Reconstruction of the Role of Parents in Building Literacy in Children

Luthfiah 1*   https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8855-6112
Selfia 2   https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7265-1106
Zahra Naila Abhista 3 https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6177-9139
Ibnu Hibban 4   https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5337-915X
Fauzi Annur 5   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6480-0766

Faculty of Tarbiya, UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of parents in fostering children's literacy habits from an early age while addressing the challenges of technology use in the digital era. Literacy is not limited to reading and writing skills, but also includes critical thinking abilities and the capacity to understand information for daily life. The rapid development of technology has led children to spend more time using gadgets, which may affect their physical, social, and emotional development. This research employs a library research method by reviewing various sources, including books, journal articles, and relevant research reports. These sources are used to analyze the concept of children's literacy, parenting patterns, and digital parenting strategies in supporting literacy development in the digital age. The findings reveal that parents play a crucial role as guides, role models, and motivators in cultivating a literacy culture. Digital parenting approaches are required through screen time limitation, appropriate content selection, and encouragement of positive activities. Collaboration among families, schools, and communities is essential to shaping a literate generation with strong character, ready to face the challenges of the digital era.

Keywords: Literacy, Parental role, Digital parenting, Digital era

Introduction

Literacy is the first step for children to learn to spell, write, and read. This is the first stage to help the child understand information or reading. Literacy learning activities, especially in terms of reading, can be done by accustoming children to listening to various stories or stories repeatedly and continuously. This activity is simple, but very helpful for children to introduce them to the world of literacy. In today's all-digital era, literacy is no longer just a matter of being able to read and

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write. Literacy also includes the ability to speak, listen, and apply it in various daily life situations. (Baiti, Yusuf, & Murni, 2021) (Liriwati, 2024)

Based on a survey from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012, Indonesian students ranked 64th out of 65 countries. This means that the reading ability and interest in learning of Indonesian students are still very low. In the same year, the index of the reading interest level of the Indonesian people only reached 0.001, meaning that out of every thousand people, only one person has a love of reading. According to Laila, this happens because the level of literacy ability of the Indonesian people is still much lower than in other countries.(Zalukhu & Zalukhu, 2024)

Instilling reading skills in children from an early age is a crucial first step to form the basis for their success in various areas of life. Reading skills are not only limited to recognizing letters and words, but are the gateway to a broader learning process and continuous intellectual development. Through reading activities, children not only practice technical skills, but also develop a more critical and in-depth way of thinking. They learn to understand meaning, interpret information, and build relationships between ideas. This process is also very effective in stimulating their imagination, opening up new horizons, and enriching their inner experiences. (Deluma, 2023) (Liriwati, 2024)

An interest in reading needs to be instilled from the moment children begin to know letters. With parental encouragement, reading can be a fun activity and part of everyday life. Home is the best place to cultivate the habit of reading. In addition to increasing knowledge, reading also helps to form religious character and responsibility. Therefore, the habit of reading should be introduced from an early age through literacy activities with moral and spiritual value.(Anhar, Siska, Lestari, Khaerunisa, & Alpian, 2024)

The implementation of literacy culture in teaching and learning activities involves eight important steps, namely: monitoring students' understanding of the text, using various forms of literacy (including visual and digital texts), providing clear and direct instruction, utilizing learning aids, responding to different types of questions, encouraging students to formulate questions involving literacy skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating, as well as teaching them how to Summarize the content of the reading. In addition to the literacy program itself, harmonious cooperation between parents and schools also has a very important role. This collaboration is needed so that children are ready to face the Society 5.0 era, because the way parents educate and understand children's development greatly affects their growth and future. (Safitri, 2023)

Parents have a very important role in supporting children's development as a whole. They are the first teachers, where children learn, and role models who must set a good example. Thus, parents must have an adequate understanding in educating their children. The main task of parents is to prepare their children's future so that they can contribute to the nation. As the first educator, parents need to build an atmosphere conducive to the educational process and the future development of their children. (Amalia, Yudistira, & Santy, 2023)

Parents play an important role in meeting the needs of children, guiding, directing, and providing education. These responsibilities include faith, material, physical, moral, intellectual, emotional, social, and sexual aspects. All of these forms

of responsibility are part of the educational process, which aims to shape children into healthy, intelligent, noble individuals, good character, and able to become a resilient generation with a bright future. (Fatmawati, 2019)

