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**Student's Attachment to Social Media and the Challenges
of Moderate Islamic Education**
(Implementation During the Covid-19 Pandemic)

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STUDENT'S ATTACHMENT TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CHALLENGES OF MODERATE ISLAMIC EDUCATION (Implementation During the Covid-19 Pandemic)

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Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic, students' dependence on gadgets and social media is stronger through online-based learning. The attachment of school-age children to gadgets and social media is prone to intersect with intolerant religious content and narratives. It is a challenge to implement moderate Islamic education in education units. This study explored the problem of school-age children's attachment to devices and analyzes the challenges of implementing moderate Islamic education in education units during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is library research with a descriptive method. The data in this study were obtained from relevant documents regarding the research. At the same time, the primary data was a document resulting from the KPAI survey with a total sample of 14,169 respondents spread across 34 provinces in Indonesia. In contrast, secondary data were studies that were relevant to this research. This study indicated that the attachment of school-age children to gadgets and social media can be directed at strengthening moderate Islamic values through several educational contents. With intensive supervision and assistance from parents on gadgets and social media, school-age children can be controlled from content that leads to narratives of intolerance, extremism, and radicalism.

Keywords: Students; Gadget; Moderate Islam; Covid-19 Pandemic.



A. Introduction

The fundamental problem of this study departs from the phenomenon of school-age children's dependence on gadgets and social media, which has strengthened since the Covid-19 pandemic. Online learning also increases children's frequency of using gadgets to access materials and do schoolwork. This condition itself is a challenge to instill the values of religious moderation (moderate Islam) in school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questions that become the significance of this study include, why is the attachment of school-age children to gadgets and social media a challenge in the implementation of moderate Islamic education during the Covid-19 pandemic?

In the industrial era 4.0, social media users in Indonesia reached 80% of the 150 million active users, including students. Among students, social media users are 12 years and over, with a presentation of 93% (Daulay et al., 2020); (Sutrisno, 2020). In line with The Asia Parent Insight research, 98% of 2,714 parents in Southeast Asia with children aged 3-8 years permitted their children to access all forms of gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers. The survey found that most parents allow their children to use gadgets to learn. However, this is inversely proportional to the survey results that gadgets are mainly used to seek pleasure or entertainment, such as playing games (Setioninggrum, 2019).

Gadgets and social media can be positively oriented by accessing educational applications or content such as Islamic encyclopedias, learning the Quran, guessing pictures and puzzles, and learning foreign languages. Gadgets can foster children's enthusiasm for learning and religious understanding with educational applications (Bruder, 2014). In particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions cannot conduct face-to-face learning, so gadgets are an essential medium for learning (Daniel, 2020). However, it is unfortunate, based on the results of the KPAI survey in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, gadgets were not only used as learning media but also for other activities such as playing online games, watching Youtube, and playing social media (KPAI 2020).

Therefore, the creativity of parents is needed in educating their children. Some things that parents can do include providing more exciting and healthier media for children, whether playing or studying. Childhood is also called the golden age, so parents must be technology literate. Parents must always supervise and guide their children regarding gadgets usage due to the negative impact of gadgets when misused. School-age children are future assets that require special attention because, at this time, motor intelligence, thinking intelligence, emotional intelligence, language, and communication intelligence begin to develop (Sunita & Mayasari, 2018); (Hijriyani & Astuti, 2020).

Other studies highlight that using gadgets and social media during a pandemic is crucial for teaching and learning activities (Pachiyappan et al., 2021). Parents, teachers, and students will always use this technology to carry out two-way communication both during class hours and outside of class to evaluate the development of students at home. Reberts et al. also said that messaging is the most important activity that parents, teachers, and students use using their gadgets (Nadeem & Ahmed, 2020).

A pediatrician from the United States, Cris Rowan, confirmed that gadgets in school-age children or under 12 are prohibited. At this age, school-age children's interest in gadgets is playing games, watching animations, and searching for learning materials via the internet. What Rowan said is the same as the rules made by the Canadian Association of Pediatricians and the American Academy of Pediatrics, which state that children aged 0-2 should not be exposed to technology at all. Children aged 3-5 years are allowed to use technology with a time limit of one hour a day, and children aged 6-18 are allowed to use technology for 2 hours per day. If the use of technology exceeds the specified time limit, it will have a severe health risk (Rowan, 2013).

