

THE IMPACT OF GADGET CONSUMPTION PATTERNS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL INTERACTION IN ERA 5.0

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ABSTRACT

In the 5.0 era, gadgets are a necessity for everyone, so most parents have introduced gadgets to their children from an early age. As a result, the long-term use of such gadgets and applications without parental supervision will affect children's social interactions. The aim of this research is to determine the impact of gadget consumption patterns on social interactions during early childhood. This research uses qualitative methods with centralized observation and interviews, involving parents as informants. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that in the 5.0 era, gadgets have a significant influence on the social interaction abilities of young children because young children spend more time playing with gadgets than playing together with their peers.

Keywords: *Gadget, social interaction, early childhood*

INTRODUCTION

One of the big parts of this new technology is gadgets. Both children and adults consider gadgets essential. Gadgets help us talk to each other and learn many different things (Rofi'ah, Fahrudi, & Muslimin, 2023). Therefore, many people spend too much time using gadgets and forget about other activities. Recently, it has become commonplace to see parents giving gadgets to very young children, even those under 5 years old. This means that gadgets are starting to replace parents as children's playmates.

In the current world, which is called the 5.0 era (Rofi'ah, Munastiwi, & Na'imah, 2021), science and technology are developing very rapidly. The new types of technology continue to emerge and change constantly. In this era, everyone needs technology to make their daily lives. It is easy to use, affordable, and adaptable to individual needs.

Gadgets are special tools designed to be useful. They are often more advanced than older technology. Gadgets include smartphones, tablets, laptops, and cameras. When children use gadgets, it can change the way they learn, making them more dependent on their phones instead of focusing on studying (Munisa et al., 2020).

When children are small, they grow and change greatly, both physically and intellectually. To help them grow strong and healthy, they must move and play. If children spend too much time on tablets or phones, they may not learn how to interact with other children (Rofiah dan Qayyum 2023). Sometimes parents are unaware of

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what is happening with their child's growth, so they may not realize that their child is failing important skills. If this occurs, it is important to receive help immediately so that the child can catch up according to his developmental stage (Listiana et al., 2020).

Excessive use of gadgets can also cause children to become lazy. Gadgets cause children who actually just love mailing with their friends to become isolated, resulting in social intellectuals who should be developing well and becoming disturbed (Oktavilana, 2021). Mistakes in using out-of-date gadgets can also result in older children having attitudes that do not care about everything that exists within them, both in their family environment and in their friends. Children's dependence on gadgets will also have an impact on social inequality between children who have gadgets and those who do not have gadgets (Puji Lestari, 2024).

Social interaction is how people connect and communicate, whether it is individuals talking to each other or groups of people interacting. When human contact is social and the person speaks; that is, when social interaction occurs. This is very important for everyone because it helps us live together and understand each other better (Novitasari, 2016). For young children, social interaction is very important because it teaches them how to be part of a community and helps them learn about their own role in life. When children interact with other people, they discover new things about the world around them.

Although the use of gadgets can sometimes have a negative impact, they can also help. They can help children plan playtime, make fun ideas, and think creatively, especially if their parents are supervising them. Therefore, parents must be involved in their children's use of technology. Parents should not let their children become too dependent on gadgets; instead, they should guide their children in choosing what to use so that it does not interfere with family time. Parents should also supervise what their children do on their gadgets to ensure that it is safe and appropriate (Hanita et al., 2023).

Based on the results of observations carried out on relatives in Delsa Kelpohagung, Plumpang, Tuban, most of the children had problems in social science, and their mental health was also affected due to their addiction to electronic gadgets. The child's emotional level is disturbed so that the closeness between the parents and the child becomes looser, and the child's ability to challenge his parents and social interaction with his peers is lessened because the child is more likely to use his gadgets than he does when gathering with his friends.

Therefore, future studies should focus on analyzing the impact of gadget use on social literacy in middle-aged children. This study provided a more in-depth understanding of the consequences of using gadgets for social psychology in middle-aged children. In addition, educational training provides practical guidance for parents or caregivers in managing and monitoring the use of technology in older children.

RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is field research using qualitative methods. Researchers carried out an in-depth research process through qualitative descriptive research with a type of field study through daily activities carried out by children in Kepohagung village. The subjects in this research were 15 children in the village of Kepohagung, Plumpang, Tuban and several parents of these children. The data collection technique in this research is collecting various kinds of information through interviews with sources and observing daily activities carried out by children. The data analysis technique used by researchers in this research is interactive model data analysis. In analyzing the data, researchers used three stages consisting of data reduction activities, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Rijal Fadli, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early childhood is a determining period for a child's development. During this period, a child really needs stimulation to obtain the right education and stimulation to move toward the next stage of development. Early childhood is characterized by the golden age. This period is called the golden age because at this age, the most amazing and best development occurs during early childhood. The developmental aspects of early childhood include the development of values and morals, emotional development, physical and motor development, cognitive development, language development, and artistic development. Therefore, appropriate patterns are necessary to help children develop well (Fadlilah & Krisnanto, 2019).

The use of gadgets is one aspect that influences a person's development. Gadgets are used by all groups, including adults and children. It is now common for children to have personal gadgets. Gadgets in this era are very popular with young children because today's gadgets are very different from the gadgets of the past, which could only be used for telephone calls and receiving or sending messages (Rahayu et al., 2021). It cannot be denied that modern gadgets are designed to be very attractive and deceptive. In addition, modern gadgets can include applications such as games that are now very varied, starting from games with gaming and learning themes. This is because modern gadgets are very interesting and diverse, which will certainly make young children happy to spend a long time playing with them, resulting in a lack of social interaction with their environment and peers (Novitasari, 2016).

