

The Role of Parents' Wise Approach in Overcoming Gadget Addiction in Elementary School Children

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Abstract

The development of digital technology has made *gadgets* an inseparable part of people's lives, especially elementary school children. Although it has a positive impact on learning, excessive use can lead to addiction, which has a negative impact on children's cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. Previous studies have mostly focused on the impact and general strategies for gadget use, but have not specifically examined how parents apply a wise approach based on the real challenges experienced in the family environment. This study aims to examine the role of parents through a wise approach in overcoming *gadget* addiction in elementary school children. The method used was qualitative with a descriptive approach and data collection techniques through interviews with three parents in Kacangan Village. The results of the study showed signs of *gadget addiction* such as children having difficulty controlling themselves, disrupted learning time and imitating trends from digital media. To overcome this, parents set rules for the use of *gadgets*, build positive communication, provide mentoring and supervision. In addition, there are wise approaches taken to support children's development, such as providing facilities to support children's interests and talents, providing an understanding of the dangers of *gadgets* and encouraging children to actively socialize. This research shows that the role of parents is very important in creating a supportive environment so that children are free from gadget addiction. These findings are relevant for developing a wise approach to adaptive parenting in the digital age..

1. Introduction

The rapid development of information technology has brought major changes in people's lives, including elementary school-age children. Information technology that is inseparable is Gadgets because it supports the learning process and facilitates access to information (Kurnia et al., 2024). Gadgets offer a variety of features that can help in completing schoolwork, make it easier to communicate with peers, increase creativity and present a variety of interesting games. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in collaboration with the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), it is known that the number of gadget users in Indonesia until the end of 2024 will reach 221.5 million people in 2024 out of a total of 281.6 million people in Indonesia. Internet user access is 78.6% (Wibowo et al., 2023). The data shows that the high use of gadgets can be a serious problem because it has the potential to have a negative impact on cognitive, social, and mental and physical health aspects.

Based on this data, the use of gadgets is a challenge for parents who have introduced gadgets to their children because they are at risk of addiction. Signs that look like difficulty controlling yourself, reduced physical activity and feeling disturbed sleep. If these signs are seen, it is necessary for parents to play a wise approach to form good habits in children in using gadgets. A wise approach is a strategy that prioritizes communication by providing gradual understanding to achieve goals optimally by considering holistic aspects, including psychological, social and cognitive aspects (Fitriani, 2025). This approach can be linked to the principle of balanced parenting, which is in line with Baumrind's classification of parenting styles into authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative types. In the context of a wise approach, authoritative parenting is the foundation because it balances control and affection, and involves children in decision-making so that they feel that their opinions are always heard (Agung et al., 2025). Parents do this not only reactively, but also in shaping their children's character and independence in using gadgets in a healthy way. A wise approach can be taken by teachers and parents because both have an important role in overcoming gadget addiction in elementary school children. However, this article focuses on discussing the role of parents, because children interact more with gadgets when they are at home.

Research that has been conducted by Atqoo et al., (2024) shows that there are strategies carried out by parents in educating children in the digital era, namely building digital literacy, monitoring content use, setting screen time, implementing online ethics and manners, being a good role model, building critical and creative skills, and collaborating with schools. Casmini and Euis state that parenting is the way parents treat their children, educate, guide, train, and protect them as they grow up (Aryanti, 2022). Parenting includes parents' efforts to create standards that are expected to shape a child's behavior and character. Research that has been conducted by Hidayatuladkia et al., (2021) discusses the positive impacts, negative impacts and the role of parents in controlling the use of gadgets in 11-year-old children.

Although this study has discussed the positive and negative impacts and strategies employed by parents, it is still limited because it has not been discussed in depth regarding the challenges and wise approaches taken by parents. Given this situation, further research is needed to uncover the real challenges faced by parents based on differences in field conditions and variations in wise approaches tailored to the conditions of the child. This study focuses on contextual parenting practices in the home environment, emphasizing situational and responsive approaches based on the real challenges faced by parents. Based on this, this study aims to uncover the actual challenges experienced by parents and how they apply wise parenting approaches tailored to the cognitive and emotional development of children. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by uncovering the real challenges faced by parents and how they apply wise parenting approaches tailored to the cognitive and emotional development of children.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to determine the role of parents in overcoming gadget addiction in elementary school children in Kacangan village. The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth interviews with three parents who have elementary school children who live in Kacangan village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency. Informants were selected purposively, based on the criteria that they had children who were familiar with gadgets and demonstrated habits of gadget use in their daily lives. Interview questions will focus on children with different levels and children who have been introduced to gadgets from an early age, the parenting style that is usually carried out by parents, the challenges faced and the strategies applied by parents, namely "What are the challenges faced when children use gadgets?" and "What are effective strategies in reducing children playing gadgets?"

