

## The Parents' Efforts to Overcome Gadget Use Addiction in Early Childhood

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, gadget users have penetrated the world of children who still have limited knowledge, namely early childhood. Early childhood is the best imitator. So that, when the child gets a good stimulus, the child will be good, but if the child gets a bad stimulus, it will interfere with the child's development process. The aims of this study were: 1) to determine the effect of gadget addiction on children's development; 2) to find out the effects of gadget addiction on children; 3) to find out the efforts of parents in dealing with children who are addicted to gadgets. The research method used is a type of qualitative research that comes from primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain data/information related to research problems. This research was conducted in Suak Batang Village, Gandus District, Palembang City, for parents and early childhood with a sample of 10% of the population in Suak Batang Village, namely 37 people. The conclusions of this study are 1) that gadget addiction causes children to like to spend time at home playing with gadgets and, in early childhood, watching violent content, thus influencing children to be arrogant when playing with their friends. 2) That gadget addiction in children has a positive impact, such as increasing knowledge, developing imagination, facilitating communication, and training children's creativity. But there are also negative impacts, such as sleep disorders, health, and development, which can also affect children's behavior, namely; restlessness, aloofness, lack of concentration, and laziness. 3) that the efforts of parents in overcoming gadget addiction in children are mentoring children, limiting the use of gadgets, scheduling gadget use, not giving children full access to gadget use.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gadgets serve as a means for convenient interaction or social communication with others. (Source: Kominfo, 2020) According to a 2017 poll conducted by APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers), the number of gadget users in Indonesia has reached 143.26 million out of a total population of 262 million. Unlike the last survey performed in 2015, which reported a total of only 110.2 million internet users. Users predominantly utilise smartphones, rather than desktops, for internet access. For instance, the percentage of mobile phone users in urban regions is 70.96%, while in rural-urban areas, it is 45.42%, and in rural areas it is 42.06%. Computer users exhibit a lack of progress; the urban population accounts for 31.55%, the population in rural-urban areas accounts for 22.42%, and the population in purely rural areas accounts for 23.83%. The source of this information is the APJII report from 2020. The data indicates a substantial rise in internet usage in Indonesia within a span of only two years. The reason for this is because electronics offer numerous advantages and are reasonably affordable. Individuals have the option to conveniently purchase it using either physical currency or a recurring payment arrangement. Furthermore, at present, gadget users have the ability to use their devices to acquire knowledge and as a means of amusement.

The benefits of gadgets and the demands of the day require us to use the Smartphone in daily activities, to watch videos, play games, and so on. Therefore, many parents give gadgets from an early age. However, premature exposure is feared to harm a child as on their social interactions with their surroundings. However, some parents argue that giving gadgets to children has several reasons, such as making it easier to access learning material and then educating them by following the era. This negative or positive impact depends on how parents or children respond to using their gadgets (Pebriana, 2017).

On gadgets, a wide range of content is easily accessible by children. This content can be either negative or positive. The Ministry of Communication and Information said that it has ordered 15 internet service providers (ISPs) and the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) to block pornographic images on search engines. Blocking is done by applying safe mode on all ISP search engines. As stated by the Director General of Informatics Applications (Aptika) of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo) Samuel Arijani, "It has been tested, the results are not bad. Nearly 98 percent are gone" (Republika.co.id, 2018). With an order from the Ministry communication and information for the ISP to activate the safe mode feature, the images will become blurry even if the user does not activate the safe mode feature on the Google search page. The block is reserved for images that appear on search engines. Because even though the site has been blocked, the pictures can still be opened when users look at the image tab while opening the Google search page. Therefore, Ministry communication and information directed ISPs and APJII to focus on blocking images categorized as pornographic following Law 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography (Online, 2018).

