The Parents’ Role in Optimizing Gadgets for Children’s Online Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic: Study on the Parenting Group of Talagening, Bobotsari, Purbalingga

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Abstract: During COVID-19 pandemic, learning online from home was regulated to prevent the spread of the virus. It results in children intense interaction and exposure of gadgets and online media. This study aims to observe the parents’ role in optimizing the use of gadgets for children in online learning during the pandemic. This study is a qualitative research using case study method. The case study was conducted in Parenting group in Talagening village involving 10 people as the subject of the study. The data were collected through interview and analyzed through thematic analysis. The results showed that the parents’ role in optimizing gadgets for children’s learning during the pandemic are becoming teachers at home, motivators, facilitators, and directors (direct influence) by choosing appropriate educational programs, accompanying and monitoring the children when they use gadgets, introducing the main function of gadgets as a means of communication, and balancing children with other positive and interesting activities.

Keywords: Parents’ Role, Gadgets Optimization, Pandemic COVID-19, Home study policy

Abstrak: Di masa pandemi COVID-19, kebijakan belajar di rumah diatur dengan tujuan untuk menghambat penyebaran virus. Proses tersebut membuat anak lebih sering berinteraksi dengan gadget karena pembelajaran dilakukan secara daring, namun praktiknya tetap harus mengacu pada kurikulum nasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat peran orang tua dalam mengoptimalkan penggunaan gadget
pada anak dalam pembelajaran daring di masa pandemi. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode studi kasus. Studi kasus dilakukan pada kelompok Parenting desa Talagening sebanyak 10 orang, dengan menggunakan wawancara dan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peran orang tua dalam optimalisasi penggunaan gadget pada anak di masa pandemi secara umum yaitu orang tua berperan sebagai guru di rumah, motivator, fasilitator, dan director (pengaruh secara langsung). Secara khusus, Langkah yang dilakukan yaitu memilihkan program Pendidikan yang bermutu, orang tua selalu mendampingi anak ketika anak menggunakan gadget, mengenalkan fungsi utama gadget sebagai alat komunikasi, dan menyeimbangkan anak dengan aktivitas lain yang positif dan menarik.

Kata Kunci: Peran Orang tua, Optimalisasi Gadget, Masa Pandemi, Kebijakan belajar di rumah

Pendahuluan

The Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19) pandemic has taught us to maintain social distance and avoid physical interaction with others to prevent the spread of the virus and to decrease the infected patients (WHO, 2020). The more frequency of outdoor activity (crowded place), the higher it will be for the exposure to the virus (Widyaningrum et al., 2020: 470-481). The pandemic COVID-19 has also changes every aspects of human life, including teaching and learning process. Children and teacher are forced to study from home. The learning mode has also changed drastically from offline-face-to-face interaction to virtual-online interaction.

Generally, learning at school or at home is having similar goals even though the quality and effectiveness must be different. It is due to different facilities provided by the organizations (schools/governments) and the parents. Many factors influence the online learning such as the limitation of internet quota, signal and even the gadget. During the emergency situation, the schools had applied different learning design and models which also has psychological impact on students (Irawan et al., 2020: 53-60).

Study from home through online learning makes children having intense interaction with gadgets. In fact, this intensity also increases the risk of gadget addiction. Gadget addicts can cause psychological disorder such as concentration and hyperactivity. Gadget addiction also affect excessive dopamine hormone which influence the maturity process in the Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC) (Paturel, 2014: 514).

The parents’ role in assisting children while studying at home is very important. In this regard, WHO (2020) released guidelines for parents to assist their
children during pandemic. The guide includes parenting tips to be more positive and constructive in assisting their children at home. Initially, the parents’ role are guiding attitude and basic skills, such as religious education to obey rules and good habits (Nurlaeni & Juniarti, 2017: 33). However, the role has expanded to assisting the learning process as well. Prabhawani (2016: 47) stated that the implementation of education is the responsibility of parents and the surrounding community, not only the responsibility of educational institutions.

