



Parents' Efforts to Limit Gadgets by Implementing Positive Discipline from an Early Age

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital landscape, parents grapple with challenges surrounding their children's gadget use. This qualitative study delves into how parents employ positive discipline to address the impact of gadgets on 5-6-year-olds. Through interviews with five parents, the research uncovers insights into parental strategies. Positive reinforcement, including positive stories, emerges as a key mediation tool. Agreements were reached, designating specific weekend timeframes for gadget use, though challenges related to parental consistency were noted. Discipline measures ranged from verbal reprimands to physical consequences, while rewards included praise and tangible gifts. Despite inconsistent agreement adherence, positive changes were observed in children's behaviour, reflecting increased politeness, gentleness, obedience, and enhanced creativity. This research sheds light on the dynamics of parental efforts to navigate gadget-related challenges and emphasizes the role of positive discipline in shaping children's behaviour in the digital age.

Keywords: *Impact of Gadgets, Positive Discipline, Early Childhood*



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INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, parents are faced with various challenges, both positive and negative, that arise alongside technological advancements. Parents must maintain full control over the education provided to their children during their upbringing. Gadgets are a form of technology that makes it easier for users to access a variety of information and entertainment. Although there are modes available to limit children's access, there is still a lot of content that is not educational. Parents need to set boundaries for children's gadget usage by applying positive discipline. The goal is for children to be aware of the negative impacts of gadgets, to understand how their parents limit gadget use through positive discipline, and to see what changes occur in them after this discipline is applied.

A child's growth and development are significantly influenced by their parents, school, and environment. The initial education received with parents involves the child listening, seeing, feeling, and imitating what their parents do. When parents and children interact through play, opportunities are created to learn how to communicate more effectively, especially for children who may have difficulty communicating their needs (Milteer et al., 2012). When fathers participate in programs that involve rough play with their children, they feel that this play strengthens their relationship and their children's development (Fletcher et al., 2011; Crumbley et al., 2020). Fathers also play a very important role for their children, serving as a source of strength in the family (Nur & Malli, 2022). Therefore, the first role models for a child are their father and mother.

Child caregivers should not only emphasize the importance of certain behaviors, but more importantly, they should actively engage in these behaviors, especially when in the presence of children (Bandura, Albert, 1999). From a nutritional standpoint, trying to make a child eat vegetables in a household where no one else eats vegetables is a futile effort. The behavior underlying this is modeling (Crumbley et al., 2020). Therefore, both mother and father need to be educators with superior qualities to be good role models for their children. This is reinforced by Ayub's opinion (2022) that the older a mother is, the better her child's discipline character becomes because she has more experience in raising children. Mothers with higher education backgrounds also implement better discipline strategies (Ayub, 2022).

Gadgets are electronic instruments or devices that assist in human tasks. As times advance, technology continues to evolve with various advantages. From a positive perspective, gadgets can support children's knowledge acquisition and help prepare them to adapt to technological developments. The positive impacts of gadget usage are as follows: (1) By using advanced technology gadgets, children can easily and quickly obtain information regarding their school assignments (Nurhalipah et al., 2020), (2) expanding social networks as they can easily and quickly join social media, making it easier to share with friends, (3) facilitating communication because gadgets are advanced technology tools that allow everyone to easily communicate with others from around the world (Hidayatuladkia et al., 2021), and (4) training children's creativity (Sugiarto, 2020).

However, in reality, early childhood gadget use is often focused on playing games, watching videos, or using YouTube. Children sometimes follow TikTok trends using songs that are not age-appropriate. Therefore, it is necessary to set boundaries and provide parental supervision. Especially with digital footprints that are difficult to erase from cyberspace, parents need to be wise in protecting their children's privacy from being misused by irresponsible individuals. Excessive gadget use can significantly impact a child's development, such as reducing physical activity that the child should be engaging in. Additionally, other negative impacts of prolonged gadget use include effects on the eyes and brain (Anggraeni, 2019).