Excessive use of gadgets and social media for school-age children or students can kill their sensitivity to ethics. Students as virtual media users who do not have self-control will eventually be carried away in a mirage and illusion (Watie, 2016). The virtual world for school-age



children is without boundaries that connect various parties without any filters. Of course, the ease of accessing social media can cause problems for various parties, such as educational institutions, and lead to access to damaging information such as intolerance, extremism, and radicalism (Afif & Dwijayanto, 2021); (Dachlan, 2020).

In this case, using social media by school-age children who do not have a robust religious understanding tends to facilitate and direct them to da'wah that does not save (Setyawan, 2020). School-age children as icons of the click generation make them addicted to gadgets so that they do not filter the information they receive (Syahputra, 2020). On the other hand, the fame of social media brings challenges for religious authorities. Social media can shift traditional religious sovereignty with Kyai as central figures and Islamic boarding schools as moderate educational institutions. However, during the current digital revolution, gadgets and social media have fulfilled all human needs for information, science, and especially religious knowledge (Peters, 2017).

Moral degradation among students is one of the impacts of rapid technological progress that is not balanced with an increase in character quality. On the other hand, technological advances influence the formation of students' identities. Like social media, it is a tool to mobilize the masses and dramatically influences the development of the intolerance movement, especially for school-age children. It causes social clashes among the nation's children (Effendi, 2020). At the same time, social media has opened up vast opportunities for various society to interpret their religious understanding in the digital space. The media development is increasingly crowded, causing every social media user, including students, to follow the news flow 24/7. The increasing number of information outlets has reflected various political and religious ideologies. The possibility to personalize and filter the content provided on social media has put users in an echo chamber according to the information received in the digital room (Cardenal et al., 2019).

The Ministry of Religion Research and Development of Indonesia (2019) states that the challenges and problems are the domino effects in



the era of disruption. In the era of technological disruption, students become users who experience a flood of information. So, moderate Islamic education can be a proper value for managing information and minimizing hoaxes. Religious moderation teaches lessons to think and act wisely, not fanatical or blindly obsessed with one person's or group's religious views, without considering other people or groups (Bokhari, 2004). Terri Muttahhari said the PPIM UIN Jakarta national survey in 2017 showed that the internet had a significant influence on increasing intolerance in the millennial generation or generation Z. Students who do not have internet access have more moderate attitudes than those who have internet access. As many as 84.94% have access to the internet, while the remaining 15.06% do not have internet access. Most students rely more on the virtual world as a source of religious learning. As many as 54.37% of students learn about religion from the internet, be it social media, blogs, or websites (Effendi, 2020).

The spread of intolerance and radicalism narratives through social media has been countered, including by the virtual *santri* community, which seeks to shift content that leads to radicalism through the production of positive content and work together to make the content go viral. With these efforts, harmful content will be shifted by itself (Syahputra, 2020). In line with Yusmicha and Arik's opinion that through creative content, children such as the NU Kids application can provide education in the form of encyclopedias and fun games for children to get to know the history and religious practices of Nahdlatul Ulama. The NU Kids application can be an alternative to digital literature in nurturing religious moderation in children (Afif & Dwijayanto, 2021).

On the other hand, according to Ayyub, Digital Parenting is very much needed by parents to accompany school-age children using gadgets and social media. Through Digital Parenting, parents can physically and mentally identify school-age children, intelligence development, and children's social environment to stem hoax news about school-age children and not be influenced by negative things (Ayub, 2021). From this



