

Nurturing Healthy Media Consumption Habits in Early Childhood: A Social Campaign Approach

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ABSTRACT

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In contemporary society, the pervasive presence of digital devices has profoundly influenced the media consumption patterns of young children, presenting challenges and opportunities for their development. This study explores the impact of media content on early childhood and the urgent need for informed parental supervision. Utilizing a Research and Development (R&D) methodology, a comprehensive social campaign titled "Healthy Watching" was developed and implemented in Pontianak, Indonesia. The campaign aimed to empower parents, particularly mothers, with the knowledge and skills to guide their children's media interactions effectively. The campaign fostered awareness about age-appropriate content, screen time limits, and the importance of active parental engagement through educational seminars, videos, stickers, and social media platforms. The campaign's efficacy was evaluated through stakeholder engagement and behavioral assessments of eight target mothers. The results indicate significant improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, emphasizing the campaign's success in promoting healthy media consumption habits. This study provides valuable insights into the design and implementation of social campaigns to address the challenges of digital media in early childhood.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, media consumption has significantly transformed, particularly among children and early childhood (ages 2-5 years) (Dal Cin et al., 2023). The ubiquity of digital devices has led to an unprecedented exposure of young children to various forms of media content, often accompanied by meals, offering a visually stimulating and auditory experience. This phenomenon has raised concerns about its potential impact on children's development, emphasizing the pivotal role of media content in shaping their knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavior. Previous studies have indicated that engaging media content can catalyze nonmedia activities and conversations, supporting children's learning and character education (Andayani, 2021; Chattoo & Feldman, 2020). However, the quality of the media content is crucial, as exposure to inappropriate or aggressive material can detrimentally affect childhood development and lead to behavioral issues (Amelia & Lestari, 2021; Atmoko et al., 2019). Furthermore, excessive screen time during childhood and adolescence has been linked to a heightened risk of developing anxiety disorders in adulthood (Mcanally et al., 2019; Yusuf & Indrawati, 2019). This escalating concern has given rise to



device addiction, a distinctive form of addiction impacting early childhood, which should ideally be a period of joyful play and learning.

Device addiction, primarily centered around the activity of watching, has been associated with multifaceted adverse effects on children's cognitive, social-emotional, religious, moral, language, and physical-motor development (Mimin, 2022). Studies have highlighted the repercussions of excessive device usage, including heightened aggression, diminished social skills, increased antisocial behavior, and disruptions in sleep patterns and learning (Pebriana, 2017; Widya, 2020).

In the Indonesian media landscape context, there is a notable scarcity of educational children's programming, a void that could have significant implications for the linguistic development of young viewers (Filisyamala, 2018; Irwansyah & Shabiburrahman, 2021). Alarming trends in child violence, with 26,954 reported cases documented over seven years by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia or KPAI), have been attributed, in part, to the content consumed by children, reflecting the urgent need for a critical examination of media content (Setyawan, 2018). This violence encompasses a spectrum from physical and online bullying to body shaming, physical aggression, and intentional harm perpetrated by peers. Whether broadcasted on television or disseminated through non-traditional platforms, children's programming often reaches young audiences unsupervised, raising concerns about the impact of unregulated content.

The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) researched the quality index of television broadcasts in Indonesia, revealing that children's programs frequently depict instances of physical and verbal violence, indicating a lapse in content regulation (Triputra et al., 2022). Although efforts are made within the Indonesian broadcasting system to uphold content quality standards, the proliferation of unregulated platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, H.O.O.Q., Viu, and various other on-demand video services presents a challenge. A study conducted in Pontianak city found that a significant portion of parents relies on YouTube as the primary source of entertainment for early childhood, with approximately 60% of parents exposing their children to regular YouTube shows, 30% opting for YouTube Kids' programs, and 10% offering a combination of YouTube Kids and Netflix content (Lukitowati et al., 2022).

