The Impact of Gadget Use on the Personality of Elementary School Students

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Abstract
The use of gadgets for a long time affects the personalities of elementary school students. The purpose of this study is to explain the impact of gadget use on the development of elementary school students. This research uses a case study type with research subjects in the form of two teachers and 25 fourth grade students selected by purposive sampling technique. Data collection was done through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique used was the Miles and Huberman method, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested through source and technique triangulation techniques. The results showed that many students experienced negative impacts of gadget use on their development, such as lack of social interaction, slow learning, and lack of concentration.

Keywords: concentration; student personality; gadgets

Introduction
The current era has witnessed rapid and complex developments. Numerous changes have occurred in various fields, all interconnected, including education, technology, and social aspects. However, the most significant changes seem to be in the field of technology, especially since entering the digital era or what is often referred to as the 4.0 era. Technology itself is created to simplify human affairs, and various types of technology can be found in the modern age. One prime example of widely popular
technology is gadgets, electronic devices designed for specific purposes, especially to assist humans in their daily activities.

It is important to acknowledge that the need for technology has become a strong influence, transforming human behavior and communication methods. It is undeniable that many children, even those under 5 years old, are proficient in operating technologies such as smartphones or mobile phones (Tatminingsih, 2017). Constant gadget use can impact the daily behavior and personality of children. Children who frequently use gadgets tend to become highly dependent on these devices, even making them a mandatory activity in their daily routines. Many children prefer playing with gadgets rather than studying or socializing with their surroundings (Maola & Lestari, 2021). This situation is concerning, as the childhood period is associated with unstable characteristics and a strong sense of curiosity, which can lead to increased consumptive behavior in children.

The negative effects of gadget use on child development include internet addiction, low concentration, poor socialization skills, gaming addiction, and exposure to pornography content (Ichlassul, 2018). Many children prioritize playing with gadgets over following parental instructions, a serious concern for parents (Sintia, 2018). This situation is exacerbated by the fact that Indonesia is among the top 10 countries with a very high rate of gadget addiction in children (Ginting, 2019).

The American and Canadian Pediatric Associations assert that children aged 0-2 should not be exposed to gadgets at all (Wulandari & Lestari, 2021). Children aged 3-5 are allowed to use gadgets, but their usage time is limited to 1 hour per day, while children aged 6-18 are only allowed 2 hours of gadget use per day (Apsari et al., 2023; Lubis et al., 2020). However, the majority of children spend more time playing with gadgets than recommended. The use of gadgets such as smartphones and tablets begins at an early age. Excessive gadget use can negatively impact the health and personality of children. If children spend a significant amount of time playing with gadgets without a clear purpose, it can be dangerous and even lead to addiction. Children addicted to gadgets tend to have difficulty detaching from these devices and are challenging to rehabilitate (Ladika, 2018).

The importance of a good personality in elementary school students is fundamental in shaping the character of children in this digital era. A positive personality has positive effects in facing various challenges and ensuring holistic child development (Harsela & Qalbi, 2020). However, the current state of elementary school students' personalities in Indonesia shows worrying changes. Through observations in elementary schools, changes in students' speaking styles influenced by the language encountered in gadgets are apparent. Students' behavior leans more toward using gadgets as a mandatory activity, neglecting learning and socialization activities.

A child's personality is influenced by differences in theory formulation, research, and measurement. According to George Kelly, personality is the unique way each individual manifests their experiences. Meanwhile, according to Gordon Allport, personality is an individual's psychophysical organization that produces distinctive behavior and thought patterns in each individual (Octavia, 2020). Referring to these
definitions, it can be concluded that personality is the result of the unique way each individual faces and expresses their experiences. Technological development, especially gadget use in children, can be a factor influencing personality formation. In this context, it is crucial to understand that technological development, particularly gadget use in children, can play a significant role in shaping their character and behavior over time. Excessive gadget use habits at a young age can form behavior patterns and personality tendencies that may require special attention.

Negative impacts such as addiction, lack of concentration, and decreased socialization skills can harm a child's growth and development. Therefore, the role of parents in monitoring and guiding their children's gadget use is crucial. Guidelines from the American and Canadian Pediatric Associations provide a healthy time framework for gadget use, but implementation still requires supervision and a wise approach.

As a society increasingly connected to technology, it is important for all of us to collectively create a balanced understanding of gadget use, especially among children. This way, we can provide an environment that supports the healthy and balanced development of personality for future generations.

Related studies highlight the negative impact of gadgets on elementary school students, including changes in speaking styles and low concentration. However, the uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on elementary school students in Kota Batusangkar. The novelty of this research includes its contribution to our understanding of how gadget use in children can affect their personality development, especially in elementary schools in Kota Batusangkar.

Methods

The method employed in this study is qualitative research with a case study approach. The informant selection technique involves non-probability sampling, specifically purpose sampling, where data sources are obtained from 4th-grade teachers and parents of students. The researcher serves as the instrument, utilizing interview guidelines, questionnaires, and a smartphone as tools. Data collection involves observational techniques, with the researcher visiting the school to observe the learning process in the classroom. Subsequently, the researcher interviews the 4th-grade teacher regarding the impact of gadget use on students' personalities. The researcher also conducts interviews with the students' parents. Documentation is carried out as part of the study to capture activities related to the learning process. The data analysis technique employed in this research follows Miles and Huberman's model, involving data reduction (selecting, grouping, discarding, and sorting relevant data), data display (presenting research results when all three sets of data—interviews, observations, and documentation—are consistent), and drawing conclusions (summarizing overall research findings). Triangulation techniques are utilized to ensure data validity.
Result

