

Utilization of YouTube for Developing Communication Skills and Imagination in Preschool Children: A Parent's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

YouTube has become one of the most popular and frequently accessed platforms by parents to find various sources of learning and entertainment for their children. Developing communication and imagination skills in preschool children can open the door to creativity and problem-solving that will shape how they interact with the world. Parents must play an active role in forming a solid foundation for preschool children's communication and imagination skills. This study aims to analyze parents' perspectives on using YouTube on children's imagination and communication skills. The research method uses the Structural Equation Model. The sample size for this study is 100 parents. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, using the criteria of parents with preschool-aged children and a habit of watching YouTube in Boyolali, Indonesia. The results showed that according to the parent's perspective, preschool children's habit of watching YouTube significantly influences their imagination and communication skills. The perspective of parents directly involved in preschool children's learning process can be a revolutionary tool in shaping communication and imagination skills. Parents who are directly involved in their children's learning process through YouTube have the power to create immersive and enjoyable learning experiences, bridging the gap between technology and the development of children's communication skills and imagination in innovative and impactful ways. This research contributes to increasing the understanding of digital media integration in early childhood education and how parents can leverage technology to support the development of essential skills in children.

Keywords: YouTube, Children's Education, Communication Skills, Imagination Ability, Parent's Perspective



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1. INTRODUCTION

Preschool children are in a critical developmental phase in the formation of communication and creativity skills. The phenomenon of the digital era is that preschool children are more often exposed to various video content through platforms such as YouTube (Alqahtani et al., 2023). The types of content available on YouTube are diverse, ranging from educational to entertainment. According to Qadri & Akram (2020), YouTube has an impact on language skills in children aged 2-4 years because YouTube provides opportunities for children to be exposed to languages that are not suitable for children to learn. To overcome the negative impacts of YouTube, according to Foo & Ng (2022), when choosing YouTube content, teachers and parents need guidelines so that preschool children can choose quality content. However, YouTube can positively enrich children's learning experiences (Muslem et al., 2022; Neumann &

Herodotou, 2020b) and help them understand the world in a fun way (Temban et al., 2021). For example, interactive or animated videos can make learning more exciting and help children expand their vocabulary and speaking skills. In other words, YouTube can be an educational tool potentially supporting children's communication development.

On the other hand, too much time spent in front of the screen can reduce the time for direct social interaction with parents, caregivers, or peers (Foo & Ng, 2022), which is essential for developing social communication skills. Children who watch too many videos may experience delays in speaking skills or difficulties interacting face-to-face (Sari, 2020). In addition, the type of content displayed on YouTube is often passive. It does not require active participation from children, which can limit their opportunities to practice speaking and communicating effectively.

In addition, it is essential to consider the quality and type of content children view (Neumann & Herodotou, 2020a). Too much exposure to inappropriate or less educational videos can limit the development of children's imagination, distracting them from other creative activities such as playing outside or interacting with peers. Therefore, according to Sholihah & Wathon (2023), parents must actively select and monitor the videos children watch, ensuring that the content supports the development of their imagination skills positively and constructively. YouTube provides easy access to various types of content that can stimulate their imagination. Interesting, colorful, and creative videos can trigger children's creativity by presenting new ideas, imaginative stories, and charming characters.

YouTube content rich in visuals and narratives can encourage children to think creatively and imagine different situations (Wulandari, 2023). However, too much exposure to highly structured and packaged content can reduce children's opportunities to imagine independently and create their own stories, which is essential for cognitive and creative development. Therefore, this study is vital to explore the balance between the benefits and risks associated with YouTube use by preschool children. Understanding how YouTube affects children's communication skills and imagination can provide valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in designing media use strategies that support optimal child development. This study is expected to contribute helpful knowledge in creating a balanced and supportive environment for children in this digital era.