In fostering healthy media consumption habits among children, the importance of intelligent viewing cannot be overstated, particularly in mitigating the potential negative impact of on-screen behaviors (Wang et al., 2022). This skill is crucial for children and their parents or caregivers, as they play a pivotal role in monitoring children's viewing choices. However, a notable gap exists in the active involvement of stay-at-home mothers in supervising their children's television habits, as revealed in Ritonga's research (2019). Stay-at-home mothers often neglect accompanying their children during TV time and setting specific limits on their viewing hours, leading to a disproportionate amount of free time spent in front of the screen.

Moreover, parents have a prevalent misconception about the suitability of certain shows for children. For instance, many parents perceive cartoon programs like *Spongebob* and *Shinbi's House* as appropriate for children, although these shows are originally intended for older audiences, including teenagers and adults (Triputra et al., 2021). While conveying positive themes of friendship, *Spongebob* has been found to potentially desensitize children and impair their concentration abilities (Hamzah et al., 2021). This underscores the necessity for parents and caregivers to make informed decisions about age-appropriate content selection, considering the language used and the visual appearance of characters in the shows. It is erroneous to assume that all children's programs are universally suitable or that children can indiscriminately watch any cartoon. For example, cartoons such as *SpongeBob*, *Crayon Shin-chan*, and *One Piece* share the commonality of being animated content. However, they differ significantly in terms of language complexity and character design, making them unsuitable for young viewers, especially concerning potential imitation by children (Lukitowati et al., 2023).

Establishing a habit of selecting appropriate content for children is paramount, particularly during the Golden Age. This critical period significantly influences a person's intelligence and character from conception to age 6. Parents are responsible for optimizing these formative years to nurture a high-quality generation. The research underscores the need for active parental supervision during children's television viewing, ensuring exposure to shows offering positive advantages (Uce, 2015). Previous studies emphasize specific criteria for selecting children's television programs, including educational and socio-cultural elements, learning motivation, and entertainment, all vital for holistic child development (Khairina & Amri, 2017). Child-friendly television content should facilitate moral-spiritual, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and physical development (Fadlurrohim et al., 2019).

The immediate home environment plays a pivotal role in shaping toddlers' media exposure, with parents, extended family, and caregivers providing essential stimulation and introducing them to television content (Hariyanto, 2018; Sabardila et al., 2021; Sanityastuti et al., 2015). Parents are instrumental in preventing children from imitating negative scenes from television shows (Ginting & Pratiwi, 2017). This research addresses the gap in media literacy initiatives (Hariyanti et al., 2021; Adiprabowo & Sanofi, 2023), focusing on fostering healthy viewing habits for toddlers. While existing efforts have enhanced critical media consumption skills among the public

(Poerwaningtias et al., 2013; Prabowo et al., 2022; Darmawan & Wenerda, 2022), a specific focus on promoting healthy watching habits for toddlers has been lacking.

This study aims to contribute by developing a social campaign model, Watching Healthily, targeted at parents and caregivers of toddlers. The objective is to enable safe and positive viewing experiences, shielding early childhood from adverse content influences. The campaign model seeks to empower parents with the knowledge and tools to navigate the complex media landscape, ensuring that toddlers engage with age-appropriate and beneficial content and foster their overall development.

METHOD

This study employed the Research and Development (R&D) methodology, a widely utilized approach for creating specific products and evaluating their feasibility. R&D activities seem seamlessly integrated into the entire product development process, following the 4-D model devised by Thiagarajan, encompassing stages of Define, Design, Development, and Dissemination (Sugiono, 2019). The primary objective of this research was to formulate a comprehensive social campaign model titled “Healthy Watching” tailored for toddlers.

