

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A DIGITAL LIFE BALANCE PROGRAM HELD IN GADUT KANAGARIAN, TILATANG KAMANG SUB-DISTRICT, AGAM DISTRICT

Zulian Fikry *, Putri Minas Sari, Yanladila Yeltas Putra, Gumi Langerya Rizal, Sherly Aprisi, Maharani Tosca, Rahma Rezki Elvika

Universitas Negeri Padang

Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka, Air Tawar Bar., Kec. Padang Utara, Kota Padang, Sumatera Barat 25171, Indonesia

Email: zulianfikry.ma@fip.unp.ac.id

Abstract

The community service program titled "Strengthening Families in the Digital Era: Digital Life Balance Program in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency" aims to enhance parents' understanding of balanced digital technology use within families. The program addresses the impacts of gadget use on the physical, mental, and social health of children and adolescents. The program employed various methods, including psychoeducation, focus group discussions, counseling, and hands-on practice with parents and children. Results indicated a significant increase in participants' understanding of balanced technology use, as evidenced by improved pre-test and post-test scores, along with positive feedback from attendees. Parents particularly valued the practical strategies provided for managing gadget use within the family. By utilizing participatory methods, the program successfully engaged the community and offered new insights into the importance of maintaining a balance between digital and non-digital life in the modern era.

Keywords: Digital Life Balance, Family Interaction, Family Strengthening, Gadget Addiction

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, advances in information and communication technology, particularly the development of gadgets, have significantly changed lifestyles around the world, especially in Indonesia. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology in 2020, approximately 90% of teenagers in Indonesia access the internet daily, with 85% using smartphones as their primary device. Additionally, 98% of children and adolescents are familiar with the internet (Arief, 2022). This trend is reflected in 2023 data showing that 98.3% of the Indonesian population accesses the internet via gadgets, with an average usage time of 7 hours and 42 minutes (Kompas, 2023).

However, the increasing use of gadgets among children and adolescents raises growing concerns, particularly regarding its impact on their physical and mental health. Research indicates that excessive gadget use can lead to sleep disturbances and posture disorders (Kurniawati & Sutharjana, 2023). Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Shilpi,

2023). Moreover, excessive gadget use can lead to a decline in social interaction within families (Keith, 2023) and hinder adolescents' behavior in social settings (Yulianto, 2023). This illustrates that gadget use impacts not only physical and mental health but also social interactions.

These issues are also evident in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang Sub-district, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, as a result of the rapidly growing digital community. The use of gadgets, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, has become a part of daily life, including family interactions. In Kanagarian Gadut, there has been a significant increase in digital technology use among children and adolescents. Despite being in a rural area, access to the internet and gadgets is no longer considered a challenge. This easy accessibility has led to rising gadget usage among Generation Z in Kanagarian Gadut, presenting an imminent challenge. However, excessive gadget use among youth also brings negative impacts that warrant attention.

Current data indicates that 80% of children in the district spend over 4 hours a day using gadgets. The Agam district government has reported that excessive gadget use is not limited to adults but also affects children and even toddlers (Fatma, 2018). Additionally, research conducted in a kindergarten in Agam Regency found that more than 50% of children use gadgets for a moderate duration and experience emotional problems (Mursidah, 2023).

Reports from Gadut Kanagarian indicate an increase in gadget addiction in recent years. Many children spend hours playing games or using social media without adequate parental supervision. This excessive use has altered communication patterns within families. An interview with the Secretary of Nagari Gadut revealed that many parents struggle to communicate directly with their children, who are often more interested in their gadget screens. Parents frequently have to shout to get their children's attention. This dynamic can lead to a lack of quality interaction among family members and potentially harm familial relationships. Moreover, many parents use gadgets to distract their children when busy, often without recognizing the negative consequences. This lack of awareness can adversely affect the physical and mental health of their children, as well as reduce time spent on real-world social interactions.

