

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The digital age has brought significant changes in the world of education, especially at the early childhood and primary school levels. This research uses the literature study method to examine this topic. The results reveal that the role of parents is crucial in creating an effective learning environment at home and helping children adapt to digital technology in the context of learning. Some important aspects found include: (1) the importance of parental supervision and guidance in the use of digital devices, (2) the role of parents in selecting and evaluating educational digital content, (3) the balance between digital and non-digital activities is crucial, (4) improving parents' digital literacy, and (5) active cooperation between parents and educational institutions. The research also reveals challenges faced by parents, such as the digital divide between generations and concerns about the adverse effects of technology on children's development.

Keywords: Role of Parents, Early Childhood Education, Primary School, Digital Age.

Introduction

The digital age has brought significant changes in various aspects of human life, including education. This great digital revolution has fundamentally changed the way we learn and teach (Sitopu et al., 2024). Rapidly developing information and communication technologies have opened up access to vast sources of knowledge, allowing learning to be more flexible and personalised (Guna et al., 2024); (Hairiyanto et al., 2024). Online learning platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have democratised education by allowing anyone to access high-quality courses from leading universities around the world. In addition, technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are beginning to be integrated into

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learning experiences, offering more immersive and realistically interactive simulations and visualisations (Park et al., 2022).

These developments have also changed the roles of teachers and students in the learning process. Teachers are no longer the only source of information, but rather a facilitator who guides students in exploring and analysing information from various digital sources. Students on the other hand are required to be more active and independent learners, able to utilise technology to access, assess and integrate information (Crosby, 2022). Concepts such as blended learning, flipped classroom, and project-based learning that utilise digital technology are gaining popularity, creating a more dynamic and collaborative learning environment (Fawait et al., 2024); (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024). These developments not only increase the effectiveness of learning, but also prepare students with digital skills essential for success in the information age.

Multiple generations are growing up in an increasingly sophisticated technological environment. Early childhood and primary school children, who are digital natives, live surrounded by digital devices. Early childhood encompasses the 0-8 years group, a period of the most rapid physical, cognitive, social, emotional development. During this time, they begin to walk, talk, interact. Early education includes kindergarten and play programmes that stimulate all-round development (Ajayi & Adelokun, 2022).

Primary school students are 6-12 years old or are studying at the early formal level. They are practising logical thinking, complex concepts, advanced social skills. Primary schools focus on building reading, writing, arithmetic skills, as well as an introduction to science, social studies, arts. During this period, they also learn independence, responsibility, teamwork, important foundations for later education and life (Mowrey & Cunningham, 2022).

With technological changes, parents are required to support their children's education in the digital era. On the one hand, technology expands access to learning, insights, new age skills. But on the other hand, inappropriate use can lead to gadget addiction, inappropriate content, decreased direct interaction.

The role of parents as the first and main facilitator of learning for children is becoming increasingly important in today's digital era. The demand for parents is no longer only to be able to understand technological developments, but also to be able to guide and assist their children in utilising technology optimally to support the education process (Piccolo & Barnett, 2022). This challenge is even more severe considering that many parents are still digital immigrants, who must immediately adapt to rapid technological changes (Judijanto et al., 2024).

The imbalance of digital capabilities between parents and children can cause various problems in the learning assistance process. Many parents find it difficult or inadequate to supervise and provide direction for their children on the use of

technology. As a result, children may not receive maximum support in utilising technology to support their education (Murphy, 2023).

In addition, the shifting paradigm of education in the digital era also demands changes in the way parents are actively involved in their children's education. Collaboration between parents and schools is increasingly important, especially in the context of online or blended learning (Morse, 2022). Parents need to understand how to act as learning facilitators at home, while maintaining a balance between the use of technology and other activities that are important for children's development (Hazegh, 2022).