Thus, parents need to be equipped with skills in educating children in the family environment, including knowledge about parenting and how to guide children so that they can grow into superior human resources. Given the importance of this, the parenting program is one of the strategic steps to improve the quality of the role of parents in the family. One of the manifestations is to foster attitudes and behaviors that are friendly to children, such as supporting education, paying attention to nutritional needs, providing the right parenting, and protecting children well. When all children's needs are met comprehensively, it will have a positive impact on their development at every stage of life in a planned and sustainable manner. (Musthofa, 2024)

A digital-based parenting approach, or digital parenting, can be an effective strategy to minimize risks in the use of technology while helping children make positive use of it. . Digital parenting itself is a way for parents to guide, supervise, and support children when they use digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, or the internet. This approach emerged in response to the increasing ease of access to technology in today's world.(Shibgohtullah, 2024)

To realize the success of the implementation of digital parenting, collaboration between parents, educators, and the community is needed. Parents need to be equipped with education about the digital world, schools and families must be in line with accompanying their children, and there needs to be adequate facilities to support them. These steps are important so that the digital parenting strategy can run well.(Rahman, 2025)

Method

This research uses a library research approach, which is research conducted through the collection and analysis of various literature sources that are relevant to the topic of discussion. The sources used include books, scientific journals, articles, previous research results, and credible online sources. The purpose of this method is to gain a deep understanding of the concepts, theories, and results of studies related to the role of parents in building literacy in children. The data collection process is carried out by browsing the literature related to the research theme, then conducting content analysis of the data found. Data analysis is carried out in a descriptive-qualitative manner, namely by describing the content of literature sources and interpreting their meaning to obtain conceptual and theoretical conclusions. With this approach, the researcher seeks to present a comprehensive picture of how the reconstruction of the role of parents can strengthen children's literacy skills in the modern era.

Discussion

Definition of literacy

Etymologically, the word *literacy* derived from Latin *literatus*, which means "one who learns." Harveu J. Graff (2006) defines literacy as an individual's ability to

read and write. According to UNESCO, literacy is a real ability, especially cognitive skills in reading and writing, which do not depend on the context or the way a person acquires these skills. Various factors can affect a person's understanding of literacy, including the results of academic research, educational institutions, the socio-cultural context of a country, cultural values, and personal experiences. In general, literacy can be interpreted as the ability to read and write as well as understand and utilize written information. In its application, literacy also includes writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. (Suyatno, 2025) (Lestari F. D., 2021)

Literacy instilling from an early age

The level of interest in reading among Indonesian people, especially among students, is still relatively low. Some of the factors that affect this condition include the lack of support from the family and surrounding environment for reading habits, the low ability of the community to buy books, the limited number and inadequate condition of the library, the negative influence of electronic media, learning methods that have not been able to foster reading habits, and the reading teaching system that has not been run effectively. (Wahyuni, 2010)

The purpose of teaching reading is not only for students to be able to read well, but also for them to be interested and enjoy reading. According to Wiryodijoyo (2009), in order for reading to be a fun activity for children, good collaboration between parents and teachers is needed. They need to help each other in motivating and providing interesting reading books for children. The habit of reading should be instilled from an early age, namely from a young age. Even from the age of about two years, when children begin to be able to speak and understand language, an interest in reading can begin to be formed. When children are in school, the motivation to read must be further increased, especially by giving books that are appropriate to the lessons at school. (Artana, 2016)

One simple way to foster an interest in reading is to read stories to children, for example before bed, especially when they are 3-5 years old. In addition, children need to be invited to visit the library and be introduced to how to read and use books in the environment. Reading various materials such as newspapers, textbooks, or storybooks is also important to practice discipline in reading. If children are used to reading regularly, then their interest in reading will grow and eventually become an inherent habit in them. (Artana, 2016)

Literacy habits and civic understanding must be formed from an early age, and the family plays an important role in this. Parents or caregivers can introduce children to books and culture, as well as foster an interest in reading and moral values. By providing reading materials and discussing culture, children learn about citizenship, such as responsibility and respect for others. This education in the family helps children understand their role in society, while respecting and preserving culture. This habit will shape children into intelligent individuals who care about the surrounding environment. (Fachruddin, Arnadi, Achmad, & Nay, 2023)