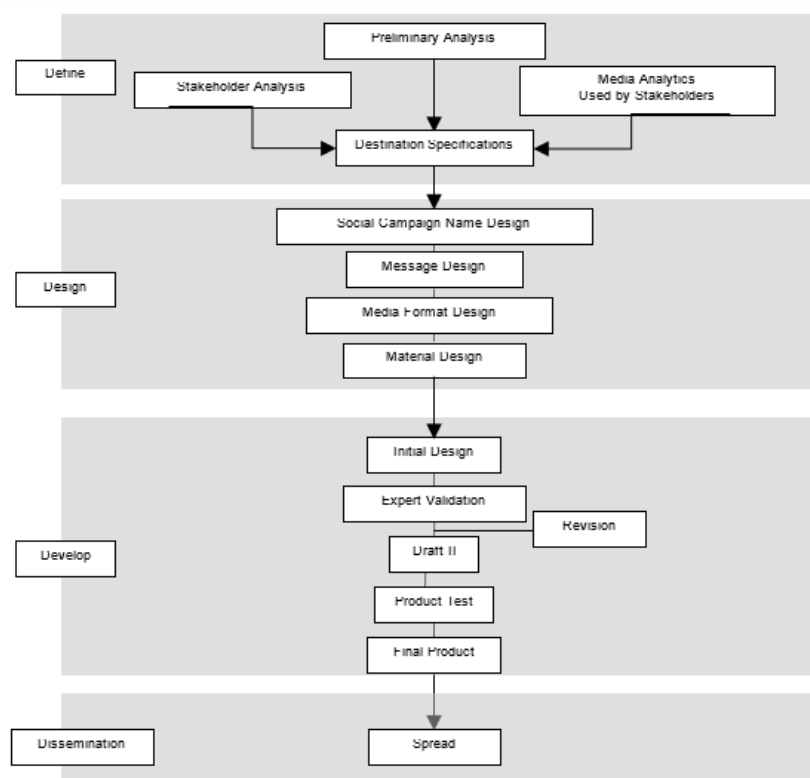


Fig. 1 The 4-D model

In the initial Define stage, a meticulous analysis was conducted, encompassing a preliminary study of the issue, stakeholder analysis, and examination of media frequently accessed by stakeholders. Subsequently, clear objectives were delineated based on the research findings. The subsequent Design phase involved crafting the social campaign’s name, formulating impactful messages, designing media formats, and creating educational materials. Development activities included the initial setup, expert validation, iterative revisions, product testing, and finalization. Finally, in the Dissemination stage, the developed social campaign products were distributed through educational seminars, instructional videos, stickers, and standing banners, ensuring wide outreach and impact.

This research methodology facilitated the creation of a practical and relevant social campaign model and ensured its applicability for personal use (Hamzah, 2021). The systematic process, guided by the 4-D model, enabled the development of an effective strategy for promoting healthy viewing habits among toddlers, contributing significantly to media and communication research in the field. Figure 1 illustrates the sequential stages of the research process, depicting the structured flow of activities in adherence to the 4-D model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The foundation of this social campaign model is rooted in an in-depth analysis of early childhood watching habits, revealing several critical aspects. (a) Prevalent Fondness and Addiction: Early childhood strongly fond of watching activities, often bordering on addiction. (b) Limited Parental Supervision: Parents need more supervision over their children's watching activities. (c) Pervasive Harmful Content: The media landscape contains considerable potentially harmful content for children. (d) Impact of Device Addiction: Early childhood device addiction hampers their growth and development. (e) Dual Nature of Children's Shows: Television and YouTube programs targeting children have positive and negative facets, necessitating efforts to ensure that toddlers predominantly encounter positive influences.

A. Setting Objectives

The primary objective is to mitigate the adverse effects of early childhood watching activities on young children.

B. Stakeholders Analysis

The issue of early childhood watching habits involves a spectrum of stakeholders, as analyzed through The Salience Model Diagram (Mitchell & Wood, 1997). Figure 2 illustrates this issue's complexity, emphasizing early childhood vulnerability, which is profoundly impacted by unhealthy viewing patterns. Despite their urgency, this demographic lacks the agency to mitigate the detrimental effects of excessive screen time, highlighting a critical societal concern. This study, primarily focused on early childhood, acknowledges their pivotal developmental phase known as the golden age. During this period, brain development undergoes maximal growth, rendering children highly receptive to stimuli, particularly audio-visual inputs. However, excessive and unstimulating screen exposure can hinder their cognitive development, emphasizing the pivotal role of appropriate content selection.

