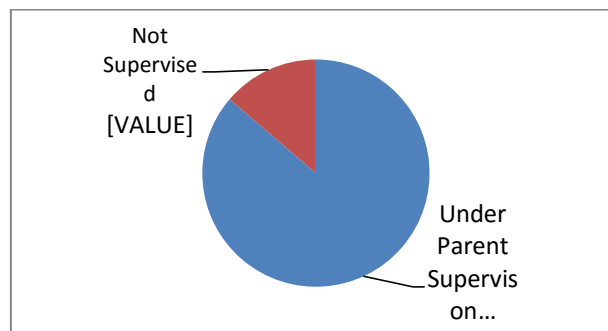


Figure 1. Parent Supervision in Using Gadgets

As the result, it is found that 86% of parents accompany their children while using gadget and there are 14% of parents let their children use gadget without supervision. Young children still need the guidance to do activities. If parents let young children use gadget without supervision, it may lead to several problems because of the content which they watch and also because of the duration children used the media.

Children who has high duration in using gadgets with low parental involvement is found to have lower prosocial behavior levels than the children who has low duration in using gadgets with parental involvement (Alif, Lara & Sofia, 2018). Using gadgets lock the children attention and keep them away from playing with other children. As the social behavior can only developed when children interact with others, gadgets has stolen their interest and time to do so.

Parental supervision on the use of gadgets at the elementary school level is the supervision of time and things in the gadget. Parents monitor which sites are opened and used by children by looking at the contents of children's gadgets. In addition, the most supervised is the time to use the gadget, which is by limiting the time to use the gadget at night (Fraharsini, Tri & Hamdan, 2018). Parents should spent time to supervise children not only the content, but also duration and time when the children use gadgets.

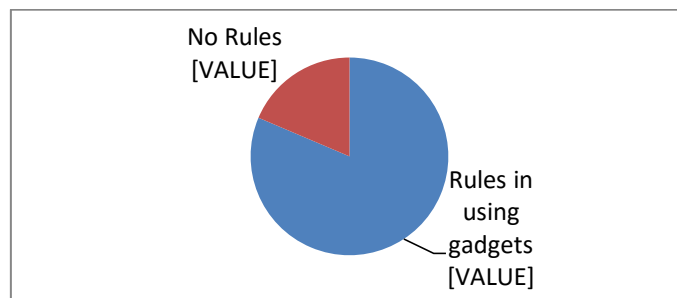


Figure 2. Rules in Using Gadgets

Figure 2 shown that 81% of parents give guidelines to their children such as duration and frequency in using gadget. There are no children who refuse gadgets. It always succed to attract children because of the fun and excitement it offers. And because of that, according to Milayani, parents should use smart parenting to give positive influence on child individual. If we let children to use gadget for a long time it will lead them to gadget addiction and will cause negative effect to children emotional development and make them uncapable of social adjustment because their lack of interaction with enviroment (2014). According to Chapman & Pellicane (2014) screen time time that is not purposeful tends to be waste of time and negative influence.

19% of parents who aren't give any rules to their children. This number might increase if parents not having access to the information about negative effect of gadgets overuse in children. They need to be aware and set rules in order to avoid later problems in children development.

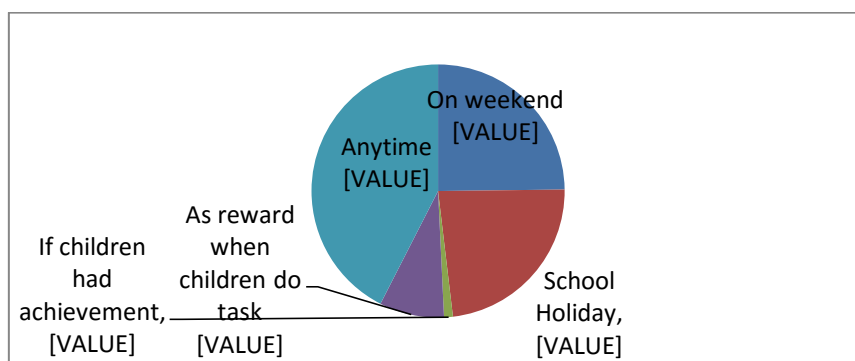


Figure 3. Time Rule for Using Gadgets

Parents feel out of control and hopelessly overmatched by the deluge of gadgets. They try to set rules of the time children using gadgets. There are 25% of parents let their children use gadget on weekends while 23% give access to gadget on school holiday. It is almost impossible to keep the digital natives from gadgets. But the wise parent should make rules to control the use of gadgets and avoid children from the negative impact. Parents need to apply parental mediation in family. According to Livingstone & Helsper (2008) parental mediation is defined as the parental management of the relationship between children and media, including simple restrictions, conversational and interpretive strategies, and parental monitoring activities.