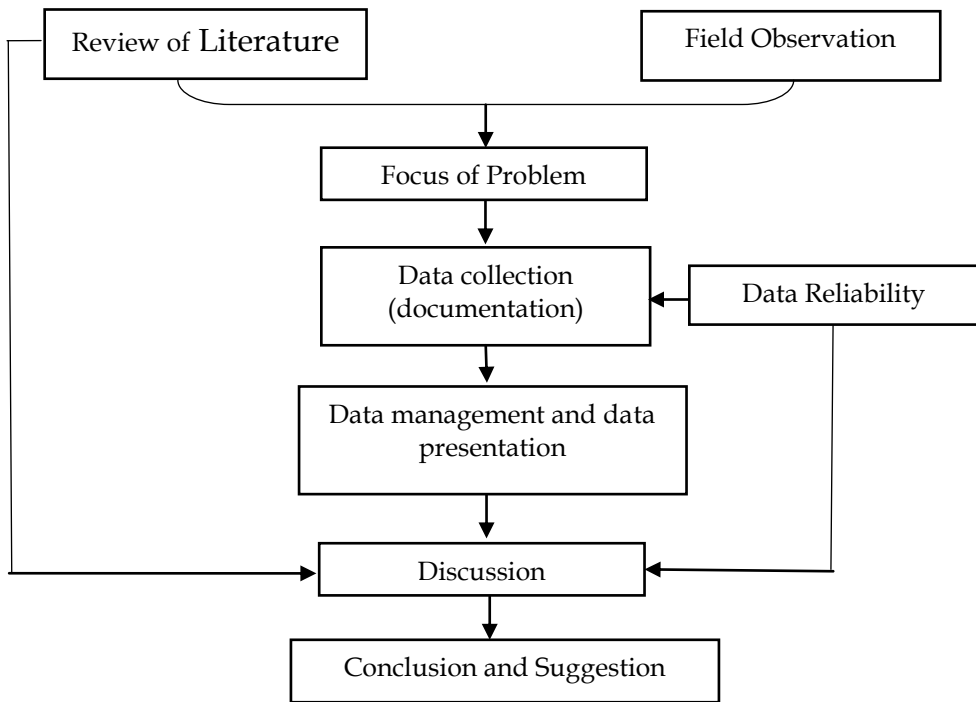
data, it can be seen how important it is for parents always to accompany and supervise school-age children regarding gadgets. It is done to avoid the destructive effects of gadgets. It is undeniable that applications and content created in gadgets are beautiful for school-age children. These applications and content are not found in books, magazines, and comics, plus the various games installed in them are attractive for children, especially children, making them forget the time and ignore their environment (Rohayani, 2020). Based on social facts in the field, this study aims to analyze children's attachment to gadgets and social media and the challenges in implementing moderate Islamic education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the covid-19 pandemic, gadgets and social media have two sides, namely positive and negative sides. During the pandemic, gadgets and social media are used as media in the online learning process (Rosa, 2021) and a tool to get as much information as possible without limits (Khan et al., 2021). However, these gadgets and social media also negatively affect children's development. According to (Budianto et al., 2022), in her research, the more modern gadgets and the more children understand social media can affect their concentration on learning. Children's addiction to technology can affect several things, namely the association of children's environment that is not healthy, the formation of children's character, and decreased academic achievement (Chinomona et al., 2013).

B. Method

This research is library research with a descriptive-analytical method. Researchers collect materials that are used as data from scientific journals, books, literature, and publications that are worthy of being a source of data for this research. The primary data for this study were obtained from the results of the KPAI survey percentage assessment related to parental assistance for school-age children and the percentage of children's attachment survey results to the features available on gadgets. Moreover, the sample from the KPAI survey is the sample of parents, as

many as 14,169 respondents, and the sample of children, as many as 14,169 respondents spread over 34 provinces in Indonesia. In contrast, secondary or supporting data in this study are relevant to this research's theme. The stages of this research are described as follows:



Based on the picture above, the stage in this research is initiated by the researcher making independent observations about the theme to be determined. Moreover, at the same time, the researcher also conducts a literature review from various references to the research to be studied. This reference allows the researcher to provide options and input when this research is carried out. After reading some references continued to focus on the problem. The focus of the research problem is on documentation related to parental assistance to school-age children and the results on children's attachment to the features available in gadgets and some other supporting data. The data analysis technique is in the form of descriptive-analytical. This method is used to process data from



