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DATA IN SUMMARY | SOCIAL SCIENCE (MISCELLANEOUS)

## Socialization of The Dangers of Gadget and Internet Use for Children: Qualitative Study from SD Negeri 2 Liliyaly, Buru Regency, Maluku, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Socialization about the impact of gadget and internet use on elementary school children is important considering their high exposure to technology from an early age. This study aims to improve the understanding of students of SD Negeri 2 Liliyaly regarding the positive and negative impacts of gadget use, as well as to encourage wiser use. Socialization was carried out through lecture methods, group discussions, and simple simulations. The results of the study showed that before socialization, around 60% of students used gadgets for entertainment without understanding the risks involved. After socialization, there was an increase in understanding, where 85% of students were able to mention negative impacts such as dependence, physical health problems, and the risk of exposure to inappropriate content. This activity proves that interactive methods are effective in helping students understand the dangers of excessive gadget use and how to manage their use in a healthy way. Thus, ongoing socialization and more intensive digital literacy programs are expected to encourage students to use technology wisely.

**Keywords:** Socialization, Gadgets, Internet, Elementary School Children, Digital Literacy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has brought significant changes to our lives. Gadgets and the internet have become an inseparable part of everyday life, including for children. On the one hand, this technology offers many benefits, such as easy access to information, more interactive learning, and more effective communication. However, on the other hand, uncontrolled use of gadgets and the internet can lead to various problems. The use of gadgets has revolutionized the way we interact, learn, and live our daily lives. In the digital era, children grow up with easy access to gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, which have been integrated into everyday life. Gadgets can provide unlimited access to information, entertainment, and communication. However, there are negative effects from the continuous use of gadgets, especially concerning their impact on individual and societal development. According to a study by Rahayu et al. (2021), gadgets can inhibit speech and language development in children. This occurs because children spend more time in front of gadget screens compared to interacting with other people, which can facilitate learning to speak and language acquisition. As a result, children rarely interact with others, leading to a decline in their speech and language abilities.

Secondly, excessive use of gadgets can negatively impact the character formation of children. Rahayu et al. (2021) explained that the negative influence on children's character formation can be caused by exposure to inappropriate content through gadgets. For example, there are various videos on the YouTube platform that can lead children to behave disrespectfully toward adults and use harsh language. Finally, excessive use of gadgets can disrupt the function of a child's prefrontal cortex. With children's addiction to gadgets, their brains can secrete excessive amounts of dopamine, which can

interfere with the functioning of the prefrontal cortex. This can negatively affect the area of the brain that controls emotions, self-regulation, responsibility, decision-making, and other moral principles.

Therefore, it is very important for us to engage in socialization about the dangers of gadget and internet use with children. This socialization aims to raise awareness among children and parents regarding the importance of using gadgets wisely, as well as providing tips and tricks to limit gadget usage time and select appropriate content. These socialization activities regarding the dangers of gadgets and the internet can be conducted in elementary schools, such as at SD Negeri 2 Liliy, which is one of the elementary schools in this area. Reasons for Socialization at SD Negeri 2 Liliy

There are several reasons for conducting socialization activities at SD Negeri 2 Liliy. First, Lack of Access to Information: Many members of society have limited access to accurate and up-to-date information regarding the negative impacts of gadget usage on children. This socialization can serve as a bridge to provide essential information about these impacts. Second, Rapid Technological Development: Although technology is advancing rapidly, many children have started using gadgets at a very young age. It is crucial to educate them early about the responsible use of these devices. Third, Contribution to Character Development: Through this socialization, we aim to contribute to the character formation of children. We hope to instill in them the importance of using gadgets wisely and understanding the potential negative effects of excessive usage. In conclusion, this socialization is vital for raising awareness among children about the responsible use of gadgets and the potential impacts of their misuse.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The methods used in this socialization activity include the lecture method and the demonstration method. This approach is friendly, prioritizing interaction with students. The teaching team employs various techniques to ensure effective delivery. The selected methods are chosen because they are effective in facilitating interaction between students and the teaching team in a face-to-face or direct manner. Through these methods, students can understand the material presented during the socialization activity. The goal of this activity is to ensure that elementary school students at SD Negeri 2 Liliy are aware of the dangers of excessive gadget usage and its implications. The activity is conducted with the guidance of materials that highlight both the positive and negative impacts of gadget usage. This includes discussions on how gadgets affect students' social reactions, possible solutions, and the importance of discipline in using gadgets.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gadgets refer to small electronic devices that serve specific functions and are often designed to facilitate daily activities. These devices are typically compact, portable, and equipped with sophisticated technological capabilities. Examples of gadgets include mobile phones, tablets, digital cameras, and smartwatches. According to Triastuti (2019), gadgets are electronic devices that assist humans in their activities, including communication, entertainment, and daily work needs. The internet, on the other hand, is a global computer network that enables the rapid and effective exchange of information worldwide. Through an internet connection, users can access various services such as browsing, email, social media, and data sharing. Tanenbaum describes the internet as a global communications network that connects numerous networks and devices around the world, allowing for real-time data transfer.

