

DIGITALIZATION CHALLENGES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDREN'S READING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE EXISTENCE OF PHYSICAL BOOKS

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Abstract. Digitalization has changed many aspects of life, including the way children learn and read. Today's children are often more familiar with technology than physical books, thus threatening the existence of physical books. This study aims to describe the extent of the influence of digitalization on early childhood reading development and the existence of physical books. The research method used is library research (Library Research) in which the author conducts a study and collects data sourced from the media of books, literature, notes, as well as relevant studies related to the research object to be studied. The results of this study are a discussion of the challenges of digitization that must be faced by parents and teachers towards the development of early childhood reading and digital literacy challenges that threaten the existence of physical books.

Keywords: Digitalization, Development of early childhood reading, Existence of physical books.

INTRODUCTION

Today the development of information and communication technology (ICT) is being intensively experienced by the people of Indonesia which brings all generations from the old, young, adults, children and infants are not free from this influence. Not only the upper class, middle class, lower class and people who can't afford it are also affected by this ICT progress. So that life is very different, changing from simple to modern. All activities are carried out by humans so that they can be done easily only through small objects called devices/gadgets. Starting from communication, meetings, shopping, bank transactions, ordering vehicle tickets, playing games, studying, watching videos and so on.

The rapid development of technology and information has made us a modern generation whose activities cannot be separated from the digital world. The current modern generation is never separated from the digital world, even in activities related to reading books, novels, news, newspapers, articles, theses and so on which can be easily accessed through these gadgets and the internet. Digital literacy has become something that is familiar to the millennial generation, in practice the digital footprint that we usually encounter in everyday life is the shift from physical reading to digital literacy. In the past, when we wanted the latest information, we could easily get it from reading a newspaper or newspapers and magazines, now we only use our gadgets to get various information easily. So that digital literacy is familiar and commonplace for the millennial generation (Julita., et al, 2023).

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in gadgets/gadgets in particular and the internet in general in early childhood has been controversial for decades. (Yuli., et al, 2020).

The presence of digital technology needs to be accompanied by knowledge and understanding regarding the good and wise use of technology. In this case, those who are responsible for providing an understanding of the use of digital technology are teachers and parents. Why should teachers, because teachers are a determining factor of success or failure in efforts to improve quality and innovation in schools, especially for early childhood. A teacher must be able to adapt learning strategies to current situations and conditions in which the teacher must move quickly in adapting to various changes and policies that apply so that children are properly facilitated so that children's education and development goals run optimally. (Yesi., et al, 2022). Whereas for parents whose children spend more time at home, it is automatically the responsibility of the parents to provide understanding and restrictions regarding the use of technology so that an imbalance in the function of technology itself does not occur.

The impact of digitalization apart from having an influence on human lifestyles, is also very influential in the academic field of children and also affects the book sales industry and its links such as writers and booksellers/bookstores. Digitalization has changed many aspects of life, including the way children learn and read. Today's children are often more familiar with technology than physical books, so the challenges of digitalization to early childhood reading development are becoming even greater. Some children are currently accustomed to using technology and digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers. This creates a challenge in developing early childhood reading habits due to competition from digital media which are more engaging and often have audio and visual features that attract children's attention. In addition, the use of digital media by children can interfere with concentration and affect the ability to read properly and correctly. Children are often tempted to jump from one page to another or watch videos instead of reading books with good focus and concentration.

Digitalization also influences early childhood development, including reading. On the one hand, technological advances make it easy for children to access various information and digital literacy. But on the other hand, this also brings challenges in forming interest in reading in children, because there are many digital distractions and entertainment that can make children less interested in reading activities. Therefore, efforts are needed to accustom children to reading from an early age and create a conducive environment for the development of children's interest in reading, both in digital and non-digital forms. Some efforts that can be made include choosing books that are appropriate to the age and needs of children, making reading activities fun, and educating children about the benefits of reading.