Based on observations made by researchers on 15 children in Kepohagung Village, Plumpang, Tuban, they already know and enjoy using gadgets. Most users use smartphones or tablets. These children often use gadgets to play educational and entertainment games. Using this gadget is more enjoyable than playing with friends. This cannot be separated from the various game applications found on children's gadgets, which, of course, attract children's attention more than games found in the surrounding environment. In addition, parents also "yes" that when their children play with gadgets, they tend to stay silent in front of their respective gadgets without caring about the world around them. Therefore, without parents realizing this, things like this affect children's social interaction abilities because children play with their gadgets more often than they have to play with their peers.

Early childhood dependence on gadgets is caused by children spending too much time playing with them for a very long time and doing it every day, even every minute or second, which can lead young children to become autistic. The impact of playing with gadgets is that children tend to be more individualistic. This phenomenon causes children to not know how to interact and communicate with family, friends, and the community (Agustina et al., 2022).

The frequent time spent by young children playing with gadgets or the virtual world certainly influences children's excessive thinking power. Children's love of playing with gadgets can influence children's social interactions or interactions with their surrounding environment. In addition, by playing with gadgets, children feel distant and unfamiliar with their surroundings and peers. This is due to a lack of social interaction in children. As a parent, of course, you have to monitor and give direction to your child not to play with gadgets too often. Excessive use of gadgets can lead to addiction. This is because the negative impact of such gadgets is very dangerous. Therefore, parents must provide supervision. Today's children are more concerned with playing with gadgets than playing with their family environment. Another impact caused by gadgets is the increasingly widespread internet access, which reveals all sorts of interesting things that, of course, affect children's social interactions and disrupt children's learning processes (Nasution et al., 2022).

From the research results, it was found that several negative impacts of using gadgets during early childhood in Kepohagung Village, Plumpang, Tuban are as follows:

1. Children have more fun playing with gadgets so they forget about the people around them and often ignore their parents' orders and prioritize gadgets more than the activities they should be doing.
2. Children prefer playing with gadgets rather than playing with their peers, and they have difficulty eating, are disturbed and do not respond when called.
3. The use of gadgets can affect the child's mental and emotional condition, emotionally children are easily angry and slam things that are nearby when the network is less stable and when they want to take the gadget that the child is using, it is very difficult to persuade them, requiring a lot of effort. Children tend to be more easily depressed, stressed and anxious because they are exposed to negative videos on social media. From interviews that have been conducted, the average use of gadgets in early childhood is more than 2 hours a day, they spend more time playing online games and watching YouTube videos.
4. Giving gadgets to young children can cause children to use impolite language because they imitate videos that are not educational and can also cause health problems for children, such as headaches, vision problems and body posture problems.
5. Children who often play with gadgets tend to be less skilled in communicating and interacting socially (low social skills). They may have difficulty building strong interpersonal relationships with their friends and family.

The research results indicate that most parents give gadgets to their children based on the child's wishes. Parents don't want their children to be fussy, so parents prefer to give gadgets to their children. Apart from that, most parents are busy with their activities so their children choose to play with gadgets because they don't have anyone to play with. Novitasari's study (2016) stated that children tend to enjoy using gadgets more than playing with their peers. This is influenced by the various interesting game applications available on children's gadgets, which attract their attention more than the traditional games around them (Novitasari, 2016).

Children's attention to various game applications on their gadgets cannot be separated from the fact that these applications are much more interesting to them than the games around their environment. Children's dependence on gadgets is often caused by the long durations they are using them. If you play with gadgets for a long time and so do every day, your child can develop antisocial behavior. In early childhood, children must hone their social skills in the surrounding environment. However, research shows that there are efforts to limit the duration of gadget use and perform strict supervision to prevent these negative effects.

Factors that influence the use of gadgets in early childhood include parenting patterns implemented by parents, interactions with peers, and online learning. The parenting style adopted by parents has a significant impact on children's gadget usage patterns. For example, parents with authoritarian parenting tend not to allow children to use gadgets freely, while democratic parenting tends to give children early access to gadgets, but with set limits. Parents with permissive parenting, on the other hand, may let their children use gadgets without close supervision (Lestari, 2024).

Another factor, namely peers, peer environment is a condition where there is a form of relationship between two or more children where one child influences, changes or improves the behavior of another child or vice versa and this relationship occurs between the child and other children of the same age. relatively the same or the same age. Early childhood children are more inclined to imitate activities. When children see their peers playing with gadgets, the child will automatically follow what their friends have done. Things like this are an obstacle to social interaction, because in this case, even though in a place there is a group or association of children, they rarely talk to their friends but are busy with their own gadgets (Rahayu et al., 2021).

From the research results, it was also found that there were several positive impacts of using gadgets on young children in one of the villages in Kepohagung Plumpang, namely that children were more active in honing their singing talents through applications on gadgets such as YouTube and TikTok. According to him, introducing gadgets in early childhood can develop children's self-confidence so that it is easier for them to express themselves and not be blind to technology, considering that in increasingly advanced times, skills are needed. By introducing gadgets to early childhood, parents, especially mothers, can make their activities easier in doing homework, and can hone children's creativity; they can design on gadgets to produce extraordinary creativity. Apart from that, children can obtain various information about learning from various gadgets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that the use of gadgets in the 5.0 era in early childhood has a complex impact on children's development, consisting of positive and negative impacts. The introduction of gadgets at an early age can provide positive stimulation for developing children's creativity, thinking abilities, and social interactions. However, excessive use of gadgets can have a negative impact; children tend to concentrate less on their lives because they are all about gadgets. Playing with gadgets can also affect children's social interactions and interactions with the surrounding environment, so parents are advised to monitor them seriously and attentively and provide directions to children not to play with gadgets often. These gadgets must be monitored by parents so that they are not misused and do not have prolonged negative impacts.

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