Interviews with the Wali Nagari (community leader) highlighted several priority issues: 1) Rampant gadget addiction exacerbated by a lack of education on the negative impacts of gadgets and weak parental supervision. 2) Diminished quality interactions among family members due to excessive gadget use by children. 3) Insufficient parental knowledge of alternative activities to engage children and skills to manage gadget use effectively. According to an article from the Agam Regency Government, excessive gadget use has led to children becoming less aware of their environment and less knowledgeable about social etiquette. This fixation on gadgets reduces their ability to socialize, leading to infrequent and poor communication. Consequently, they may struggle with direct interactions, which can negatively impact their psychological and social development (Fatma, 2018). These findings align with research indicating that excessive gadget use can make children more withdrawn, aloof, and less creative (Putri, 2021).

Based on the analysis of the situation and the identified problems, implementing the program "Strengthening Families in the Digital Era: Digital Life Balance Program in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency" is crucial. This program aims to

address children's gadget addiction, enhance positive interactions between parents and children, and improve knowledge and skills to achieve a balanced digital lifestyle within families.

The program will help families recognize the importance of balancing digital and non-digital activities, providing practical strategies for managing gadget use in a way that does not compromise the quality of family relationships. Ultimately, it seeks to mitigate the negative impacts of excessive gadget use while fostering stronger connections between parents and children.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service was carried out in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency. This activity was carried out in August 2024. The form of activity implementation is the Digital Life Balance Program with a focus on Strengthening Families in the Digital Age. Activity participants are families in Kanagarian Gadut. This program consists of several activities, namely: FGD, Psychoeducation, Counseling, Training, "Joint Activities", and strengthening the commitment of "*Strong families in the digital era*". The method of implementing this program goes through several stages as follows:

Pre-Implementation Phase

1. Data analysis and retrieval
 - a. Field observation in Kanagarian Gadut
 - b. Interviews with community leaders and local families
2. Determination of psychoeducation schedule

Determining the right time for program implementation based on the results of analysis and coordination with local parties. Initially this activity was to be carried out on August 17, 2024, but the activity was finally postponed because it coincided with the commemoration of the 79th Indonesian Independence Day. By considering these conditions, the event was held on August 26, 2024 so that the activities ran smoothly.
3. Program socialization

This community service program is carried out to provide understanding and education to the community, especially for parents and children, so that they can use technology wisely and in a balanced manner. To ensure maximum participation, this program is socialized to the community in collaboration with the local village apparatus, later the village apparatus will contact the people of Kanagarian Gadut either directly or through social media. Making psychoeducational materials
4. Submission of materials relevant to the theme of Strengthening Families in the Digital Age.

The service team compiled materials relevant to the theme of Strengthening Families in the Digital Age. The material created includes problems related to the unbalanced use of gadgets circulating in the community, the impact of unbalanced gadget use, ways to maintain balance in gadget use, and how to overcome problems that arise due to excessive access to gadget use.

Implementation Stage

5. Participant Registration and Opening of Program

The service activity was carried out at 09.00 WIB, the service team opened registration starting at 08.00 WIB, so it is hoped that the Kenagarian Gadut community will come no later than 08.30 WIB. The program is opened by Wali Nagari Persiapan Gadut Barat on behalf of the community leader.

6. Focus Group Discussion

Conduct focus group discussions to dig deeper into the problems and needs of families related to digital life. Participants and facilitators together discuss several problems faced by families related to digital life, with the aim of being able to dig deeper into the specific needs of each family and jointly find suitable and applicable solutions.

7. Psychoeducation

At this stage, participants were educated about the positive and negative impacts of the digital age on family life. The facilitator discussed how to maintain healthy interactions within the family as well as strategies to overcome gadget addiction.

8. Counseling

After psychoeducation, for families who want to consult and ask further questions, the service team provides a family consultation session. This counseling provides an opportunity for participants to discuss problems in depth.

9. Family strengthening training

Providing practical training to strengthen family relationships in the digital age. This activity is in the form of a roleplay of how parents direct and give instructions to children regarding the use of gadgets. In this training, game techniques and activities are also taught so that parents and children can reduce the use of gadgets in achieving digital family balance.