The decline in the performance of physical book sales in Indonesia has become clearly visible since 2015. Research from the Indonesian Publishers Association (IKAPI) notes that conventional Indonesian book publishing has decreased, although basically the number of publishers has increased (Omta Purba, 2021). People's patterns of buying and reading books began to shift, this impacted the industry of making physical books. Several bookstores have closed their outlets, one of which is the Aksara bookstore, which is a store that sells imported books. To balance income from physical books, store owners complete their business by opening online bookstores to serve purchases via the internet. The major bookstore in Indonesia, namely Gramedia, also provides a network of bookstores via the internet to be able to maintain its business in this digital era. The declining sales chart in the world of books is not only experienced by the physical book sales industry but also by the publishing and printing business. Being in the same business chain, namely physical book sales, the publishing and book printing industries also experienced a significant decline in graphics due to the influence of today's technological advances. (Dewi., et all, 2020).

Before entering the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, books were in the form of a collection of writings printed on paper and then bound or put together to become a book. In using a physical book one has to carry several books to read a number of different topics, of course this is a bit difficult to do because these books are of course heavy, another thing that is a weakness of a physical book is that the basic paper used will wear out quickly with time and over time it will be damaged. Even if exposed to water, the book will quickly deteriorate and will be difficult to read. This is of course different from ebooks or digital books, which are easy to access via mobile devices, easy to read and carry anywhere, cheap and durable. Digital books are also considered to be more environmentally friendly because they do not require paper-based materials made from wood/tree raw materials (Dewi., et all, 2020). Electronic books/ebooks save more time, space, children's spines and trees, without bringing them up as a cause of visual impairment (Jim

Trealease, 2022). Of course, this has also been a factor in people's declining interest in buying and reading physical books, so that the existence of physical books decreased, because it is easier to use ebooks.

Based on the results of the researcher's search regarding the results of research that are relevant to this paper, First is Anita Rahmawati's writing entitled "Development of Children's Reading Interest in the Digital Age" this paper raises the theme of learning while playing, playing while learning as an effort to increase children's interest in reading (Anita , 2021). The two writings from Julita Lindriany et al entitled "Urgency of Digital Literacy for Early Childhood and Parents" this paper describes the importance of digital literacy for early childhood in training children's intelligence, psychology, language skills, cognitive, emotional, social, academic and critical (Julita, et al. 2023). The three writings from Dewi Nurbaeti and Mari'ah with the title "The Influence of Attitudes towards Ebooks and Attitudes towards Physical Books on Community Reading Interest in the Industrial Age 4.0" This research describes the attitude that a person has towards ebooks and physical books that creates an interest in reading. read it (Dewi.N & Mari'ah, 2020). The three studies mentioned above have similarities with the author's research, namely "both discuss one's interest in reading" except that the difference is that the author's writing this time emphasizes what are the challenges of digitalization to the development of early childhood reading and what are the effects on physical books with article entitled "Challenges of Digitalization on the Development of Early Childhood Reading and Its Effects on Physical Books".

Based on this explanation, the purpose of this study is to describe and find out what things or challenges that arise experienced by society in general and early childhood in particular regarding digitalization which has mushroomed in today's modern world. The influence that the author explores is regarding the development of early childhood reading and the existence or existence of physical books. The results of this study are hoped that PAUD educators or parents who read this article can be wiser in managing the right times for children to use digital media and must also pay attention to and supervise the use of digital media because besides there are advantages, of course there are also many disadvantages. to free and unlimited use, because it can affect children's learning interest.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is library research (Library Research) using a phenomenological approach, things or phenomena that occur in the real world are one of the discussions in this study. Where the author conducts a study and collects data sourced from the media of books, literature, notes, and relevant studies related to the research object to be studied. The result of this study is a discussion of the challenges of digitization that parents and teachers must face regarding the development of early childhood reading and digital literacy challenges that threaten the existence of physical books, as well as what actions parents or PAUD educators should take in order to balance between technology and enthusiasm for learning to read.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Digitalization Challenges for Early Childhood Reading Development

Digital literacy has been hotly discussed and even debated since the publication of Paul Gilster's Digital Literacy. In 1997 Gilster first made the world aware of the concept of digital literacy. He acknowledged the fundamental and revolutionary uniqueness and advantages of the internet. Digitally literate children have a specific set of information skills such as evaluating or searching for information. Digital literacy goes far beyond reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. With today's digital media and technology, one can create, work, share, research, socialize, play, collaborate, communicate and learn. Technology has made individuals, groups and communities change the way they communicate, learn and work. (Adiyati., et all, 2021)

The challenge in today's digital era is to foster a love of reading in children. Basically, children will be more interested in something that is projected using a computer or cellphone, in fact this is not wrong, but in the long term, the habit of reading using a projector is believed to have a bad impact on children's health, especially on children's eyes (Nur Najibah, 2021). The phenomenon that has occurred lately due to the Covid 19 virus requires many parties, especially in the world of

education, to carry out learning using digital media or what we are more familiar with as online learning. At that time, online learning was felt to be more effective and efficient in preventing the transmission of Covid-19 which is easily caused by crowds or face-to-face learning. However, behind the advantages and convenience of online learning, there are definitely disadvantages as well.