Nevertheless, in addition to negative content, there exists positive content. For example, children can participate in learning such as memorizing the Qur'an, and English vocabulary, or helping in reading and remembering and e-learning. Any effects experienced by children will undoubtedly influence their developmental stage (Sari and AA, 2020). The influence of utilising electronics can be either beneficial or detrimental, contingent upon the level of parental regulation over their usage. Typically, employed parents entrust their electronic devices to their children in order to allow them to entertain themselves without disturbance. Mothers with advanced education often actively involve themselves in using electronic devices as educational tools, making it easier and more enjoyable for children to acquire reading, writing, counting, memorising colors and objects, memorising the Qur'an, and memorising songs. Conversely, women with a lesser level of education allow their children unrestricted access to electronic devices, resulting in carefree and unregulated activities that may expose them to harmful content. Furthermore, several parents prohibit their children from utilising electronic devices (Yuli, 2018). In a hadith, as reported by Salim, 1985, "Every child is born according to his fitrah. Moreover, it was his parents who determined his religious affiliation, whether it be Judaism, Christianity, or Zoroastrianism. This Hadith elucidates that a child is inherently equipped with the

capacity to absorb and comprehend auditory and visual stimuli. Like a white paper, the outcome is contingent upon how his parents nurtured him (Al-Gazali, 1986).

Several previous studies that are relevant to this research include: Research by Fathia Nurfadilah, Badru Zaman, Nur Faizah Romadona, regarding Parents' Efforts to prevent children's dependence on gadget use (Nurfadilah, 2019). The results of the study obtained that there were parents' views on the use of gadgets for children, and there were positive opinions and negative opinions. The parents' efforts to prevent children's dependence on gadget use include: 1) Be firm by forbidding children to play too long; 2) not setting an example of using gadgets in front of children so they have to hide when using gadgets; 3) invite children to play outside and interact with neighbors and distract them with other activities; 4) enroll children in school to reduce the frequency of children using gadgets; 5) stop wifi access at home. Della Russyiana's research, The role of parents in overcoming the negative effects of using gadgets on children aged 3-6 years in Bukit Ulu Village, Karang Jaya District, North Musi Rawas Regency. (Della, 2020) the role of the family, especially parents, is very important in overcoming the negative effects of using gadgets on children, because the family is the first school for children. Familiarize children with time discipline in using gadgets with time limited by parents and providing games such as (lego, various kinds of puzzles, other learning media). Besides that, the role of parents is to set a good example for children, such as using gadgets when the child is sleeping or using gadgets only as needed.

Isma Nasikhatin Nafiah conducted a research study titled "The role of parents in preventing addiction to playing gadgets in early childhood: A case study of students at RA Tahsinul Akhlaq Tedunan Demak in 2011." The findings of the researchers' study indicate that parents play a crucial role in preventing early childhood gadget addiction. This role includes: 1) actively engaging with their children, 2) regulating and monitoring their children's gadget usage, 3) maintaining firmness and discipline, and 4) encouraging outdoor activities and play (Isma, (2021). The study conducted by Adinda (2021) focuses on the management of gadget addiction in school-age children in Wantilan Village, Subang Regency, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The writer's efforts yielded positive outcomes in addressing the actions of the child. The child started to exhibit responsiveness towards engaging in activities that were both more productive and enjoyable than simply playing with gadgets all day. Additionally, the child displayed a newfound interest and underwent noticeable changes as a result of the author's carefully planned interventions during the observation period. Parents, in addition to children, are also influenced by the good effects that arise from addressing gadget addiction in school-age children during this pandemic.

Based on the aforementioned studies, there are certain commonalities. Specifically, the subject of investigation is young children who are addicted to electronic devices. However, the distinguishing factor is in the methods employed to avert addiction to various electronic devices. The focus of this research is on parents' endeavours to combat their addiction to using electronic devices in the context of early childhood education.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses the qualitative descriptive method. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations in this study were used to obtain data about the condition of early childhood in Suak Batang Gandus Village, Gandus District, Palembang City. Interviews were conducted with parents who have early childhood to get information about parents' efforts to overcome gadget addiction in children. Documentation is intended to obtain supporting data such as a question and answer process with parents of early childhood and other data deemed necessary. Data analysis techniques in this study include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity includes source triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The author will provide information about the data following the research problem and discuss, as follows;