According to Susanto (2016), gadgets and the internet bring various changes to human life across all sectors. They have several positive impacts on children, including:

1. **Increased Access to Information:** Gadgets and the internet provide quick access to a wealth of information, serving as valuable learning resources for children. They can search for

information on topics of interest, use educational applications, or watch educational videos. Research conducted by Susanto shows that the internet can help children easily develop knowledge and insight while increasing their interest in learning across various fields.

2. **Development of Technological Skills:** Early exposure to gadgets and the internet helps children become accustomed to technology, an essential skill for their future in an increasingly tech-driven world. Children who regularly use gadgets are likely to adapt more easily to sophisticated devices and software later on.
3. **Strengthened Communication Skills:** Messaging and social media applications allow children to maintain connections with friends and family. Research by UNICEF indicates that the responsible use of gadgets can support children in building and maintaining social relationships through online communication, which is crucial for their social development.

However, despite the numerous positive impacts of gadgets and the internet on children, there are also significant negative effects that can be detrimental, particularly if usage is not properly controlled (Ratnasari, 2018). The negative impacts include:

1. **Dependence and Addiction:** Excessive use of gadgets can lead to dependency. Children who spend too much time with gadgets often exhibit signs of addiction, such as irritability or restlessness when they cannot access their devices. Ratnasari's research indicates that gadget addiction in children can result in decreased concentration, leading to a lack of interest in learning or interacting with others.
2. **Physical Health Problems:** Prolonged gadget use can cause various physical health issues, including eye problems (such as dry eyes and nearsightedness), poor posture, and a lack of physical activity. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) warns that children exposed to screens too frequently are at risk of physical health problems due to insufficient physical activity, which can also contribute to childhood obesity.
3. **Mental Health Disorders:** Unsupervised internet access can expose children to age-inappropriate content, including violence or cyberbullying. According to UNICEF, children who are involved in cyberbullying, either as victims or perpetrators, are at risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, and decreased self-confidence. This has a negative impact on their mental health and can interfere with a child's emotional development.
4. **Social Development Disorders:** Excessive gadget use can reduce children's face-to-face interactions with others, which impacts their social skills. Children who spend too much time with gadgets tend to have lower direct communication skills, difficulty reading other people's emotions, and a reduced ability to form healthy social relationships.

Gadgets have become an integral part of everyday life, including for children. However, excessive or uncontrolled use of gadgets can cause various effects that impact social aspects, education, mental health, and even physical health. Here are some reviews:

1. **Social Impact:** Excessive use of gadgets can reduce direct social interaction, making it more difficult for children to build interpersonal communication skills and empathy. Children who spend a lot of time in the digital world are often more comfortable interacting online than face-to-face. This can affect their ability to understand and respond to the emotions of others, which is important for social development (Rosyada, D. 2019).
2. **Impact on Education:** In terms of education, gadgets provide access to various information and interactive learning methods, which can help children understand the subject matter. However, uncontrolled use of gadgets can cause children to be easily distracted by entertainment content, such as videos, games, or social media, which can reduce their

- concentration and learning achievement. Supervision by parents and teachers is essential so that gadgets are used as learning aids, not distractions (Santoso, D., & Widiyanto, S. 2020).
3. **Mental Health Impact:** The impact of gadgets on children's mental health is also quite significant. Children who use gadgets for a long time, especially for social media, are susceptible to psychological stress due to exposure to cyberbullying or negative content. This can lead to stress, anxiety, and even depression. Social media that often showcases an ideal life can affect children's self-perception, which can interfere with their mental well-being (Ramadani, R., & Febriani, L. 2021).
  4. **Physical Health Impacts:** Long-term use of gadgets can impact children's physical health, such as impaired vision and posture. Radiation from gadget screens can also disrupt sleep patterns if used before bedtime, affecting children's sleep quality and physical development. Additionally, the tendency to sit for long periods while using gadgets can cause posture problems and a lack of physical activity, which can trigger obesity (Nugroho, H.A., & Wicaksono, A. 2020).