Literacy education for children is an important foundation that helps them build social relationships in their daily lives. Providing literacy stimulation from an early age, adjusted to the child's age, will help them be more mentally prepared to follow the teaching and learning process in formal schools. Literacy in early

childhood is known as pre-literacy. The purpose of this activity is to stimulate language skills, including skills in expressing opinions, which will later become an important foundation in developing writing skills to the maximum. Literacy education in early childhood is dynamic and continues to develop, starting from the growth of curiosity, critical thinking skills, oral language skills, to finally developing reading and writing skills. (Wildova, 2015)(Novrani, 2021).

Childhood is a crucial period for children to absorb various information from their surroundings. One of the best ways to learn at an early age is through play, because through play, children can understand various things in the world around them. In addition, listening to stories is also an effective way for children to learn, because they can understand the expressions, storylines, cause and effect, and even life values contained in the stories. Reading stories or fairy tales is one of the effective methods to foster a literacy culture in early childhood. However, unfortunately, there are still many parents who do not realize the importance of this activity in supporting the development of children's literacy skills. (Nurhayati, 2019)

Literacy skills in children develop with age, but the factor that greatly affects this development is the stimulation provided by the family, especially in the development of children's language. At elementary school age, especially in the lower grades, the stage of children's literacy development is highly dependent on the role of parents. According to Niklas, the role of parents is very important in fostering children's literacy skills at an early age. Nowadays, many children spend more time with gadgets than reading books. This can affect their ability to read. Therefore, it is important to teach reading from an early age. But, before that, we need to know how to read to children so that we can provide appropriate guidance. (Kurniawan, 2018)

In order for children to grow and develop well into a great generation, they need to be in a positive environment. The family, although it is the smallest part of society, has a very big role to play in the future of the nation. From the family were born children who would later become the successors of the nation. If a family is able to carry out its role well, such as educating, guiding, and providing affection, it will grow a quality and reliable generation to advance the country. On the other hand, if the family does not carry out its functions properly, children can grow up to become problematic individuals and become a burden to society.(Lestari, 2021)(Andi, 2010)

Factors that affect literacy

The family is the first and most important environment in the process of children's education. From birth, children are under the care of their parents and grow up in a family environment. It is in this place that children begin to learn and absorb the values and norms of those closest to them, such as fathers, mothers, and siblings. Therefore, parents have a great responsibility to nurture, guide, and educate their children as best as possible.(Ahmadi, 2003)

According to Zakiah Daradjat, there are three main environments that play an important role in the educational process and the formation of children's character, namely family, school, and community. The three are interconnected and inseparable because each has a great influence on the development of children.

Among the three environments, the family is the earliest and most important, because it is there that children grow up from birth. In the family, parents hold the greatest role and responsibility in providing education. They not only function as caregivers, but also as primary educators who instill life values, shape attitudes, and habituate positive behaviors from an early age.(Drajat, 1997)

The family has an important role in helping children learn, discover talents, and develop their potential. In the family environment, the formation of moral values, character, and personality of children needs to be done from an early age. Children tend to imitate the behavior of those around them, so this is the right moment to instill positive values. The main goal of the family is to support the development of children as a whole, including cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects so that children are ready to adapt, socialize, and interact with the community in their environment. (Hadian, 2022)

School is the second environment after the family which plays an important role in the process of socialization and character formation of children. There, children learn to instill values such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation through various activities and positive interactions. The teacher and the school atmosphere serve as an example that will be imitated by students. By fostering good habits and activities that support character building, schools help children develop into individuals who not only excel academically, but also have good morals and morals. (Purnama, 2022)

Meanwhile, the community environment also has a great influence on student learning outcomes. Children not only gain learning experience at home and at school, but also through social interaction with the people around them in social life. Associations and relationships with the surrounding community can help shape students' attitudes and ways of learning. The influence of this environment can occur indirectly, unintentionally. (Harahap A. , 2018)

The living environment can have a positive influence, such as fostering the spirit of learning, or vice versa can have a negative impact, depending on the condition of the surrounding community. Therefore, the environment in which students live has a big role in determining how well students can learn and achieve. So, problems that arise both in the learning process at school and in the home environment are equally important factors that affect students' success in learning. (Harahap E. , 2023)