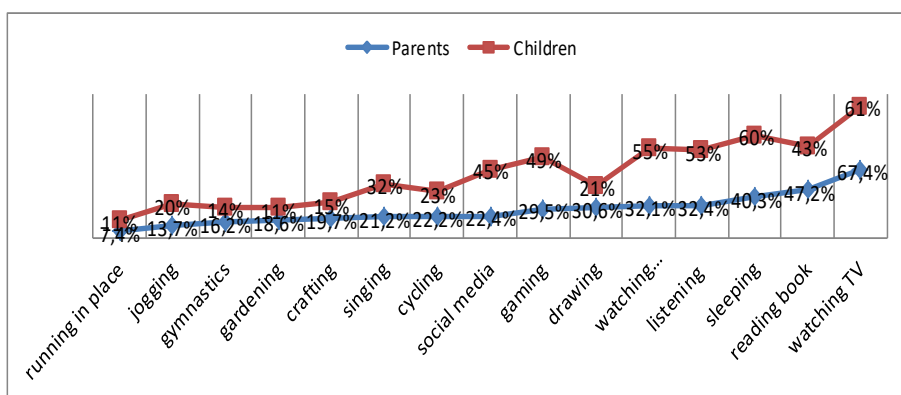
documentation regarding aspects of school-age children's activities during the Covid-19 pandemic and parental supervision of children regarding the use of gadgets. (Hennink et al., 2020).

C. Result and Discussion

1. Dynamics of School-Age Children with Gadgets and Social Media

The attachment of school-age children to gadgets and social media has intensified since the Covid-19 pandemic. Physical activity such as sports for school-age children during online learning has decreased, including activities that support creativity. Based on the results of the 2020 KPAI survey in outline, activities carried out by school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic include:

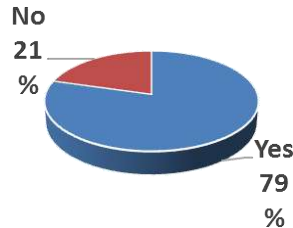
Table 1: School-Age Children's Activities During Covid-19



The table above can be seen the activities of school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic on social media. Playing games, watching YouTube, and television is higher than other activities like cycling, gardening, gymnastics, and jogging. It can be concluded that the dependence of school-age children on gadgets and social media has increased significantly. Parents are indeed involved in this regarding Permission to use these gadgets. As stated in the survey on parents' Permission to school-age children to use gadgets besides learning, the survey on ownership of gadgets for children:



Table 2: Parent's Permission Regarding the use of Gadget for School-Age Children and Its Ownership.

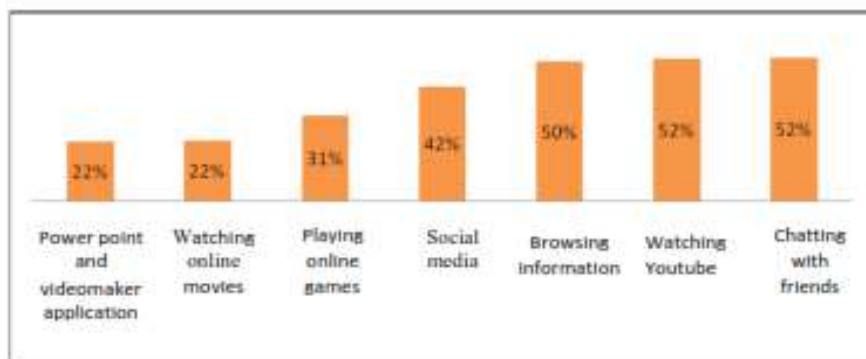


Source: KPAI 2020's survey

The survey results show that as many as 79% of school-age children are allowed to use gadgets other than studying, and 21% of parents only allow their children to use gadgets for studying. It will undoubtedly harm the development of school-age children, especially those who do not get direct supervision from their parents.

Gadgets provide positive benefits when used correctly and well and negatively impact if their use is excessive and uncontrolled (Al Sagr & Al Sagr, 2020). School-age children who cannot manage time and cannot choose educational content will undoubtedly be negatively influenced. Various exciting applications and games make school-age children addicted, as stated in the KPAI 2020 survey regarding the features accessed by children during the pandemic:

Table 3: Result of the survey Regarding Gadget Usage Beside Studying.