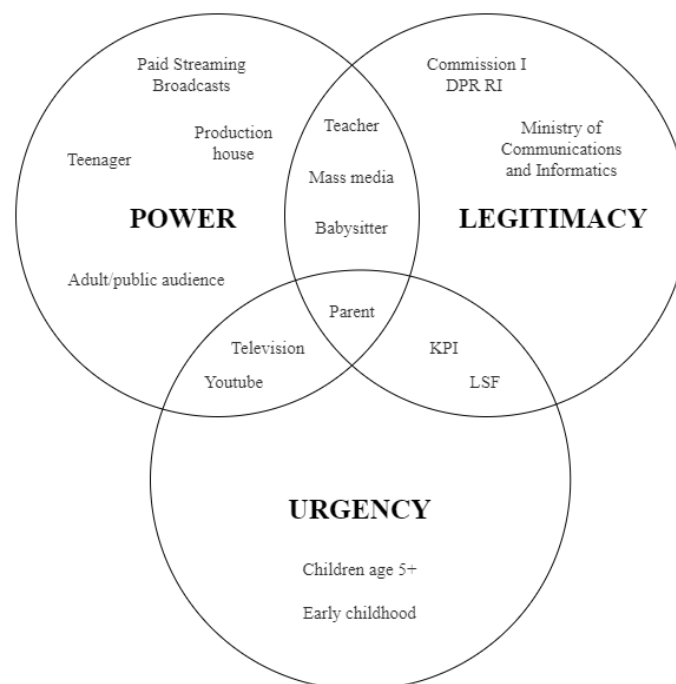


Fig. 2 Stakeholder Mapping Based on The Salience Model Diagram

Ensuring children's rights to access healthy content involves multiple stakeholders, spanning from immediate circles such as parents, babysitters, and teachers to broader entities including the community, media actors, regulatory bodies (e.g., KPI, Commission 1 of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia), and the Ministry of Communication and Information. The campaign's strategic focus on early childhood audiences and their proximal caregivers, especially parents, is rooted in the ethical imperative to safeguard children's rights. Parents, possessing emotional closeness and moral responsibility, emerge as crucial advocates. Targeting parental awareness and empowerment aligns with a proactive approach to redirect public interest toward wholesome content.

C. Social Campaign Design and Objectives

The social campaign introduced in this study bears the name “Healthy Watching Campaign,” accompanied by the tagline “Protected Children, Advancing Indonesia.” The primary objective of this campaign is to promote healthy television-watching habits among young children, emphasizing guidance and direction to facilitate positive impacts. It is essential to clarify that the campaign does not advocate the prohibition of watching activities; instead, it recognizes the ubiquitous presence of television and electronic devices in children’s daily environments. Effectively managing these activities becomes pivotal, as it entails positive and negative aspects. With appropriate guidance and supervision, the positive effects of watching activities can be optimized, transcending mere entertainment and contributing significantly to children’s growth and development. This campaign aligns with the Ideological or Cause-Oriented Campaign paradigm, aiming for social change and emphasizing specific non-commercial objectives (Saifulloh & Lazuardi, 2021). The categorization as a social campaign underscores its distinction from political and commercial counterparts, reinforcing its altruistic mission for societal betterment.

D. Message Type Design

In the design of the social campaign “Healthy Watching,” careful consideration was given to crafting messages that effectively resonate with the campaign’s objectives. These messages are categorized into two key types, each serving a distinct purpose within the campaign framework. (1) Awareness-Raising Messages: focuses on raising awareness among parents concerning the intricate issue of watching habits in young children. (2) Problem-Solving Solution Messages: strategically crafted to provide practical solutions that parents can implement to mitigate the challenges posed by their children’s media consumption.

E. Communicator Determination

In the strategic deployment of the “Healthy Watching Campaign,” meticulous consideration has been given to selecting communicators based on their expertise and credibility in addressing the complexities of early childhood media consumption. The campaign has enlisted a diverse panel of communicators, each possessing distinct capabilities pertinent to children’s viewing habits. News related to early childhood, the child’s developmental stage, and the child’s need for stimulation are delivered by a Child Psychologist. Statements about the role of children in the media, the development of media, and children’s content are provided by the Central KPI (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission). Messages regarding children and children’s content, as well as their development, will be delivered by the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at UNTAN (University of Tanjungpura).