Various studies suggest that children aged 3-5 years should be limited to using technology for only one hour per day, and children aged 6-18 years should be limited to 2 hours per day. This is based on the view that excessive gadget use can have significant effects on a child's development (Anggraeni, 2019). It can be said that the appropriate duration for children aged 5-6 years is 1-2 hours per day. This way, parents can determine the appropriate time limits according to the child's age. To mitigate the negative impacts of gadgets, parents need to set an example for their

children, especially when at home, by reducing gadget use in their presence. In cases where the primary caregiver works, sharing responsibilities with other caregivers can help maintain the child's involvement. Parents can choose high-quality programs and watch them together with their children (Vaidyanathan et al., 2021).

In general, positive discipline requires adults to be both kind and firm at the same time. Through positive discipline, harsh/strict disciplinary actions involving various punishments or permissive behavior are not justified (Mulyani et al., 2020). The more physical punishment is used, the more likely a child is to become sulky due to negativistic tendencies. This leads to poor social personality adjustment, which is also characteristic of children raised with weak discipline. Children raised under democratic discipline will have the best personal and social adjustment (Gunartati & Kurniawan, 2021). The upbringing provided by teachers and parents should be aligned, meaning that parents and teachers must collaborate in educating children so that the desired character traits are instilled. Parents or educators must be firm, consistent, and responsible.

Another important aspect parents should consider when encouraging discipline in children is the use of rewards and punishments. According to Wulan et al. (2016), positive discipline fosters discipline driven from within the child without punishment and rewards (Wulan, U. R.; Nisa Rachmah, 2016). Rewards can be given verbally or nonverbally. Verbal rewards involve praising the child's actions, while nonverbal rewards involve giving the child a star. Similarly, punishments can also be verbal or nonverbal. Verbal punishment involves reminding or reprimanding the child. For young children, parents should avoid using nonverbal or physical punishment whenever possible (Ayub, 2022). According to Fromm, humans have five different psychological needs: relational needs (to love and be loved), transcendence needs (creation and discovery), rooting needs (secure implementation), integration needs (independence), and directional needs (Shih, 2022). Therefore, based on these various opinions, positive discipline is very suitable for parents to apply in raising children without violence, while teaching them to voice their opinions on decisions made together to form good character.

Some important points to consider regarding discipline are as follows:

- a. Parents must learn to refrain from becoming dictators when continuing to discipline their children.
- b. Parents need to establish communication and help children understand why various rules exist.
- c. The basic principle of fostering discipline should be for the safety and personal growth of the child.
- d. Inspire children by telling them stories about great figures.
- e. Do not let children fear us as parents.
- f. Take time to listen to the child's opinions on certain matters, even though it is normal for parents and children to disagree at times.
- g. Learn to control oneself when disciplining, controlling emotions so as not to go overboard.
- h. Implement rules with gentleness and love.
- i. When children make mistakes, let them correct those mistakes.
- j. Teach children how to control their behavior (Sulvinajayanti et al., 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method with the Miles and Huberman model for data analysis, aiming to describe and reveal what occurred at the research site. This study involved 5 informants who were parents of students, coming from various educational backgrounds and different professions, with children aged 5-6 years who were students at RA Al-Hikmah Ambon. Observational and documentation data served as complements and triangulation tools, while the results of interviews with the informants were the primary data for the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of the Negative Impacts of Gadgets

From the interviews conducted with five informants regarding their awareness of the negative impacts of gadgets, it was found that all five had the same opinion, namely that they knew and were aware of the effects of gadgets. Observations conducted on the five informant children revealed that four of the observed children were aware of the impacts of gadgets. They knew that using gadgets to watch content could make their eyes red and lead to blindness. This aligns with Anggraeni's (2019) statement that excessive gadget use can have significant impacts on a child's growth and development. One of these impacts is the reduction of physical activities that the child should be engaging in. Additionally, another negative impact of gadget use is that prolonged usage can affect the eyes and brain (Anggraeni, 2019).