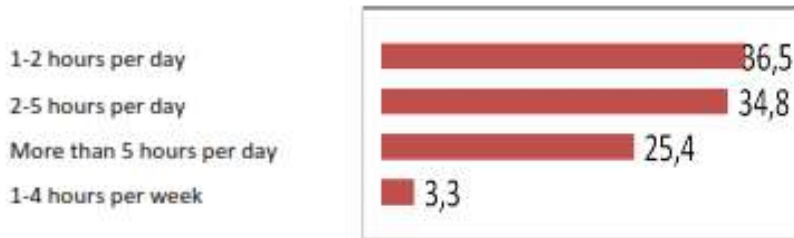


From the graph above, it can be seen the percentage of use of gadgets for school-age children outside of study hours. School-age children most often use gadgets to chat with friends and watch YouTube, with a percentage of 52%, to find information by 50%, used for social media as much as 42%, to play online games by 31%, and the rest is to watch online movies and other applications as much as 22%. (Widodo & Sutisna, 2021) the research found that students did not use gadgets and internet quota subsidies to study in the field. However, indications of misuse of gadgets as learning media can be seen in children's many activities who prefer to play online games, watch YouTube, and other social media content (Susanto & Hakim, 2021). The results of other studies also say from interviews with parents that children are more likely to like playing online games than studying (Marhaeni Pudji Astuti et al., 2018).

According to (Mustafaoğlu et al., 2018), school-age children have gadgets with restrictions on their use according to their respective ages. Children are more likely to use gadgets only for entertainment in early childhood or elementary school. Meanwhile, middle-aged children use gadgets for entertainment and also for their hobbies. For middle-aged children, the most use of gadgets is entertainment and social media with colleagues.

The influence of gadgets on human life is significant, from children to adults. Psychologically, school-age children are the most vulnerable period if they learn something inappropriate for their age. If school-age children are addicted to gadgets, this will affect their psychological and intellectual development (Suhana, 2017). Moreover, school-age children learn from what they hear and see. In addition, without realizing it, children often apply "What You See is What You Get." In its implementation, this means that school-age children assume that what they see and hear is a lesson, so if children do not get direction and guidance, it will lead to the negative impact of gadgets, as is data about time allocation in using gadgets outside of study hours from the results of the 2020 KPAI survey.

Table 4: KPAI 2020' Survey Result Regarding Gadget Time Beyond Study Time

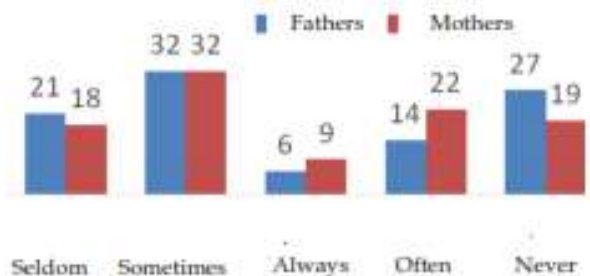


Based on the graph above, the allocation of time used by school-age children in using gadgets outside of study hours is very loose; if the graph says that the use of gadgets with a duration of 1-2 hours per day is 36.5%, the remaining 63.5% use gadgets more than 2 hours a day. So, in this case, education related to the use and use of gadgets for school-age children is urgent to be used for self-development and their creativity and to strengthen religious values.

2. The Urgency of Parental Assistance for School-Age Children in the Use of Gadgets and Social Media

Parental assistance for school-age children is critical in using gadgets and social media. However, it is unfortunate that this has not received parents' attention. As released from the results of the KPAI 2020 survey, the intensity of parental assistance to school-age children related to the use of gadgets and social media is below:

Table 5: Survey Results of Parental Assistance to School-Age Children Regarding the use of Gadgets and Social Media.

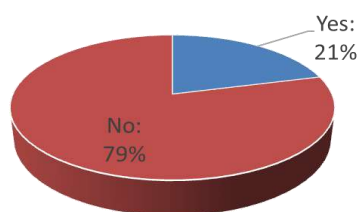


Source: KPAI 2020



From the graph above, we can see that during the Covid-19 pandemic, most parents did not assist their children when playing with gadgets. The survey results also show that mothers often assist children when using gadgets compared to fathers. More than that, rules from parents to children regarding the use of gadgets need to be made to regulate the allocation of time for children to play with gadgets and social media. It is as evidenced by the results of the KPAI survey in 2020.

