

# The Impact of Gadgets on Social-Emotional Development of Early Children During Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract:

*With the Covid-19 crisis, we can see how technology and education have changed. To adapt to these changes, we must accept who we are and continue to acquire new knowledge. Gadgets are often used as a tool that facilitates communication in human life, both in the general and family environments, which also impacts children's social emotionality. This research aims to describe gadgets' impact on early childhood social-emotional development. This study uses a qualitative method. research data obtained through observation and interviews used three stages in analysing the data: reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The population of this study is 20 parents and three parents with children aged 5-6 years with different professions. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the impact of Gadgets contributes to the formation of children's social and emotional development; the effect of gadgets on the positive side is that children can develop and improve themselves; on the negative side, that occurs in children, namely the loss of awareness of their social life with their environment.*

**Keywords:** Use of Gadgets, social-emotional development.

## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is carried out by providing educational stimulus to help the development of physical and mental growth so that children are ready to enter further education. (Permendikbud, 2014, p. 3) The progress of the times in the field of technological science in the 21st century is proliferating. Various inventions are created yearly to simplify the space and scope of human movement. This proves that people's thinking power and behaviour patterns are rapidly advancing and developing. The increase in inventions to be more sophisticated is undoubtedly separate from previous inventions, and this is because technology is needed for the community's needs in the current era (Ai-Ayouby, n.d., p. 12).

Children's social and emotional development will be impaired due to excessive use of electronic devices. Children who use gadgets have adverse effects such as developing a closed personality, difficulty sleeping, being alone, violent behaviour, loss of creativity, and

possible cyberbullying. In this sophisticated era, gadgets have become the primary need of both adults and children. Gadgets are not only a tool for communication but can also help facilitate other activities because they have become a necessity for everyone. During toddlerhood, children move a lot so that the body develops optimally. If, in toddlerhood, children are only engrossed in front of their gadgets, the child's health and social development will likely be less than optimal. All aspects of intellectual development, namely intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence, experience extraordinary development that will affect and determine further development.

In using Gadgets, most children use them more to play. From this small thing, children who initially enjoy playing with their friends can change the habit of being given a Gadget as a substitute for a playmate. Dependence on Gadgets in children is due to the long duration of using Gadgets. (Yana, 2021, p. 78) Gadgets or Gadgets are small electronics with special functions, such as smartphones. The gadget is the latest innovation from the latest feature technology and better capabilities with more practical and functional purposes and functions.

The development of Gadgets is getting more and more models and brands. The model of Gadget is based on the quality and shape that makes people interested in buying it. But they all have the same function; only the facilities are different (Miranti & Putri, 2021, p. 2). Social development is defined as the child's ability to interact with peers, adults, and the wider community to adjust well to the nation's and the State's expectations. (Mayar, 2013, p. 459) This social development follows a pattern of social behaviour. Where this pattern applies to all children who are in one cultural group. This development begins when the baby can interact with his family. Children's social experiences at an early age greatly influence the formation of children's character in the future. Social-emotional competence during preschool is one of the developmental tasks that can be used to predict later mental health. (Indanah & Yulisetyaningrum, 2019, p. 222) There are limited learning opportunities because Gadgets only communicate in one direction: responding. Children cannot naturally learn how to communicate and socialise, they are also unable to recognise and share a variety of emotions, such as sympathy, sadness or pleasure, and finally, they cannot respond to things around them emotionally and verbally. (T. P. Sari & Mitsalia, 2016, p. 73), This social-emotional ability can still be improved through various appropriate stimulations by teachers and parents. (Tatminingsih, 2019, p. 49) children often ignore parental orders; learning time is disrupted / achievement decreases; temper tantrums; children's language exceeds the language system in the general child phase; children's brain development is too fast without going through step by step; addiction/addiction, health problems. Positive impacts include training creativity, sharing, and socialisation media. As for the impact of Gadgets on the personality of elementary school children can be classified as follows; temperamental, indifferent, rapidly developing mindset without appropriate stages, like to share, and creative. The role of the family is not only a guide and reminder, but also the family must play an active role in helping children in their development process. (Hidayat et al., 2021, p. 11) As long as in education, children have many opportunities to develop themselves (Mansur, 2014, p. 110). Keep parents from relying on Gadgets to accompany children, and parents let children prioritise Gadgets not to bother parents. Parents have a significant role in guiding their children's Gadgets by controlling every content on them

(Sabil Risaldy, 2015, p. 36).

