

Enhancing Parental Guidance on Children's Gadget Use through Psychoeducation: A Study in Bakalan Krapyak

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ABSTRACT

The pervasive integration of technology into daily life has significantly impacted childhood, making gadgets ubiquitous tools for entertainment and learning. While offering potential benefits, excessive or unguided gadget use in children raises concerns among parents regarding its effects on development, behavior, and well-being. This study describes a psychoeducation initiative aimed at enhancing parental assistance and guidance on children's gadget use within the community of Bakalan Krapyak. Utilizing a community-based approach, a psychoeducation program was developed and delivered to parents. The program focused on increasing parental awareness of the impacts of gadget use, identifying appropriate content and duration, and equipping parents with strategies for effective mediation and supervision. Qualitative data gathered from participants highlighted increased parental understanding of the complexities surrounding children's gadget use and a greater sense of confidence in their ability to guide their children. The findings suggest that targeted psychoeducation can be a valuable tool in empowering parents to navigate the challenges of the digital age and promote healthier gadget habits in children.

Keywords: parental guidance, gadget use, children, psychoeducation, digital parenting, screen time, family intervention, child development, Bakalan Krapyak, media literacy.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, digital technology, particularly in the form of gadgets such as smartphones and tablets, has become deeply embedded in the lives of individuals across all age groups, including young children [7, 8]. The accessibility and diverse functionalities of these devices have transformed them into prevalent tools for play, education, and social interaction [8]. While gadgets offer numerous potential advantages, such as access to educational content and development of digital literacy skills [7, 12], their widespread and often unsupervised use among children has become a significant concern for parents and educators [10, 11].

The impact of gadget use on child development is a subject of ongoing research and debate. Studies suggest that excessive screen time can be associated with various negative outcomes, including potential delays in sensory and motor development [11], impacts on psychological well-being [8], and even addiction in more extreme cases [9]. Furthermore, unmonitored access can expose children to inappropriate content, including pornography, highlighting the critical need for parental supervision and guidance [12].

Parents play a pivotal role in mediating their children's interaction with technology [2, 10]. Their attitudes, understanding, and strategies for managing gadget use significantly influence their children's habits and the overall impact of technology on their development [10]. However, many parents feel ill-equipped to navigate the rapidly evolving digital landscape and the challenges associated with regulating their children's gadget use effectively [10, 13]. There is a clear need to empower parents with knowledge and practical skills to assist their children in using gadgets in a healthy and beneficial manner [2, 13]. Psychoeducation, which involves providing individuals with information about psychological topics and coping strategies, has proven effective in various contexts [6]. Applying a psychoeducational approach to parental guidance on gadget use can equip parents with the necessary understanding of child development [6], the effects of technology [1, 7, 8], and practical strategies for setting boundaries, monitoring content, and fostering alternative activities [2, 10]. This study aimed to implement and explore the initial impact of a psychoeducation program designed to enhance parental assistance

regarding children's gadget use within the specific community of Bakalan Krapyak. The objective was to provide parents in this community with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively guide their children's engagement with gadgets.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the process and initial outcomes of a psychoeducation program for parents in Bakalan Krapyak. The focus was on understanding the parents' experiences, perceptions, and the perceived usefulness of the psychoeducation in enhancing their ability to assist their children with gadget use.

Participants

The participants were parents residing in the Bakalan Krapyak community who voluntarily participated in the psychoeducation program. A total of 35 parents attended the program sessions. Participants were recruited through community announcements and local networks. Inclusion criteria included being a parent or guardian of at least one child aged 3-12 years and residing in Bakalan Krapyak. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, ensuring adherence to ethical considerations.

Psychoeducation Program Development and Delivery

The psychoeducation program was developed based on a review of literature concerning the impact of gadget use on children [1, 7, 8, 11], effective parenting strategies in the digital age [2, 10, 13], and principles of psychoeducation [6]. The program content was structured into three main sessions:

- 1. Understanding Gadget Use in Children:** This session provided information on the prevalence of gadget use [3], potential positive and negative effects on physical, cognitive, and psychological development [1, 7, 8, 11], and recognizing signs of problematic use or potential addiction [9].
- 2. Navigating Digital Content and Safety:** This session focused on identifying age-appropriate content, understanding online risks, and strategies for ensuring children's safety while using gadgets, including the importance of parental monitoring [12, 13].
- 3. Effective Parental Guidance and Mediation:** This session equipped parents with practical strategies for setting healthy limits on screen time, establishing family rules, encouraging alternative activities (such as imaginative play [5] and reading [10]), promoting open communication with children about gadget use, and being positive role models [2].