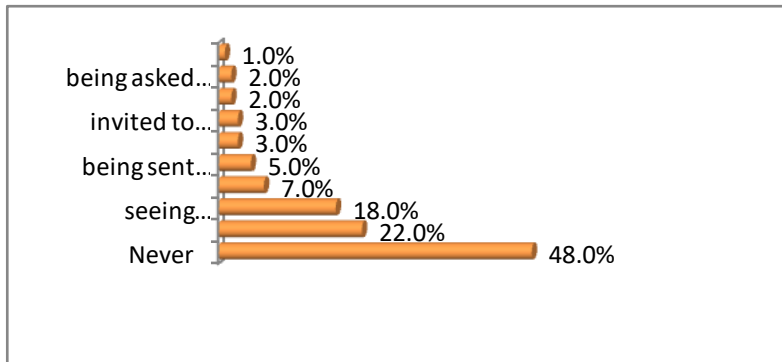
Table 6: Rules For Using Gadgets From Parents



The survey results also show that most parents do not make rules for their children using gadgets. It can be concluded that school-age children have the freedom to use their gadgets. According to (Mustafaoğlu et al., 2018), it is essential to impose limits on children and adolescents regarding gadgets. It is essential to monitor the time, frequency, and content viewed when using technology as a parent. Providing such supervision allows children to have and develop opportunities for adequate physical activity, healthy eating habits, proper sleep cycles, and maintaining an excellent social environment (Martinez, 1994).

Therefore, supervision of school-age children from both parents is needed to find out what information or content children access (Wijaya & Sandriya, 2019). With this, parents can guide children when they access information or features that they should not have to avoid the negative impacts of using the gadget itself, for example, the influence of radicalism, impolite shows, acts of fraud, and the like (Susanto, 2021). Specifically, below are the things that school-age children get when accessing the internet through their gadgets:

Table 7: KPAI 2020's Survey Result

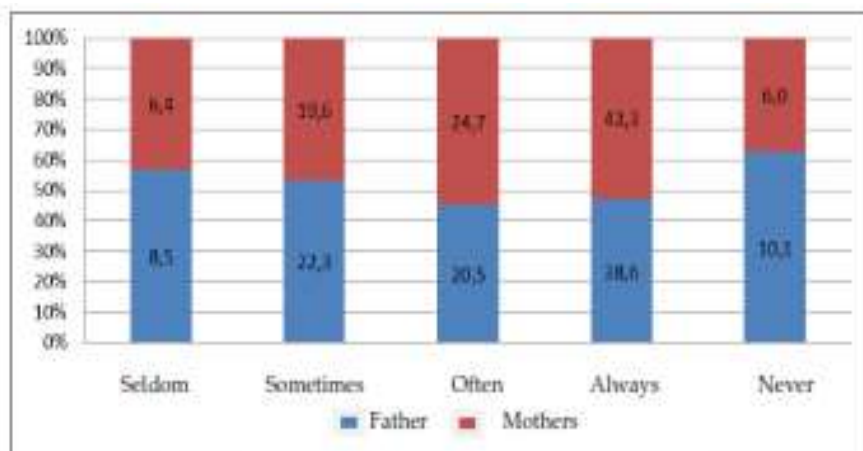


To optimize supervision of the use of gadgets for school-age children, several aspects need to be considered by parents, including when parents give personal gadgets to children, the email account used belongs to the parents so that activities using the internet will be directly integrated can be supervised by parents. Likewise, when school-aged children use social media, restrictions must be placed on allowing children to follow or make friends with their peers (Widodo & Wartoyo, 2020). Parents must also be firm by making a "No Gadget" rule for school-age children after *maghrib* time until 9 pm. This time is an adequate time for school-age children to learn. In this case, parental example is needed by not showing parental activities using gadgets, exceptionally high intensity. Parents are also advised to provide explanations and directions in a language that children can easily understand when they access content that is not appropriate for their age (Fadzil et al., 2016).

In addition to supervising the use of gadgets, of course, parental direction and guidance are also essential. Parents must provide knowledge about the effects of excessive use of gadgets. Below is the data from the 2020 KPAI survey results regarding parents' explanations to their children regarding the benefits and negative impacts of gadgets.



Table 8: The Results of the Survey on Parents' Explanations to their Children About the Positive Benefit and Negative Effect of Gadgets.



