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Synergy of Parents and Christian Early Childhood Teachers: Efforts to Prevent the Negative Influence of Social Media on Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the cooperation between parents and Christian PAUD teachers in protecting early childhood from the negative impacts of social media. In this digital era, children are easily exposed to negative content that can affect their development. Synergy between parents and teachers is the key to providing proper education and supervision, so that children can use social media wisely and adhere to Christian values. Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to provide knowledge discourse to readers, academics, and practitioners to explain the importance of synergy between parents and Christian PAUD teachers in preventing the negative influence of social media on early childhood. The method used in this study is a literature study method with a descriptive qualitative approach through books, journal articles, and websites as references in data collection. The results of this study are parents as the foundation in building children's awareness, while teachers play a complementary role through the transfer of knowledge so that children's innocence can be filled with knowledge and instilling spiritual character for them which can be achieved through synergy between parents and teachers in supporting child development, and especially in preventing the increasingly widespread negative impacts of social media.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media serves as a means of communication that allows users to interact with each other. According to Rahmaniar et al., social media currently plays a role as a platform that facilitates the public in finding and disseminating information through various available software applications, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok [1]. Wulandari and Pasaribu emphasized that the existence of social media services facilitates individuals in exploring themselves according to their interests such as expanding knowledge in certain fields, building communication with fellow users, and utilizing social media as a source of income [2]. In line with the development of social media, people can use it as a communication channel that is easily accessible through the internet. In addition to functioning as a tool for interacting and communicating, social media is also used to promote products and display the latest trends

[3]. Therefore, it can be concluded that the existence of social media has a significant impact on people's daily lives in meeting various needs.

However, behind activities that are all online, fast, and considered efficient, various negative impacts have emerged that are detrimental. Especially for early childhood, which in its developmental phase has been introduced to the use of gadgets and internet access, so it is more susceptible to being affected by behaviors that are dangerous to them. According to Hasan et al, during early childhood development, children show high curiosity that not only observes their surroundings, but also tends to imitate things that they consider interesting [4]. Kurniawan et al added that early childhood is very sensitive to the events around them, which triggers behavior based on stimuli received by the five senses. Children continue to explore themselves to meet the developmental needs that occur in their daily lives [5]. Early childhood is an individual who has physical and mental uniqueness that is different from other children. According to Andiawan, early childhood is included in the category of "golden age" because it is in a unique phase of growth and development, especially in the aspects of thinking, imagining, and communicating, which are also related to gross and fine motor development [6]. Chairilsyah also states that early childhood is a small individual who undergoes a period of growth and development that will not be repeated. Therefore, this period is the best time for parents to play an active role in developing their child's potential and shaping their personality, which is influenced by the parenting style applied [7]. Therefore, in the developmental phase, children tend to imitate and do things that are very similar to what is observed and noticed around them.

According to a report from Tribunnews.com, a child in London with the initials MR committed suicide due to the influence of social media. MR was affected after often watching videos featuring acts of self-harm and suicide scenes, which eventually led to MR experiencing depression and mental health disorders. A child also recklessly jumped from the 26th floor of his residence using an umbrella. This dangerous action allegedly occurred because the child watched Tom and Jerry's cartoons and then imitated one of his scenes. Based on research data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2022, it was recorded that 33.44% of children in Indonesia as a whole have used gadgets, and 24.96% of them are early childhood children who are able to access the internet and play social media. Quoted from tvonenews.com, it was reported that children in Banyuwangi experienced eye problems due to the use of gadgets to watch and play games. When SOE volunteers conducted an eye examination, it was found that most children were nearsighted, with minus numbers ranging from 0.25 diopters to 6 diopters. In addition, Primaningtyas and Pietra stated that social media can have a negative impact on health [8]. Excessive and irregular use can lead to mental health disorders, including depression, stress, and excessive anxiety. Thus, the above explanation shows that uncontrolled use of social media can lead to dangerous and detrimental events, especially for early childhood who have been introduced to access and play on social media. This attracts the attention of academics to find out the cause of this phenomenon and contribute thinking as a solution to overcome existing problems.