It was also found that one of the informant children, AP, stated that his mother did not inform him about the dangers of gadgets. This contradicts AP's statement when asked about the form of mediation in providing understanding to the child about gadgets, where AP mentioned that "usually it's through stories, just like that." This indicates that the message AP wanted to convey was not effectively communicated to the child. According to Bandura A. (1999), child caregivers should not only emphasize the importance of certain behaviors but, more importantly, actively engage in these behaviors, especially in the presence of children (Bandura, Albert, 1999). From a nutritional standpoint, trying to make a child eat vegetables in a household where no one else eats vegetables is a futile effort. The underlying behavior here is modeling (Crumbley et al., 2020). Therefore, parents as role models need to set an example first and actively engage in caregiving.

Implementation of Positive Discipline at Home

From the interviews with five informants, the average response was similar, namely implementing positive discipline at home. However, there was uncertainty from two informants regarding the implementation of positive discipline. Observations conducted on the five informant children during recess revealed that there was a form of positive discipline being applied at home. When asked, "Are there any rules made together by the father and mother at home?" they responded that there are rules at home, some make daily schedules, and some activities are reminded by their parents. In general, positive discipline requires adults to be both friendly and firm at the same time. Through positive discipline, harsh/strict disciplinary actions involving various punishments or permissive behavior are not justified (Mulyani et al., 2020).

Several important points to consider regarding discipline based on Islam are as follows:

1. Parents must learn to refrain from becoming dictators when continuing to discipline their children.
2. Parents need to establish communication and help children understand why various rules exist.
3. The basic principle of fostering discipline should be for the safety and personal growth of the child.
4. Inspire children by telling them stories about great figures.
5. Do not let children fear us as parents.
6. Take time to listen to the child's opinions on certain matters, even though it is normal for parents and children to disagree at times.
7. Learn to control oneself when disciplining, controlling emotions so as not to go overboard.
8. Implement rules with gentleness and love.
9. When children make mistakes, let them correct those mistakes.
10. Teach children how to control their behavior (Sulvinajayanti et al., 2021).

With the above key points, it is hoped that parents can understand the implementation of positive discipline. During the interview process, it was found that parents lacked an understanding of the meaning and methods of applying positive discipline themselves. It was also found that some parents implemented forms of positive discipline by setting boundaries or rules without involving the children.

Forms of Mediation Between Parents and Children

From the interviews with five informants, forms of mediation were found, including providing positive reinforcement by telling stories to the child, as well as instilling fear and intervening with rules. Observations conducted revealed that all children affirmed that their parents like to tell stories about the dangers of gadgets. Some stories were told before they went to sleep, while others were told during mealtime. According to Milteer and Ginsburg (2012), when parents and children interact through play, opportunities are created to learn how to communicate more effectively, especially for children who may have difficulty communicating their needs (Milteer et al., 2012). According to Fletcher R. et al. (2011), when fathers participate in programs that involve rough play with their children, they feel that such play strengthens their relationship and their children's development (Fletcher et al., 2011; Crumbley et al., 2020). According to Nur and Malli (2022), fathers also play a very important role for their children, serving as a source of strength in the family (Nur & Malli, 2022).

With the various opinions above, it can provide parents with an understanding that interacting with their children is important. This interaction does not only involve mothers but also fathers who hold significant roles at home. In the interview sessions, some parents stated that children tend to fear and listen more to their fathers, while others mentioned that fathers tend to pamper their children, making the upbringing efforts by mothers ineffective. Therefore, parental unity in raising children is very important.

It was also found that parents who are busy working leave their children with siblings at home, allowing them to use gadgets. In a study, it was stated that in cases

where the primary caregiver works, sharing responsibilities with other caregivers can help maintain the child's involvement. Parents can choose high-quality programs and watch them together with their children (Vaidyanathan et al., 2021). In this case, parents can involve other family members such as aunts or guardians who can assist in caregiving at home.