10. Activity practice with children

Holding a joint activity session involving parents and children to practice activities or games that can be done by children to reduce the intensity of gadget use in order to achieve balanced use of technology. In this activity, parents and children play together in groups and take turns from the games that have been prepared by the service team.

11. Healthy and Balanced Digital Family Commitment

At the end of the program, each parent is asked to sign a commitment that contains a promise to implement a healthy and balanced digital lifestyle. By doing this activity, it is hoped that parents already know what steps can be taken to use technology wisely in the family.

12. Evaluation of the Implementation of Service Activities and closing

The program ended with a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the activities. Participants fill out an evaluation sheet that has been provided by the research team. This evaluation sheet will be reviewed and feedback from participants will be collected to see what needs to be improved in the future. The activity was closed with an expression of gratitude to all parties involved.

This community service activity employs a participatory approach, engaging families in Kanagarian Gadut throughout the program's implementation process, from the needs analysis

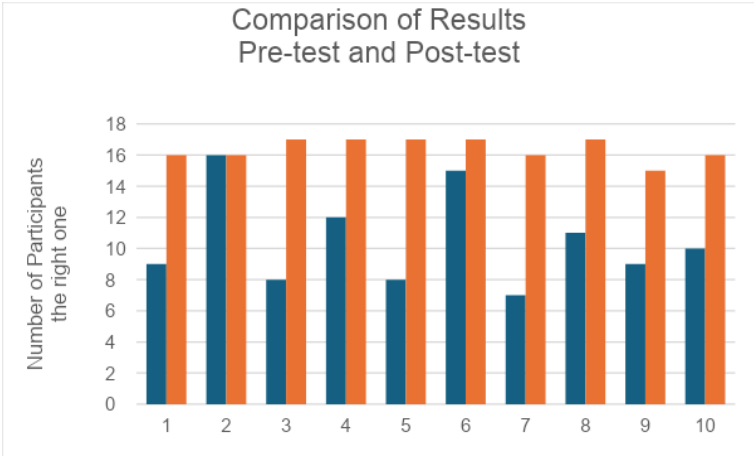
stage to the evaluation of activities. This approach ensures that the program aligns with the local community's needs and maximizes benefits in strengthening families to navigate the challenges of the digital era.

RESULTS

The community service program implemented in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency has shown positive results in increasing parents' knowledge regarding digital life balance. The effectiveness of this program is clearly visible through the increase in scores between the pre-test and post-test given to parents. This increase shows that parents have gained a better understanding of the concept of digital balance in family life.

a. Improvement in pre-test and post-test results

Table 1. Improvement in pre-test and post-test results



The outcomes of the community outreach programme in Kanagarian Gadut, Kecamatan Tilatang Kamang, Kabupaten Agam, which aimed to improve the general public's understanding of the dangers of digital lifestyles, were rather disappointing. The program's success is based on the improvement of the score between the pretest and pretest scores that participants get. Its improvement shows that young people have a better understanding of the concept of digital balance in family life.

b. Participant feedback

Feedback showed a very positive response to this community service activity. The participants stated that this program was very useful and succeeded in broadening their horizons regarding digital life balance in the family context. One of the participants, Mrs. Isnawati, stated,

"after this parents can find out and gain new knowledge in educating children. I know when children should be given gadgets and what we will do in introducing and supervising children in the use of gadgets in this era."

Great enthusiasm was seen during the sessions, indicating the participant’s interest and awareness of the importance of this program. This shows that the program succeeded in attracting parent’s interest and attention to issues surrounding the use of digital technology in the family. Another participant, Mrs. Amelia, also added,

"Thanks to the speakers who have provided this material, the way of delivery is fun, even when parents are busy listening to the material, the children are invited by community service team to play outside, the children become comfortable playing so they forget about their gadgets."

