

The Important Role of Parents for Children in the Negative Impact of *Gadgets*

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ABSTRACT

Dependence and addiction to gadget technology among elementary school children have become increasingly concerning in society. This research aims to explore how parents address these issues. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the study employs interview techniques to gather insights into strategies parents use to prevent addiction among children aged 7-9 years. The research was conducted on June 18-20, 2024, in South Manggarai, Tebet sub-district, South Jakarta district, the capital city of DKI Jakarta. Participants included children from grades 2 to 3 along with their mothers. The research instrument used was a human instrument (self-conducted), employing paper and writing utensils for note-taking from participants, and mobile phones for recording interviews. Data analysis utilized descriptive analytical techniques, revealing three main strategies parents employ to mitigate the negative impacts of gadget use: (1) managing children's gadget usage time, (2) avoiding introducing social media to children, and (3) using non-punitive methods in child education.

Keywords: Dependence and addiction, Gadget technology, Negative impact.

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments in this era have become increasingly advanced, especially the use of *gadget technology* (Putra, 2017). *Gadgets* are no longer foreign objects, we all know this because almost everyone has a *gadget* (Kurniawati & Sutharjana, 2023). Its users are not only used by adults for work, but also by teenagers or children for education and entertainment. So it is common nowadays that many children use *gadgets* in their daily lives (Sukor & Razak, 2023).

The main aim of creating *gadget technology* is to make our daily lives easier in positive ways, whether in the fields of communication, searching for information, work or education (Wijaya & Sandriya, 2019). Before *gadgets* were created, we always went through our daily lives manually which could take a lot of time. But many *gadget users* use *gadgets* in negative ways that are very dangerous and affect other users in a short time and in large numbers (Firmansyah et al., 2023).

The development of *gadget technology* has had many positive impacts on children in improving education and creativity for children aged 7-9 years, but in certain situations the presence of *gadgets* has had many negative impacts on children (Astuti et al., 2022). One of the negative impacts is the emergence of a feeling of addiction and dependence on *gadgets*. This feeling of addiction can make children increasingly dependent on excessive *gadgets* (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023). *Excessive* use of *gadgets* in children aged 7-9 years can reduce discipline and interest in learning. *Excessive use of gadgets can also have a more fatal impact if left untreated, it will damage the child's mentality* (Shah et al., 2020).

According to Rohmah (2022), children aged 7-9 years are already at one of the four stages of cognitive development, namely the concrete operational stage (7-12 years). At this stage, children are starting to be able to use logical thinking, but can only apply logic to physical or real objects. Children begin to be taught who is moral or immoral by giving genuine or solid examples, one example is parents teaching children how to interact with friends of the same age properly or telling children that watching television for too long can damage their eyes and disturb them. Study time. So it is not difficult to find out why children aged 7-9 years are easily addicted to cellphone *gadgets*.

Recently, many parents think that cellphones can be objects of interaction that are safe and easy to monitor (Lemish et al., 2020). Children will think of cellphone *gadgets* as physical objects for their logical thinking. Without parental education, children will absorb all age-inappropriate information without knowing whether the information has a positive or negative impact (Danet, 2020). A feeling of dependence and addiction will arise in children because they think of cell phones as interaction partners and it is very dangerous for their mental health if they continue (Scott et al., 2017). Children will lose their interest in going to school, learning knowledge that is useful for their future as the next generation (Docherty, 2018). Children will also find it difficult to control their emotions, when *gadgets* are not nearby children will get angry and throw tantrums at their parents (Widodo & Wartoyo, 2020). The period when children listened to what their parents said, studied hard and went to school diligently, and played with friends or family physically at home or outside the home will gradually fade if this continues.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that parents have an important role in controlling, limiting and educating children in the use of *gadgets* (Yulianti et al., 2023). Parents have an obligation to control and in addition supervise children's activities when using cellphones in their daily lives by providing good and appropriate explanations. Parents also have an important role in accompanying children in the educational process in the family environment by teaching them to behave well and have good habits too. In accordance with this phenomenon, the increasing use of *gadgets* without knowledge and education from parents will have a negative impact on children's cognitive development. The following are some of the roles of parents in controlling children's use of *gadgets*: (1) limiting children's use of cellphones and other digital devices; (2) accompany and monitor children when using social media on cellphones; (3) teach children to use *gadgets* in a good and positive way; and (4) help children choose safe and appropriate media and broadcasts; and (5) divert children's attention from *gadgets* by encouraging children to play outside with friends.

