

Digital Press Social Sciences and Humanities

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Proceeding of The Non-Formal Education International Conference 2020

Alim Harun Pamungkas, Jamaris, Solfema (eds)

Developing Emotional-Social Intelligence of Early Childhood in Long-Distance Family Relationship (LDR) Through The Introduction Of Digital Literacy

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Abstract

Although they yearn for it, not all families can live together in their daily life. Many factors are causing some families to decide to live a long-distance relationship (LDR). This issue certainly will bring new problems in the provision of stimulation in the development of children's emotional-social intelligence. Children need stimulation from both parents to get their emotional-social development improved optimally. The introduction of digital literacy at an early age can be one of the creative and effective solutions for a long-distance family relationship to optimize their children's emotional-social stimulation. There are several things parents need to consider when introducing digital literacy in early childhood, including: 1) agreement from both parents; 2) schedule or time to communicate; 3) child-friendly simple application; 4) communication time limit, and 5) accompaniment for children during communication

Keywords

early childhood, emotional-social intelligence, digital literacy, long-distance family relationship (LDR)

1 Introduction

Every family dreams of an ideal family where everybody lives together in one place meets each other, chats, takes care, and gives attention and affection directly in daily life. However, human can only plan, try and pray because, at the end of the day, every decision is on god, as explained in Qur'an verses (Qur'an 2:216, 10:49, 17:85). The verses interpret that partner, prosperity, and death are god to decide. Given that, human cannot do much when god has predetermined our fate. Thus, we only need to put effort and be grateful in life so we can be blissful.

Many factors cause a family to have a long-distance relationship, such as finance, work, and education. Most adults may handle the long-distance condition and adapt quickly as they are equipped with rational consideration and psychological maturity. On the other hand, children may face different conditions especially those who are still at an early age. Early childhood is the stage when children need a figure of parents in their daily life, whom they imitate as a role model and whose behavior they learn from. Stephen R. Covey (1997) in Hamdan (2003), proposes four pivotal roles of parents: (1) As role model; parents are model and exemplary for their children. Parents' exemplary behavior takes part in children's development. Children's development of behavior, attitude, and utterance are influenced by their surroundings. In early childhood, family is the closest one because they have a limited and narrow set of interactions. Hence, parents are the model to shape their way of life; (2) As a mentor; children learn various things from their family especially parents. Children's ability to build and engage in a relationship, give affection, and protect others sincerely, honestly, and voluntarily is nurtured from home; (3) As organizer; children learn to be organizers from home. Family is like a miniature of a company that only operates with team cooperation. Family as a team helps in solving problems, performing tasks, and fulfilling family's needs; (4) As a teacher; parents as teachers in a family. The primary role of teachers for children is their family because parents teach them the basic principles and laws of life.

The big part of parents in children's development of knowledge, behavior, and skills in life will attribute to their future. For a long-distance family, they need to seek a solution to maintain the parents' role when their distance apart. As information technology is rapid, one of the solutions to solve this issue is digital media. However, digital media needs to be used correctly to ensure children's safety from the negative impact. Based on these premises, the writer entitled this research as "Developing emotional-social intelligence of early childhood in a long-distance family relationship through the introduction of digital literacy".

2 Methods

This article used the library research method. According to Sugiono (2012), library research or literature study is often used in research about culture, value, moral and social situation. Zed (2014) explains several steps when applying library research including preparing tools, arranging working bibliography, and allocating time, reading a variety of relevant references, and making notes.

3 Discussion

3.1 The Development of Emotional-Social Intelligence of Early Childhood

The intelligence development of children in the early years is holistic and rapid. Holistic, according to research, means early childhood intelligence development is comprehensive and at least is encompassed by several aspects; physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional-social, artistry, creativity, and religious morals in which the process occurs simultaneously and interconnects one another. Moreover, early childhood is the golden age of human brain development due to the interconnected process and function of cells in the brain are developed. For this reason, children can easily record and respond to outside stimulations from what they see, hear, and feel.

Emotional-social development is one of the aspects that quickly evolved in early childhood. Emotional-social intelligence consists of two components: social intelligence and emotional intelligence. Despite the differences in the aspects, both integrated into the process of development. Individuals with good social development will give a good impact on their emotional maturity. Similarly, individuals with good emotional development will have their social development optimally flourished. And this phenomenon has begun since the early years.

