ONLINE PARENTING: SOLUTION FOR THE "BUSY-BEE" PARENTS

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Abstract

The school has become a second home for children at today age. Children spent more time at school rather than at home. Word "Parent" has taken new meaning since "biological" parents have transferred some of their responsibilities to "mandatory" parents at school. The practice has now been further intensified by the use of Information Technology (IT) that facilitates distance interface communication between the parent-school-children. With online services, the parent can real-timely monitor the baby and the baby sitter or teacher while doing her/his task in a separate location. Consequently, a new parenting style is then needed. Online parenting is becoming a new trend in urban society. This short article is intended to provide an overview and suggestion on how to use social media for parenting education. The online parenting program has currently popular with social media users. The common applications used are WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. These applications provide a way out to interact among parents, parents and teacher, parents and grandparents, and also parents and experts. The use of social media for parenting purpose requires some basic rules and arrangement to be agreed among the participants; otherwise, its importance will be degraded and its role as parenting platform will not function as expected. Online parenting program benefits the "busy-bee" parents with: (1) time management, (2) knowledge gathering, and (3) promoting the partnership. Sharing information and participation are much easier by using this online parenting programme especially in selecting priority characters to be introduced at school and then powering them up at home. The parallel system used by both biological and mandatory parents will reinforce the intended characters built in the child.

Keywords: Online Parenting, Social Media, Parent's Involvement

INTRODUCTION

Some say that home is where the heart is, where love resides or where memories are created. The current situation shows that some school has been accepting pupils from early in the morning until late in the afternoon with its school care program. With most of the time spent at school and built interaction with people other than parents; the situation creates a new meaning of home for children. There will be two kinds of parents for them. One kind is the biological parent, while the second will be the mandatory parents. The "biological parents" are the one who provides DNA for the children. According to Merriam-Webster, "biological parent" means "one's natural parent or the woman who gave birth to a child or the man who is related by birth to a child". They are also usually will provide financial and well-being support to the child. Another term is "mandatory parents" that mean people who are given the mandate to act as parents for the child. This mandatory parent is also known as a teacher. Government regulation No 14 year 2005 defined "the teacher is a professional educator with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, evaluating, and evaluating students in early childhood education in formal education,

basic education, and secondary education". Thus with more than 50% time spent at school, the teachers surely becoming parents.

These two types of parents have big influences on the lives of children. Their mutual participation in child care services will ensure the best result for children. In bridging and connecting the teacher-the parent and the children, the IT plays a vital and strategic role in the current childcare service. The children who spend a lot of time at school with extra care program should be facilitated by a better communication programme to maintain the relationship with the biological parent. However, not all parents and schools utilize online facilities appropriately. Many schools reported that they are having difficulties to talk with the "biological' parents. This situation appeared because both "biological" father and mother are working so that it is hard to find the "appropriate" time to do some discussion. Thus, a bridge such as the parenting program is needed to accommodate the situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW
As an institution, a school has to inform its stakeholders about what happens with their responsibility. It will need to provide reports or knowledge transfer to its patrons. The school usually arranges transfer information through a meeting. This meeting will share information about children growth, development, and well-being. It is called parenting program. The common meeting between teachers to parents is when the school gives reports about the children's progress at the end of each semester. However, sometimes the biological parents' presence is not as high as expected. Many do not come to school to take the report alas sending another person or when they do come, they cannot spend enough time to talk about their children's progress. The situation also creates gaps between teacher and parents about the expected development of the children. Parents need to know about their childhood development.

The importance of parenting program to facilitate better participation of parent in education has been discussed at length by practitioners. For example, Suyadi and Maulidia (2013, p. 43) explained that:

> "Knowledge and understanding of parents in parenting with children is very influential on the growth and development of children and their future. The parents need to be given skills in educating children in the family, knowledge of nurturing and guiding children so that they will become qualified human resources in the future. Seeing these conditions, the parenting program is one of the tools that can be utilized in improving the quality of being a parent in the family. One of them is the cultivation of attitudes or behavior of child-friendly parents such as friendly education, friendly nutrition, friendly care, and friendly protection so that the needs of their children will affect the phases of child development in a structured and orderly manner". (Maulidia, 2013, p. 43)

Proceeding the 4.0 industrial era, today's world is all about digital. It affects not only children and teenager as an alpha generation but also adults who are Y and Z generation. This Y and Z generation is born from 1977 to 2010 and they are all part of a family who takes important roles in educating young children (Ambardewi, 2018). This digital world also affects the social life with the invented gadgets and software

applications, which is in the educational world is called communication and information technology. This technology affects many areas of human life. It becomes inseparable equipment for many people and industries, not only for personal individual purposes but also for incorporations activities, not only parents but also teachers take part in using the information technology for their own purposes. Munir (2009, pp. 1-4) stated:

> "Information and communication technology is an inseparable equivalent that contains a broad understanding of all activities related to the processing, manipulation, management, and transfer of information between media. Information and communication technology include various aspects involving technology, engineering, and management techniques used in controlling and processing information and its use, computers, and machine (computer) and human relations, and matters relating to social, economic and cultural aspects". (Munir, 2009, pp. 1-4)

The main objective of parenting program is to connect teacher and parents to discuss or exchange information about the children's growth and development. By considering the massive use of social media within the community, it is strategic to introduce the online parenting program, especially for the digital society. There are some applications popularly used by the community; such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and online messaging.