But unfortunately many parents ignore these things and events. The role of people in educating children can also prevent children's addiction and dependence on *gadgets*. Even though many parents ignore it and think that it is normal for their children to use *gadgets* and don't need to worry about them, there are also parents who do everything they can to educate their children well and protect them from the negative impacts of *gadget technology*.

The objective of this research is to investigate how parents manage and prevent feelings of gadget addiction and dependency among elementary school children aged 7-9 years. By understanding effective parental strategies, this study aims to provide insights into promoting healthier gadget use habits among children in this age group. Specifically, it aims to explore the strategies employed by parents to manage gadget usage among children aged 7-9 years, identify the challenges parents face in preventing gadget addiction and dependency in children, and examine the impact of parental involvement on children's digital habits and behaviors.

This study aims to benefit both academic and parental communities by providing insights into effective parenting strategies to mitigate gadget addiction among young children, enhancing understanding of the roles parents play in shaping children's digital behaviors and habits, and offering recommendations for parents and educators on promoting responsible gadget use among elementary school children.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach because the data used is in the form of sentences, not numbers. This research aims to determine the role of parents in educating and controlling children in using *gadget technology*. The data collection technique used in this research is interviews. Interview techniques were used to obtain information about how parents prevent addiction and dependence in children aged 7-9 years on *gadgets*. The data from the interviews will be used as the main data for the article.

Interviewing activities were carried out at the subject's residence which is located in South Manggarai sub-district, Tebet sub-district, South Jakarta district, capital city of DKI Jakarta. It was held for two days on June 18 and June 20 2022. Date the subjects I interviewed were the parents of a child who is 9 years old this month and is in grade 2 going up to grade 3. In the interview activity, I asked several questions related to the topic what I chose, one of which was asking the mother about how to prevent her child from feeling addicted and dependent on *gadgets*.

The research instrument used is *a human instrument* (own research), the researcher himself acts as the research instrument. This *Human Instrument* is used to obtain research data that is valid and focuses on the research objectives so that the results of the research carried out can be accounted for. The tools used in interview activities are paper and writing tools which are used to record important information said by the subject. Technological media in the form of a cellphone is used to record conversations between the subject and me. The analysis technique for this research is a descriptive analytical technique. Descriptive analytics is a technique used to describe the facts contained in the object of research, then continue by explaining them up to the stage of providing understanding and explanation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Being aggressive is one of the negative impacts of gadget technology

Initially the parents still let the subject play on their cellphone without knowing the consequences. But because of an incident where the subject slammed and hit the cellphone until it broke and was damaged. The reason was because the subject lost a game on his mother's cellphone. When they found out about this, the parents decided to control the subject and make rules limiting the use of cellphones for the subject and the subject's siblings.

"So he once played with his cellphone until the front of the screen cracked. He hit him, until he was annoyed and emotional. "His cellphone is broken and can only be used to hear sounds." (Interview 2. June 20, 2024)

Nowadays, many parents do not understand that if children are given *gadgets* and allowing them to use *gadgets* without a time limit can make children addicted to *gadgets*. This is a serious problem that needs attention and immediate action to reduce and eliminate *gadget addiction* in children. The following are some of the negative impacts of *gadgets* on children's cognitive aspects: (1) Decreased learning concentration (when studying, children do not focus and only remember *gadgets*); (2) Lazy because

he has no interest in learning; and (3) (cognitive or thinking psychological processes related to how individuals study, pay attention, observe, imagine, estimate, assess and think about their environment will be hampered) (Damayanti et al., 2020).

Children's Cognition Is Hampered Due to Using Gadgets

Imagine children forgetting all the knowledge taught at school and needing a lot of time to understand it with a lot of effort. Initially being able to do assignments with high grades decreased to low grades

"Once Mathematics grades dropped. After being given a schedule, thank God, I didn't feel like I was joking anymore. He understands all the lessons." (Interview 1, June 18, 2024)

All children's memories related to lessons are replaced with those related to *gadgets*. Children find it difficult to quickly recall what they understand from school because they play with *gadgets for too long* without time limits. The subject cannot do math problems smoothly because the thing he immediately remembers is the game on *the gadget*. When the subject's mother found out about this, she immediately restricted the subject from using a cellphone and as a result the child was able to use his cognitive abilities. The subject can search and recall the lessons he learned quickly.

Children's Time Management Using Gadgets

Time management is a method used by parents in an effort to limit children's use of gadgets. One way of managing time used is by making a schedule for using gadgets after the child comes home from school. There are children who are allowed to play on their cell phones only from Friday to Sunday, and there are also those who are allowed to play on their cell phones after all their school assignments have been completed (Sisbintari & Setiawati, 2021).