Given the complexity of the issues parents face in supporting their children's education in the digital age, an in-depth understanding of the role of parents, the challenges they face and effective strategies that can be applied is needed. This literature review aims to explore these aspects, with the hope of providing useful insights and recommendations for parents, educators and policy makers in their efforts to support early childhood and primary school education in the digital age.

Research Methods

The study conducted in this research uses a literature review, which is a research approach that involves collecting and analysing data from various written sources relevant to the research topic. This method involves a series of activities related to collecting library data, reading and recording, and managing research materials (Alaslan, 2022); (Suyitno, 2021).

In the literature study research method, researchers collect a number of books, magazines, and other sources related to the research problem and objectives. The main purpose of this method is to build a strong theoretical foundation, identify gaps in existing knowledge, and provide context for the research being conducted (Adlini et al., 2022); (Raco, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Early childhood and primary school education

Early Childhood Education and Primary School are both important in developing the initial foundation for a child's growth. PAUD focuses on holistic stimulation through fun play according to developmental stages, while primary schools begin to introduce more structured learning with various subjects. Although different in approach, both pay attention to aspects of child development with their own level of difficulty according to age and cognition (Jang, 2024). The transition between early childhood education and primary school is a critical phase where the basic skills and knowledge acquired in kindergarten become the foundation for further learning in primary school. Despite the differences in learning and

approaches, ECD and primary school are equally important in forming the initial educational foundation for children's growth (Saroinsong et al., 2020).

Early childhood education (ECE) is very important with the intention of optimising the development of the child as a whole, including physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and even spiritual aspects. The importance of PAUD is because early childhood is the golden age of brain development, where 90% of the brain is built between the ages of 0-5 years (Terlop, 2022). Proper stimulation at this time will form a solid foundation for their future development. ECD also plays a role in instilling basic values, building confidence, and developing social skills that will help children interact with their environment. In addition, PAUD helps prepare children to enter formal levels of education, so they are better prepared to face the challenges of learning in primary school (Windiastuti & Syamsudin, 2020).

Primary school (SD) aims to provide basic reading, writing and counting skills, as well as basic knowledge and skills that are useful for students according to their level of development. It also aims to prepare students to continue to secondary education (Hori et al., 2024). The importance of primary school education lies in its role as the foundation of formal education that will affect children's success in further education. At this stage, children not only learn about academic knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities. Elementary school also plays an important role in shaping children's character and personality, as well as instilling moral and civic values (Prytuluk, 2022).

Early childhood education is a strong foundation for the development of the nation's next generation. Kindergartens and primary schools complement each other in preparing young people for the challenges ahead. Early childhood education forms the primary foundation, while primary school adds more complex knowledge and skills on top of that foundation (Burriss & Prudhoe, 2022). Investing in early childhood and primary school education has a long-term impact not only on individuals, but also on society and the nation as a whole. It can improve the quality of human capital, reduce social inequalities and promote economic growth. Therefore, adequate attention and support for early childhood and primary school education is a strategic step in building a better future.

The Digital Age

The digital age can be described as a period in human history marked by the transition from analogue mechanical and electronic technology to digital technology. It is characterised by the widespread adaptation and integration of digital technologies in various aspects of human life, including communication, education, business, entertainment and government (Tubagus et al., 2023). Beginning in the late 20th century and continuing today, the digital age has fundamentally changed the way humans interact, work, learn and access information. At the heart of the digital

age is the digitisation of data, which allows information to be stored, processed and transmitted in the form of binary codes (0 and 1), facilitating the rapid and efficient exchange of information around the world (Aslan & Shiong, 2023).

The main characteristics of the digital age include several key aspects. Firstly, high connectivity, where the internet and wireless networks enable instant communication and global information access. Second, the proliferation of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers, which have become an integral part of everyday life. Third, increased automation and artificial intelligence (AI) that are transforming ways of working and production (Sollars, 2020). Fourth, big data and analytics, which enable large-scale data collection and analysis for better decision-making. Fifth, the transformation of business and economic models, with the rise of e-commerce, the sharing economy and digital currencies. Sixth, changes in social and cultural interactions, including the rise of social media and online communities. Finally, the digital age is also characterised by new challenges such as cybersecurity, data privacy, and the digital divide between those with access to technology and those without (Minasi, 2022).