Jim Trelease (2022) in his book describes five major capabilities of online learning according to experts, namely first, children will always be children. There is Wi-Fi or not. College kids will act like college kids. Stulman concluded that many children who use their computers in both regular and mainstream schools play games, send e-mails to girlfriends, spend time in chat rooms and upload and download music. This is of course contrary to the real purpose of online learning.

Second, educational software companies often either undercut or lie about their products. This was proven when the Center for Research on Educational Outcome (CREDO) project at Stanford University recorded reading values for four years involving around 73,000 students in flagship schools in Pennsylvania, found 100% of students from cyber schools (which fully learn online). at home) scored lower than students studying at school. The graduate rating of cyber students in Colorado is 12% against 78% of public school graduates. Even Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, holding meetings before he died in 2011, "agreed that until now computers have had surprisingly little impact on schools."

Third, multitasking reduces achievement. It's only natural for electronics enthusiasts to overdo it on gadgets and children. Gadgets are attractive to children's brains. Teenagers are currently attracting e-tablets, iPods, smart phones, laptops and TV screens in their rooms. The perpetrators of heavy multitasking lost badly, experiencing attention deficits in all aspects. Nass and colleagues found that heavy multitaskers struggle to tell what's relevant and what's not, and are more easily distracted by irrelevant material. Their ability to recall also showed random collections and they were more erratic when switching tasks. In comparison, it is similar to multitasking, namely in particular, such as teloneeing while driving a car.

Fourth, being constantly connected hinders thought processes and creativity. Students who are constantly connected to the internet, including sleeping with their cell phones under their pillows, don't have time to study and develop ideas and this is a worry from a psychological perspective.

Fifth, text that has too many links (reading online) hinders understanding. In *The Shallows*, Carr mentions some of the dangers of reading online, including: 1) Text that has too many links (underlined) both slows down the reading process and hinders understanding. 2) The torrent of information and visions confronting internet readers overwhelms the brain. 3) Out of a hundred volunteers showing a lesson via their computer machine, half got the text-only version while the other half got the text version with various multimedia windows added to the lesson. The results that got the text-only version had a much higher value compared to the others. 4) Studies of eye movement while reading online show only about 18 percent of the bottom of web pages are actually read, while the average page view lasts 10 seconds or less.

The influence of digital media has a huge impact on the way children learn and read. If used wisely, electronic devices can help improve reading skills and increase children's interest in reading. However, there are several challenges that need to be faced in providing an optimal reading experience for children through electronic devices such as tablets or smartphones which can be useful tools to help children learn to read. However, the challenges of digitalization that arise also affect early childhood reading development. Here are some digitalization challenges that must be faced by parents and educators:

First, there is too much exposure to digital media, early childhood children who watch too much television or use electronic devices usually experience a decrease in their ability to read at an earlier age. Excessive exposure to digital media can distract a child's attention, encourage the use of inappropriate words, and hinder the development of social skills.

Second, there is reduced respect for printed/physical books, printed books can be an effective tool for improving early childhood reading skills, but many children prefer digital media because they are considered more interesting. This can lead to a reduced appreciation of printed books and hinder children's reading abilities.

Third, reduced memory, digital media offers a lot of visual and sound stimuli that can interfere with children's memory. This affects reading ability and reduces a child's ability to understand information effectively.

Fourth, the lack of social interaction, the use of gadgets in children also hinders several aspects of child development such as the existence of gadgets that can reduce children's interactions with other humans so that it has an impact on a lack of verbal communication skills (Bentang, 2020). The use of digital media for hours on end can hinder children's social interactions. This can lead to a child's inability to interact socially, which in turn can affect the development of optimal reading skills.