F. Media Type Design

In crafting an effective communication strategy for the “Healthy Watching Campaign,” careful consideration has been given to the diverse needs of the campaign’s target audience, primarily mothers of early childhood. The campaign’s messaging has been designed to ensure comprehensive coverage and impactful engagement. To achieve this, a multifaceted approach incorporating face-to-face interactions, audio-visual content, and print media has been implemented. By employing this comprehensive tripartite communication approach, the campaign aims to establish acceptance and reinforce the understanding of the imperative to minimize the negative impact of early childhood watching activities.

Table 1. Media Type Planning

Message Type	Media Type	Message Characteristic
Face-to-face messages (in person)	Educational seminars	Generate <i>awareness</i>
Message via audio-visual	Educational videos	
The Importance of Adult Supervision in the Watching Activities of Toddlers.		Generate <i>awareness</i>
The Role of Children in the Media.		Generate <i>awareness</i>
Classification of Broadcasting Types Based on Age According to P3SPS (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission).		Providing solutions
Dangerous Types of Content on YouTube.		Generate <i>awareness</i>
Not All Cartoons Are Suitable for Children.		Providing solutions
How to Accompany Children While Watching.		Providing solutions
Recommendations for Child-Friendly Programs According to the Child-Friendly Broadcasting Award.		
Minimizing the Negative Impact of YouTube Content.		
Written message (<i>print media</i>)	Stickers, standing banners	Providing solutions

G. Preliminary Design

In the preliminary design phase of our social campaign, a meticulous approach was undertaken, considering the intricacies of promoting healthy media consumption among young children. Figure 3 illustrates our stakeholder mapping based on The Saliense Model Diagram.

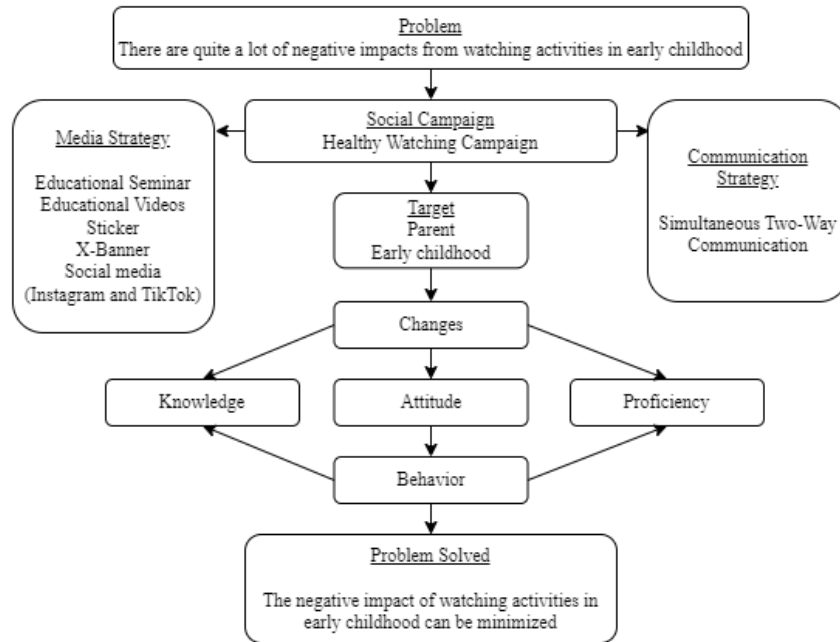


Fig. 3 Stakeholder Mapping Based on The Saliense Model Diagram

1. Face-to-face messages

In our comprehensive initiative to foster healthy media habits among young children, face-to-face communication was pivotal. This interaction occurred through an educational seminar titled “Portrait of Children’s Shows on Indonesian Television,” thoughtfully scheduled to coincide with National Children’s Day, observed annually on 23rd July. The primary objective of this seminar was to deepen participants’ understanding of the intricacies surrounding children’s media consumption. By aligning this event with National Children’s Day, the initiative aimed to raise awareness and commemorate the occasion’s significance, symbolizing a collective commitment to children’s well-being. The seminar bore the tagline “Protected Children, Advanced Indonesia,” encapsulating the essence of our campaign—shielding children from harmful content while propelling the nation forward. Held on Saturday, 23rd July 2022, this event was a focal point for disseminating crucial insights and strategies.