The data obtained was then analyzed descriptively through interactive analysis stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by the researcher by sorting relevant information from the interview results. This was followed by data presentation in the form of structured findings that could describe the patterns of parental roles and wise approaches that had been used. Conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring information. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques used. This was done by comparing statements from the three informants, systematically reviewing the interview results, and reconfirming the informants' answers at different meetings to assess consistency.

3. Results and Discussion

Researchers conducted interviews with three parents who had elementary school children with different cognitive levels. This research focuses on challenges, solutions carried out by parents and wise approaches to overcome gadget addiction in children in Kacangan village. This research shows that gadget addiction in elementary school children is a real challenge faced by parents in today's digital era. Children who have been introduced to gadgets from an early age tend to experience dependency if there is no time limit and supervision from parents. Judging from the results of the interview, children have been introduced to gadgets starting from the ages of 4 and 6, which means that children are still at an early age. Based on research conducted by Mil, S & Shanzivani S (2023) show that gadgets have a great effect on early childhood behavior when playing gadgets without any time limit. Even though this age should be used to maximize motor sensory, explore social activities together with friends and family.

Findings from the interviews indicate that the challenges in overcoming gadget addiction vary depending on the parenting style applied by parents, such as parenting style, screen time control,

and children's emotional regulation. It was found that Mrs. Nita and Mrs. Novi adopt an authoritative parenting style, as they establish rules at home through open communication with their children: "I set rules at home, such as no gadget use after 9 PM and a gadget usage limit of less than one hour." Meanwhile, Mr. Jito tends to be permissive, stating that "If my child is using a gadget and asked to stop, they often get angry and cry. I usually let him continue until he stops on his own." These differences in parenting styles can affect the effectiveness of the wise approach being applied. Screen time control is very important, but its implementation and consistency among informants tends to vary. Mrs. Novi said, "At home, my child is only allowed to play with gadgets for one hour a day. The rest of the time, he must play or study." Meanwhile, Mr. Jito said, "My child immediately looks for gadgets after school, even during study time. If I forbid him, he gets angry and refuses to eat." This suggests that without discipline and parental involvement, it is difficult to enforce. Additionally, the level of a child's addiction can be gauged by their emotional responses, as Mr. Jito explains, "When children play with gadgets, I usually rebel and cry." Meanwhile, Mrs. Nita says, "If asked to help with something, he often procrastinates because he's still engrossed in watching TikTok. But I help redirect him with drawing activities." This approach highlights the important role of parents in helping children recognize and manage their emotions when they need to put down their gadgets

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The following are the results of the interviews presented in the table below:

Table 1. Results of parents' interviews in overcoming gadget addiction in children

| Parent s | Children's Cognitive Level | Challenge | Solution from parents | A wise approach |
|-----------|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Mrs. Nita | Tall | <p>Q: "What are the challenges experienced when children play gadgets?"</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When it has been more than an hour of playing <i>gadgets</i> and the time is taken, there is still a discussion with his friend regarding group assignments through WhatsApp groups" • "During school holidays, my child seems a little addicted to <i>gadgets</i> from playing Tiktok a lot." • "If you ask for help to do something, delay a bit." | <p>Q: "What is the most effective strategy in reducing children from playing <i>gadgets</i>?" "That is why A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Giving time allowance for up to half an hour when my son is still discussing group assignments in WhatsApp groups." • "I made rules at home, namely not to play <i>gadgets</i> more than 9 pm, not to play <i>gadgets</i> when with his sister and the limit of playing <i>gadgets</i> is less than one hour." • "Supervise when playing gadgets ." | <p>Q: "What is the wise approach taken to address these challenges?"</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I have to know what my child likes" • "Providing facilities for children to channel their drawing talents" • "Directing and providing support to develop their talents" |