Related research on the impact of YouTube on children's communication and imagination has been conducted by several researchers. Research by Imaniah et al. (2020) states that children's communication skills are believed to be able to be improved effectively through YouTube media. Research by Serlinika & Tarmini (2023) states that YouTube impacts children's communication skills in acquiring vocabulary. Research by Farizqi (2022) states that through YouTube, children get information about a second language well when watching foreign language YouTube content. Research by Panjaitan et al. (2023) states that YouTube content has an impact on stimulating children's imagination. Research by Ratnaningsih & Gumindari (2022) states that YouTube can stimulate children's imagination when listening to YouTube content. Some of these studies only focus on children, as novelty and different from these studies, this study is not only focused on children but also on the perspective of parents. Therefore, this study aims to analyze parents' perspectives on using YouTube on children's imagination and communication skills.

2. METHOD

The research method for analyzing parents' perspectives on the impact of YouTube on preschool children's imagination and communication skills uses the Structural Equation Model (SEM) with the help of AMOS software. According to Li (2021), this technique can estimate the relationship between observed and latent variables. Through SEM, the researchers attempted to test inferential statistics about parents' perspectives on the impact of YouTube on preschool children's imagination communication and skills.

According to the maximum likelihood estimation theory for SEM., this study's sample size is 100 parents. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, using the criteria of parents with preschool-aged children and a habit of watching YouTube. The study was conducted from January to April 2024 in Boyolali, Indonesia.

Table 1. Questionnaire Indicators

Variable	Indicators	
YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	X1	Parents limit Youtube usage time
	X2	Parents select quality YouTube content
	X3	Parents involved in activities
Development of preschool children's communication skills	X4	Social interaction of preschool children
	X5	Speaking skills of preschool children
	X6	Language comprehension of preschool children
Development of preschool children's imagination	X7	Creativity of preschool children
	X8	Abstract thinking of preschool children
	X9	Reliance on visuals in preschool children

The instrument employs a questionnaire. The technique used a Likert Scale approach to convert the questionnaire findings into quantitative data for each answer. The score for each answer to the indicators of YouTube usage perspective of parents, development of communication skills of preschool children, and development of imagination of preschool children ranges from 1 to 5. Table 1 above indicates the questionnaire statements. The indicators prepared by researchers have been tested for validity and reliability, which shows that they are feasible to be used in this study.

After compiling the questionnaire indicators in Table 1, the researchers created a statistical hypothesis that would be tested using SEM: 1) H1: According to the parents' perspective, the habit of preschool children watching YouTube has a significant influence on communication skills. 1) H2: According to the parents' perspective, the habit of preschool children watching YouTube has a significant influence on imagination skills. Finally, after formulating a statistical hypothesis, the researchers created a visualization of the hypothesis using AMOS software in Figure 2 below.