Fig. 4 Poster for the Educational Seminar

2. Audio-visual messages

Several videos were crafted to address various aspects of early childhood media consumption. These videos served a dual purpose: some were derived from the content of our educational seminar, ensuring consistency and depth, while others offered practical solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of early childhood media exposure.

Comprising eight distinct messages, these videos covered essential topics such as the significance of adult supervision during toddlers’ viewing activities, the role of children in the media landscape, and the classification of broadcasting types based on age, as stipulated by the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (P3SPS). Furthermore, the videos delved into identifying hazardous content on YouTube, emphasizing that not all cartoons are suitable for children. Practical guidance on how to accompany children while watching and recommendations for child-friendly programs based on the Child-Friendly Broadcasting Award were also provided. Importantly, strategies for minimizing the negative impact of YouTube content were elucidated, enhancing parents’ and caregivers’ media literacy. These videos were documented and disseminated through various social media platforms, ensuring widespread access.

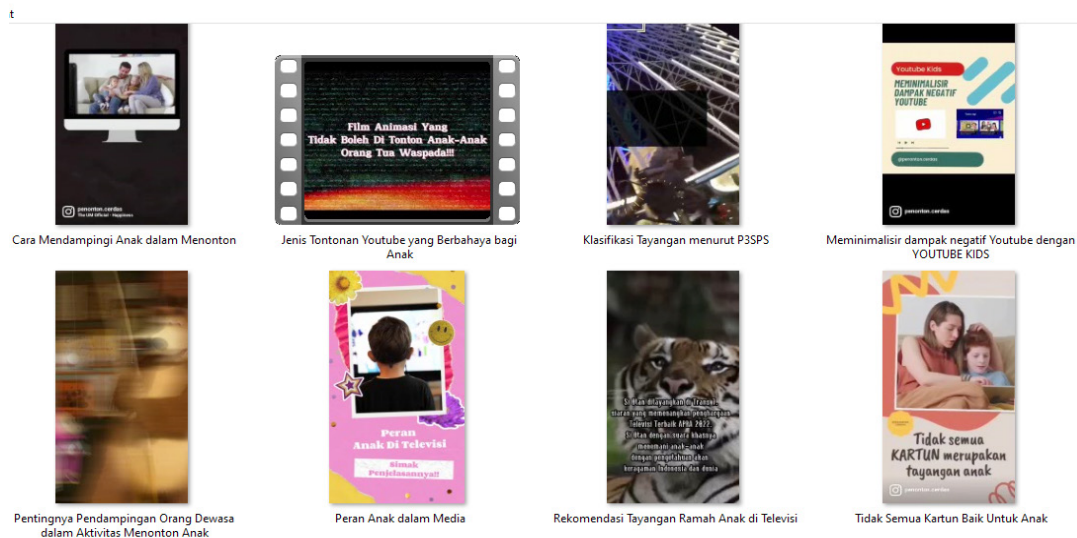


Fig. 5 Educational Videos

3. Written message (print media)

The campaign employed three stickers strategically designed to convey essential information, which were then distributed to the campaign’s target audience. These stickers served as tangible reminders, reinforcing key messages within households. Additionally, one standing banner was prominently displayed during focused group discussions (FGD), creating a visual focal point for discussion participants.



Fig. 6 The three stickers employed



Fig. 7 The standing banner employed

H. Product Campaign Validation and Product Testing

In evaluating our social campaign model, a vital step involved product validation and testing through focused group discussions (FGDs). The participants in these FGDs were drawn from the audience of the educational seminar titled "Portrait of Children's Shows on Indonesian Television," which occurred on Monday, 26 September 2022. The FGDs were multifaceted, with detailed discussions focused on feedback and suggestions about the educational seminar's implementation. Subsequently, participants collectively viewed educational videos, providing a valuable opportunity to assess their immediate reactions. Additionally, participants received and interacted with educational stickers, an integral component of our campaign materials. The FGDs facilitated in-depth discussions where participants shared their thoughts and opinions, enabling us to collect comprehensive feedback regarding the effectiveness and reception of the social campaign products.