Based on the table above, the mother often explains the benefits and negative impacts of using gadgets with 43%, while the father has 38.6%. As many as 10% of fathers did not explain the benefits and negative impacts of using gadgets during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parental assistance on the use of gadgets is critical, considering that gadgets can also negatively influence children apart from having a positive influence. The adverse effects of using gadgets for children include: 1) accelerated brain development of children, 2) stunted intelligence development, 3) overweight, 4) sleep disorders, 5) psychological disorders, 6) aggressiveness, 7) decreased numeracy skills, 8) addiction, 9) exposed to electromagnetic waves. At the same time, the positive benefits of gadgets for children are that they can foster enthusiasm and interest in learning (Sudiyono & Astuti, 2021). Parents must also be aware of their duties and responsibilities in modeling the appropriate use of technology while maintaining a balance between the use of technology and other activities.

The assistance of parents for school-age children in using gadgets and social media is urgent during the pandemic and post-Covid-19 pandemic. It is due to the spread of negative behavior from the effects of excessive gadget usage without assistance from parents. This supervision is carried out because children can be exposed to harmful content such as pornography,

violence, and radicalism through gadgets. As the KPAI data reveals, the time limit that must be given by parents to children when using gadgets for children aged 13 years and under is allowed to play games but must not exceed one hour, and children aged 13 years and over are allowed to play online games. For two hours and not allowed at once (KPAI, 2019).

3. Challenges of Implementation of Moderate Islamic Education for School-Age Children During the Covid-19 Pandemic

This study's term "moderate" is not easy to interpret and understand. The term moderate is a term whose meaning is being contested by various groups (highly contested concept), both internally and externally, in this case, non-Muslims. The meaning and understanding of moderate Islam vary depending on who and what context it is approached and understood (Bokhari, 2004). Muhammad Ali's understanding of moderate Islam is that moderate Islam in Indonesia refers to the Muslim community that relies on normal behavior (*tawassuth*) in implementing the religious teachings they defend; those who are moderate will be tolerant of differences of opinion, prefer to avoid violence, and prioritize thinking and dialogue as problem-solving strategies (Prasetiawati, 2017).

The implementation of moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic faced several challenges, including (Guan et al., 2020), the lack of digital religious literature with moderate Islamic narratives for children, inadequate parental supervision of digital content accessed by children during online learning, and limit the interaction of children with religious institutions including figures such as *kyai*, *ustadz*, madrasa teachers during the covid-19 pandemic. So special efforts and strategies are needed to implement moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Efforts that can be made include increasing parental supervision during online learning assistance at home. This effort is expected to minimize and control children's digital content (Lorenzo et al., 2021).



Another effort that can be used as an alternative in implementing moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic is visual religious literature such as Islamic comics, Islamic encyclopedia books, and Islamic stories to reduce children's dependence on the use of gadgets. In addition, children's interactions with religious figures or figures can be done using zoom meetings or Google Meet and similar applications so that during a pandemic, children can still interact virtually with *kyai* or *ustadz*, who guide their religious behavior.

Therefore, the implementation of moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic cannot depend on digital devices alone. Instead, parents' physical presence in religious learning assistance also has a vital role in instilling moderate Islamic values for children. The implementation of moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic can be done through parents' example. Children will duplicate the behavior and religious activities of their parents. If, during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents are active in activities such as performing congregational prayers at home, reading the Koran together at home, and reading religious literature at home, the child will follow the practices that his parents have done.

D. Conclusion

Based on the study results, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of gadgets and social media by students increased significantly. As many as 70% of parents allow their children to use the technology. This gadget is used by school-age children based on online teaching and learning activities. However, not only a medium for learning about gadgets and social media. However, it is also used for many things in students' daily lives. Like, such as communicating with friends, watching youtube, social media, playing online games, etc. The use of gadgets and social media is still a tiny part of being under the supervision of parents.

The challenges of implementing moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic are increasingly



complex. The attachment of school-age children to gadgets and social media is a double-edged sword, on the one hand, it can be directed at strengthening Islamic moderation values, but on the other hand, it can also bring them closer to intolerant content, violence, and religious radicalism. Moderate Islamic education for children cannot be fully formed through digital devices but is more effective based on parents' examples as central figures in shaping and instilling moderate Islamic values in children. The use of digital devices is only a tool to internalize views in understanding moderate religious literature. Thus, the implementation of moderate Islamic education for school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic emphasizes parents' encouragement through habituation of religious activities together at home.

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