| | | | | |
|-----------|------|--|---|--|
| Mrs. Novi | Keep | <p>Q: "What are the challenges experienced when children play gadgets?"</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My child still can't control himself when playing <i>gadgets</i>, so parents play a role in setting limits on children." • "There are signs of <i>gadget</i> addiction such as changes in behavior that follow <i>trends</i>." <p>"When the child is at home and has no playmates, then what they are looking for is a <i>gadget</i>."</p> | <p>Q: "What is the most effective strategy in reducing children from playing <i>gadgets</i>?" That is why A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There is a rule at home, which is that you can play <i>gadgets</i> but only for 1 hour." • "Providing assistance so that activities carried out by children with <i>gadgets</i> are positive activities." <p>"I often monitor my children's activities when playing <i>gadgets</i>."</p> | <p>Q: "What is the wise approach taken to address these challenges?"</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Giving my child an understanding of the dangers of playing <i>timeless gadgets</i> can result in decreased brain intelligence." • "Showing video of the dangers of <i>gadget</i> addiction." <p>"Implement gradually and consistently."</p> |
| Mr. Jito | Low | <p>Q: "What are the challenges experienced when children play gadgets?"</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When children play <i>gadgets</i>, I usually rebel and cry." • "When playing from outside or after school, my son immediately looks for <i>gadgets</i>." • "Learning time is reduced because children want to play <i>gadgets</i>." • "Children seem to be addicted to <i>gadgets</i>." | <p>Q: "What is the most effective strategy in reducing children from playing <i>gadgets</i>?" That is why A:</p> <p>"Giving a time limit to play <i>gadgets</i> even though my son often rebels."</p> | <p>Q: "What is the wise approach taken to address these challenges?"</p> <p>A:</p> <p>"I as a parent provide an understanding of the dangers of playing <i>gadgets</i>."</p> <p>"Give more time to play with his friends so that he forgets about <i>gadgets</i>."</p> |

Source: Interview Data, 2025

These results show that although the challenges faced by parents are diverse, the three parents strive to establish boundaries with gadgets, accompany and provide understanding to children. The child's cognitive level can determine the effectiveness of a wise approach because children with high cognitive levels can be easily discussed and directed to other activities that shift their focus away from gadgets, and vice versa. In this case, if parents cannot play an active role in overcoming children who have seen signs of addiction, it will have an impact on declining cognitive levels caused by laziness in learning if they have played gadgets and worse, addiction if used excessively. In addition, the difference in parenting style seen from Mrs. Novi takes an educational approach by providing an understanding of the dangers of gadgets that can help in understanding the concept of the consequences of excessive use of gadgets and accompanied by supervision from parents. However, this condition is different from Mr. Jito because he takes an instructive approach such as lack of communication with children due to the lack of supervision that makes it difficult for children to escape from gadgets.

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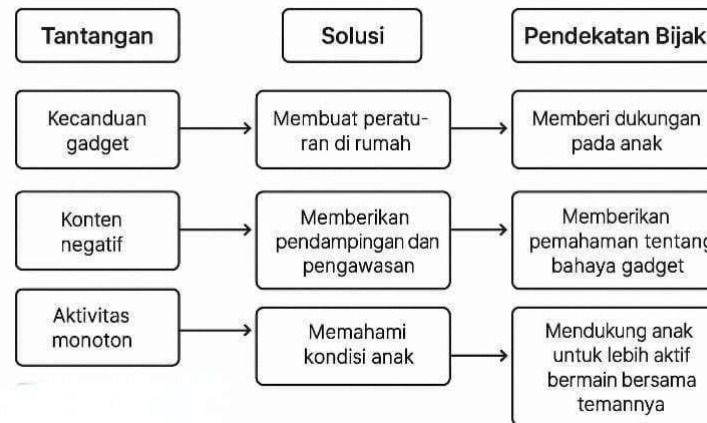


Figure 1. Mind map role wise parental approach of challenges

After the researchers conducted interview activities, it was found that there were differences in the challenges faced by the three parents so that the solutions and wise approaches obtained tended to vary. Challenges faced such as changes in behavior in children, when asked to stop playing gadgets become rebellious and the difficulty of controlling themselves to stop. According to Rawanita & Mardhiah, (2024) if there is no time limit, children get the opportunity to linger to play gadgets so that it indirectly causes children to become addicted to gadgets. That way, the three parents make rules at home that can help children to be separated from gadgets. Playing gadgets can cause less time for learning. If parents do not act firmly, then children will be complacent so that it can interfere with study time (Ardiansyah, 2024). Mr. Jito said “Learning time is reduced because children want to play gadgets”, this affects their cognitive aspects, either decreasing the potential of children or lack of enthusiasm for learning.