Yusmita, et al. (2018) describe the WhatsApp as a messaging application for smartphones with a basic similar to BlackBerry Messenger. WhatsApp has been used as a social chat media where you can exchange information between individuals and groups. WhatsApp Messenger uses the internet data package or WIFI connection for data communication. The advantages of WhatsApp are that the platform integrates all needed communication channel such as text messages, images, audio, and video conference.

This shows some advantages that can be used from WhatsApp for the purpose of intensifying parenting communication between teacher and parents. WhatsApp Group can be used by the teacher to share information with a group of parents in his/her class without bothering sending the same general information to each parent. WhatsApp also can be used to send pictures or videos of classroom activities for parents to see what is happening in the class. The teacher also can do a video call with parents to talk about a child's personal information without having to ask parents to come to school, or even he/she can show the progress of the children by using this video call.

Another application is Instagram or IG. Instagram focuses on sharing photos and short duration videos (Sari & Pribadi, 2017). The teacher can use this IG to share pictures and short videos about each child to the parents. There is also an application called Twitter. With this application, the teacher can share information or stories about children on its wall because Twitter provides a microblog feature which can accommodate 140 characters (Azeharie & Kusuma, 2014). With this facility, teacher can write a story about a child and tag the child's parents.

Facebook is the first social media introduced on the internet in 2004 and soon followed by millions of people. According to its homepage, Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life (Facebook.com, 2018). Its feature varies from sharing photos and tag people, uploads videos, and even creates a group page. These features are useful in building communication between teacher and parents especially in sharing information about their children.

All these four applications almost have the same features that can be used by teacher and parents to start talking about their children. They all have features to send information through text, photos, video call, and even group chat. Parenting program can be done with all these four features, and since it is done through the internet, then we can call it "online parenting". This online parenting is a program set up by the school with the teacher as the administrator and all parents are the group members. The teacher should use the four features to share information and knowledge about children's growth, development, and well-being to the parents. The teacher also needs to send updates such as a child's performance in class through his/her artworks by sending a short video to his/her parents, or by sending photos of what they are doing in class to the group Facebook account.

The social media has increasingly become important and has different aspects compared to other media. Bradley mentioned six core principles which underlie the value of social media, and, in combination, serve as the defining characteristics that set social media apart from other forms of communication and collaboration (Bradley, 2010).

- *Participation*: this social media will be successful when many parents are interested to participate. Thus as many parents as possible should be encouraged to get involved to get the higher participation rate and therefore will be longer lasting.
- *Collective*: the word refers to the collectiveness of parents as an entity that has the same interest in their children well-being.
- *Transparency:* within this social media, each parent will be able to see, use, reuse, augment, validate critique and rate other parents' contributions in the network.
- *Independence:* the word means that it provides each parent with no collaboration or coordination required with a specific place or time.
- *Persistence:* with social media, the persistent topic of children well-being will be mostly viewed, discussed and exchanged among the member. Thus when a teacher wants to point out an issue toward parents, then he/she will only need to maintain the existence of the issue within the topic discussion.
- *Emergence:* this core ensures the diversity of the dynamics of how the parents use social media.

From those cores, the writer trace three principles that will help school and parents in maximizing their social media especially when we are challenged in bridging the same understanding about children growth and development from teacher to parents or vice versa.

- *Time management*: teacher and parents will be able to see, use, reuse, augment, validate, critique and rate issues about the children anytime.

- *Knowledge gathering*: teacher and parents should be able to discuss varies topics about their children either by sharing information they receive from other sources or their own experiences.
- *Promoting partnership:* teacher and parents will receive benefit from each other because, within the social media, there will be no boundaries that separate each parent's profile. Sometimes, the teacher should be able to find a different type of occupations that can be helpful for the children, such as by introducing a different type of occupation to the children to create varying imagination about their future wannabe.

Now with those principles connecting the technology world with the parenting program, the school should be able to connect more people other than parents. There can be sharing information from teacher to parents; sharing experiences from parents to parents; passing on updates about their little one from parents to grandparents, and even holding up an online seminar or online workshop with experts. However, the interaction within those social media for parenting purpose requires some basic rules and arrangement to be agreed among the participants; otherwise, its importance will be degraded and its role as parenting platform will not function as expected.

DISCUSSIONS
Setting up this online parenting is easy enough as long as we follow some steps. The following steps are recommended:
1. Selection of the application. This can be arranged through the first school meeting to agree on a suitable and compatible application for both sides. The appropriate application will smooth the information transfer by any type of program provided.
2. Consensus for ground rules. This is to settle principle communication within the apps, such as: what can and cannot be shared, respecting other, the polite language used, good manners in talking and answering questions, and type of information shared within the forum.
3. Timetable. This is used to notify the member of the forum about important events.
4. The Module of the Parenting. The module is created in relevance to themes agreed within the forum. The module will provide important information about children's growth and development.
5. Management of the parenting program. The online parenting must have good management. It should be cleared upon who will be the administrator of the forum, who shall be the facilitator, who shall be the eligible member, and so on.

This online parenting will provide multiple advantages for busy-bee parents. The parents will be able to find out the latest updates about their children directly from anywhere. The parents will receive update information and theories about early childhood education from experts. The parents can share best practices in taking care of children. The parents will receive a dynamic atmosphere within communication style with a different area of professionalism among them. In conclusion, this online parenting program offers higher and better results than the conventional parenting program.

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