Parenting style should be updated along with the changes of time, and in this digital age, rules and communication should be effectively applied in family in order to make gadgets used properly and wisely.

3.2. Parents Knowledge about Gadgets for Children

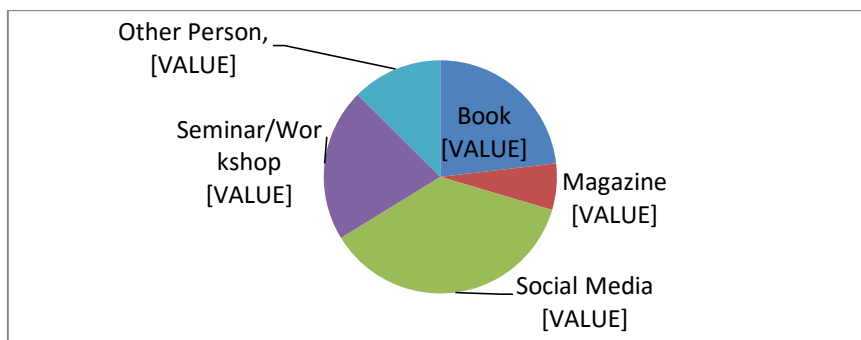


Figure 4. Information About Gadget Negative Effect

Fortunately most of parents know the negative effect of gadget overused. As shown in figure 4, they get the information 37% from social media, 21% from books and about 13% from seminar or workshop. Social media is an effective media to spread out anykind of information, also about parenting in digital age because most of parents is connected to social media such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Children learn lot of things before the age of six and in this golden age era, they are developing in many aspect. If they are using gadgets most of the time, they loose chance to communicate with their parents and learn a lot of things from the enviroment. Speech delay, low communication skill, less empathy and health problem often found as the negative effect of gadgets.

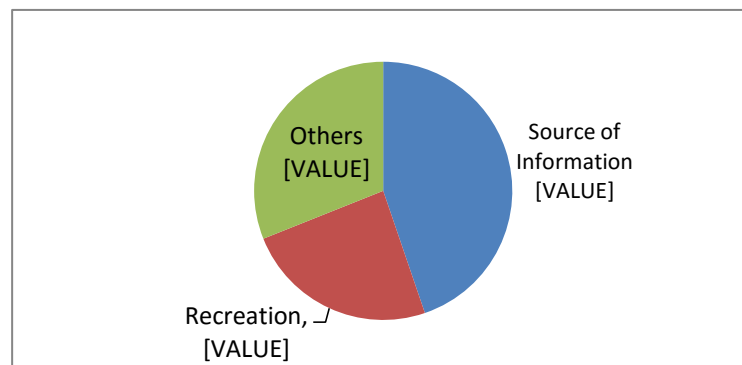


Figure 5. Parents Reason for Giving Children Gadgets

Most of parents or 45% see the gadget as the source of information for their children. That's the main reason they let their children use gadgets. The millennial parents tend to see knowledge and achievement as an important part of their children development. They try to equipped children with the academic resources they can afford and one of it is gadgets. De Lima & Eva (2016) report that parents, see the technology as a learning tool, a source of entertainment and also educational purposes for their children. They are aware with the negative outcome of what it can impose to them. The parents know the benefits and, at the same time, the risk factors of the digital technology to their children. In terms of family, the technology should bringing the family closer together, not driving the family farther apart and the proper place for technology won't be exactly the same for every family. So, every parents should play their role wisely for the brighter future of children and to nourish the warmth relation in family.

4. Conclusion

Parents can't avoid children from gadgets, what they can do is to set rules and supervise the use of it to get the positive effect of this technology. Social media is the most effective media to share information about parenting in digital age, so the stakeholder such as government, campus and parenting institution, may use it to reach more parents and share information about gadgets awareness for generation alpha.

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