#### 3.1. *The Effect of Gadget Addiction on Child Development*

The researchers interviewed the respondents. The results of interviews and observations of children's parents:

*“actually my child became addicted to gadgets and that was also my fault, because since I was 2 years old, I gave my child a cellphone, so I thought it was only for watching YouTube or playing games and the effect was not that big. It turns out that the effect is that until now my child has not been separated from the cellphone. In one day my child played gadgets until I couldn't count them, so often they played cellphones. Even every day always play HP. I'm confused about how to get my child off the cellphone (Mt)”*

Then, another respondent said that when my daughter plays her cellphone for a long time. Even before the battery runs out, it won't stop. But yeah, about 5-6 times a day.

*“I often get angry when she keeps playing with her cellphone. my child is addicted to playing cellphones and likes to be alone, doesn't want to play outside the house with his friends. I'm so afraid that my child is like this all the time, I'm even happy when my child is playing outside the house with his friends (Rus).”*

Murni said:

*“my child had played on the cellphone very often. If I count it up to five times a day. But yeah, I'm not sure. That's also in my opinion, I have often played cellphones. Once you play 30 minutes to an hour, but that's also uncertain. And I see the effect of gadgets on my child becoming addicted and playing cellphones too often, then likes to be alone, all he remembers is the cellphone”*

Gadget addiction has a significant impact on child development in Suak Batang Gandus Village, Gandus District. For instance, children who are exposed to violent content on gadgets tend to imitate such behaviour and may exhibit arrogance towards others. Subsequently, children develop a perception that gadgets are enjoyable companions, leading them to allocate a significant amount of time engaging with gadgets within the confines of their homes, resulting in a profound dependency on gadgets. Based on interviews, youngsters often engage with electronic devices approximately five to six times per day. There are even certain children who engage with electronic devices more than six times every day. Dispensing guidance and illustrations to youngsters should be conveyed in a deliberate and incremental manner. Early childhood is a critical stage of rapid and fundamental growth in an individual's life (Pebriana, 2017). Providing advice and examples to children must be conveyed and carried out slowly and gradually. Early childhood is an individual figure who is undergoing a process of rapid and fundamental development for the next life.

Based on the results of interviews and observations from parents and children, giving directions is necessary because they do not have good reasoning abilities and cannot distinguish between good and bad things. It is why the role of parents in giving directions and monitoring gadgets using is necessary. But, there are still many parents who do have control over using a gadget; they tend to let their child play with it freely. Besides that, the use of applications is very influential on children's behavior or social development. The most commonly used applications are watching children's animation or cartoon series, learning media, playing games, and watching videos.

### 3.2. Impact of Gadget Addiction on Children

The use of gadgets has an impact on its users, especially children. The impact depends on how to use and utilize it. There are two effects of gadget addiction on children:

- a. Positive impacts, among others; 1) Increase knowledge. Children easily and quickly get new knowledge from gadgets. For example, children watch YouTube for learning, such as learning to count, learning shapes, colors, and so on. 2) Development of imagination. A kid's imagination can appear after playing with a gadget, they can imitate what has been watched. For example, the Islamic cartoons of Nusa, Upin, and Ipin. 3) Facilitate communication. The main function of gadgets is to make someone seem to meet each other even though they are in different places. Through video calls from various applications. A gadget is a tool that has advanced technology. Children are easier to communicate with their parents who are working or communicating with their families. 4) Train children's creativity. Technological advances have created a variety of creative games on gadgets. For example, the application to learn to count, learn colors and shapes, and other educational children's games. It can increase children's creativity. 5) Adapt to the times. Gadgets will help the development of a child's adaptation function. It means they can adapt to the surrounding environment and the development of the times. If today's developments appear with gadgets, then even children must know how to use them. It's like learning from the gadget in the form of video calls with teachers at an early age. (Sari & AA, 2020)
- b. Negative impacts, among others; 1) Gadgets can interfere with children's health. Excessive use of gadgets can interfere with the users healthy, especially eyes. For children who often play with gadgets, of course, the eyes work hard to focus on text on a Smartphone or tablet, which will cause headaches and tension in the eyelid area. As a result of staring at the gadget screen for too long, the eyes will experience fatigue, causing minus eyes. And also because the effects of radiation from gadgets are dangerous for human health, especially for children under 12 years. 2) Can interfere with child development. If they are addicted to gadgets, they will assume that the device is a part of their life. They will feel anxious when the gadget is kept away. All the time will be used to playing with gadgets. Activities in Kindergarten schools are only carried out as obligations because children who are addicted to these gadgets will consider the device as a loyal friend. There will be a conflict in his mind when they have to socialize with peers both at home and at school. 3) Sleep disturbances. Children who play with gadgets without parental supervision can disrupt their sleep hours. When it's time to sleep, children play with gadgets. It can interfere with the child's rest time. 4) Can influence the behavior of children. Advances in technology accelerate everything and without realizing it, children are conditioned to not stand the delay. As a result, children are increasingly weak in terms of patience and concentration and quickly demand people to give what they want immediately. 5) Gadgets are distracting. Unknowingly, nowadays children are addicted to using gadgets which are very influential for children. 6) Likes to be alone. Children who like to play with gadgets will feel that gadgets are fun friends, so children tend to spend time at home playing with gadgets rather than playing with their friends. 7) Have decreased concentration, and 8) Lazy to write and read. (Sari & AA, 2020)