Therefore, parents need to show wisdom in educating their children, by applying an approach based on love and care. The education provided should not only be based on obligations or duties, but also born from sincere attention and concern for children's growth and development. Children who are raised with an affectionate approach tend to grow up to be confident, accomplished, and beneficial to those around them. On the other hand, education that is rigid and only command-oriented often makes children feel depressed and difficult to develop their potential optimally.(Rahmawati, 2022)

The role of parents in literacy in the digital era

This role of parents greatly affects children's reading ability in the future. Parents are very important in introducing the basics of literacy to children, and the best way to do this is to interact directly with the child. As Haringey said, children's

reading achievement is highly dependent on the extent of parental support and involvement in their learning process. (Fahmi, Subroto, & Suprijono, 2022)

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), parenting is a form of interaction between parents and children that aims to support children's physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and personal development. In other words, parenting is the effort of parents in caring for and educating children to help their growth and development. Parenting is not only about meeting the basic needs of children, but also building healthy relationships and supporting children's emotional, intellectual, and social development. Parental involvement is an important factor in shaping children's character and abilities in facing life's challenges. (Hafizhah, Najwa, Rizqi, & Rio, 2024)

Parental involvement can be realized in various forms, such as through parenting activities, creating a safe and stable environment, providing intellectual stimulation, having discussions with children, being role models in terms of educational and social values, supporting the fulfillment of children's needs and aspirations, playing the role of a good citizen, establishing communication with schools, and participating in school activities. All forms of involvement have an important role in supporting the learning process of children in schools so that educational goals can be achieved. The parenting program itself aims to help parents create an environment that is rich in literacy and foster children's interest in reading, so that they get used to reading and are encouraged to repeat it until it becomes a positive habit. (Nyoman, Putu, Kerti, & Wayan, 2018)

The role of parents has a great contribution to improving children's reading literacy skills at the elementary school level, both as guides, role models, facilitators, motivators, and parties who provide awards and sanctions as needed. However, this role is not fully optimal because not all parents can carry it out well. Parents' education patterns in improving literacy can be divided into authoritarian, democratic, and permissive, with the most effective democratic pattern because children become more confident and able to get along with their friends. Obstacles faced by parents include child fatigue, parental busyness, low motivation of children, lack of parental awareness of the importance of reading, and lack of cooperation between parents in supporting children's literacy. (Fikriyah, Rohaeti, & Solihati, 2020)

Parents play a very influential role in the process of children's growth and development, especially in the digital era like now. They have a responsibility to take care of and protect children, both in the real environment and in the digital world. Children also need to be taught the importance of maintaining privacy and understanding the risks that may arise when using the internet. The way parents parenting children can vary, depending on the family's social background, gender, and culture. For example, children tend to use the internet more often when their parents are permissive or loose, and conversely, they tend to be online less often if their parents are authoritarian or too strict. Many parents choose to set clear and firm rules to keep children safe when using technology. They expect children to obey the rules. However, wise parents usually do not immediately restrict their children completely, but rather provide balanced supervision and guidance. (Rodhiya, 2020)

In today's digital age, technology has become an indispensable part of everyday life, not only for adults but also for children. Today, children often use

gadgets, social media, and the internet, which affect the way they interact, learn, and play. However, technology provides many benefits, including making it easier to access information and improving the ease of communication. However, behind it all, there are big challenges that must be faced, especially by parents. They must be able to maintain harmony in the family while educating children well in the midst of the influence of technology. Therefore, parents are in dire need of parenting guidance ((Rochmawan, 2024)*parenting*) in order to adapt to these changes and still accompany children effectively. (Ulfah, 2020)

In the midst of rapid technological developments, the role of parents has become increasingly important as the main supervisor and educator for children. If the use of gadgets is not controlled, it can disrupt family harmony and reduce the quality of communication between parents and children. Children who play too often in cyberspace can become more introverted, less sensitive to other people's feelings, and have difficulty communicating well in the family. This is one of the main reasons why parents need to have a parenting guide that is smart and in accordance with the development of the digital age like today. (Ulfah, 2020)

