

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDREN: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The research aims to describe and analyze the social development of early childhood in the digital age and uncover challenges and solutions faced by parents, teachers, and society. This research method uses qualitative methods with the type of literature review research. Data sources use two kinds of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Preliminary data is obtained directly from collecting data from research journals, books, websites relevant to the study of early childhood social development in the digitalization era, and secondary data sources (essential government legal regulations, books, etc.). The data analysis technique uses content analysis. The results of this study indicate that as many as 47% of parents spend all day in front of gadget screens, and most of their children already have an emotional bond with gadget devices. Solutions in more intensive surveillance research for parents in using smartphones at home, making specific programs to use gadgets. The recommendation from this study is that a unique learning model is needed at home in using devices with particular programs to foster social development.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Social Development, Digital Age*

A. Introduction

Technological advances and the times have had a significant impact on the moral crisis in children. Technology development today will result in the erosion of children's morals. This is influenced by the circulation of information from social media, which has harmful content every time consumed by children who are not following spectacles at an elementary age. In addition, the effects will affect the tendency of modern behavior (westernized culture) and the occurrence of a local cultural drought with its characteristics (Putra, 2019a, 2019b).

In the era of digitalization, the role of technology dominates almost all human activities involving gadgets to meet their needs; this has impacted various groups, both adults and early childhood. Technological and information developments have influenced today's children's lives, especially in the use of digital devices (Kusumawati & Widjayatri, 2022). Many of us find that morals and religion in society, especially in early childhood, have decreased regarding attitude, belief, and behavior. The morale of the Indonesian people is not good; this can be seen from the many children who are not polite, children always beat and force their wishes, and even children act bravely to attempt suicide so that their wishes are obeyed. The digital world affects children, and adults' attitudes make children misbehave (Natari & Suryana, 2022).

Various phenomena of deviant behavior are often seen in children's daily lives today. An example of an alleged assault on an elementary school student in Kediri by a friend while playing football was allegedly only because they committed their own goal in January 2018. Problems related to children's religious and moral values vary, such as bullying, stealing, smoking, brawls, fighting parents, free sex, drugs, and so on, are increasingly troubling the community, especially teachers and parents. It can be said that problems that are also important besides improving children's cognitive quality are problems of morals and children's character. We can know a child's religious and moral values by simply looking at and paying attention to the attitude or behavior of the child daily, which reflects his personality (Rizki Ananda, 2019).

Children's moral development is related to the development of children's (cognitive) ways of thinking. That is, the higher the level of development of a child's review, the greater the potential for the child to achieve a better level of moral development. Even so, it is not certain that children with high intelligence will automatically have a good level of moral development. It must also be added that it does not mean that children who have high moral concepts will also have good ethical behavior. So, a child who knows that being cunning is not good will not automatically continue to act straight (Majdi, 2013).

Syaodih (Rosa & Cindrye, 2022) state that the development of religious and moral values in early childhood includes: children being imitation, that is, starting to imitate the attitudes, perspectives, and behavior of other people, children being internalized, that is, children have started to get along with the environment. Social environment and begin to be affected by the conditions in their social environment and begin to be affected by the states in that environment; children are introverted and extroverted, namely reactions shown by children based on experience.

John Lock strengthens the importance of moral/moral education; according to him, "In fact, the virtue (morals) is something that we are obliged to make educational goals." Furthermore, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1273M) stated that "in fact, the purpose of education and the purpose of life is to realize happiness by instilling the virtues of reason and morality (moral)." He argued that the goals of religion during the time of Jesus Christ began to emerge during periods of moral decadence (Tanfidiyah, 2017). Cultural context is closely related to individual thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and how humans shape their reality through their culture. In addition to providing symbols to communicate with each other and recognize their social environment, culture also provides individuals with information about their identity, about what is considered meaningful and has value (Mukhlis & Mbelo, 2019).