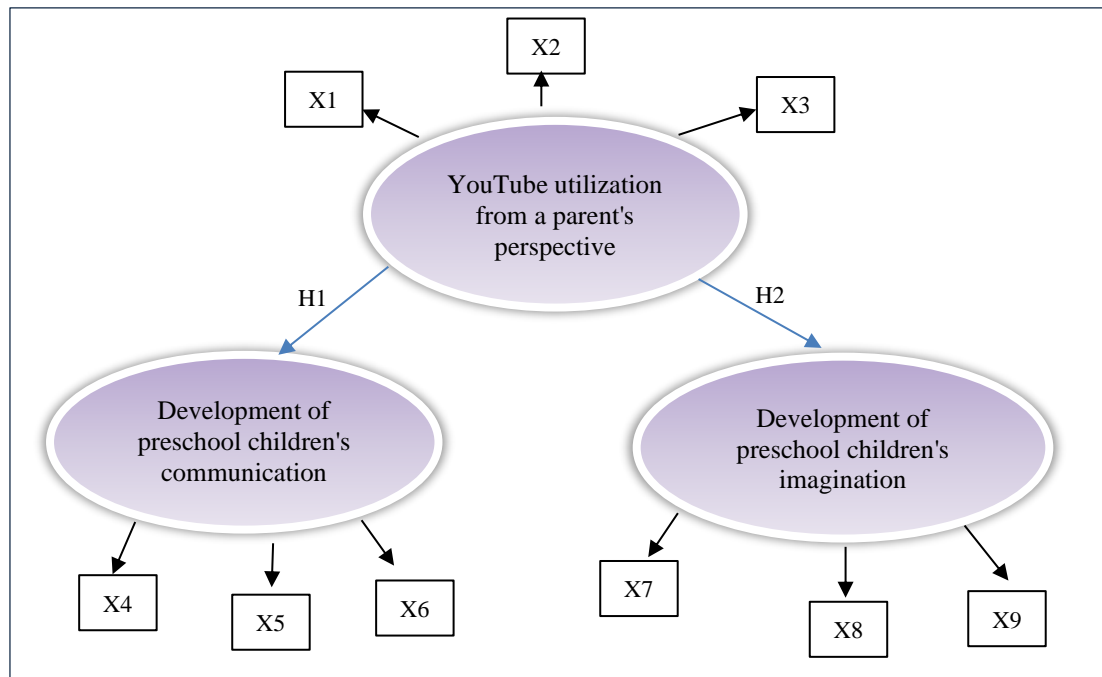


Figure 2. Hypothesis Visualization

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result of Validity

Table 2 below is the validity result using the loading factor value from the AMOS software output. The decision is valid if the Loading Factor value is more significant than 0.5.

Table 2. Result of Validity with Loading Factor

Indicator	Estimate
X3 <--- YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	0.697
X1 <--- YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	0.649
X2 <--- YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	0.693
X6 <--- Development of preschool children's communication skills	0.862
X4 <--- Development of preschool children's communication skills	0.752
X5 <--- Development of preschool children's communication skills	0.791
X9 <--- Development of preschool children's imagination	0.804
X7 <--- Development of preschool children's imagination	0.716
X8 <--- Development of preschool children's imagination	0.811

Table 2 shows the estimated loading factor value of more than 0.5. It means that indicators X1 to X9 are valid. The nine indicators in Table 1 are eligible for SEM analysis.

3.2. Result of Normality

Table 3 below is the normality result using the critical ratio (c.r.) of Skewness and Kurtosis from the AMOS software output. According to Huriyah & Hidayat (2022), the data has a normal distribution if the critical ratio (c.r.) skewness and kurtosis values are in the range of -2.58 to 2.58.

Table 3. Result of Normality

Indicator	Skew	c.r	Kurtosis	c.r
X9	-0.342	-2.152	-0.576	-1.722
X7	-0.162	-1.504	-0.703	-2.204
X8	-0.271	-1.856	-0.688	-1.742
X6	-0.312	-2.161	-0.439	-1.643
X4	-0.217	-1.502	-0.801	-2.244
X5	-0.402	-2.281	-0.692	-1.998
X3	-0.174	-1.675	-0.753	-2.327
X1	-0.204	-1.987	-0.709	-2.206
X2	-0.336	-2.064	-0.803	-2.254

Table 3 shows that the nine indicators of YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective, development of preschool children's communication skills, and development of preschool children's imagination have a normal distribution and are eligible for SEM analysis.

3.3. Result of Hypotheses Test

Before testing the statistical hypothesis of this research for H1 and H2, the researchers tested the criteria of Good of Fit. The minimum criteria are adopted from the SEM method presented by Sahoo (2019). The following are the results of processing data based on AMOS output: 1) Chi-square = 32,743 (meets the criteria: small); 2) Probability = 0.727 (meets the criteria: greater than 0.05); 3) GFI = 0.926 (meets the criteria: greater than 0.9); 4) AGFI = 0.908 (meets the criteria: greater than 0.9); 5) RMSEA = 0.013 (meets the criteria: smaller than 0.08); 6) RMR = 0.042 (meets the criteria: less than 0.05); 7) NCP = 0.004 (meets the criteria: little). Based on the AMOS output, it shows that all values have met the minimum criteria of the Good of Fit. In other words, it is appropriate to continue the SEM analysis to test the statistical hypotheses of this research for H1 and H2 that have been proposed.