One of the challenges faced by parents is the difference in parenting at home. It affects the cognitive, social and emotional abilities of children. This condition is in line with research conducted by Fauziyah, (2023) which reveals that parenting patterns have a significant effect on the use of gadgets in children, it is stated that there are authoritarian, democratic and permissive parenting patterns. In addition, the age of the child can affect how to control themselves. Children who are still 4, 6 and 10 years old tend to be more difficult to limit themselves. This is in accordance with Mrs. Novi, namely “My child still cannot control himself when playing gadgets so that parents play a role in providing limits to children”.

Based on these challenges, parents play a role to overcome so that there is a solution, namely parents make rules at home by giving time limits, not allowed to play more than nine hours and allowed to play only one hour. This is in accordance with Azmin's research, (2023) which shows that rules must be carried out and when they exceed the specified time limit, parents can keep the gadget. Parents also supervise and accompany because rules alone are not enough. In line with Matakana & Supratman's research, (2022) which states that it is important to provide assistance so that they can find out the activities carried out with gadgets, children also feel they have friends so they don't feel lonely. Parents must understand the child's condition when at home, such as giving additional time when learning through gadgets when not finished. This is the same as research conducted by Maulida H, et al, (2022) which states that the use of gadgets while learning must be used wisely and understanding conditions can train trust between children and parents.

In addition to solutions by parents, there are wise approaches that can overcome gadget addiction in elementary school children. As parents who have the

responsibility of developing children for the better, harmony between parents and children is needed. This can be done by knowing what children like and dislike (Mohamad Sabda Fariz Akbar, Ridwan Fauzi, Zaqi Abdillah Tsamanyah, 2022). In general, children have not been able to limit themselves when playing gadgets so that they often do not know the time (Nugroho et al., 2022). A wise approach by parents can be done by showing educational videos related to the dangers of gadget addiction. Videos viewed by children can be a direct reminder not to get addicted and limit themselves from gadgets.

Playing with friends can train social, emotional and psychomotor aspects because children can move freely and experiment directly (Sugiarti & Andyanto, 2022). The results of the interview also show that children who play with their friends will forget about gadgets. A wise approach that can be taken by parents is to support children to move actively with their friends. Before children go to play with their friends, parents can give rules such as not fighting, not to forget the time to go home and must be supportive when playing. If delivered well, the child will gladly accept advice from parents. That way, the relationship between parents and children will be better and children can play happily so that they forget about gadgets.

Based on these findings, the authors recommend that parents consistently implement gadget usage rules coupled with positive communication with children. Parents can set an example to be wise in using gadgets so that children can follow. In addition, schools can integrate education about the dangers of gadget use so that it can provide understanding to be wise in playing gadgets. Future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to observe changes in children's behavior towards gadget use habits in the long term and can involve children's opinions directly to find out more about the internal and external factors that influence gadget use from the perspective of the children themselves.

3.3. Conclusion

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, it is known that gadget addiction in elementary school children is a serious challenge because gadgets are not a strange thing anymore. The ease of access offered makes it difficult for children to be separated from gadgets. There are differences in parental parenting so that it has an impact on children's habits. That way the solutions provided to deal with children when interacting with gadgets are also different. This is because parents try to give the best version of themselves by adjusting their children so that they do not get caught up in addiction. Such as making rules at home, accompanying children when playing and introducing interesting activities with their friends.

A wise approach does not mean completely prohibiting children from playing gadgets at all, but supporting and providing facilities to be able to develop their talents, teach children to know limits, provide opportunities to play with their friends without distractions from gadgets. This can foster children's empathy because they feel heard and understood and learn to control themselves. That way, it is important to have the role of parents through a wise approach to create a safe space for children, a place for children to develop and be free from gadget addiction. However, this study still has limitations in the number of informants because it only involves three parents from one village and has not directly involved children. Therefore, this research still has a wide space to develop, so that the next researcher can expand the informant and involve the child's perspective directly, in order to find out the effectiveness of the role of parents through a wise approach to overcome children who are addicted to gadgets.

Author Contributions

The success in preparing this article cannot be separated from the contribution of the two authors from planning to editing the article. The first author, Afidatun Faiza contributed to the conceptualization of the research topic, designing the methodology, conducting field investigations and writing the manuscript in the form of an original draft and final editing. Meanwhile, the second author, Candra Utama contributed to the supervision of the research process, data validation, review

and editing of the final manuscript. Both authors have contributed equally to the article. In addition, both authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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