### 3.3. Parents' Efforts in Dealing with Gadget Addiction Children

Parents employ several strategies to address gadget addiction in children, including: a) Restricting usage. Restrict the use of electronic devices based on the recommended age range for children. (1) Children below the age of 2 should not be permitted to independently engage with

gadgets, such as televisions, smartphones, and tablets. (2) Children between the ages of 2 and 4 should engage in physical activity for no more than 20 minutes each day. (3) For children aged 5 and above, it is recommended to limit non-study use to a maximum of 30 minutes per day. b) Provide a timetable. Allocate a specific time slot, preferably once daily throughout the evening, for youngsters to engage with electronic devices, limiting the duration to 20-30 minutes. So that youngsters can be regulated through engagement with electronic devices. Furthermore, parents should also arrange supplementary activities to prevent youngsters from becoming bored and reverting back to using electronic devices. d) Restrict access. Avoid exposing children's eyes to electronic devices. It is not advisable to solely entrust gadgets to children. Prior to using it, the youngster should get permission and return it once they are done. d) Establish designated zones free from electronic devices. Establish regulations prohibiting the use of electronic devices in specific locations, such as the dining table, bedroom, and car. e) Educate youngsters on the significance of self-control. Ensure that you commend the youngster when he successfully abstains from playing games on the gadget and adheres to the established regulations while also exhibiting exemplary behaviour. It is widely recognised that children emulate their parents' behaviours. In order to do this, parents must also serve as a positive role models by setting aside their mobile devices and actively engaging in playtime with their children (Fitria, 2020).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings derived from this study can be summarised as follows: a) The addiction to gadgets leads children to spend their time at home using gadgets and watching violent content during their childhood. This influences children to become arrogant when interacting with their friends during playtime. b) The addiction to gadgets in children has positive effects, such as enhancing their knowledge, fostering their imagination, facilitating communication, and nurturing their creativity. However, there are also adverse consequences, including disruptions in sleep, health, and development, which can also have an impact on a child's behaviour. These may manifest as restlessness, feelings of isolation, difficulty concentrating, and a tendency towards laziness. In order to address gadget addiction in children, parents can take measures such as accompanying their children while using gadgets, setting limits on gadget usage, scheduling designated times for gadget use, and not granting unrestricted access to gadgets. Parents should actively monitor and enforce strict measures to address excessive gadget usage by their children. This can be done by implementing penalties or sanctions, as well as imposing additional requirements such as completing memorization tasks, reading assignments, or giving homework before allowing children to use gadgets. The recommended duration for gadget usage should be limited to a range of 10 to 30 minutes per day. In order to instill Islamic values in children, parents should dedicate daily time to closely monitor their children's behaviour, ensuring that they are aware of their actions while yet providing a nurturing environment.

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