The parents’ role cannot be separated from the family. Lestari, (2012: 66) states that the family, viewed from its function, has duties and responsibilities to provide emotional and material support, as well as fulfilling specific roles. Muchtar (in Lutfatutatifah et al., 2015: 1-226) also argues that family is an important part of the community unit with their specific role including caring, educating, protecting and nurturing the children. During online learning, parents must be able to assist their children, especially when they use gadgets. Excessive use of gadgets without parental supervision will have adverse impact.

The parents’ role in optimizing the use of gadgets during the COVID-19 pandemic is an important thing to be analyzed. This is also related to the optimization of the teaching and learning process in online classroom, whether gadgets used to support the learning process and children’s intellectual development or used for other purposes such as playing games, watching online videos or social media. Therefore, the study in this research is very important to understand how the role of parents in optimizing the use of gadgets during a pandemic, so that gadgets can be used properly and effectively.

The method used in this research is a case study. A research design used to reveal a phenomenon or the object being analyzed in more detail and comprehensive (Alwasilah, 2002: 34). Yin, (2003: 56) stated that Case studies are very suitable for answering “how” questions because they will explore the data more deeply. This study aims to analyze the role of parents in optimizing the use of gadgets during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The subjects in this study were parents who have children aged between 5-12 years in Talagening, Bobotsari, Purbalingga Regency. The subject consists of 10 parents. The data were collected through observation and interview. Data analysis using thematic analysis that is an analysis techniques that emphasize the compilation of coding, refers to research questions, to make the themes structured accordingly with the research questions. This will be used as a reference in describing the phenomenon that happened (Heriyanto, 2018: 317-324).
The Parents’ Role

According to Khairani (2019: 20) “role” is an expectation on how people have to behave and act in certain situations based on their social status. The word “role” in the Oxford Dictionary is defined as Actor’s Part, One’s Task of Function. According to Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), “Role has the meaning of a play (film) or behavior that expected to be owned by someone “.

According to Novrinda (2017: 42) “Parents are men and women who are tied up in marriage and ready to take responsibility as the father and mother of their children”. Muthmainnah (2012: 108) argues that “Parents are figure who understands how children learn well.” Martiswati (2014: 190) “Parents are a family consisting of father and mother; they are the result of a legal marriage that can form a family”. Ni’mah (2016: 15) states that “Parents is children’s first and primary educators” because they have great influence on their children development. Astita (2016: 41) also defines “Parents are the role model for her children, because every child admiring his/her parents, all his/her parents’ behavior is imitated by their children. They educate their children to go to school, live in Islamic boarding schools, private lessons, and so on”.

Heriyani (2010: 16-17) suggests that “Parents, mothers and father plays an important role in educating their children. A father’s role is managing and organizing all the children affairs and give precise and useful directions. A father is also obliged to seek material support for his family and having adequate knowledge to guide and educate his family to be better. Mother also has an obligation to seek knowledge because she is a person who is close to her children.

The parents’ role is very important in mentoring children. Assistance provided by parents to their children in doing learning activities at home will effect on discipline in learning. Motivation given to children should be able to direct them to participate in educational activities. This condition can occur if there is an emotional bond between parents and their children. Safe and comfortable home conditions will help children to develop and prepare himself for the future (Prasetyo, 2018: 16).

According to Widayati (2018: 28-29) the parents’ roles in the family consist of:

a. The role as educators, parents need to teach children the importance of education and science.

b. Role as a motivator, as the children are in the transition period, children need motivation from their parents to grow courage and self-confidence in dealing with problems.
c. Role as role models, parents need to provide examples and role models for children, both in speaking honestly and deeply carry out daily life and society.

d. Role as friends, parents must be patient and understand their children development. Parents can be the source of information and friends who shares the ideas, listen to children's difficulties or problems to make them feel comfortable and protected.

e. The role of supervisor, the obligation of parents is to see and monitor children's attitudes and behavior, especially the influence of the family, school and community environment.

f. The role of counselor, parents can provide an overview and consideration of positive and negative values, so that the child able to make the best decisions.