Forms of Agreements

From the interviews with five informants, several agreements were made regarding the time or hours children use gadgets. These include only two hours every Saturday and Sunday for playing gadgets, as well as agreements made for 1 hour per day. Observations conducted on the five informant children revealed that they affirmed the existence of agreements, such as house rules regarding the time limits set for playing gadgets, with days like Saturday and Sunday being allowed days for gadget use. The results of the mediation conducted revealed various forms of agreements between parents and children, including gadget playtime only on Saturdays and Sundays with a duration of 1-2 hours, as well as giving 1 hour per day and 1-2 hours only on Sundays.

Various studies suggest that children aged 3-5 years should be limited to using technology for only one hour per day, and children aged 6-18 years should be limited to 2 hours per day. This is based on the view that excessive gadget use can have significant effects on a child's development (Anggraeni, 2019). It can be said that the appropriate duration for children aged 5-6 years is 1-2 hours per day. This way, parents can determine the appropriate time limits according to the child's age. The agreed-upon forms of agreements also have other benefits for children, such as supporting the child's responsibility towards themselves and creating a better environment within the family. By implementing positive discipline at home, the impact of gadget screen radiation can be minimized, thereby maintaining the child's health through regulation.

Parental Commitment

From the interviews conducted, it was found that all informants were inconsistent or lacked firmness regarding the agreements made. Observations conducted revealed that when parents were inconsistent or forgot to allow more time for children to use gadgets, the children affirmed what their parents did. They stated that their parents reminded them to stop playing gadgets when they recalled. On the positive side, gadgets can support increasing a child's knowledge and help in preparing the child to adapt to technological developments. The positive impacts of gadget use are as follows:

1. Increasing knowledge, as children can easily and quickly obtain information regarding their school assignments using advanced technology gadgets (Nurhalipah et al., 2020).
2. Expanding social networks as they can easily and quickly join social media, making it easier to share with friends.
3. Facilitating communication because gadgets are advanced technology tools that allow everyone to communicate easily with others around the world (Hidayatuladkia et al., 2021).
4. Training children's creativity (Sugiarto, 2020).

However, in reality, gadget use among young children is mostly focused on playing games, watching videos, or using YouTube. It is not uncommon for children to follow TikTok trends using songs that are not age-appropriate. Therefore, boundaries and parental supervision need to be set. According to Anggraeni (2019), excessive gadget use can have significant impacts on a child's development, such as reducing the physical activity the child should be engaging in (Anggraeni, 2019). Moreover, with digital footprints that are difficult to erase from cyberspace, parents need to be wise in protecting their children's privacy from being misused by irresponsible individuals.

Furthermore, from the data obtained, the form of parental commitment in implementing positive discipline is still lacking, caused by work and other activities as well as the lack of involvement of fathers in making joint agreements. As a result, fathers and mothers often disagree in front of the children, leading to children being less committed to the agreements made. According to Nur and Malli (2022), fathers also play a very important role for their children, serving as a source of strength in the family (Nur & Malli, 2022).

Additionally, the data revealed that in certain conditions, parents are still inconsistent in limiting gadget use for their children. These conditions include when going out to eat and when mothers are exhausted after work. Parents play an important role as role models in shaping children's screen media habits, especially in the early years of childhood. The quality of children's digital screen media experiences depends not only on the educational value of the media content presented to children but also on the quality of interaction between parents and children (Chia et al., 2022).

Forms of Punishment on Children

From the interviews conducted, the forms of punishment administered include scolding, yelling, giving dispensations, and pinching in certain conditions when the child is difficult to manage. Observations conducted on the five informant children revealed that they affirmed what their parents did, stating various forms of punishments given, ranging from scolding, yelling, to providing time reductions when playing gadgets.

