Parents’ Experiences in Assisting Elementary School Students in Using the Internet

Amining Rahmasiwi*1, Dewi Setyo Rini2, Yessy Sulistyowati2, Halimah2

1 Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah, UIN Raden Mas Said, Indonesia
2 Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah, UIN Raden Mas Said, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: amining.rahmasiwi@iain-surakarta.ac.id

**ABSTRACT**

This cross-sectional survey seeks to explore parents’ experience in assisting elementary school students in using the internet during an emergency learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Data were collected through questionnaires. It was processed through descriptive qualitative data analysis. This current study involved 20 parents of elementary school students in Dukuh Mojolaban Sukoharjo. The results showed that 95% of parents limit children's access to THE gadget by setting screen time, assisting the use of THE gadget, increasing interaction with children, and selecting appropriate programs or applications. Parents should assist their children in utilizing devices to reduce addiction and the negative impact of gadgets so that children are more focused on learning.

**INTRODUCTION**

Digital media has grown more pervasive in the lives of children and adolescents (Chassiakos et al., 2016; Hall, 2021). Digital media is extensively used as the society 5.0 era begins. Twenge et al. (2019) reported that the use of digital media (internet, SMS, social media, and online games) increased rapidly from 1976 to 2016 among students in grades 8, 10, and 12. Digital media is used for learning (Cannon, 2018; Greve et al., 2022), business (Kumar et al., 2020) as well as entertainment (Rothschild, 2011).

The utilization of digital media is inextricably linked to the possession of gadgets and other electronic devices. Based on research conducted by Kabali et al. (2015), 9797% of households have a television, 83% have a tablet, and 77% have a smartphone. The number of gadget users increased by 3.2 billion in 2019 and is expected to reach 3.9 billion by 2022.
Because of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, learning is now carried out online, and the use of gadgets is expanding. The use of devices shifts face-to-face learning. (Nurulita et al., 2021).

Learning that employs digital media as the main means of instruction requires parental involvement, particularly for elementary school-aged children (Sulistyowati et al., 2021). Elementary school children’s ages range from 7 to 12 years, and this age group still requires guidance and assistance from adults (Bujuri, 2018). Parental assistance is essential because there are applications that are not appropriate for children, such as social media like Instagram, Tiktok, and so on (Triastuti et al., 2017). Trends on social media platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok are inappropriate for elementary school-aged children (Jayanata, 2018). Furthermore, Abu Bakar (2011) argues that social media causes children to forget to do their homework since it is more entertaining than the responsibilities assigned by teachers at school. In addition to social media, smartphones also provide games that can make children addicted (Iswidharmanjaya & Agency, 2014). As a result, parental assistance is critical for children (Yulianingsih et al., 2020).

Research examining parental assistance in using gadgets with elementary school children during the COVID-19 pandemic has not been widely carried out. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a previous study did research on gadget risk minimization through parental assistance (Chotimah & Harun, 2022). However, this study focuses on the context of early childhood education rather than primary school education. In addition, the research conducted by Purwaningtyas et al. (2021) focuses on the impact of parenting and gadget use on the psychosocial development of school students During the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this study is designed to answer the following problems.

1. How do parents assist elementary school children in using gadgets during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What challenges do parents have when assisting elementary school children in using the internet during the COVID-19 pandemic?

This study contributes to providing an overview of parental assistance to elementary school children in using gadgets during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it is expected that parents and elementary school teachers would be more critical, attentive, and knowledgeable in guiding and directing positive content that is appropriate for elementary school children’s development. As a result, they can obtain good learning outcomes in any situation, including during the pandemics.
METHOD

This study is a quantitative survey. According to Creswell (2016), a survey seeks to generalize the population from a set of a representative samples to draw conclusions on the population’s attitudes. This current study is a cross-sectional survey since data collection was carried out at one time.

The population in this study were parents whose children are elementary school students in Dukuh Mojolaban Sukoharjo. From the entire population, 20 respondents were then taken randomly. Primary data were obtained through the questionnaires. This study used a closed-ended questionnaire. The closed questionnaire provides questions and alternative answers. Questionnaires were distributed through the google form platform. Questions include 1) identity (name of parents, names of children, student’s grade, and gender), 2) duration of online learning from the start of the pandemic, 3) online learning facilities provided, 4) the way assisting children in using gadgets, 5) restrictions on internet use outside of learning, 6) obstacles in assisting children in using gadgets and accessing the internet, 7) children’s responses, 8) solutions for gadget use according to their needs.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating the average percentage of parents’ answers. Descriptive data analysis refers to the process of examining data in an organized manner by relating the sample to a certain population to provide answers to a problem or provide information about a phenomenon (Yulianingsih et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rapid advancement of technology and information in the digital era has an impact on every human being’s freedom to access numerous things through the internet. Because of its advantages in enabling access to information and communication, almost everyone uses the internet. The use of the internet in Indonesia increased in 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. As reported by BPS-Statistics Indonesia (Sutarsih et al., 2020) household internet use reaches 78.18% in 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet is widely utilized to seek COVID-19-related information, finance-related searches, work, entertainment, and the use of the internet to engage in discussions and learning (Azizah, 2022). The rise in internet access in numerous domains is proportionate to the spike in the number of gadget users, especially children, who use internet access in society.