Based on the description above, parents have important roles in the development of their children including emotional, intellectual and spiritual development. Parents also have to support their children and provide motivation to learn. Parents must also be able to supervise the child's learning process, so that in online learning, parents have an obligation to determine the success of their child's learning process. Optimizing the use of gadgets is important, because gadgets are the media used in online learning. Using gadgets properly will help children in the teaching and learning process accompanied with parental supervision and assistance.

Characteristics of Online-based Learning

According to Mahnun (2018: 31) the characteristics of online learning are enabling students to learn without having to go to the classroom, and the lessons schedule can be agreed between the instructor and students, or students can determine their own learning time. Meanwhile, according to Ruth Colvin Clark and Richard E. Mayer the characteristic of online-based learning 1) must have two important elements, namely information and teaching methods; 2) Online-based learning is carried out via computer use text, voice, or images such as illustrations, photographs, animation, and video; 3) online-based learning intended to help educators teach the student objectively.

The use of e-learning should consider some of the characteristics of e-learning as expressed by (Sari, 2015: 26):
a. Take advantage of electronic technology services, so that you can obtain information and communicate fast and easily, both between teachers and students or between students with one another.

b. Utilizing computer media, such as computer networks (computer networks or digital media)

c. Using learning materials for independent study

d. Learning material can be stored on a computer, so that can be accessed by teachers and students or anyone, not limited to time and place according to their needs.

e. Utilizing computers for the learning process, find out the results of learning progress or administration, as well as to obtain a lot of information from various sources

Results and Discussion

The results of interviews with 10 informants in this study are presented in the tables as follows:

Table 1. Forms of assistance by parents against the use of gadgets in children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Role of Parental Assistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching children how to operate the gadget</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Helping children find learning videos on <em>youtube</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Monitoring children's activities in playing gadgets</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Limiting the time to play gadgets, maximum of 15 to 30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Prohibiting the children accessing certain application</td>
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<td>- Prohibiting to play gadgets outside home</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reducing usage gadget in front of the children</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Using the device as learning media for children like teaching children to recognize colors, knowing the names of plants and animals, learning to read and counting, learning foreign language, getting to know various children's songs, diming the screen brightness of the gadget</td>
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Table 2. Factors that support and hinder parents in accompanying the child uses gadgets;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Factors;</th>
<th>Inhibiting Factors;</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Parents’ knowledge regarding the positive and negative impact of using gadgets for children.</td>
<td>- Limited parental time because they work every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parents’ awareness to accompany their children while using gadget</td>
<td>- The number of homework, children’s tantrum,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and lows mother’s education level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Majority, children use gadget for playing games, *whatsapp* and watching *youtube* video for education purposes. Parental monitor in the usage of gadget results in children awareness to use gadget for positive activities such as memorizing songs and recitation of *al-quran*, and learning to read and telling stories. However, there are also children who playing gadgets towards negative things.

**The Effect of Optimizing Gadgets for Child Development**

The parents’ role in assisting the use of gadgets for children during online learning can be seen through their willingness and involvement in mentoring their children. This research found that most parents are willing to accompany their children while playing gadgets. Housewives are more often involved and monitoring their children using gadgets as a learning media compare to those working mother who had to work every day. They can only monitor their students when they are at home.

The involvement of mother in directing and teaching children can stimulate children's literacy skills and increase their knowledge. Ruhaena and Ambarwati (2015: 172-179) also mentioned that one of the facilities provided by the parents in the process of developing children's interest and literacy skills at home are by utilizing digital media.
In line with this opinion, the observation results show that parents’ involvement is done by maintaining communication with their children such as asking questions about the videos they watched or games they played, asking the children to name various colors of the objects in the video or games, and occasionally correcting children’s reading when the child sees a video about memorization verses of the Quran.

Generally, parents praise the children for their ability to operate gadget or their ability in understanding information from videos they have watched. In line with the results of this observation, parents praise their children when they can memorize al-quran, imitate the video they have watched, and answer questions related to the video. According to Brooks (2011: 98) one of the effects of parents’ involvement in their children development through positive interaction such as giving praise to children, hugging and kissing their children can cultivate important positive feelings for the children psychological development.