The digital age has had a significant impact on education, fundamentally changing the way we learn and teach. One of the most prominent changes is the sharply increased accessibility of information. Students now have access to vast learning resources through the internet, including e-books, video lessons and online courses. This has expanded the horizon of knowledge and enabled more independent and flexible learning (Muruti et al., 2022). In addition, digital technology has introduced interactive and innovative learning methods, such as game-based learning, virtual simulation and augmented reality, which can enhance student engagement and understanding. Online learning platforms and learning management systems (LMS) have also enabled distance education and blended learning, removing geographical and time barriers in education (Montesinos et al., 2022).

However, the digital age also brings new challenges in education. The digital divide between students who have access to technology and those who do not can widen inequalities in the quality of education. In addition, the overload of information and online resources can lead to confusion and difficulty in verifying the reliability of information, requiring the development of strong digital literacy skills (Burns & Jules, 2022). The role of the teacher is also changing, from a mere presenter of information to a facilitator and guide in the learning process. This requires continuous training and professional development for educators. Online security and student data privacy are also major concerns as the use of digital platforms in education increases (Mujtahid et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the digital revolution has brought profound changes to education, offering tremendous opportunities to improve access, quality and

effectiveness of the learning process. However, to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of this digital transformation, a balanced and careful approach is required. This involves investment in technology infrastructure, digital skills development for students and teachers, and policies that ensure equitable access and protection against digital risks. With the right approach, the digital age can be a catalyst for creating a more inclusive, adaptive and effective education system that prepares future generations for the challenges of the 21st century.

Parents' role in education

The social role of parents has been described as a series of responsibilities, duties, and actions carried out by individuals in the role of guardian to support children's growth, development, and well-being. This role encompasses various aspects of a child's education, from fulfilling basic physical needs to shaping character and values (Nurdiana et al., 2023). More broadly, the role of parents also involves creating a conducive, stable and supportive environment for children to develop optimally. This role is dynamic and evolves as the child grows and their needs change at each stage of life (Nurhayati et al., 2023).

Parental roles can vary and encompass a range of behaviours, including; 1) Providing basic needs: Meeting the child's physical needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and health care. 2) Educator: Teaching the child life skills, values, and universal knowledge. 3) Guide: Provides direction, advice, and emotional support in facing life's challenges. 4) Positive role model: Modeling behaviour, attitudes and values. 5) Protector: Keeping children safe and well from physical and emotional harm. 6) Facilitating: Supporting and facilitating the development of children's interests, talents and potential. 7) Household manager: Managing family routines, rules and dynamics. 8) Legal representative: Defending children's rights and interests in various contexts, including education and health. 9) Partner in education: Actively involved in the child's learning process, both at home and school. 10) Compassion giver: Providing consistent love, care and emotional support (Mujtahid et al., 2021); (Burris & Prudhoe, 2022).

Parental participation in children's education is crucial and has a significant impact on children's academic success and social-emotional development. When parents are actively involved in the educational process, they not only show support for their child's learning, but also help create a facilitating environment for learning at home (Krishnasamy, 2022). This participation can take the form of helping with assignments, communicating regularly with teachers, participating in school activities or simply showing interest in their child's academic improvement. Research shows that children with parents actively involved in their education tend to have better academic performance, higher attendance rates, and more positive attitudes towards school and learning (Mollenkopf & Gaskill, 2022).