Educational services in early childhood are one of the fundamental strategies for preparing the nation's generation and preparing those with quality and character. (Devianti et al., 2020, p. 68) Based on the results of research conducted by Marsal and Hidayati, it shows that the use of smartphones has a significant effect on the social interaction patterns of children under five by 40.2%. (Marsal, A., & Hidayati, 2017, p. 74) Many people have used gadgets, which are even used in early childhood. The results of another study stated that 42.1% of preschool children exposed to Gadgets are relatively high, as evidenced by the use of Gadgets in preschool children watching videos or playing games (Novianti & Garzia, 2020, p. 1001). Almost every child today has used a Gadget. This condition is characterised by the news that Indonesia is one of the ten countries with very high Gadget enthusiasts (Supriyadi, n.d.).

This study aims to determine the impact of Gadgets on early childhood social-emotional development. Parents and teachers often overlook children's social-emotional development. As a result of children's habit of using Gadgets, it is not uncommon for children their age to often feel angry and emotional when not allowed by the teacher not to play during the learning process, want to win alone and play alone, busy with their world, and often some children are somewhat more physically active than others so that the teacher focuses on them and the learning process is not conducive. (Nurhasanah et al., 2021, p. 93) the golden period in AUD that cannot be repeated, a sensitive period and the development of all aspects of child development, which will later become the basis for further development (Ridwan & Bangsawan, 2021b). However, a child's ability to grow and develop cannot just be present. They must go through processes or stages in which environmental stimuli are needed to support their optimal development (Ridwan & Bangsawan, 2021a). For this reason, parents, teachers, the community and even the government must know the nature of early childhood first before providing stimulus to them so that the stimulus or support provided can not only optimise children's development in every aspect of child development but also have a positive impact on themselves and the child's environment.

Based on initial research conducted by researchers on September 17, 2021, at RT 05 Pusaran Village, in early childhood aged 4-6 years, researchers found four children who had various forms of problems experienced by children, namely with Gadgets, children who use gadgets too often can become very dependent on these devices, so they will find it difficult to interact with other people or do other activities outside the widget. In addition, children's emotions are poorly developed because they are contaminated by watching various videos. Based on these problems, researchers examined the impact of gadgets on early childhood social-emotional development in RT 05 Pusaran Village, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive research. Qualitative research is a method used to research natural object conditions (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument; the population of this study were 20 parents in RT 05 Pusaran Village, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province. While the sample in this study was three parents with children aged 5-6 years with different professions. data collection techniques are triangulated (combined), data analysis is inductive and research

results emphasise meaning rather than generalisation. Qualitative research methods are often also called naturalistic research methods because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural settings) (Sugiyono, 2019).

The subjects in this study, which became the source of informants, were parents totalling three people in RT 05 Pusaran Village, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province. While the object of this study is the use of Gadgets. The data collection technique used in this research is to use a structured interview method prepared by the researcher himself by giving a set of research instruments in the form of questions for respondents to answer. The length of this research was conducted for two months, starting in July-August 2022.

Based on alternative answers that have been listed in the interview guidelines regarding the impact of Gadgets on early childhood social-emotional development. While the researcher acts as a data analyser and observer who then also reports the results of the research that has been done. The data that has been collected is analysed using descriptive analysis. With the conditions amid the COVID-19 outbreak, interviews were conducted online or online by utilising social media with parents to gather the information needed by researchers.