The psychoeducation program was delivered over three weekly sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes, conducted at a central community location in Bakalan Krapyak. The delivery methods included presentations, group discussions, Q&A sessions, and sharing of practical tips and resources. The language used was accessible and tailored to the local context.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with a subset of 10 participating parents immediately following the completion of the psychoeducation program. The interview questions focused on their experiences with the program, their key takeaways, perceived changes in their understanding and confidence, and how they planned to apply the learned strategies. Interview data were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The transcribed interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis [4]. The analysis involved reading through the transcripts to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to the parents' perceptions of the psychoeducation program and its impact on their approach to guiding children's gadget use. Codes were developed to categorize the data, and these codes were then grouped into broader themes.

RESULTS

The psychoeducation program in Bakalan Krapyak was well-received by the participating parents. Attendance was consistent across the three sessions. The qualitative data from the interviews revealed several key themes regarding the program's impact:

Increased Awareness and Understanding:

Parents frequently expressed that the program significantly increased their awareness of both the potential benefits and risks associated with children's gadget use. Many acknowledged that they had previously lacked a clear understanding of the developmental impacts discussed [1, 7, 8, 11]. One parent commented, "I didn't realize how much it could affect their brain development [11]. Now I understand why limiting time is so important." The sessions on online safety and content appropriateness were particularly eye-opening for many, highlighting risks they were previously unaware of [12].

Enhanced Confidence in Parental Role:

A prominent theme was the increased sense of confidence parents felt in their ability to guide their children's gadget use. Before the program, many expressed feeling overwhelmed or unsure how to effectively manage their children's screen time [10]. The practical strategies provided, such as setting clear rules and encouraging alternative activities [2], empowered them. As one parent stated, "I feel much more confident now in talking to my child about their gadget use and setting boundaries. I have actual steps I can follow."

Intention to Implement Strategies:

Parents consistently articulated their intention to implement the strategies learned during the psychoeducation. Specific techniques mentioned included establishing gadget-free times, monitoring browsing history, and actively engaging in non-screen activities with their children [2, 10]. There was a clear motivation to apply the knowledge gained to create healthier digital habits within their families.

Value of Community Learning:

Several parents highlighted the benefit of participating in the program alongside other parents from their community. Sharing experiences and challenges with peers provided a sense of solidarity and mutual support, reinforcing the learning [29]. The group discussions facilitated a sense of shared responsibility in addressing the issue within Bakalan Krapyak.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that a targeted psychoeducation program can be an effective intervention for enhancing parental guidance on children's gadget use within a community setting like Bakalan Krapyak. The program successfully increased parental awareness of the multifaceted impacts of technology on children [1, 7, 8, 11] and equipped them with practical strategies for effective mediation [2, 10].

The reported increase in parental confidence is a crucial outcome. Feeling empowered and knowledgeable is essential for parents to take an active and consistent role in managing their children's digital lives [10, 13]. By providing concrete tools and information, the psychoeducation helped to alleviate some of the uncertainty and challenges parents face in the digital age. The intention to implement the learned strategies indicates a positive shift in parental behavior and a commitment to fostering healthier gadget habits in their children. This aligns with the understanding that parental involvement and guidance are key determinants of how children use technology [2, 10].

The positive reception of the program and the value placed on community learning underscore the importance of delivering

such interventions in an accessible and supportive environment. Psychoeducation delivered within the community can leverage existing social networks and create a shared understanding and approach among parents facing similar challenges.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has several limitations. The qualitative design provides rich insights into parental perceptions but does not quantitatively measure changes in children's gadget use or developmental outcomes. The sample size was relatively small and limited to one community, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data with quantitative measures of screen time, parental practices, and child outcomes. A control group could also be included to more rigorously assess the program's efficacy.

Furthermore, this study focused on the immediate impact of the psychoeducation. Longitudinal research is needed to determine the long-term effects of the program on parental practices and children's gadget habits over time. Exploring the most effective delivery methods (e.g., in-person, online, blended) and the optimal duration and frequency of sessions could also inform future program development. Finally, adapting the psychoeducation content to address the specific needs and cultural contexts of different communities would be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the potential of psychoeducation as a valuable tool for enhancing parental guidance on children's gadget use. The program implemented in Bakalan Krapyak successfully increased parental awareness, boosted their confidence, and motivated them to adopt healthier strategies for managing their children's engagement with technology. By empowering parents with knowledge and practical skills, such initiatives can contribute to promoting responsible and beneficial gadget use among children, ultimately supporting their healthy development in the digital age.

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