"I used to like playing on my cellphone, but I had a schedule. So the schedule is Saturday and Sunday. So, if it's Friday, for example, Saturday is the holiday, you're allowed to play on your cellphone. But on weekdays you can't play with your cellphone" (Interview 1, 18 June 2024)

Apart from that, there is also a way to allocate time for using *gadgets*. Based on the information obtained, this scheduling can be accepted by both parties (parents and children) because it is in accordance with the allocation given.

"Even on holidays, we don't do that, no. There are times when he plays outside. No, it's a holiday, for example Saturday, it's a holiday when you keep playing on your cellphone, nothing. Only in the morning to play for a while outside. In the afternoon, after midday prayers, we played again at home. After Ashar finished playing, he went out to play football, what did he play? There are a lot more activities outside." (Interview 1, June 18, 2024)

Children's use of gadgets must be controlled so as not to interfere with their growth and development. There are various ways that parents use their children to prevent gadget addiction in their children. One method used is to make an agreement with the child regarding a schedule for using gadgets. This scheduling is very important so that children's use of gadgets is not too intense. Parental communication is very important in preventing gadget addiction in children. One form of communication is communication regarding an agreement on scheduling the use of gadgets with children. Furthermore, well-developed communication between parents and children has a

positive impact on children's mental development because children experience a democratic education pattern in the family.

"After a while I found out his schedule (playing on my cellphone). Back then, I didn't give him a schedule, so I still let him go, but he just got worse, didn't he? But over time, the more I come here, the more I give you a schedule or not, I'm already following it. I don't need to bother anymore, I don't get angry anymore because he already knows his schedule" (Interview 1, 18 June 2024)

Not Introducing Social Media to Children

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok are social media applications that we often use to interact with other people and as entertainment for us. It is not unusual to see elementary school children using social media like the example above. But there are times when children unintentionally or intentionally see adult content or that elementary school children should not see on social media.

"It's like Facebook now sometimes has (adult posts) these kinds of pictures, right? Many are now entering everywhere. That's why, all my children don't make Facebook, I don't make Twitter. Because it's scary, there are a lot of pictures now. Facebook is like, what? It's really easy for people to share all kinds of things. No, I said it was really scary." (Interview 2. 20 June 2024)

Based on this description, parents are worried about the dangers of social media for children. Parents think that social media can damage children's brains and make them mentally ill. Adult content can damage a child's brain and over time make the child unconsciously addicted to seeing things that are not appropriate for children. That's why it's important for parents to always check their children's cellphones to avoid the dangerous incidents above. As parents, they must protect their children not only physically, but also mentally.

Scolding is not the right way to educate children

As a parent, their duty and obligation is to educate their children so that they are on the path that is blessed by Allah SWT. To achieve good goals we must also have good methods. There are times when parents scold their children to stop being lazy and start studying. There are some children who listen to this anger even though in the end it will only traumatize the child slowly. There are also some children who fight back against their parents with angry emotions.

"Well, if I get angry, he ends up rebelling and sulking. So I tried to persuade him to study without getting angry. Over time it becomes easy to obey and learn straight away. "His father was the same when he woke him up, he continued to kiss him." (Interview 1, June 18, 2024)

The subject's mother tried to persuade the subject gently without needing emotion. The subject will rebel and try to avoid their parents. This is a common reason because children's dependence on *gadgets* makes them easily emotional and see their parents as a threat to their entertainment time. This can be avoided with smooth communication between children and parents without any coercion. Parents must also understand what their children really need and forget about using *gadgets*. Children will be open and willing to listen to parents' words in the form of gentle persuasion and non-coercive suggestions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there are 3 efforts used by parents to prevent children's addiction and dependence on *gadget technology*. The following are the efforts: (1) children's time management using *gadgets*; (2) do not introduce social media to children; and (3) Scolding is not a fast way to educate children. This is an effort by parents to reduce the intensity of children's feelings of addiction and dependence on *gadgets*. This will not arise when parents focus on children's development and do not take the solution that playing with gadgets is an effective shortcut so that children learn to live independently without *solid education* from them. Parent. The adult role as a parent is a very important role for their children for the future. Children may have many needs that they want in very large quantities, but the needs that they really need in their lives are support and education from parents, and their presence when children are in bad situations that make them worse off. Of course there are times when parents can't make time because of work and need to earn a living for their children, but at least take a little time to communicate with children and understand the child's situation and feelings. In this way, children will feel safe, happy, and not feel lonely, so their motivation to grow well will appear whether they have help from their parents or not.

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