

## **Determination of Social-Emotional Disorders Regarding the Use of Gadgets in Children Aged 5-6 Years Old**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine the forms of gadget use and their social-emotional disorders in the children at Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, West Sakra District, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The subjects involved in this descriptive qualitative analysis were 2 Kindergarten children aged 5-6 yrs old. The methods of data collection also involved interviews with children's parents, sample observation, and documentation. The results showed that both FH and AL subjects used gadgets almost on all occasions, with smartphones mostly utilized by the Kindergarten children in West Nusa Tenggara. Furthermore, the alternative used in the absence of phones was television. Based on these results, the impacts of these gadgets on children showed that their social-emotional developments were still very undeveloped. These undeveloped attributes included condition unadaptability, behavioural irresponsibility, tolerance, and appropriate emotion control. This indicated that both subjects often forgot to perform other activities and did not want to be disturbed when using these gadgets. Even when instructed by their parents to perform specific activities, they commonly displayed angry expressions. In addition, FH and AL were undisciplined, difficult to work with, and environmentally careless.

**Keywords:** Gadgets, Social Disorders, Emotional Disorders

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### **Introduction**

Several perspectives have been observed regarding the definition of gadgets, such as Echols and Shadili (2003: 265 in Rohmah), where they were considered tools. According to Sari and Mitsalia (2016: 73-77), gadgets are small technological objects (tools or electronic items) having special functions, although often associated with innovations or new items. The early childhood period is reportedly the best period for the formation of the personality foundations capable of determining future experiences. In this case, this development period is often observed as a golden age for education. This shows that childhood is a very fundamental phase for individual development, due to the existence of personality formation and growth (Froebel in Susanto, 2017: 9). Children are observed to have specific potentials and characteristics, which need subsequent and adequate development (Setianingsih, 2018). This is because of their activeness, dynamism, enthusiasm, and consistent curiosity in emphasizing the environment, regarding the things they hear and see. Children are also egocentric and have a natural curiosity due to the following characteristics, (1) social, (2) unique, (3) rich in fantasy, and (4) short attention spans. This developmental stage is subsequently observed as the most potential period for learning. Based on previous observations, parents were found to use gadgets as shortcuts for their child caretakers. Meanwhile, concerns are observed when their children continuously play with these tools for a long time.

According to some experts, the maximum time for children to access gadgets was 1-2 h daily. On March 30, 2021, Aladokter.com also highlighted the recommended duration for children to play with gadgets based on age. This included the following, (1) Children under 2 years old should not be provided with access to gadgets, (2) Children aged 2-5 years old should be granted 1-hour gadget accessibility daily, and (3) Children aged 6 years old and over need to play with gadgets, although at agreed periods with parents. Meanwhile, these accessibilities led to limited playing time with their friends. Every parent's perception of technology and its impact on their children's development is also found to be very different. This supported Henry J. Kaiser in Rideout et al. (2003), where most parents perceived the media as a constructive educational tool for child development (Indrijati, 2016: 108). In early childhood, social-emotional development needs to be essentially considered, due to the children's abilities to manage emotions and interact socially with others in the surrounding environment. Without these abilities, difficulties are often encountered when adapting to their social environment. The abilities also help them determine their identity and role in real life. Based on these descriptions, children presently play with gadgets more often than socialize with the surrounding community. From the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2020), approximately 29% of early childhood children used cell phones for three months in Indonesia. This indicated that children < 1, 1-4, and 5-6 years old were 3.5%, 25.9%, and 47.7%, respectively. Similar occurrences were also observed in the phenomenon that occurred in Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, West Sakra District, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, where children preferred to play with gadgets over their friends. Therefore, this study aims to determine the forms of

gadget use and their social-emotional disorders in the children aged 5-6 years old at Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, West Sakra District, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

### **Method**

This is a descriptive qualitative report, which emphasizes the postpositivism philosophy used to examine the condition of natural objects, as opposed to experimentation. A triangulation (combined) technique was also used in obtaining data for an inductive/qualitative analysis. In addition, the results obtained emphasized interpretation than generalization (Sugiono, 2018: 9). According to Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2018: 246), the activities in the qualitative analysis were interactively and continuously carried out until the collection and saturation of data. This showed that the present analysis was carried out during and after data collection within a specific period. Based on the interview conducted, the answers of the interviewees were thoroughly analyzed. In this case, when the data obtained were unsatisfactory after analysis, the questions were continuously asked until appropriate answers are obtained. Based on this study, the descriptive qualitative analysis emphasizing "how or why" problems was used (Yin in Fitrah and Luthfiyah, 2017: 203). This was to obtain information about the children experiencing social-emotional disorders due to gadget usage. In this case, the utilized subjects were children aged 5-6 years old, which had gadget accessibility and its disorders at the Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, West Sakra Sub-district, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

### **Result and Discussion**

This analysis includes the steps involved in observing the impact of gadgets on children's social emotions. Before these observations, the initial stage carried out was interviews, which emphasized the children's gadgets use at home. It also observed the impacts of these tools on the subjects' social-emotional development. In the second stage, observations were carried out in 2 phases, (1) An observation sheet containing the indicators of social-emotional development was consecutively used for 2 weeks, and (2) Evaluation was carried out after the observation activities, subsequently indicating the impacts of gadget use disorders on children's social-emotional development.