The Parents’ Role in Optimizing Gadget for Learning

a. Parent as a Teacher

Parent can act as a teacher for their children during online learning means assisting their children in doing their school tasks, giving directions and explanation if their children having difficulties. Parents as a teacher do not entirely replacing a teachers’ role such as educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating learners. Parents as a teacher has been done far before the online learning conducted. Naturally, parents will be their children first and foremost teacher since they were born. Parents are responsible in giving life lessons, religion, or general learning (Imron, 2016: 97-98). In other word, the duties of parents to support their children during online learning are extended not only teaching socio-religious values but also teaching the school materials.

Based on the interview, some parents believe that during online learning, parents are playing very significant roles. Parents must accompany or control their children to ensure that their children use their time to learn. Parents must learn how to operate gadgets properly, so that when children experience difficulties in learning, parents are able to help them. This is one of the weaknesses that we often encounter in some parents. Many were not literate in
technology. Meanwhile the children are more familiar and easily learn to use the gadget. It results in unbalance usage of gadget for their children because their parents are unable to monitor them.

The parents’ role as teachers is very important, especially for children under 12 years old, because children are more dominant in getting negative impact while using gadget. Many parents said that Gadgets can make kids addicted to the internet. Young and Abreu (2017: 122) also having similar argument that one of the most dangerous influences of gadgets is addiction, especially internet addiction.

Parents’ knowledge for the benefits and disadvantageous of gadgets for children, grow their parental awareness to accompanying their children in optimizing the use of gadget for positive impact and minimize the negative impact. In line with research results conducted by Harfiyanto, Utomo, and Budi (2015: 1-5) found that the parents’ role is very important to limit the use of gadgets for children because it has negative and positive effects for the children mental development.

It can be concluded that the parents’ role as teachers is not only helping children in completing school assignments, but directing children to be able to use digital media as a medium for learning. When children understand that there are many positive things that we can use by using gadgets, this will minimize the negative impact of gadgets. In addition, parents must introduce educational applications, so that children are able to enjoy and learn new things.

b. Parent as a Facilitator

Facilitator generally means a person who provides facilities or needs. Parents as facilitator means fulfilling their children’s needs to do their tasks in online learning (Cahyati, 2020: 155). One of the informants said that parents have an obligation to provide or facilitate children’s learning needs, including gadgets, books, internet packages, and even a conducive learning environment.

Important facilities in the implementation of online learning are a gadgets and internet package. Therefore, the role of parents is very important in facilitating the children with supported gadget as well as internet network, because smartphones cannot be used for online learning without an internet network.

Parents need to provide books or learning media related for their children. A comfortable learning place for children also needs attention. A
conducive learning atmosphere will make children focus on learning. A noisy environment will make children less focused on learning. They will choose to play video games or watching videos on YouTube rather than learning.

Most of the parents said that gadgets can make children addicted to the internet. Young and Abreu (2017: 123) reveal that one of the most dangerous influences of gadgets is addiction, especially internet addiction. Parents realize the risk of giving gadgets to children, it grows parental awareness of the importance of accompanying children when using gadgets. So that parents can optimize the positive impact and minimize the negative impact of gadgets for children. Research result conducted by Harfiyanto, Utomo, and Budi (2015: 1-5) revealed that the role of parents is very important to limit gadgets on children because gadgets give positive impact and negative impact on child development.

Gadgets have negative and positive impact on children cognitive development. The negative impact include hindering children's language skills, imitating inappropriate language from the video they have watched, shutting down and unwilling to communicate with friends or family. Meanwhile, the positive impact of gadget for children cognitive development is increasing their intelligence. Gadgets can help children learn to write, read, and describe something. It can teach children to solve a problem. Children have curiosity of what they experienced, so that it can generate interest in learning without any coercion. Curiosity will increase the children imagination such as drawing something in his mind (M. Hafiz, 2017: 21–22).

c. **Parent as a Motivator**

Parents can act as motivators. Motivator generally means people who work by providing motivation to others. Parents as motivators mean they have important role to motivate their children to learn. In term of online learning, parents’ motivation to support their children to learn, to do their school tasks and follow the online learning is very important. Without their parents’ support, children tend to use gadget for other purposes such as gaming, social media or watching videos.