Based on the research conducted at X Elementary School in Kota Batusangkar, it was found that the impact of gadget use on the personalities of primary school children includes:

Speaking Style

Speaking is one of the communication skills with others through language. It involves verbal utterances accompanied by body movements and facial expressions. This was evident in the researcher's interviews, as indicated by the following statement:

"Fourth-grade students mature quickly; the way they speak with friends and even with older individuals changes because they mimic it from gadgets. The language used by these fourth-grade students is beyond their age." (w1, November 1, 2022)

A similar observation was made during interviews with parents, revealing the following information:

"Ever since Aldo started playing with a mobile phone, his way of speaking has changed. He checks and talks like adults, imitating what he sees on the phone. His older brother is also influenced, and Aldo's language now resembles the language used by adults." (w2, November 28, 2022)

From the above interviews, it can be concluded that the way children speak is now using more mature language, and conversing with older individuals is equated with talking to friends. This could be a consequence of gadget use on the personalities of primary school children.

Lack of Concentration

Concentration involves intentional focus on a specific activity, directing attention to a particular task. Concentration in learning entails focusing attention on the subject matter by eliminating distractions. This was supported by the researcher's interview with a teacher:

"The personality of the fourth-grade students lacks concentration in learning because they are too engrossed in playing with gadgets. Every teacher explains that there is no concentration in the students; they are absorbed in their own world, playing with friends, making it difficult to control their focus. The students like to walk around when the teacher explains the material, disturbing others and making it hard for them to concentrate." (w1, November 1, 2022)

These findings were further reinforced by observations during the study. Students were found not taking lessons seriously, some sleeping in class, others engrossed in their own activities, and some wandering around during lessons. The lack of concentration in learning was evident. The researcher also documented these observations, as depicted in Figure 1.
Based on the above findings, the researcher concludes that there is a lack of concentration among students, with some engrossed in their own world. This indicates an impact of gadget use on the personalities of primary school children.

**Discussion**

Based on the statements above, the researcher found that the use of gadgets has various impacts on the personalities of fourth-grade elementary school children. These impacts include changes in the children's speaking style and a lack of concentration. Gadgets represent a manifestation of current technological advancements, and uniquely, they are considered a necessity for individuals of all ages, from children to adults (Safrizal et al., 2021). Gadgets encompass various mini technologies with multifunctional capabilities, such as smartphones, mobile phones, iPads, and others. While gadgets are generally created to facilitate positive human activities, the reality is that they can have both positive and negative impacts, depending on how individuals optimize their use of gadgets (Erliana et al., 2021).

Addressing the formulated problem, the sub-sections derived from the observational process, interviews, and documentation revealed that the impact of gadgets on the personalities of elementary school children is significant and diverse. Although this study specifically refers to fourth-grade teachers and parents, the formulated problem is generally applicable. The research results indicate that the impact of smartphone-type gadgets on individuals, especially elementary school children, varies. The effects can be either positive or negative, depending on how the child utilizes the gadget (Anastasha et al., 2021; Nugroho & Gumiandari, 2022).

Elementary school children aged 6-12 are still in a phase of unstable emotional development (Magdalena et al., 2021; Wiratman et al., 2023). This means that children have not yet developed a stable sense of discerning between right and wrong for themselves. While it is reasonable to introduce children to the existing gadgets to keep...
them abreast of technological developments, it should not be done excessively. Excessive exposure is detrimental to a child’s growth and development. If a child becomes overly reliant on gadgets, even to the point of addiction, it becomes challenging to address as the child perceives the gadget as more than just a companion (Mustikawati, 2018). In adults, the usual time spent using gadgets ranges from 1 to 4 hours in multiple sessions. This practice should not be equated with children, as gadget usage for children must be distinguished from that of adults. Implementing such practices with children can potentially lead to negative consequences, including a quick onset of gadget addiction (Magdalena et al., 2021).

Among the various identified impacts, negative consequences such as children disregarding parental instructions, the use of language beyond their age level, disruptions in learning time, and tendencies towards addiction and temperamental behavior are the most dominant. Uncontrolled and unsupervised gadget use can amplify these negative impacts on children. Therefore, the role of parents is crucial in monitoring, guiding, and reminding children about gadget usage to ensure the balanced and healthy development of their personalities.

In the context of children’s gadget use, various theories support understanding its impact. One relevant theory is behavioral theory, emphasizing that a child's behavior is influenced by stimuli in their environment (Wirawan, 2012). In this case, gadgets can become dominating stimuli, shifting a child’s attention away from more productive activities. Developmental psychology theories also support this understanding, emphasizing the importance of the environment in shaping a child’s character and behavior. Uncontrolled and unsupervised gadget use can amplify these negative impacts on children. Therefore, the role of parents is crucial in monitoring, guiding, and reminding children about gadget usage to ensure the balanced and healthy development of their personalities.

Conclusion

The use of gadgets among students at Elementary School X in Kota Batusangkar demonstrates significant impacts on personality development. Results from interviews and observations reveal a shift in students' speaking styles towards a more mature tone, often using language beyond their age. Furthermore, a notable concern is the low concentration observed during learning, with students becoming overly absorbed in their gadget world. This condition can negatively affect the learning process for students. The importance of the role of parents in monitoring and guiding children's gadget use is a crucial point, as lack of supervision and potential addiction can arise when gadget usage is uncontrolled. Therefore, the conclusion of this research emphasizes the need for a prudent approach in utilizing gadgets for elementary school children, with active parental involvement as the frontline to ensure that the development of children's personalities remains healthy and balanced.
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