#### **Forms of Gadget Use in Early Childhood**

Based on the results, smartphones were highly used by the children at Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, with television being the most utilized alternative. This indicated that parents provided these gadgets to their children with the excuse of not being disturbed during home assignments. From the surveys and interviews with the subjects' parents, several answers were obtained regarding the reasons their children were being provided with gadgets. These included the provisions as gifts or to ensure the children's happiness due to environmental effects, where most of their friends or family members used gadgets. This was common among those that demanded, cry, and whine about gadget usage from their parents.

According to the interviews, the subjects from FH and AL often used smartphones to watch Youtube or play games. This was due to accessibilities provided by parents when a child cries for phone utilization. In this case, the provided YouTube content emphasized educational cartoons. However, difficulties were often encountered in stopping these children from playing with their smartphones. From these results, the parents and the surrounding environment greatly influenced children's participation in the daily usage of gadgets. The environment's effect also emphasized the gadgets' introduction and usage intensity to children. In addition, the average daily time for FH and AL to play with these tools was more than 2 hours. This had exceeded the normal time limit (2 hour max) for children aged 5-6 years to use gadgets, indicating the need for an agreement from parents.

#### **The Impact of Gadgets on Children's Socio-Emotional**

This was carried out through the interviews and observations of parents and children, indicating many undeveloped aspects in FH and AL. Based on the results, the self-awareness and waiting turn of FH were undeveloped due to the impatience showcased in obtaining and playing with gadgets, respectively. In the waiting turn sub-indicator, the difficulty of children to cry when they lose in games and lending-borrowing activities was also not developed. For AL, patience was likely observed during self-awareness, although awaiting the turns to play with a phone was undeveloped. In the knowledge of rights, the children's non-acquisition of toys without the owner's permission is still not developed. In addition, underdevelopment was found for AL in regulation compliance and responsibilities. Irrespective of these conditions, several developed indicators were observed, such as FH and AL's unwillingness to cry due to their parent's unavailability. By complying with provided orders, children were also able to work together with their friends while performing other private tasks.

According to the results, excessive use of gadgets negatively affected children's development. This proved that they become more emotional, angry, and rebellious when disturbed from playing with gadgets.

Laziness, unawareness, and inappropriate feeding behaviours were also outcomes of excessive gadget usage. These were similar to the characteristics of FH and AL, according to the interviews and observations performed. When they are provided with a smartphone, difficulties are often encountered in stopping its utilization. In this case, an entire day is commonly used to play with gadgets, especially when friends do not invite them for leisure activities. From the interviews with AL's parents, the child was often very easily disappointed and angry when stopped from gadget usage. This led to the act of angrily throwing nearby things away.

### Conclusion

The results showed that parents and the environment influenced the subjects, FH and AL, to use gadgets daily. Based on the results, the following conclusions were observed, (1) The early introduction of gadgets to FH and AL caused their inseparability from the daily usage of the tools. This led to their high tendency to use gadgets on almost all occasions. In this case, smartphones were mostly used by the children at Lenterahati Islamic Boarding School Kindergarten, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, with televisions highly utilized as appropriate alternatives. Furthermore, the children often used these gadgets to watch Youtube or play games. This was due to the willingness of the parents to provide them with tools when they cry continuously. In this case, YouTube content was then provided as an educational cartoon. Irrespective of these conditions, difficulties were often encountered when stopping the child from playing with a smartphone. From the results, the average time utilized by FH and AL in playing with gadgets daily was more than 2 hours. This has exceeded the normal time limit for children aged 5-6 years old, indicating the need for an agreement from parents, and (2) The gadgets' impact on children's social-emotional development showed many undeveloped characteristics, such as condition unadaptability, behavioural responsibility, tolerance, and appropriate emotion control. This indicated that subjects do not want to be disturbed when using these gadgets. In this case, they commonly forget to perform other activities, with the expression of anger displayed when instructed by their parents to perform an action. FH and AL were also undisciplined, difficult to work with, and environmentally careless.

Based on these results, the children using gadgets showed differences in social development, such as environmental disinterest. In this process, the parents' roles are very important, such as providing opportunities for freer external environment activities. Children's dependence on gadgets also limited learning and development opportunities, due to their inability to communicate and socialize. In addition, they were unable to identify emotions, such as sympathy, sadness, or joy. Attachment to gadgets also caused the inability to respond to environmental occurrences, leading to interference with environmental socialization development.

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