One aspect that participants highly appreciated was the hands-on activity session. During this session, parents gained practical knowledge about various alternative activities they can engage in with their children to reduce gadget use. This shared practice experience effectively provided actionable ideas that could be easily implemented at home. Additionally, participants expressed a desire for similar programs to be held in the future, highlighting the ongoing need for education and support in navigating the challenges of the digital age. This feedback indicates the potential for more in-depth and sustainable follow-up programs.

DISCUSSION

The community service program titled "Strengthening Families in the Digital Era: Digital Life Balance Program," implemented in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency, has shown positive results. Following activities such as psychoeducation and joint practice, there was a notable increase in parents' knowledge about digital life balance. This indicates that the program successfully achieved its goal of educating parents on the importance of maintaining a balanced use of digital technology in family life. Livingstone et al. (2015) explain that a key factor in creating a healthy digital environment at home is parents' understanding of digital technology and its impact on children.

The community outreach initiative titled "Strengthening Families in the Digital Era: Digital Life Balance Program," implemented in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency, has shown positive results. Young participants demonstrated a better understanding of digital life balance after engaging in remedial activities such as psychoeducation and group practice. This indicates that the program successfully achieved its goal of educating parents on the importance of maintaining a balanced use of digital technology in family life. Livingstone et al. (2015) explain that a key factor in creating a healthy digital environment at home is parents' understanding of digital technology and its impact on children.



Figure 1. Psychoeducation for digital life balance in the modern era

To thrive in the modern digital world, it is essential to have a deeper understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of technology. Knowledgeable adults, such as parents and guardians,

are better equipped to guide their children in the appropriate use of technology. This aligns with research by Nikken & Schols (2015), which indicates that parents with strong digital knowledge are generally more effective in managing their children's technology use.

The program has successfully increased parents' awareness of the risks and benefits of digital technology for children, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to digital media usage. Consequently, it is hoped that parents will be able to guide their children in using technology wisely and responsibly (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016).



Figure 2. Interactive discussion in FGD to strengthen the role of families in the digital era

An effective method, such as psychoeducation, can deliver educational information and enhance understanding among the younger generation. Psychoeducation provides structured and systematic information, enabling parents to easily comprehend and apply what they learn in their daily lives. Furthermore, combining psychoeducation with joint practice allows parents to directly implement the knowledge gained.

Applying insights from psychoeducation and joint practice helps parents establish healthy digital habits within the family. This includes setting time limits for gadget use, creating technology-free zones at home, and engaging in offline activities. Chassiakos et al. (2016) emphasize that achieving optimal child development requires a balance between online and offline activities in children's lives.



Figure 3. Practicing games with children aim to decrease gadget use

Implementing a digital life balance is driven by parents' knowledge of digital technology, parenting styles, and positive family interactions. A better understanding enables parents to

make more balanced decisions regarding their children's use of digital technology at home, such as setting screen time limits, selecting appropriate content, and creating technology-free activities. This program encourages parents to enhance communication within the family, particularly concerning digital technology use. Clark (2011) notes that to create a positive digital experience for children, it is essential for parents and children to engage in open interactions and dialogue about digital technology. Effective communication helps parents understand the needs and challenges their children face in the digital environment.



Figure 4. Commitment to promote Strong Families in Digital Era

The development of digital technology presents both benefits and challenges, particularly concerning the growth and development of children, who are especially vulnerable to negative impacts. Collaboration between educational institutions and the community is essential in addressing the challenges of the digital era. Community service programs like this one enable the direct transfer of knowledge and expertise from academics to the community, helping them navigate rapid social and technological changes.

Moreover, these service programs provide academics with valuable insights into the needs and challenges faced by society, offering critical input for future research and program development.