Social development is defined as the process of behavior development of each individual. In this context, children are required to adjust themselves to the rules in society. Yusuf 2004 in (Yahro, 2009), asserts that social development is a learning process for children to adapt to norms, morals, and traditions of a certain group. Besides, social development in early childhood occurs through a spiritual process that is rather difficult due to their egocentricity as a child. Children at an early age are only able to interpret things through their own perspective, meanwhile, in social development; they are required to follow rules that have been established in their environment outside their selves. Further, emotional development, according to Nurmalitasari (2015), is a process of feeling or affection development of an individual in a certain situation that is considered important. One's emotional condition is expressed from their attitude. The expressions can be a sense of comfort or discomfort of the current situation and interaction. In several references, comfort expression is known as positive emotion, such as; happiness, joy, delights, etc. In contrast, discomfort expression is referred to as negative emotion, such as; anger, sadness, fear, dejection, etc. Research showed that emotion takes an important part in children's development, whether in the early years or the future. As explained previously, emotion influences one's attitude. A study by Woolfson (2005) in Puspita (2011), affirms that children have emotional needs. They want to be loved and respected, feel safe, have the ability, and being able to have their ability well-developed.

Further research disclosed that the characteristics of the emotional development of early childhood differ from adults. There are six characteristics of children's emotional development in early childhood. First, emotion in early childhood occurs unexpectedly in a short time. Second, emotion in early childhood is strong and intense. Third, emotion in early childhood is light and shallow. Four, emotion in early

childhood often emerges. Five, emotion in early childhood is easily captured from their attitude and expression. Six, emotion in early childhood reflects their current feeling.

When we investigate deeper about social and emotional development in early childhood, both are influenced by the stimulations received by children from their surroundings. As explained by Montessori in Ismaniar (2018), children at early an age have yet to acquired self-concept. The analogy is that they resemble dry sponge, which is ready to absorb anything around them. Therefore, if they lack stimulation, their intelligence development will not progress optimally, as well as their social-emotional development. The closest people like parents need to provide the necessary stimulation. However, when a family encounters a long-distance relationship, it will be hard as they have a little meeting with their children. For this reason, parents need to seek a creative solution to provide stimulation for their children.

3.2 Long-Distance Family Relationship (LDR)

Marriage is a way for some people to build a family that brings along comfort in life. As stated by Papalia, Olds, & Feldman (2008), the ideal marriage is the one that gives intimacy, friendship, sexual fulfillment, togetherness, and emotional development. Various attempts were made by married couples to create an ideal family. What they do is fulfilling financial demand, social and educational needs for each member of the family. A study conducted by Qomariyah (2015) in Prameswara & Sakti (2016), shows that the family head status of a father causes them to be the breadwinner. Their role is to cover a family necessity. The sense of responsibility pushes them to work and earn to fulfill the needs of each member of the family. That is why ideal marriage life is not for everyone because, under certain conditions, a family may decide to live apart or have a long-distance relationship. Jimenez (2010) in Prameswara & Sakti (2016) argues that long-distance marriage is marked by the absence of a partner and lack of physical relationship due to the difficulty to come home in one day. In fact, no couple wishes to live apart from their loved ones, as uttered by one of the respondents of the aforementioned research (Prameswara & Sakti, 2016). Every couple feels that long-distance marriage life is hard to be done, and oftentimes, the spouse feels lonely and bored. Additionally, the long-distance relationship affects the physical, social, and psychological development of children.

3.3 Digital Literacy

Digital literacy consists of two words: literacy and digital. To understand better, we need to discuss the term one at a time. Literacy, according to Elizabeth (1986) in USAID (2014), is the language ability of an individual in communication. The ability includes reading, speaking, listening, and writing. It should be noted that every individual has a different way of delivering language and it also depends on the purpose. The government of Alberta (2009) suggests that literacy is the ability of an individual to read and write, improve their knowledge and skills, think critically when solving problems, communicate effectively, expand their potency, and participate in the community. From those definitions, we understand that literacy has a wide range of meanings. Literacy is not merely an ability to read and write but also a skill to think critically and overcome issues within oneself and in society. This point is in accordance with the Education Development Center (EDC) that describes literacy as beyond the ability to read and write. Literacy is the ability of an individual to exert their potency and skill in life. This means literacy involves the skill to read words and the world.