Children are among those who quite often access the internet. According to BPS-
Statistics Indonesia (2020), only 33.04% use the internet for school and studying, while 88.99% use it for social media and entertainment. This shows that the majority of time is spent on activities unrelated to learning. This is particularly critical for children. Parents are the most important party in setting boundaries so that children can use the internet wisely.

This study aims to explore the role of parents in assisting children when surfing the internet. The results showed that 95% of parents assist to their children when accessing the internet by providing screen time. In general, parents limit the use of the internet to two hours per day. The following points provide a more extensive description of parental assistance in limiting children’s internet access.

**Limiting Screen Time in Accessing the Internet**

This study indicates that most parents of elementary school students in Mojolaban, Sukoharjo apply screen time in accessing the internet. Figure 1 depicts a comparison of the number of parents who regulate their children’s screen time and those who did not.

![Figure 1. Parents in Regulating Screen Time to Their Children](image)

Figure 1 illustrates that more parents limit their children’s internet access than those who do not. Limiting children’s internet access using gadgets is one sort of parental internet assistance for children. Parents encourage their children to use internet access for educational purposes. Parents, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, should teach their children that the gadget is offered as a requirement for home learning. As a result, the usage of gadgets and internet access must be done with caution and efficiency.

According to the findings, most parents set limits on internet access, which was consistent with the parent’s assumed role. According to Sulastri and Ahmad Tarmizi (2017),
Parents serve as mentors, caregivers, and educators for their children, as well as support their social and emotional needs. Parental assistance for children in the digital era should be intensified to prevent the negative impacts of the internet. Several undesirable consequences of internet access include the impact on social development, such as difficulty interacting with the surroundings, being individualistic, and being difficult to get along with (Ariston et al., 2018). In addition to social development, other impacts are shown on psychological development. A study conducted by Syifa et al. (2019) reveals that children who use the internet excessively are more likely to become angry and rebellious. Furthermore, children who use gadgets for entertainment grow undisciplined, lethargic, and neglect tasks.

Because of the harmful consequences of excessive internet usage, every parent with children must be involved in providing assistance when their child surfs the internet. The most crucial thing that can be done is to set a regular time limit for internet usage. Parents must be consistent in their restrictions on the use of gadgets in order to achieve the best results. An inconsistent parental attitude has the potential to result in excessive internet access that does not match the benefits (Triastuti et al., 2017).

Parents in Indonesia should be concerned regarding setting screen time for their children. This is based on the results of research conducted by Setiawati et al., (2019) which shows that in Indonesia, children’s use of electronic devices is relatively high. In Indonesia, approximately 2-10% of gadget users hold gadgets 100 to 200 times per day. This falls into the 'high' category since the maximum age of minors should be achieved in order for them to use the internet using gadgets for only 5 to 30 minutes every day. If done for more than 120 minutes a day, it can have a negative effect on brain health, impair eye and hand health, cause sleep disorders, exposure to radiation, and prone to being antisocial. Other research carried out by Fadzil et al., (2016) that more than half of parents in all Asian countries do not enforce the rules for limiting children's use of gadgets. As a result, many children in Asia, particularly in Indonesia, have been identified as having obstacles to social, mental, and psychological development as a result of excessive use of smartphones (Fadzil et al., 2016).

**How to Restrict Internet Access to Children**

According to the study's findings, there are several ways for parents to limit their children's internet use, including setting screen time, strengthening engagement with children when using gadgets, and selecting appropriate programs or applications. The percentage of how to restrict internet access for children is shown in Figure 2.
This study indicates that not all parents restrict internet access to their children. 95% of parents of elementary school students in Mojolaban, Sukoharjo prefer to limit their children’s internet use by limiting time screen and engaging with their children when accessing the internet. Only 10% of parents select appropriate programs or application for their children.

Every parent has their way of assisting their children when using the internet. However, not all parents apply the methods mentioned in this study. The results of previous studies confirm that only a small proportion of parents impose time limits on their children (Valcke et al., 2010). Although only a small number of people apply internet access time limits, parents still determine when to access the internet. Valcke et al., (2010) indicated that only 30% of parents remain physically present while their children use the internet. Finally, in terms of selecting positive programs or applications, Valcke et al., (2010), Valcke et al., (2010) revealed that program selection is more focused on checking the applications installed on children’s devices, as well as routinely reviewing internet browser history and site URLs that children can access.

The obtained research findings are largely consistent with earlier study results that not all parents apply all the methods to limit internet access to their children. Every parent has their own method of regulating and monitoring their child’s internet use so that it is used wisely and correctly. However, it has not been determined with certainty which method yields the best results from the use of internet access for children.