Fig. 8 FGDs for Campaign Product Validation

I. Final Campaign Model

Our research efforts culminated in a robust final campaign model, refined through comprehensive product validation and testing, yielding invaluable suggestions. These suggestions, gleaned from participant feedback and expert evaluations, have significantly enhanced our approach to promoting healthy watching habits in early childhood. Several key recommendations emerged.

Firstly, based on participant preferences, the educational seminar duration should be extended beyond the initial one hour, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of crucial concepts. Additionally, feedback emphasized the importance of adjusting background music in educational videos to a softer tone, ensuring it complements the content without causing distraction, thus enhancing message clarity and retention. Furthermore, recognizing the ubiquity of social media platforms in modern society, it was proposed that educational videos be disseminated intensively across these channels. This necessitates the establishment of a dedicated entity or resource tasked with managing social media content effectively, ensuring widespread reach and engagement. In response to the evolving digital communication landscape, leveraging WhatsApp groups was identified as a promising avenue. These groups provide a platform for intensified educational messaging, fostering interactive experiences and

knowledge exchange among participants. Moreover, recognizing the influence of social media influencers, a strategic collaboration with these individuals was recommended. By enlisting influencers to disseminate our educational videos through their platforms, we can significantly broaden our campaign’s reach, capturing the attention of diverse audiences swiftly and effectively.

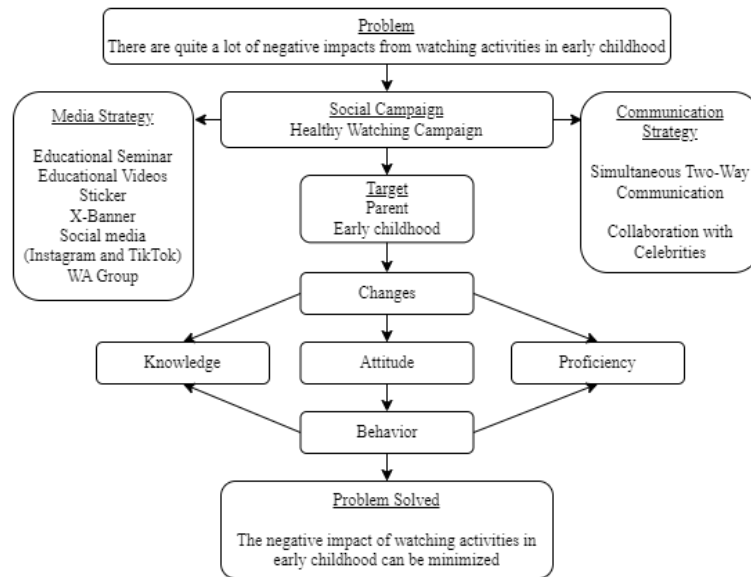


Fig. 9 Stakeholder Mapping Based on The Saliency Model Diagram

J. Dissemination Stage

1. Educational Seminar

In advancing our campaign, a pivotal educational seminar took place on Saturday, July 23, 2022, utilizing a hybrid format to ensure maximum outreach and engagement. The seminar, held from 08:00 AM to 11:00 AM WIB, transpired in Theater Room 2 of the Tanjungpura University Conference Building. Noteworthy was the seamless integration of modern technology, as the event was broadcast via Live Streaming on the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) Central Media Center, facilitating a broader virtual audience. The seminar attracted a diverse group of 65 attendees, including Young Professional Mothers, Representatives from local Schools in the Pontianak City region, Students, members of the Public, and representatives from Local Mass Media outlets. The seminar was meticulously conducted in strict compliance with the established Health Protocol standards to uphold public safety amidst the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.



Fig. 10 Stakeholder Mapping Based on The Saliency Model Diagram

2. Distribution of Educational Videos through the Smart Viewer’s Social Media

3. Creating an Educational Group via WhatsApp Group

Establishing WhatsApp groups was pivotal in engaging parents as active participants in the “Watch Healthy” social campaign. A diverse cohort of eight mothers, from homemakers to state civil apparatus, was carefully selected to represent the target demographic comprehensively. Within these groups, eight educational videos were disseminated, providing valuable insights and solutions related to healthy viewing habits for young children. Additionally, these WhatsApp groups served as dynamic platforms for monitoring the evolution of parents’ knowledge, attitudes, and skills pertinent to promoting healthy watching practices.