Based on these various opinions, parents, formal institutions, and the community environment must provide examples or examples of good behavior for children so that they become helpers in this world and the

hereafter. This study identifies and analyzes the impacts and challenges in shaping early childhood social development in the digital era.

B. Method

This research method uses qualitative research with the type of literature review research. This study's purpose is to show that research activities with scientific characteristics are rational, empirical, and systematic. The rationale for research is that analysis is carried out logically, not as a result of mediation. Data sources in this study used two kinds of data, namely primary and secondary data. Preliminary data is obtained directly from collecting data from research journals, books, websites relevant to the study of early childhood social development in the digitalization era, and secondary data sources (essential government legal regulations, books, etc.). Data collection techniques by classifying research results and books that support this research. This data analysis uses content analysis. Content analysis is where the researcher examines a text objectively to get an overview of the content without the researcher's intervention. In this case, the researcher will conduct an in-depth discussion of the contents of information on data sources that need to set the time to read and examine the data so that there is a result. These results are then expected to answer the problem and be used as a consideration in the scope of education in early childhood.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

Early Childhood Social Development Challenges and Solutions in the Digitalization Era

The digital revolution era is where almost everyone is familiar with digital technology, from adults, teenagers, the elderly, and even children. This is because the current generation is an alpha generation. According to McCrindle & Fell (Nurjanah & Mukarromah, 2021), the alpha generation is the generation born between 2010 and 2024 and living in a period of rapid technological progress marked by the existence of smartphones and gadgets, video games, tablets, etc., so that this generation have coexisted with digital technology screens since they were

tiny, so this generation is also called the "glass generation." This generation will be more familiar with digital technology when they get older and will continue to find increasingly advanced technology in the life to come. This revolutionary era then indirectly formed a generation with different characteristics from previous generations, encouraging parents to adapt to raising their children.

However, Surahman (Mardiyah, 2023) states that the era of digitalization also hurts children's character education and becomes problematic because of the many social factors that can threaten the younger generation, including the emergence of violence and discrepancies between the media and the real world. So it is unsurprising that gadgets as technology products raise various problems in early childhood. This condition became a global study and began to appear after 2000 through Google Books Ngram Viewer searches. Then researchers used the VOS Viewer to show that studies of gadget addiction in children began to emerge in mid-2020 with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

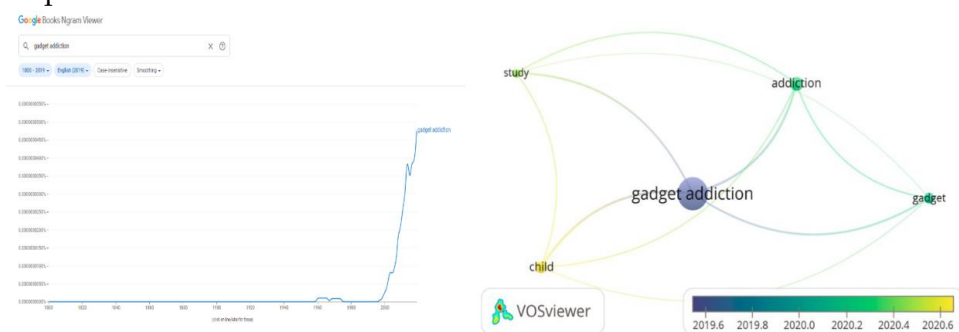


Figure 1: The Gadget Addiction Dimension

Figure 1 provides an initial global explanation of the emergence of gadget addiction studies and emphasizes that the pandemic that hit the world in early 2020 made gadgets a primary need. The need for devices in the learning process cannot be ignored in education. However, the impact caused by gadget addiction cannot be avoided. A Ministry of Communication and Information study stated that 98% of children know about the internet. As much as 79.5% are internet users (Peraturan Menteri

Komunikasi Dan Informatika Republik Indonesia Nomor 36 Tahun 2014 Tentang Tata Cara Pendaftaran Penyelenggara Sistem Elektronik, 2014). This means that more than three-fourths of children are familiar with technology and gadgets, which can affect learning achievement, eye health, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, physical and brain development, delays in language development, and cyberbullying (Ginanjar & Kurniawati, 2017).