Overall, the community service program titled "Strengthening Families in the Digital Era: Digital Life Balance Program," implemented in Kenagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency, has made a positive contribution to strengthening families in the digital age. Enhancing young people's understanding of digital lifestyles is a vital step in preparing families to face challenges and leverage the opportunities presented by digital technology. Such programs should be made widely available to ensure that more families can adopt healthy digital lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

Here's a refined version of your text:

The community-based program "Family Strengthening in the Digital Age: Digital Life Balance Program," implemented in Kanagarian Gadut, Tilatang Kamang District, Agam Regency, has yielded positive results in enhancing children's understanding of digital life. The program's effectiveness is evident from the pre-test and post-test results administered to participants, which indicate a significantly improved grasp of the concept of digital life and its importance in modern society. Participants' satisfaction has been positive, and they accept the program as beneficial in addressing their concerns about digital life within the community. Additionally, the program encouraged parents to brainstorm and discuss alternative activities to reduce children's screen time. This collaborative learning process proved effective in providing practical ideas that can be easily implemented at home. We would like to express our gratitude to LPPM Universitas Negeri Padang for providing funding support for this Program with contract number: 2253/UN35.15/PM/2024.



Figure 5. Photo group between the PKM team and participants after the activity

REFERENCES

Bookchapter:

Blum-Ross, A., & Livingstone, S. (2016). Families and screen time : Current advice and emerging research. Media Policy Brief 17. London : Media Policy Project, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G., Dreier, M., Chaudron, S., & Lagae, K. (2015). How parents of young children manage digital devices at home : The role of income, education and parental style. London : EU Kids Online, LES.

Journal Articles:

Arief B. 98 persen anak dan remaja tahu internet [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2024 Mar 18]. Available from https://www.kominfo.go.id/index.php/content/detail/3836/98+Persen+Anak+dan+Remaja+Tahu+Internet/0/berita_satker

Chassiakos, Y. L. R., Radesky, J., Christakis, D., Moreno, M. A., & Cross, C. (2016). Children and adolescents and digital media. *Pediatrics*, 138(5), e20162593.

Clark, L. S. (2011). Parental Mediation Theory for the Digital Age. *Communication Theory*, 21(4), 323-343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01391.x>

Fatma F. Dampak penggunaan gadget bagi perkembangan psikologi anak [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2024 Mar 20]. Available from <https://www.agamkab.go.id/Agamkab/detailkarya/670/dampak-penggunaan-gadget-bagi-perkembangan-psikologi-anak.html>

Keith W, Muir. The impact of gadget use on social interaction for underage children. *JIS* [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2024 Mar 18] ;3(2). Available from <http://doi:10.31219/osf.io/6d7zp>

Kompas.com. Pengguna internet di indonesia tembus 212,9 juta di awal 2023 [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2024 Mar 18]. Available from https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2023/02/13/19300087/pengguna-internet-di-indonesia-tembus-212-9-juta-di-awal-2023?page=all&_gl=1*1hv65zx*_ga*YW1wLThRNHhSNk5DeI

Kurniawati NN, Sutharjana IM. The Influence of Gadgets on The Development of The Early-Age Learners' Behavior and Character. *IJMS* [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2024 Mar 18]; 1(2):159-171. Available from: <https://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/IJMS/article/view/2321>

Mursidah U. Hubungan durasi penggunaan gadget terhadap perkembangan emosional pada anak usia sekolah di TK harapan Bundo Nagari Padang Laweh Kecamatan Sungai Pua Kabupaten Agam Tahun 2023. Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat; 2023.

Nikken, P., & Schols, M. (2015). How and why parents guide the media use of young children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(11), 3423-3435.

Putri LD. Waspadai dampak penggunaan gadget terhadap perkembangan sosial anak usia dini. *Jendela PLS: Jurnal Cendekiawan Ilmiah Pendidikan Luar Sekolah*. 2021 Jun 30;6(1):58-66.

Shilpi K. A study of the impact of electronic devices on the lifestyle of secondary school students. *JBKR* [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2024 Mar 18] ; 9(1). Available from <http://doi:>

10.59364/ijhesm.v4i1.228

Yulianti. Studi kasus dampak pengaruh gadget terhadap komunikasi dalam keluarga. Jurnal bimbingan dan konseling Ar-Rahman. 2023. Available from <http://doi:10.31602/jbkr.v9i1.11207>