K. Behavior Change Monitoring

The campaign's effectiveness was assessed through direct engagement with eight key participants in the "Healthy Watching" initiative. Through detailed interviews and observation, notable transformations were identified across various domains. The study revealed substantial enhancements in mothers' knowledge base, skill sets, attitudes, behaviors, and discernible shifts in household members' perspectives.

1. Changes in Knowledge

The impact assessment of the "Healthy Watching" social campaign on the knowledge of the eight targeted mothers revealed significant advancements. These improvements encompassed several crucial aspects of children's media consumption: (a) Participants exhibited enhanced knowledge about high-quality children's programs aired on prominent TV stations such as TVRI and Trans 7. Notable shows such as "Mari Menggambar," "Anak Indonesia," and "Buah Hatiku Sayang" were recognized for their educational value and child-appropriate content. (b) Mothers demonstrated increased awareness regarding the suitability of cartoon programs for their children. This discernment was pivotal in ensuring children were exposed to age-appropriate and educational content. (c) Participants acquired knowledge about the existence of YouTube Kids, a specialized application tailored for children. (d) Mothers gained awareness of content classification logos on television, indicating the appropriateness of the material for different age groups. (e) Participants developed a heightened awareness of limiting children's screen time. (f) Mothers recognized active supervision's critical role while their children consumed media.

2. Changes in Proficiency

The "Healthy Watching" social campaign yielded notable advancements in the proficiency of the eight targeted mothers, enhancing their media literacy skills in various dimensions: (a) Mothers exhibited improved proficiency in screening television content tailored for toddlers. (b) Participants demonstrated enhanced proficiency in screening content on YouTube, a platform widely accessed by children. (c) Mothers gained proficiency in teaching their children to differentiate between imagination, fantasy, and factual information while engaging in media consumption. (d) Proficiency in utilizing features within the YouTube Kids application.

3. Changes in Attitude

The "Healthy Watching" social campaign has elicited significant changes in the attitudes of the eight targeted mothers, fostering a proactive approach toward their children's media consumption: (a) Previously, they did not pay much attention to the type of content their children were watching. Still, now, mothers try to accompany and supervise their children while managing actively. (b) Mothers also encourage fathers and people around them to be concerned about the content viewed in early childhood.

4. Changes in Behavior

Behavior changes have occurred in the eight target mothers of the "Healthy Watching" social campaign. The behavior changes include: (a) Mothers, when accompanying their children while watching, now explain the negative impacts and the reinforcement of positive values in the content. (b) The behavior of people living in the same household as the campaign's target, not only fathers but also caregivers and even family members living with the target family, has become more attentive to what the children are watching.

CONCLUSION

In light of the research findings, several key conclusions can be derived. The "Healthy Watching" social campaign, meticulously designed to address young children's television-watching habits, focuses on mothers' pivotal role in Pontianak as the primary audience. The communication strategy employed in this campaign adopts a multifaceted approach, encompassing diverse channels such as face-to-face interactions, printed media, educational videos, and social media platforms. Specifically, the campaign utilizes educational seminars for interpersonal communication, video content for audio-visual engagement, stickers, standing banners, and digital platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp groups for broader outreach through printed and social media. Crucially, the campaign emphasizes a continuous, two-way communication strategy, emphasizing ongoing engagement until the target audience comprehensively grasps the desired message. This sustained dialogue aims to empower parents, particularly mothers, with the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes required to supervise and guide their children's viewing activities actively. By instilling a sense of agency and responsibility in parents, the campaign aims to transform their role from passive observers to proactive mediators. This transformational approach involves not only the selection of appropriate content but also active participation in reinforcing positive values during early childhood media interactions. Moreover, the success of this campaign model lies in its ability to alter parental behaviors significantly. Parents are encouraged to be vigilant selectors, actively curating content that aligns with their values and guiding their children's media experiences. By assuming an active translation role, parents filter the messages that reach their children, thereby minimizing potential negative impacts associated with viewing activities.

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