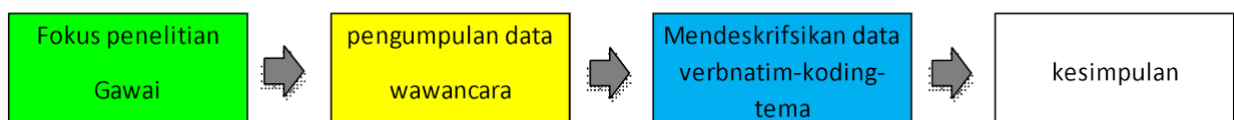


Figure 1. Research design

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Use of *Gadgets* in early childhood

Based on interviews with MIF parents, who have underage children and even toddlers, it turns out that many have started to get addicted. children who are addicted to Gadgets after the circulation of COVID-19 and are encouraged by the government to do activities at home alone, so children rarely play with friends and schools are held online, which requires children to use gadgets and can indirectly familiarise them with gadgets in their learning activities. When the teacher gives an assignment, the child does not immediately work but opens another media application, which parents do not know the child opens something other than the assignment given; of course, it will have a different effect from the expectations of the father and mother.

Not a few activities outside the home are prohibited, then the child will feel bored, so he uses his gadgets to play games to fill his spare time. The preoccupation with playing games so that he forgets the time, the longer he becomes addicted to the game; if the child's parents regulate the time to play Gadget, the child cries, and even the tool must be given back. In addition, children access many videos that parents need to guard. Especially during online learning like today, exam teachers prefer to learn with movements using videos.

Likewise, an interview with DA's mother shows that today's parental control over children is fragile because of the parents' are busy meeting their economic demands. For example, many fathers cannot accompany their children to play because, on those days, they are busy with professional activities or work; as well as a mother who does not want her

child to cry, so one of her efforts is to provide games by typing herself so the child does not disturb the mother's work. Every child uses gadgets to fill various game activities in a family without minimising other activities. Still, the use of Gadgets seems dominant along with the development of technology and information in today's world. The number of applications used in learning activities or children's play activities in filling various tasks and opportunities given by their parents to play using the Gadget. this can certainly affect children's social-emotional development.

Parents apply parenting flexibly, according to the situation and conditions. Parents spend more time motivating, accompanying, guiding and teaching children to become independent individuals. Parents give trust and get used to children doing things independently without the help of parents. Parents provide parents or other adults need to facilitate children to develop independence by providing opportunities for children to explore and discover new things. (D. R. Sari & Zainur, 2019, p. 11) Some fathers and mothers are responsible for their children's development within the family. 11) In the family, there are a father and mother as parents and children, where the role of parents is to form long-lasting interactions marked by love, warm relationships and affection. (Prima, 2020, p. 120) Parents are central to supporting children's talents because parents are the closest people to children. After all, they influence children's personalities and characters. Parents also have an essential role in educating and guiding children because education and guidance from parents determine the development of children in achieving success (Yulianti, n.d., p. 20).

Excessive use of Gadgets in children is always a bad habit if it is left without providing supervision of fathers and mothers; parents must regulate the time when children can use Gadgets. Usually, parents who know about cognitive child development will provide rules and agreements together in using the Gadget gave to their children, such as if Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are not given use of the application, on Friday is given 1 hour on Saturday 1 hour and then on Sunday 1 hour. With this mutual agreement, the power of using this tool on children can be well controlled. This is in line with what the expert Kadek Dwinita said: smartphones are a strong magnet in the memory of children under five, so smartphones tend to make children under five individual and less sensitive to the environment. Parents should consider how much time preschool-age children can play with Gadgets because the total length of gadgets used can affect child development. The ideal length of time for preschool-age children to use Gadgets is 30 minutes to 1 hour a day (Kadek Dwinita Viandari & Susilawati, 2019, p. 78).