Fifth, there is no adult supervision, many children independently use digital media without adult supervision. This condition allows children to be exposed to inappropriate content, such as pornography or violence, which can affect their social and mental development and hinder their learning. Therefore, it is important for parents and teachers to make appropriate policies on the use of digital media in young children. It can be tricked by keeping time and using digital media, integrating printed books into everyday life, increasing social interaction and adult supervision of the content they access on digital media. This will help children build optimal reading skills and promote healthy personal development.

The role of parents here must always provide motivation to increase children's interest in reading rather than just playing with gadgets. In addition to providing motivation, parents must also provide examples of reading habits in their home environment, limiting time and controlling when children play gadgets, helping guide children in understanding stories in reading books (Anita, 2022). The role of parents does not only end in overseeing the use and content of gadgets, but how do parents and teachers work on and develop children's abilities to analyze, observe, and even criticize what is happening in their environment through digital media according to Sivrikova in Julita (2023).

1.2 The Effect of Digitalization on the Existence of Physical Books

The challenges of digital literacy today cannot be denied. Technological developments and digitization have had both positive and negative impacts on the existence of physical books. On the one hand, physical books are still in great demand by many people, especially those who want to feel the sensation of reading that is more real and not significant enough to the existence of physical books. Many people prefer to read books digitally because it is easier and more practical. However, this has the potential to threaten the existence of physical books as learning media.ability to read.

Some of the digital literacy challenges that threaten the existence of physical books include, first, easy access to information, with the internet, information can be accessed easily and quickly. Many people choose to read articles or e-books digitally because they can be accessed anytime and anywhere without having to carry heavy physical books. Second, lower prices, many sites or applications provide digital books at lower prices than physical books. This makes many people prefer to buy digital books because they are more financially efficient. Third, a friendlier environment, the use of digital books is considered more environmentally friendly because it does not require paper and other materials used to make physical books. This makes many people more concerned about the environment and choose to use digital media.

However, physical books still have value that cannot be replaced by digital media. Physical books provide a more enjoyable reading experience and help in building reading skills in children. In addition, physical books can also be used as decorations and collections that can improve the quality of the room. Jim Trelease (2022) in his book describes a study which shows that we understand less when reading digital text than printed text why is that. First, electronic writing is like an ocean, difficult to navigate, unlike writing on paper, which is like an area with road signs, this is a permanent physical deficiency that stands out from a digital book. The best thing we always remember is aided by visual and geographical memory, which is why it is difficult to look back in e-books without using search tools. Readers cannot identify what they are looking for if it is in the front, middle or bottom of the book. Second, reading using physical books stimulates many areas of the brain related to emotions and spatial recall, thus leaving "deeper imprints".

The phenomenon of book piracy also threatens the industry's profits that might be obtained related to copyright, not only stealing the intellectual and creative efforts of authors, but also reducing the standard and quality of original works and the income earned from these original works is also neglected (Omta Purba, 2021). In this case, the role of publishers and writers is very important to ensure the existence of physical books is maintained. By presenting innovation and an interesting

reading experience, physical books continue to have an important place in literacy and increase people's love for a reading culture.

Therefore, parents and educators must find creative and innovative ways to get their children to read books and introduce them to good reading skills. Such as by reading together, providing story books that are interesting and according to children's interests, and showing examples of good and correct reading to instill reading habits in early childhood. Anita Rahmawati (2022) says that reading is a major requirement in everyday life or can be said to be the heart of education because almost every activity involves the ability to read and this becomes a demand for the reality of everyday life. Progress in the digital world is growing day by day, and this tends to make children more fond of watching videos and playing games on gadgets than reading books. This is very worrying for parents, especially busy parents who have busy activities so they don't have much time to control their children's use of gadgets.

CONCLUSION

Technological developments and digitization also have an influence on the development of early childhood reading, apart from being able to provide convenience in accessing information, digitization is a challenge in shaping children's reading interest. Where children are more interested in gadgets than reading books, in other words physical or printed books are less desirable. Digital media competition in this case is a digitalization challenge for parents who have AUD and AUD Educators in an effort to generate interest and enthusiasm for children's learning, especially their reading development which is of course more diverted towards better physical books to avoid misuse of digital media.

Digitalization has both positive and negative impacts on early childhood reading development. The positive impact is that technology can help children develop their reading skills in this digital era by accessing interesting features and applications that support their development. Meanwhile, the negative impact is that children are more interested in cellphone screens than physical books. In dealing with this situation, there needs to be a balance between the use of digital technology and physical books.

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