Meanwhile, the survey results supporting the above statement show that as many as 47% of parents say their children spend all day in front of gadget screens. Meanwhile, 43% said their children had an emotional bond with gadgets (Surya, 2011). Meanwhile, a survey conducted by Common Sense Media in Philadelphia revealed that: (1) children from the age of 4 have their own mobile devices without parental supervision, (2) as many as 70 percent of parents allow their children aged six months to 4 years playing mobile devices when they are doing household chores, (3) 65 percent of parents calm their children while in public places, and (4) some one quarter. , 2023).

The impact of using gadgets in the social development of early childhood has positive and negative effects. Excessive use of devices will hurt children's social and emotional development. The adverse effects of using gadgets on children include children becoming closed personalities, sleep disturbances, being alone, violent behavior, fading creativity, and threats of cyberbullying. The solution to the problem of using gadgets in early childhood is by limiting the use of devices, supervising children in playing with gadgets with parental figures who play a vital role, and providing the correct schedule when children play with gadgets so that widgets cannot hinder early childhood social development (Dinas Pengendalian Penduduk dan Keluarga Berencana, 2022).

Modern gadgets have revolutionized the way we live. They have made our lives easier and more comfortable in many ways. However, there are also some potential downsides to children's increased use of gadgets. One of the main concerns is the influence of devices on children's mental development. Some experts believe that too much time spent staring at screens can affect a child's ability to concentrate and pay

attention. In addition, this can also cause problems with short-term memory (Dinas Pengendalian Penduduk dan Keluarga Berencana, 2022). In this era of globalization, the challenges children will face will vary, so educational institutions and parents need to provide guidance and direction that is by the child's personality. To be able to find proper guidance and direction by both academic institutions and parents, they must recognize the child more profoundly and match it with advice because they are afraid that in the guidance process, the child will not feel comfortable, causing misunderstandings between the child and the guide so that the impact on the child being unable to face and complete the challenge. When Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, faces globalization, this is a formidable challenge, and one must always be vigilant about it so that it does not lead to westernization, especially in children (Mansir, 2021).

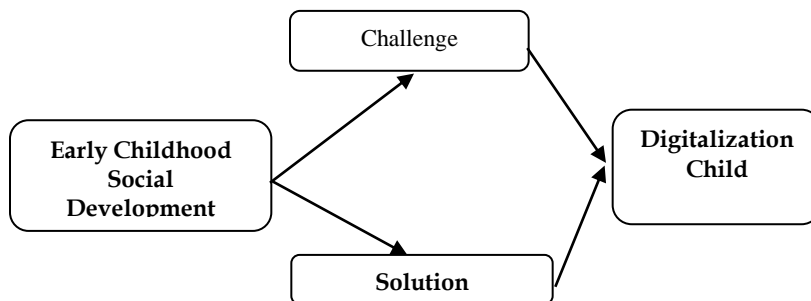


Figure 2. The Concept of Early Childhood Social Development in the Digital Age

Based on the concept of Figure 2 above, it is undeniable that the challenges experienced by parents, school institutions, and the community are due to the very swift currents of globalization, so there are many obstacles in controlling children. Control in the sense of being at home, because every child uses a smartphone that is held so that parents neglect a lot. As a result of the excessive use of smartphones in AUD, it will form a mental revolution, which means that social decline is reduced. Thus the solution that must be provided is more intensive supervision for parents in using smartphones at home, given specific programs for using gadgets.

The Impact of the Digital Age on Early Childhood Social Development

Increasingly advanced technology indeed makes the younger generation cognitively intelligent but effectively weak. This can be seen in everyday life, where bullying, blatant insults on social media, violent behavior, to deviant sexual characteristics are no longer taboo or even shameful to show. Without realizing it, said Iqbal, gadgets and social media have made many generations of users become manipulative humans, as if they don't match reality (Rufaidah, 2020).