Table 4. Output AMOS of Hypothesis Test

Hypothesized Variables		CR	P	H	Hypothesis Decision	
					Yes	No
Development of preschool children's communication skills	<--- YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	3.007	0.004	H1	√	
Development of preschool children's imagination	<--- YouTube utilization from a parent's perspective	3.068	0.002	H5	√	

Table 4 shows that H1 is accepted, indicated by the CR = 3.007 and P = 0.004 < 0.005. It means that according to the parents' perspective, the habit of preschool children watching YouTube has a significant influence on communication skills. H2 is accepted, indicated by the CR = 3.068 and P = 0.002 < 0.005. It According to the parents' perspective, the habit of preschool children watching YouTube has a significant influence on imagination skills.

3.4. Parent's Perspective of YouTube Use on Preschool Children's Communication Skills

YouTube offers various content designed specifically for children, from educational to entertaining (Neumann & Herodotou, 2020b; Renés Arellano et al., 2020). However, parents often see a significant impact on their children's communication skills. Children who watch too many YouTube videos can experience a decline in social interactions with their peers. Entertaining video content often replaces time spent playing and communicating face-to-face with friends, which is essential for developing social skills.

Based on the results in Table 4, the researcher conducted SEM path analysis on each variable indicator so that it was obtained that according to the parent's perspective: 1) Parents limit YouTube usage time affects social interaction of preschool children. This is in line with research by Aulia (2024), who said that parents need to limit time for preschool children to reduce the impact on social interaction. 2) Parents limiting YouTube usage time affects the speaking skills of preschool children. This is in line with Yudaningsgar (2021), who said that parents must monitor the duration of watching YouTube because it affects the development of children's speaking skills. 3) Parents limiting YouTube usage time affects the language comprehension of preschool children. Yudaningsgar (2021) also said that parents must limit the time they spend watching YouTube so that the development of language comprehension is stable. Limiting

the time parents use YouTube can significantly impact the development of children's communication. On the one hand, parental restrictions can prevent children from excessive digital media addiction (Işıkoğlu et al., 2023; Theopilus et al., 2024), giving them more opportunities to interact directly with parents and peers. Direct interaction is essential in building practical communication skills, such as listening, speaking, and empathy (Pashevich, 2022; Reith-Hall & Montgomery, 2022; Wati et al., 2023). On the other hand, too strict restrictions on YouTube usage time can limit children's access to helpful information and educational resources. Overly strict restrictions can alienate children from trends and technologies important in social communication and learning. Therefore, parents need to find a balance in time restrictions, ensuring that children not only benefit from direct social interactions but also opportunities to learn and develop through digital media.

In addition, based on the results in Table 4, it was also obtained that according to the parent's perspective: 1) Parents select quality YouTube content affects the social interaction of preschool children. Research by Adwiah & Diana (2023) states that parents must accompany their children in selecting YouTube content appropriate for children's social interactions. 2) Parents' select quality YouTube content affects the speaking skills of preschool children. Osias Kit T. Kilag et al. (2023) said that YouTube is a valuable tool for developing language skills, especially English, but parental supervision is needed in selecting content. 3) Parents' select quality YouTube content affects the language comprehension of preschool children. Imaniah et al. (2020) said that parents must be wise in selecting YouTube content so that the language comprehension is appropriate for the child's age. Parents must be careful when choosing quality YouTube content to ensure that children watch content supporting their communication development. By choosing YouTube content with positive values, good language, and effective communication methods, parents can help their children develop better speaking and listening skills. On the other hand, exposure to age-inappropriate YouTube content can have a negative impact on children's communication development. Videos featuring harsh language, negative behaviour, or inaccurate information can affect how children interact and communicate with others.

Finally, based on the results in Table 4, it was obtained that according to the parents' perspective: 1) Parents involved in activities affect the social interaction of preschool children. Ramadhan et al. (2024) said that parental involvement in children's online activities is needed to maintain social interactions that arise due to YouTube. 2) Parents involved in activities affect the speaking skills of preschool children. According to Malik & Nurhadi (2024), parental involvement in children's YouTube activities ensures that the speaking skills obtained do not deviate. 3) Parents involved in activities affect the language comprehension of preschool children. Harining & Suardana (2023) said that parents must be actively involved in their children's online activities to maintain the language comprehension that children understand.