More than just improving academic performance, parental participation in a child's education also helps develop important social and emotional skills. When parents show interest and support in their child's education, they indirectly instil the importance of education and learning throughout life. This can increase children's intrinsic motivation to learn and develop confidence in their academic capacity (Loose, 2022). In addition, parental participation also helps strengthen the link between home and school, creating a stronger support system for the child. With good communication between parents and educators, problems that may arise can be identified and addressed more quickly, ensuring that children get the support they need to succeed both in and out of the classroom (Kim et al., 2024).

The Role of Parents in Supporting Children's Education in the Digital Age

The role of parents in supporting children's education in the digital age is becoming increasingly complex and essential. With the rapid advancement of technology, parents are required to not only understand conventional learning methods, but also to adapt to the increasingly dominating digital environment in education (Jha & Jha, 2022). One important role of parents is to be digital 'gatekeepers', ensuring children only access safe, educational and age-appropriate content. This involves intensive supervision of internet and digital device use, as well as providing guidance on how to navigate the online world safely and responsibly (Nienhaus, 2022).

In addition, parents need to act as facilitators of digital learning. This means not only providing the necessary devices and internet access for online learning, but also helping children understand how to use various digital platforms and tools for educational purposes. Parents can help their children develop important digital skills, such as effective information search, evaluation of online sources and use of productivity apps (Carreres et al., 2022). Thus, parents not only support their child's formal education, but also prepare them for success in an increasingly digitalised world.

The role of parents as collaborative partners with schools is also becoming increasingly important in the digital age. With much learning happening online or hybrid, close communication between parents and teachers is key to ensuring children's academic success (Courtney-Dattola, 2022). Parents need to be actively involved in monitoring their child's progress, participating in virtual meetings with teachers, and helping to overcome any technical or learning challenges the child may face during distance learning. This collaboration also helps create continuity between school and home learning, which is crucial in an increasingly fragmented educational environment (Gandhi, 2021).

Finally, parents have an important role to play in maintaining a balance between the digital and analogue worlds in children's lives. While digital technology

offers many benefits for education, it is important for children to stay connected to the physical world around them. Parents can encourage offline activities that support children's all-round development, such as reading physical books, playing outdoors, or engaging in arts and crafts activities (Ward, 2020). In addition, parents also need to help their children develop social and emotional skills that may be less honed in digital interactions. By balancing the use of technology and traditional activities, parents can ensure that their children get the best of both worlds, preparing them for success in the digital age while still maintaining the essential skills and values needed in everyday life (Carreres et al., 2022).

Challenges Faced by Parents in Providing Children's Education in the Digital Age

In the digital age, parents face various hurdles in educating their children. One of the main obstacles is the digital divide between generations. Many parents feel behind in utilising technology compared to children who have grown up as 'digital natives'. This makes it difficult for parents to understand and monitor their children's online activities and effectively guide them in using technology for learning (Sarmila et al., 2023). Parents may feel less confident helping their children with schoolwork that involves advanced technologies or digital platforms that are unfamiliar to them. As a result, there is tension between the need to support children's digital education and parents' limited technological knowledge (Haddar et al., 2023).

The second barrier is managing screen time and maintaining a balance between technology use and offline activities. With increasing reliance on digital devices for learning, communication and entertainment, parents face the difficult task of limiting children's screen time without interfering with the importance of educational tasks (Hori et al., 2024). Defining the right boundary between productive and excessive technology use is becoming increasingly complex, especially when many school and extracurricular tasks are also carried out online. Parents must be creative in finding ways to encourage offline activities that benefit children's physical, social and emotional development, while ensuring they are not left behind in digital education (Adara, 2020).

Online safety is the third significant barrier for parents. With increased internet access and social media usage, children are becoming increasingly vulnerable to various online risks such as cyberbullying, exploitation, exposure to inappropriate content, and data theft. Parents should always be vigilant and constantly update their knowledge about online safety to protect their children. This includes understanding privacy settings on various platforms, recognising signs of cyberbullying, and teaching children about digital etiquette and how to behave safely online (Nunamaker & Mosier, 2022). However, maintaining a balance between allowing freedom to explore the digital world and keeping children safe is often a challenging task for parents.