The results of Ghofururrohim et al.'s research show that parents' understanding of the influence of social media on children is still very limited. In this context, supervision and direction through restriction measures as well as scheduling access and use of social media for children can be used as a solution [8]. In Harining and Suardana's research, it was found that many parents lack information regarding the risks and negative impacts of spectacle seen by early childhood. The proposed solution is that parents must play an active role in communicating and explaining to children about the dangers and influences that can arise from watching unhelpful content on social media [9]. In addition, teachers play a crucial role in facilitating the use of digital media in the children's learning process. Teachers not only play the role of teachers, but must also function as facilitators and supervisors to ensure that children utilize digital media appropriately and in line with learning objectives [10]. Some children experience behavioral changes due to excessive use of gadgets. Children tend to play games and watch YouTube frequently, which can lead to decreased motivation and laziness. Therefore, efforts to deal with psychological changes in early childhood require supervision and the active role of teachers in the learning process. During learning, teachers must consistently supervise, monitor, and control children's activities to support optimal growth. It is important to ensure that children's interest in learning, especially in the psychological aspect, does not decline [11]. Several studies show that parents' understanding of the impact of social media on children is still limited, so supervision and restrictions on the use of social media are needed as a solution. Furthermore, teachers have a crucial role in facilitating the proper use of digital media in learning and must function as supervisors to avoid negative impacts, such as decreased motivation and laziness that often arise due to excessive use of gadgets. Meanwhile, Kajina is currently focusing on synergy efforts between parents and Christian PAUD teachers to keep children's psychological development and learning interests optimal.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this article, the author applies a research method known as library research. This method is so named because the sources of materials and data used as references are obtained from various types of

literature, including books, documents, encyclopedias, journals, and other written sources [12]. The references in this literature study method cite and refer to sources from online websites [13], along with relevant literature and data related to the problem to be discussed. The data used in this study are secondary and related to the development and characteristics of early childhood, social media, as well as the impact or influence caused by social media on early childhood mindsets, so that they are relevant to the topic discussed. Data sources are obtained from scientific articles, books, and journals available online.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In a study conducted by Zeva et al., it was explained that social media has a number of negative impacts. These impacts include easy access to various types of information, including inappropriate content, such as pornography, which can lead to moral degradation. In addition, social media has the potential to trigger social conflicts due to widely disseminated differences of opinion. Excessive use also reduces social interaction in the surrounding environment, triggers addiction, and encourages consumptive behavior that leads to waste of money. Furthermore, the spread of personal data on social media platforms increases user privacy risks, thus increasing vulnerability to digital security threats [14]. The results of the research conducted by Syafnita revealed that based on the questionnaire that has been distributed, it was found that children are often victims of bullying, harassment, and cyberbullying. This action is carried out through various forms of media, such as images, videos, and written messages sent to children. Ironically, while parents are aware that social media is often used by irresponsible individuals to carry out illegal activities, they often don't realize that children have experienced these things. This phenomenon shows that there is a gap between parents' understanding of social media risks and their ability to supervise children's online activities, thus posing a significant threat to children's safety and well-being in the digital world [15]. Utami and Ikhwana also stated that excessive use of social media by children can trigger behavioral deviations. This can be seen from the negative reaction that arises when parents prohibit children from using gadgets, where children show anger and frustration. In addition, children tend to develop selfish attitudes, lack empathy, and do not understand the conditions or difficulties faced by parents. This phenomenon is further exacerbated when the internet quota on parents' devices runs out or is not available, which causes children to feel disappointed and frustrated because they cannot access social media. This condition shows that dependence on social media can damage the relationship between children and parents and interfere with children's emotional development, causing various behavioral problems [16].

Agustyn further explained that the negative impact of social media on children is also seen in the educational environment. Many children become lazy to study at school, tend to be passive, and lack interaction with their friends and teachers. The habit of using social media excessively causes children to be more interested in cyberspace than learning activities in the classroom, so that children become less involved in school activities. In addition, the influence of social media also contributes to a decline in ethics and politeness, especially in the way children speak, both to fellow students and to teachers. This change in behavior raises concerns about the long-term impact on social and academic development, given the importance of face-to-face interaction and polite communication in building character and social skills [17]. Based on the explanation above, it is important for parents and early childhood education teachers to be actively involved in efforts to limit the negative impact of social media that is increasingly widespread among children. This involvement is not just about supervision, but also includes providing clear guidance to children regarding the use of social media.

Synergy of parents and teachers of Christian PAUD

In facing the challenges of early childhood social development, synergy between parents and Christian PAUD teachers plays a very important role. This collaboration not only aims to provide academic education, but also to shape children's character, morals, and spirituality. In the modern era, children face various negative social impacts that can affect the development of each child, such as the influence of social media, individualist behavior, and social conflict. Therefore, harmonious cooperation between parents and early childhood education teachers is needed to create a consistent and supportive environment, both at home and at school. Through this synergy, children will be guided to develop healthy social behaviors, based on Christian values, and protected from bad influences that can hinder children's emotional and spiritual growth.