Preschoolers who spend much time watching YouTube without active engagement can experience delays in developing speech and language skills. The one-way communication of videos does not provide opportunities for children to practice speaking and listening in the same way as direct interactions with adults or peers (Putri et al., 2024). Parents must be involved in their children's YouTube activities to maintain and support their communication development. By participating in watching and discussing the content consumed by children, parents can build a strong communication bridge and open up space for constructive dialogue. Parents can ensure that YouTube content is appropriate and educational and guide children in choosing helpful and cheerful videos. Parental involvement is quality control that supports children's communication development and ensures that their media experiences remain productive and safe.

3.5. Parent's Perspective of YouTube Use on Development of Preschool Children's Imagination

YouTube also has a significant impact on preschoolers' imagination and creativity. Highly structured content on YouTube often offers all the answers and solutions, which can reduce children's opportunities to imagine and find their own solutions. When children are exposed to highly specific content, they may be less motivated to imagine or create their own games. However, not all content on YouTube has a negative impact. There are many videos designed to stimulate children's creativity and imagination, such as story videos or arts and crafts activities. The right choice of content can spark a child's imagination and provide new ideas for creative exploration.

Based on the results in Table 4, researchers can conduct SEM path analysis on the variable indicators so that according to the parent's perspective, it is obtained: 1) Parents limit YouTube usage time affects the creativity of preschool children. According to Aulia (2024), YouTube content can stimulate children's imagination, but parents must have time control. 2) Parents' limiting YouTube usage time affects the abstract thinking of preschool children. According to Yunia (2022), parental supervision of YouTube viewing time is necessary to maintain the cognitive development of abstract thinking. 3) Parents limit YouTube usage time, affecting children's reliance on visuals. Parents who limit their children's YouTube usage time can contribute significantly to developing children's imagination and creativity. By regulating screen time and replacing it with activities such as playing outdoors, reading books, or being creative with art tools, children can develop their imaginative skills more optimally. These activities allow them to imagine, create, and learn holistically and in-depth.

In addition, based on the results in Table 4, SEM path analysis on the variable indicators so that according to the parent's perspective: 1) Parents select quality YouTube content affects the creativity of preschool children 2) Parents select quality YouTube content affects abstract thinking of preschool children 3) Parents select quality YouTube content affects reliance on visuals in preschool children. Parents who select YouTube content for their children play an essential role in supporting the development of children's imagination and creativity. By selecting educational and stimulating content, such as videos featuring science experiments, art, or educational fantasy stories, parents can ensure that their children are exposed to materials that are entertaining and spark their imagination. According to Alqahtani et al. (2023) and Ochoa & Reich (2020), parents selecting YouTube content also helps children avoid videos that may be age-inappropriate or contain negative elements, which can affect how they think and behave.

Finally, based on the results in Table 4, researchers can conduct SEM path analysis on the variable indicators to obtain according to the parent's perspective: 1) Parents involved in activities affect the creativity of preschool children 2) Parents involved in activities affect Abstract thinking of preschool children 3) Parents involved in activities affect reliance on visuals in preschool children. Parents who are directly involved in their children's YouTube activities have a significant positive impact on the development of children's imagination. According to Ihza et al. (2024), when parents participate in watching videos, discussing content, or creating content together, they direct children to helpful material and facilitate constructive interactions. This involvement opens opportunities for children to explore new ideas with parental guidance and encouragement, strengthening their understanding of the world around them. Through discussion and collaboration, children can hone their critical and creative thinking skills, broaden their perspectives, and feel more connected to the activities they do.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the parent's perspective, preschool children's habit of watching YouTube significantly influences their imagination and communication skills. YouTube can potentially influence preschool children's communication and imagination in different ways. From a parent's perspective, monitoring and guiding children's YouTube usage is essential. With a balanced approach and active involvement, parents can harness the educational benefits of YouTube while minimizing the negative impacts on their children's communication and imagination. In today's digital world, parents who are directly involved in their children's learning process through YouTube have the power to create immersive and enjoyable learning experiences, bridging the gap between technology and child development in innovative and impactful ways. This research contributes to increasing the understanding of digital media integration in early childhood education and how parents can leverage technology to support the development of essential skills in children.

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