The negative impacts of digital (Mardiya) (Klinik Pratama Fisiocare, 2021) are as follows:

- a. Children's growth and development are not optimal because children sit too long engrossed in gadgets.
- b. Children's growth makes it difficult to speak clearly because they watch too many cartoons or online games without verbal communication.
- c. Child becomes aggressive.
- d. Children become less concentrated in learning.
- e. Children are addicted to always using gadgets

According to Gottman and Declaire in Susanto (Syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021), the social benefits for children include: (a) Children have a friendly attitude and quickly get along with their peers; (b) Children have tolerance and concern for other people; (c) Having an attitude of social interest (happy to help others); (d) Children have a happy attitude to share and cooperate; (e) Children have a democratic attitude in socializing; (f) Children can communicate well with other people; (g) Children can resolve conflicts with other people; (h) Children have the understanding and ability to analyze relationships with other people.

Socialization behavior is learned, not just the result of maturity. Children's social development is obtained apart from the maturity process also through learning opportunities from responses to behavior. Social evolution begins to be rather complex when children reach the age of 4, where children enter the most elemental realm of education, namely kindergarten. At this time, children study with friends outside the home.

Children have started playing with peers (cooperative play). Vygotsky and Bandura call it social learning theory through cognitive development. Kindergarten-aged children (4-6 years) social development has started to run. This can be seen from their ability to carry out activities in groups. Joint activities are shaped like a game. Signs of development at this stage are: (1) Children begin to know the rules, both in the family environment and the play environment, (2) Little by little, the child has begun to obey the rules, (3) Children begin to realize their rights or interests other people, and (4) Children are starting to be able to play with other children, or peers (peer groups) (Kaffa et al., 2021).

2. Discussion

In this digital era, it is easy for parents to develop motoric physical abilities and skills in early childhood. By watching videos or doing gymnastic movements, you can also play other sports that you can do together, especially for the father who can do it with his son and daughter. The activities are enjoyable, making the child feel comfortable and happy to play with the father even though the father is busy working (Rokhim et al., 2021). Denis McQuail, (Eem Kurniasih, 2013) argues that there are four main categories in digital media, namely: (a) interpersonal communication media such as email, (b) interactive game media such as games, (c) information search media such as search engines on the internet and (d) participatory media such as chat rooms.

The benefits of social development for early childhood include: (a) children can establish communication with other people, (b) children can adapt to other people in a new environment, (c) children are easily aroused by empathy, (d) children become caring for others, (e) children can be leaders for themselves and others, (f) children want to share with others, (g) children can be used as peer tutors (Mahendra, 2023). The use of digital media and technology has positive and negative implications if a child and youth use it excessively and get out of control. Andriyani (Fatmawati & Sholikin, 2019) said that based on statistical data on internet users in Indonesia, the average Indonesian spends 5.5 hours per day accessing information. At the same time, using the internet via smartphones or mobile phones is around 2.5 hours per day. This data

shows that excessive and out-of-control internet use particularly impacts children and adolescents. Children's education is instilled from an early age; children must be controlled and monitored for what children do daily in using digital media through approaches when children are relaxed with entertaining questions (Murtopo, 2017).

E. Conclusion

The development of information technology has brought about a transition from a knowledge community to a dynamic community based on digital information and communication. This brings a new orientation to the social development of early childhood also brings new influences on responsibility, social sensitivity, and logical abilities, and honesty. All of these things ultimately affect the new roles of parents and teachers. In the global digital era, a learning reorientation should be carried out that focuses on the construction of search and discovery, learning that emphasizes creativity and initiative, and learning that emphasizes interaction and cooperation in early childhood. This reorientation also requires a reorientation to responsibility, social sensitivity and logical ability, and honesty. All of this leads to a reorientation to the new roles of parents and teachers, namely as agents of change, renewal of knowledge, and consultants to children to oversee education from an early age.

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