Parents can maximise their children's supervision when playing with gadgets; there are several essential things to note, namely: a) make the parent's personal email account the child's main account so that all children's internet activities are directly integrated and monitored on the parent's email account; b) for social media applications, only allow children to make friends and follow friends of the same age; c) make a No Gadget rule starting from maghrib until nine o'clock at night. This is an adequate prime time for children to learn; d) for kindergarten-age children, limit gadget playing to no more than two hours per day; e) parents should be role models by not showing high intensity in using devices; f) Do not scold children blindly when they find out they are exposed to harmful content in cyberspace. It is better to provide assistance, directions and explanations that are appropriate and easily

understood by the child's language (Syifa et al., 2019).

So, it can be concluded that the use of Gadgets by children must be controlled by their parents, minimising the adverse effects on children who are free to access various sites and media applications that do not model good things so that children imitate them, as much as three money, many parents are not good enough to give good examples to their children such as the absence of communication built in a family resulting in the loss of role models who are loved. These role models are heard advice and words in children's lives so various kinds of spectacles on Gadgets affect the development of children's souls in the form of social and emotional. Children's social-emotional development at an age in showing their daily behaviour clashes directly with current technology. must be with happiness tips to anticipate adverse effects for the child himself.

### **The Impact of Gadgets on Early Childhood Social-Emotional Development**

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers on DA's mother, the visible impact of the use of Gadgets on the social-emotional development of early childhood is the weak social attitude between children and their environment. things that usually play with peers, with the missing world of children in the real world, impact the quality of child development, so the presence of parents is needed in providing services and supervision to children. Everything done excessively is not suitable for the child himself; do not let the child become a human being alien to his environment.

According to Mr WJ, there are two sides to the impact on children. Positively, they can help them improve their creative thinking, problem-solving skills, and thought processes. On the negative side, children tend to be dependent, which worsens their social skills. Modern technology has undoubtedly changed the way we live. They have made our lives simpler and more enjoyable in various ways. However, children's increasing use of electronic devices also has some drawbacks. The impact of technology on a child's mental development is a significant concern. According to some experts, a child's ability to concentrate and pay attention can be harmed by spending a lot of time staring at a screen. In addition, it may have an impact on short-term memory. Another concern is the possibility of electronic devices inhibiting a child's ability to socialise and interact with others. Children may have fewer opportunities to interact directly with their peers due to the increased amount of time they spend playing on smartphones and tablets. Social skill development may suffer as a result. Overall, modern technology has both positive and negative effects on child development. For parents to make an informed decision regarding their child's use of these devices, they must know both sides.

Another impact that will have due to the use of Gadgets is that children become no longer sensitive to the feelings of other children; individualistic Gadget games make other children will shun children because there is no stimulation about the feelings of their friends, and they respond naturally and do not adaptive to their conditions. On the other hand, the child's attitude to sharing with others and respect for the rights and opinions/works of others becomes very vacuum; this is undoubtedly influenced by the fun of playing with the Gadget technology tool. It could even be that children are unable to solve their social problems, which is a rare thing that children do not get social experience in solving issues such as using

their minds to solve problems; the human side of children can no longer show a tolerant attitude and do not know manners and manners by local socio-cultural values. The following are the negative impacts of excessive use of Gadgets that interfere with health, meaning that accessing and running various applications on Gadgets for too long interferes with health, such as eye health and decreased interest in reading because children are more interested in games. With the emergence of an individualistic attitude, children prefer to play in the network world compared to the real world, so they are addicted to using the Gadget; there is no relationship with fellow humans in their environment, this is not good for children, it is not suitable for their physical health such as eyes, ears and other limbs.

Then it can waste time when children are lulled into the world of playing with Gadgets, making children no longer able to remember what their duties and responsibilities are at home and even their obligations become negligent, as a child who is preoccupied with playing with Gadgets does not remember eating, late bathing, late learning to recite the Koran and even no longer heeds his parents' orders because the world of Gadgets itself influences him. With the loss of children's independence, with the Gadget, many children become lazy, all forms of work are no longer carried out, even their parents have to use an uncompromising attitude towards them in completing their duties and obligations, an ignorant attitude towards others is present in the child due to transience with the game that poisoned his mind.