First. Collaboration in Character Education. Parents and teachers of Christian early childhood education need to work together to teach moral and ethical values to children. Through an integrated educational program, it will be able to equip children with strong social skills and a clear understanding of the impact of social media. It helps children develop a critical attitude towards the content consumed. Wijaya stated that basic education provided by parents through proper parenting can have a significant impact on children's awareness, so that they are able to prevent themselves from negative influences in the surrounding environment [18]. Baso et al, stated that parents need to allocate time effectively and play an active role in

various aspects, including being directly involved in supervising and controlling children's activities when using social media. In addition, parents must also provide comprehensive education related to spiritual values to children [19]. By applying socio-spiritual values, it can build understanding and positive thinking concepts in children [20]. In addition, PAUD teachers play a role model that shows behavior according to norms and conveys ethical values to children [21]. Educators in early childhood education need to improve their ability to assess the feasibility of content and provide appropriate guidance on the safe use of social media [10]. Thus, the synergy between parents and educators in Christian PAUD can play an important role in strengthening the formation of children's character through continuous and effective teaching of moral and ethical values. Through harmonious collaboration, both parties are able to create a conducive learning environment, supporting the development of children to become individuals with strong character and high ethics.

Second. Improved Communication and Supervision. Synergy between parents and PAUD teachers creates an effective communication channel regarding the use of social media. Parents should be reminded to be actively involved in monitoring their children's online activities, while early childhood education teachers can provide insights into safe and healthy social media habits. This encourages early detection of risky behaviors that will arise due to uncontrolled use of social media. Agustang et al stated that education in the family is an inherent responsibility of parents, both fathers and mothers, in providing support and stimulation to children to receive, understand, believe, and teach and practice religious teachings. This is seen as part of the moral responsibility of parents, considering that children are a mandate that must be maintained [22]. Estafianto stated that child protection involves efforts to protect children from the influence of negative associations that can be formed through social interaction with peers. In addition, protection also includes supervision of the use of technology by controlling children's activities when using technological devices, as well as providing alternative games that can distract children. Above all, the most important aspect of child protection is ensuring their health, creating a conducive environment, and providing adequate welfare guarantees for children [23]. Furthermore, PAUD teachers must provide clear and easy-to-understand education about the use of social media. It is expected to be able to outline both the positive aspects and potential risks associated with the use of social media (Pebriani & Darmiyanti, 2024). Early childhood education teachers can utilize technology to supervise children's activities on social media platforms. For example, through social media monitoring apps, teachers can ensure that children are protected from exposure to inappropriate or harmful content. This approach helps create a safer digital environment for children's development [24]. By strengthening communication and supervision, parents and early childhood education teachers can help children avoid the negative effects of social media and equip them with the essential skills to use technology wisely and responsibly.

Third. Provision of Positive Activity Alternatives. By collaborating, parents and PAUD teachers can design and provide alternative activities that are more positive and attractive for children, such as art activities, sports, and study groups. This aims to distract children from excessive social media use and build social skills and interests that are useful in daily life. Octaviani stated that the provision of alternative activities involving physical movement, creativity, and social interaction is able to reduce children's dependence on technology. In addition, positive activities like this improve children's problem solving skills, communication skills, and empathy. Through this form of partnership, schools can provide various information and ideas to parents on how to support children's learning at home in accordance with the material learned at school, so as to create a continuity of the learning process from school to home. Parents can be involved in accompanying, monitoring, and guiding their children regarding school assignments. Schools can also provide books and supporting materials for parents, provide guidance to accompany children to learn at home, and develop websites that display classroom activities along with suggestions for parents to develop and continue these activities at home. Thus, the provision of alternative positive activities by parents and early childhood education teachers can contribute to reducing children's dependence on technology, while also improving their problem-solving skills, communication skills, and empathy. These activities not only provide fun, but also play an important role in supporting children's development.

4. CONCLUSION

Close collaboration between parents and Christian early childhood educators is essential in facing the challenges posed by social media. By working together, parents and teachers can design positive alternative activities as well as provide clear education on the use of technology. Through effective communication and the provision of appropriate resources, it can help children avoid the negative impacts of social media, while also developing important social and emotional skills. This synergy not only supports the holistic development of children, but also forms a strong foundation for the wise use of technology in the future.

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