As for the term 'digital', it is defined as a signal or data expressed as series of digits 0 and 1 and typically represented by values of a physical quantity such as voltage and magnetic polarization. Digital is electronic technology that stores, generates, and processes data in terms of two states: positive and non-positive. Positive is represented by the digit 1 and negative is represented by the digit 0. Digital technology is widely used in the latest communication media, such as satellite and optical fiber transmission. Digital technology is a device in which manual labor is no longer needed. It is operated through a computer system or formats that are readable on a computer. Today, digital technology has advanced rapidly and can be accessed at almost all levels of society. Some familiar types of digital media in society are handphone, smartphone, notebook, and other communication media. As described above, we can define digital literacy as the ability in using various media generated by digital technology, such as handphone, smartphone, notebook, and other communication media. The purpose is as a tool in various activities in communication in solving problems encountered by individual, group, or society.

3.4 Developing Emotional-Social Intelligence of Early Childhood in Long-Distance Family Relationship (LDR) through the Introduction of Digital Literacy

Emotional-social intelligence is one of the aspects that need to be developed in early childhood. Recent research has shown that optimal emotional-social intelligence influences one's successful future. It even overthrows the cognitive intelligence factor that has been always regarded as superior by many people. It is confirmed from the research conducted by Goleman (2005), who asserts that individual with high emotional intelligence has been proved to be happier, more confident, more popular and gain more success in school and community.

As emotional-social intelligence takes a big part in childhood development, parents need to provide stimulation since the early years. Most importantly, children at an early age have their intelligence developed through the stimulation given by their environment especially parents. In this case, a family with a long-distance relationship must carry commitment and high responsibility. Parents, for this issue, need to seek a solution to ensure the children receive emotional-social stimulation from them. One of the solutions to overcome this problem creatively and effectively is to introduce digital literacy in early childhood. As previously explained, digital literacy is the ability to communicate using digital media as a tool to overcome problems. Introducing digital literacy to children means to provide the knowledge and skills in communication using digital media such as handphone, smartphone, and notebook, and other media by certain restrictions. This aims to ensure children have their parents' presence daily.

The concept and practice of introducing digital literacy do not mean handing children a handphone or smartphone as what many parents did all this time. Many parents hand their children smartphones, and they use it all day. Besides, the application installed in it is not under control. This has been the issue and causing more problems for children as it affects their physical aspect and other aspects.

Introducing digital literacy for emotional-social intelligence of children needs to be implemented with some measures, as follows: (1) Agreement and commitment from parents to provide communication time for their children, especially when one of the parents lives apart from their children (usually the father); (2) Communication schedule determines under parents' and children's agreement. It must consider many aspects, specifically opportunities spared by both parties. Both parties need to commit to the schedule because when parents infringe the commitment, it will disappoint children and affect negatively their emotional-social development; (3) Find an easy application that is child-friendly. The application that sparks happiness and joy during the interaction, for instance, it provides playable animations or interaction while singing together; (4) Communication time needs to be limited to keep children's eyes and physical health safe. It will also teach children that their parents have other activities, like working and resting. Likewise, children need to study and play with their peers; (5) Assist children during communication using digital media. Parents need to be alert in case their children misuse the application and provide directions when their children encounter difficulty during the interaction. These steps need to be addressed in introducing digital literacy for children so that families with a long-distance relationship will be able to provide stimulation and maintain their children's emotional-social development.

4 Conclusions

Based on the background of the problem, result, and discussion described above, we can conclude several points: (1) Emotional-social intelligence is one's ability to commit a relationship and interaction in the social environment, and express every feeling they have properly in various situations; (2) Emotional-social intelligence influences children's futures. Therefore, the closet people especially parents need to provide stimulation from an early age; (3) Family with a long-distance relationship needs to seek solutions or effective and creative ways to create a situation in which children receive stimulation from parents despite the long-distance; (4) Digital literacy is one of the solutions to provide children with knowledge and skills during communication using digital media. Through digital literacy, parents are available to stimulate their children's emotional-social development in a fun manner.

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