Motivation can be done in various ways, such as giving rewards when their children accomplished certain thing, or when they have finished school assignment. Parents can also motivate their children to learn by appreciating for small things that have been done by their children, such as preparing
learning equipment or cleaning the house. Appreciation will make children happy. This happiness will encourage them to do other positive things, such as studying or doing assignments.

During the interview, some parents said that they must be patient when assisting children in learning, because children try to understand the material given by the teacher. Often, parents scold or yell at their children when they make mistakes. This will actually cause trauma for the child. Parents must understand that learning something cannot be instant, but gradual. This is where parents often make mistakes.

Uncomfortable conditions in the learning process will make children lazy to learn, so they think of using gadgets as entertainment media. Traumatic during online learning makes them reluctant to use gadgets for learning purposes. They think learning is boring and even annoying. Therefore, parents should be able to give positive suggestions and motivation to their children, so that they will feel cared for and appreciated. Thus, children will be excited to learn, because parents act as teachers, partners, and motivators.

Therefore, the negative impact caused by gadgets, perhaps due to parents not doing their role properly. The disappointment felt by children is vented in the wrong ways. As an example; children are more comfortable playing gadgets all day, rather than having to be yelled and scolded.

d. **Parent as a Director**

Influence means the power that arises from something (person or objects) that built character, belief, or action. Parents as influencer mean providing flexibility for children in developing their interests and talents. Parents should always guide their children to achieve success in the future. Parents also play role to direct their children based on their talents and interests because every child has the right to realizing his/her dreams. Based on the interview, the parents’ role is to direct children according to their potential by providing supported facilities such as painting equipment, musical instrument, reading books, etc.

Parents must direct children to use gadgets for positive things such as downloading educational game applications, educational YouTube videos, reading books according to the child’s age, and togetherness with parents.

Rahman argues that parents attempt to develop children in detail as follows: nurturing mental health as well as physical health, laying the foundation child’s
personality, motivating and guiding in developing themselves, providing adequate facilities, and creating comfortable, safe and conducive atmosphere (Catur Bintoro, 2019:10–11).

Maulia argues that there are some characteristics when children addicted to gadget: a sense of desire activity will disappear, talk about technology continuously, children get angry easily when someone gets in their way playing gadgets, irritable, selfish, difficulty in sharing time. Then, children often lie because they can’t get away from the gadget. They will find any way to play their gadgets and even disturbing their sleeping time (Hana Febriana, 2017: 2).

There are some steps can be taken by parents to overcome gadget addictions; first, limiting the time to use gadget in order to discipline their children. Given this limitation, the child will gradually forget the gadget. Second, develop the child’s talent started from early age, for examples talent in music, visualization such as drawing, painting, crafting, dancing, etc. Third, play with the child more often. If the child often invited to play with parents, the child will be closer to parents rather than gadgets. It will strengthen the relationship between parents and children. Fourth, invite children to participate in the adult activities, for example, cooking, cleaning and gardening, etc. This activity can train children to be responsible, creative and sympathy. Fifth, invite children to recreation areas. Recreation will make the child’s mind fresh and forget their gadget they used to play, because recreation will be make them feel happy and joyful. Visiting some interesting places such as beaches, mountains or zoo will also educate them.

Conclusion
Based on the result and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the parents’ roles in optimizing gadgets for children’s learning during the pandemic are becoming teachers at home, motivators, facilitators, and directors (direct influence) by choosing appropriate educational programs, accompanying and monitoring the children when they use gadgets, introducing the main function of gadgets as a means of communication, and balancing children with other positive and interesting activities.
References


The Parents’ Role in Optimizing...