In the implementation of positive discipline, there will naturally be punishments and rewards given. From the data obtained, the forms of punishment provided by parents are gradual, starting from scolding, yelling, providing dispensations, to pinching. However, pinching was only given under certain conditions when the child was difficult to direct. According to Gunartati and Kurniawan (2021), the more physical punishments are used, the more likely a child is to become sulky due to negativistic tendencies. This leads to poor social personality adjustment, which is also characteristic of children raised with weak discipline. Children raised under democratic discipline will have the best personal and social adjustment (Gunartati & Kurniawan, 2021).

Most children raised with violence tend to have a harsh character. This is evident from their facial expressions and the way they speak, mimicking their parents' characters at home. Therefore, it is important for parents to educate themselves to become more patient and to develop better parenting methods. It was also found from various educational backgrounds of the informants that those who graduated from junior high school (SMP) actually better understood how to educate children. Upon closer examination, it turned out that informant MD was much older compared to the

other informants. This is reinforced by Ayub's (2022) opinion that the older the mother, the better the child's disciplinary character becomes because she has more experience in raising children (Ayub, 2022).

Forms of Reward for Children

From the interviews conducted, the forms of rewards such as praise and hugs were commonly given. From all the answers provided by the five informants regarding the forms of rewards given, some were in the form of praise and rewards in the form of toys or outings. Observations conducted on the five informant children revealed that the forms of rewards received included gifts such as dolls, toys, and promises of giving Coco Crunch.

According to Wulan et al. (2016), positive discipline is fostering discipline driven from within the child without punishment and rewards (Wulan, U. R.; Nisa Rachmah, 2016). According to Ayub (2022), rewards can be given verbally or nonverbally. Verbal rewards are given by praising what the child has done, while nonverbal rewards are given by awarding stars to the child (Ayub, 2022). According to Fromm's explanation, humans have five different psychological needs, one of which is relational needs (to love and be loved) (Shih, 2022). It is advisable that rewards given, besides praise, include providing the child with an understanding that what they did was for their own good without being enticed by rewards. For example: "By limiting your use of the phone, it benefits you by maintaining your eye health," thus the measure of the success of implementing positive discipline in children can be seen by their appreciation, feeling happy and proud of themselves, and being able to manage themselves to become more responsible.

Changes in Character After Implementing Positive Discipline

From the interviews conducted with five informants, only four responded that the changes obtained were the children becoming more obedient, independent, and more creative. According to Hansen (2020), values such as obedience, adjustment, willingness and readiness, responsibility, and desire to learn can be seen as disciplinary values. The disciplining process is expressed both directly and indirectly (Hansen et al., 2020). From the data obtained at the end of the interview session, it was found that the children had character changes. Before implementing positive discipline, the children tended to be more tantrum-prone or had uncontrolled emotions, liked to argue, and were less polite. The changes obtained after implementing positive discipline in the children were: The child became more obedient, the child became more polite, and the child became more creative.

This certainly serves as a measure of change in early childhood as a result of the positive discipline that has been implemented. The observations conducted did not involve asking the children but rather observing their characters during school. From the researchers' observations, assisted by the class teacher, it was found that among the five informant children, FL and AP preferred playing indoor games, had polite characters in class, and were emotional. Meanwhile, HM, FM, and MD preferred playing outdoor games, such as swinging, running, climbing, and other activities that train their gross motor skills. From a character perspective, they were easy to socialize.

CONCLUSION

Parents and children show a good understanding of the impact of gadgets, with mediation in the form of positive reinforcement through storytelling. The agreement formed between parents and children limits gadget use to Saturdays and Sundays for 1-2 hours or 1 hour every day with similar limits on weekends. However, parents' commitment and consistency in enforcing this agreement are still lacking due to their busyness and occasional neglect. In terms of discipline, parents implement punishment gradually, starting with a warning, scolding, reducing screen time, and, in certain cases, pinching. As a reward, they provide praise, hugs, and gifts or outings. The changes observed in children after implementing positive discipline are that they have become more polite, gentle, obedient, and creative.

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