Besides having a harmful impact, there is also a positive impact of using Gadgets on children, namely as follows, as a means of communication, Gadgets can be a means of communication with friends, parents, family and teachers in getting information related to the needs of the child himself. Then as an information tool for school learning aids as a learning aid, for example, it can also open applications that have many benefits, such as accessing learning Youtube, brainly questions and so on. This application uses a cellphone without having to buy expensive books, google book applications or the like children can read and search for learning books; youtube learning is needed to support school lessons to develop and expand knowledge. Even utilising various application features such as calculators and other automatic counting tools makes it easier for children to learn to count.

After that, as a reminder of worship and work time, the reminder application can also remind the child to complete the time limit for carrying out his work. Even with the timely reminder, his various activities can be organised, such as reminders for prayer, recitation, etc. In the family, children are prepared to undergo stages of development as provisions when entering the adult world; language, customs and all the contents of culture should be a task that the family does, so it is necessary to create a home as a place for the growth and development of a child. It is through the house that education begins. If the home can become a source of knowledge, charity, and struggle for the child, then the child will grow into a reliable, steady, and accomplished cadre. a comfortable home for the child until the child becomes an adult. Starting from the frame of family life, everything develops from the ability to socialise, self-actualize, and argue to deviant behaviour. The family is an umbrella of life for a child (Bangsawan et al., 2021, p. 236).

Morrison states that at 5 to 6 years old, children are in the initiative versus guilt stage in Erikson's psychosocial theory. This stage occurs during the preschool period when children enter the wider social world; they face new challenges that require them to develop

dynamic behaviour. Children are expected to take responsibility for their behaviour, body, animals, etc. However, guilt arises if they are considered irresponsible and will feel very anxious. Elias states that social-emotional learning is the process by which people develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to acquire the ability to understand, manage, and express social and emotional aspects by forming relationships and problem-solving. During early childhood, children increasingly understand that a situation can evoke certain emotions, facial expressions indicate certain emotions, and emotions can influence behaviour and can influence the emotions of others. Ensor, Spencer, & Hughes state that children's emotional understanding relates to prosocial behaviour. In the age range of 4 to 6 years, children show an increased awareness that they need to manage their emotions to meet social standards (Dewi et al., 2020, p. 187).

The use of gadgets in children has limits so that no negative things can interfere with children's development and growth. As explained by WHO that there is a limit to screen time or duration for viewing digital screens (gadgets, television, and so on) for children under five years. The expert view states that children aged 1-4 years should not exceed one hour. It also revealed that the effect of screen use on a person depends on several factors. The most critical factor is how long the duration is used to see the screen; prolonged use can affect the brain's frontal cortex and has almost the same effect as cocaine (Nur Sri Rahayu et al., 2022).

Early childhood development can be said to be children aged 0-6 years. At that time, it is in a very rapid stage of physical and mental growth and development. Social development is also very influential at an early age. Social product in early childhood is intended as the development of children's behaviour in adjusting to the rules that apply in the community where the child lives (Miranti & Putri, 2021). In the level of achievement of early childhood development in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, which guides teachers to be able to provide stimulation of children's social-emotional development. Children's social-emotional behaviour can develop well if parents can play their role as a companion to children playing to meet the desires of children's play needs, as well as continuous supervision, parents are expected to behave and behave well towards children so that they also have a good impact on children's behaviour, especially in their social and emotional behaviour. Children with their characteristics will imitate the attitudes and behaviour of parents to impact behaviour towards others in their environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of gadgets in early childhood has several impacts; from the positive side, children can develop and improve creative thinking, the ability to solve life problems, and a more advanced and good thinking process as a communication tool, information tool for school learning assistants, on the other hand, the negative impact that occurs on children is the loss of children's playful spirit with their peers, disturbing their health because they are addicted to playing, especially wasting time, besides that the fading of children's independence.



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