Finally, parents face barriers in ensuring the development of their children's social and emotional skills amidst increased digital interactions. With so much time spent in front of screens, there is a concern that children may lack face-to-face communication skills, empathy and the ability to manage emotions in face-to-face interactions (Nudin, 2020). Parents need to find creative ways to encourage meaningful social interactions, both online and offline, and help children develop the emotional intelligence essential for future success. This may involve going the extra mile to create opportunities for children to interact with peers and adults in a variety of contexts, and teaching them how to recognise and respond to their own and others' emotions, even in digital environments (Modise, 2022).

Effective Strategies for Parents to Support Their Children's Education in the Digital Age

To support children's education in the digital age, parents need to adopt some effective strategies. Firstly, parents' digital knowledge needs to be continuously improved. This can be done by taking online courses, reading the latest articles on educational technology or learning from their own children. By understanding the technology used in learning, parents will be better able to guide and support their children (Surandika et al., 2023). In addition, parents can be actively involved by showing interest in what their children are learning online, helping to navigate digital resources and discussing information found on the internet. This collaborative approach will not only help children learn more effectively, but also strengthen the parent-child relationship (Morphis & Yuan, 2022).

One strategy is to create a balanced learning environment between technology use and offline activities. Parents can set clear screen schedules, ensuring screen-free time for physical activity, in-person social interaction and family time. It is important to set up comfortable and distraction-free learning spaces for both digital and traditional learning (Adawiyah, 2023). Parents can also encourage creative and productive use of technology, for example by introducing interactive educational apps or projects that combine technology with practical skills. By balancing the use of technology and offline activities, children can develop comprehensive skills and enjoy the benefits of both approaches to learning (Mollenkopf & Gaskill, 2022).

Securing the child's cyberspace is the third important strategy. Parents need to implement parental controls on the devices and networks their children use and regularly monitor their online activities. More important, however, is educating children about internet safety and responsible online behaviour. This includes open discussions about online risks, how to protect personal information, and the importance of being critical of information on the internet (Mollenkopf & Gaskill,

2022). Parents should also model healthy and ethical use of technology. By building trust and open communication, children will be more likely to share online experiences and ask for help if they experience uncomfortable or dangerous situations online (Oyero et al., 2022).

Finally, parents can focus on developing 21st century skills that are essential for children's future success. These include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication skills. Parents can encourage children to use technology to solve problems, create original content and collaborate with friends on digital projects (KARGIN & DEMİR, 2023). It is also important to teach children how to critically evaluate information, especially in the era of fake news and information overload. Parents can engage children in discussions of current issues, encourage them to seek out different sources of information, and help them develop opinions based on careful analysis. By focusing on these skills, parents are preparing their children not only to succeed in formal education, but also to become lifelong learners who can adapt to future technological changes.

Conclusion

The role of parents as the pillar supporting the education of the next generation in the era of the digital revolution is absolutely necessary. Now everyone is competing to meet a brilliantly sophisticated future through a myriad of advanced technologies. Including beloved children who are at the initial and basic education levels. Parents are required to adapt with their children to face the dynamics of modern times. Starting from monitoring how children use digital devices, selecting constructive digital teaching materials, and limiting children's time online in a balanced manner. In addition, parents are required to continue to improve their own digital literacy to become the best example and mentor for children to face various problems today.

Then collaboration between parents and educational institutions is increasingly essential. Parents are expected to actively communicate with teachers and schools to understand the syllabus and learning methods used, especially those that intersect with advanced technology. That way parents will be more focused on supporting the learning process at home, creating a conducive learning atmosphere, and helping children develop the competencies needed to succeed in the digital era. In the end, parents' active role in their children's education in the digital era will not only help their children reach their maximum academic potential, but also prepare them better for the future.

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