In the era of digital technology, parents need to try harder to understand the character of children who grow up as a digital generation. Parents must also prepare themselves to be able to accompany and guide their children actively and intelligently If the use of gadgets is not properly restricted, it can cause disharmony in the family and reduce the intensity of communication between parents and children. Children can be affected by negative things that can interfere with their development. There are parents who welcome technological advances with a positive attitude, because they see many opportunities and benefits that can be obtained. However, there are also those who feel excessive fear and anxiety, so they only focus on the bad side of technological developments. (Ruslan, 2023)

In addition, using technology too often can interfere with the development of children's social skills. Many children now prefer to communicate through social media or play online games rather than talking directly to friends or family members. As a result, they can have trouble building good social relationships in real life. This problem becomes even more complex if parents do not set clear time limits for the use of technology or do not participate in their children's digital activities. (Satura, 2024)

Digital parenting is an effort by parents to guide their children so that they can use technology wisely. This includes the role of parents in directing, supervising, and accompanying children when using digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and the internet. Digital parenting is a way for parents to manage and assist children and adolescents in using technology. This involves a variety of actions, from monitoring gadget and internet use, to helping children develop digital skills and supporting their learning process through technology. The main goal is so that children can use technology safely, not excessively, and for useful things. Parents can control what their children see, limit time to play with gadgets, and teach children about the importance of being kind on the internet, protecting personal information, and recognizing the good and bad impacts of technology.(Shibgohtullah, 2024) (Rahman, 2025) (Supartiwi, 2020)

Digital parenting (*digital parenting*) plays an important role in guiding children to be able to use technology positively and productively. According to

Pratama, parents need to provide education about the benefits and risks of using technology, supervise what children see or access, and accompany them during digital activities. Educational applications and interactive games can help improve children's thinking skills. Through proper supervision from parents, technology can be used as a means to help children's learning process, both at home and at school. (Pratama, 2022) (Yusuf, 2020)

Digital parenting aims to strike a balance between keeping children safe and giving freedom in using technology. Parents are expected to be able to do the following: (Supartiwi, 2020)

1. Protect children from dangers in the digital world, such as inappropriate content, online bullying (*cyberbullying*), and privacy concerns. (Wulansari, 2017)
2. Helping children understand how to use technology wisely, so that they can think critically, use technology positively, and are not easily influenced by bad things.
3. Teach good manners and responsibility in cyberspace, including maintaining privacy and being kind when communicating online.
4. Encourage children to use technology positively, for example to learn, create, and develop their abilities.

In this way, children can grow up to be smart and responsible users of technology.

Excessive use of gadgets by children and adolescents can have adverse impacts, such as impaired growth and development, addiction to technology, and physical and mental health problems. Children can be less active, have difficulty socializing, and experience sleep disturbances or tired eyes Therefore, the role of parents is very important in guiding children. They can set screen time limits, choose the right content, and encourage children to do various other activities such as playing, reading, or exercising. With the right guidance and attention, children can grow up healthy and wise in using technology. (Widyanigsih, 2023)

To avoid these things, parents need to limit their children's time using gadgets, provide useful play activities, choose appropriate content, be a good example, and actively communicate and be involved in children's activities. In addition, it is also important to make family rules and provide education about the dangers of excessive use of gadgets. With the right parenting style and attention from parents, it is hoped that children can grow up healthy and learn to use technology wisely in this digital age. (Widyanigsih, 2023)

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that parents have a crucial role in instilling literacy habits and directing the use of technology in children from an early age. Literacy, which includes the ability to read, write, and think critically, needs to be instilled through habituation in the family, school, and community environment. However, in today's digital era, major challenges arise from the excessive use of gadgets, which have the potential to interfere with children's development, both from physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects.

For this reason, a wise and balanced parenting pattern is needed through a digital parenting approach. Parents need to limit screen time, choose appropriate

content, be role models, and encourage children to do positive activities such as reading, playing, or discussing. In addition, collaboration between parents, schools, and the surrounding environment has an important role in supporting children's development holistically. Through the attention, direction, and continuous support of parents, children can grow up to be intelligent, responsible, and able to use technology wisely. This effort is also the main foundation in forming a generation that is literate, has strong character, and is ready to face various challenges in the future.

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