![Figure 2. Restricting Internet Access for Children](image-url)
Learning Facilities Provided by Parents

90% of parents provided smartphones to support learning activities. Facilities provided by parents to their children in accessing the internet is described in Figure 3.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 3.** Types of Facilities for Internet Access

It is shown that 90% of children are provided with smartphones compared to laptops or notebooks. Most users choose mobile phones since they can be used to communicate between parents and children. This makes it easy for parents to watch their children's activities when they are not present. This demonstrates that parents view communication as the most important aspect of internet use.

The results of this study corroborate relevant research related to the selection of facilities for children in accessing the internet. According to Setiawati et al., (2019). Menurut Setiawati et al., (2019) Due to the simplicity of use, features for learning, and means of communication anytime and everywhere, more than half of parents provide their children with mobile phones as the main source of news for surfing the internet. Hazalizah and Alexander Khiiu (2018) propose the same result that mobile phones are the most commonly used gadgets to access the internet for all groups in several regions in Malaysia.

In general, the selection of mobile phones as a way for children to surf the internet is based on practical considerations such as ease of use, portability, and the ability to be used for a variety of activities ranging from communication to learning interests. Laptops or notebooks are less preferred because some people believe they are less practical to use, larger in size, and less than ideal as a medium of communication for all groups. Even so, there are still parents who facilitate children with these types of gadgets.

All types of digital facilities provided by parents to children are intended for educational
purposes. In terms of education, these digital resources can bring significant benefits to children’s understanding, one of which is the ability to deliver audiovisual education. Children can see real images through films with sounds, such as videos about the life of a tiger, which they can watch on their individual gadgets. They can see what a real tiger looks like, what it sounds like, and where it lives. However, the gadget can harm children if it is not provided with assistance from parents.

**Obstacles when Assisting Children in Using Gadgets**

Obstacles for parents assisting children in using gadgets are very diverse, especially obstacles in the learning process. One of the obstacles that parents frequently face is that it is difficult to instruct their children not to access applications other than those linked to learning. Figure 4 depicts the percentage of obstacles that parents face when assisting their children using the internet.

![Figure 4. Obstacles that Frequently Occur when Assisting Children](image)

The findings revealed that the most common challenge encountered by parents while assisting their children in using the internet was the difficulty in guiding children not to open programs other than those related to learning. Although this is reasonable because everyone, not just children, has a desire to learn something new and more interesting. In this regard, It is the responsibility of parents to continue to supervise their children.

Another issue that parents frequently mention is unstable internet access. Almost everyone who uses the internet today faces this issue. This confirms previous studies conducted by Hariyanti et al., (2020), Wardani and Ayriza, (2020), and Utami, (2020) which show that
network problems are the most common barrier to internet access in Indonesia, particularly for educational purposes. Because the signal is the most important factor in being able to access the internet, any activity on the internet will most likely be hampered if the signal is unstable. Each region has its own signal strength; those in urban areas have no issues with the network or signal, while those in rural regions are at a higher risk because internet connection is still not widely dispersed in rural areas. However, the government has attempted to address signal issues by building many towers in rural areas, ensuring that everyone has equal access to the internet and technology literacy.

The next obstacle that parents frequently encounter while taking their children to the internet is the desire for more time to access the internet. This impediment is caused by a desire to try something new that is more appealing to children. Setiawati et al. (2019) describe that the majority of Indonesian children use the internet for more than 60 minutes every day to access educational content. When children request extended internet access time, the majority of what they do is play educational games. Another obstacle is a lack of parental experience in operating devices; for parents of senior age, using digital media such as gadgets, especially applications such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, or even media meeting conferences such as Zoom or GoogleMeet, will feel foreign. WhatsApp is frequently used by parents, although other learning program programs require additional instruction from parents.

Thus, it can be concluded that learning through digital media such as gadgets truly requires parental guidance. Aside from being too young, the use of gadgets without supervision can be fatal, such as resulting in children who are addicted to using gadgets, resulting in a lack of relationship with the social environment, and the knowledge obtained is not optimal because there are too many sources that contain information without clear accountability. Parental assistance is essential to minimize the negative impact of technology and gadget addiction. In studying from home, parents play a crucial role to help and motivate children (Lilawati, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Most parents in Mojolaban Sukoharjo are involved in assisting children when accessing the internet using gadgets. Assistance provided by parents includes providing screen time, intensifying interaction with children when using gadgets, and selecting appropriate programs and applications for children. It is critical to provide parental assistance to children in their use of devices to reduce children's addiction to gadgets and the negative consequences that
accompany them, so that children may focus on following teaching and learning activities carried out at home. This study has limitations in terms of the number of samples involved since not all respondents answered the questionnaire distributed. Only 20 of the 85 people who were given the instrument were willing to fill in and submit it. Because of the small number of samples that are not adequately representative of the community, the findings of this study cannot be more extensively generalized. It is recommended that the following research be conducted on this topic with a larger sample size that is more representative of the population and with additional research sub-variables under consideration.

REFERENCES