Excessive use of gadgets in children can lead to addiction. The following are several factors that contribute to children becoming addicted to gadgets, accompanied by sources in Indonesian for further reference:

1. **Instant Pleasure and Satisfaction:**  
Gadgets offer diverse and quickly accessible content, such as videos, games, and social media apps, which provide instant gratification. The systems in apps and games are designed to keep children engaged, such as through notifications, in-game rewards, and constantly updated content. This instant gratification stimulates children's brains to release dopamine, a hormone that plays a role in the sensation of "pleasure," leading to addiction and a desire to continue using gadgets (Darmawan, R.F., & Suryadi, H. 2021).
2. **Lack of Supervision from Parents:**  
Children who have free access to gadgets often spend more time without clear boundaries. A lack of parental supervision or the absence of strict rules regarding gadget usage time can lead to addiction. Children who receive less attention or supervision from their parents are more likely to seek escape and comfort through gadgets (Santoso, F.E., & Ramadhan, D.A. 2019).
3. **Social Environment and Peer Influence:**  
Peer influence can also be an important factor. When children see their friends' using gadgets or playing certain games, they tend to want to join in to feel accepted in the group. The trend of applications or games that are popular among peers also encourages children to use gadgets frequently and not want to be left behind (Kusuma, A.P., & Rahmawati, R. 2020).
4. **Stress and Escape from Problems:**  
Gadgets are often used by children as an escape from stress or problems they face. Games, videos, or social media can provide entertainment that helps them forget feelings of anxiety or stress for a moment. This is especially true for children who face pressure in their home or school environment, leading them to prefer spending time with gadgets to avoid problems (Wijaya, A.P., & Putri, R.S. 2021).
5. **Content Designed to be Addictive**  
The content presented in applications or games is often designed with mechanisms that encourage users to continue using or playing. For example, the use of notifications, reward systems in games, and level systems can make children feel challenged and motivated to continue progressing. These features are designed to continuously attract children's attention, making it difficult for them to stop.

#### 6. Lack of Interesting Alternative Activities

Children who do not have many activities or lack interesting stimulation outside of gadget screens are more susceptible to gadget addiction. When there are no alternative fun activities, such as playing outside, participating in sports, or engaging in arts and crafts, children tend to seek entertainment through gadgets (Wijaya, A.P., & Putri, R.S. 2021).

Considering the many negative impacts that can arise from the use of gadgets and the internet, preventive measures need to be taken to minimize these negative effects on children, including:

##### 1. Limiting Gadget Usage Time

Setting time limits for gadget use is an important step to prevent addiction and physical health problems in children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) recommends that children aged 2 to 5 years do not use screens for more than one hour per day. For children over 6 years old, parents must be consistent in setting a balanced time for gadget use alongside other activities, such as playing outdoors and studying. This time limit helps children remain physically active and prevents eye fatigue.

##### 2. Parental Guidance and Supervision

Parental supervision in the use of gadgets is crucial, especially to ensure that children access age-appropriate content and avoid the risks of cyberbullying. Parents are advised to be involved in their children's digital activities, such as watching or playing with them and discussing what they see and learn. According to UNICEF (2017), parental supervision helps prevent exposure to negative content and improves communication between parents and children, allowing them to discuss potential problems that may arise online.

##### 3. Use of Content Control Applications

Parental control apps can assist parents in monitoring and regulating their children's access to specific apps, websites, or content. These applications allow parents to set time limits, block inappropriate sites, and track their children's online activities. According to Giedd (2012), content controls help protect children from exposure to age-inappropriate content while safeguarding their privacy and security online.

##### 4. Teaching Digital Literacy and Gadget Usage Ethics

Teaching children about digital literacy and online ethics from an early age is essential for fostering a healthy understanding of gadget use. Digital literacy includes understanding data security, the risks of cyberbullying, and how to use the internet positively. By learning about digital ethics, children will be more cautious when interacting online and will possess the skills necessary to protect themselves from unwanted risks. According to research by Livingstone and Haddon (2009), digital literacy improves children's ability to use the internet safely and responsibly.

##### 5. Encourage Non-Digital Activities

To prevent children from becoming too dependent on gadgets, parents are advised to encourage them to engage in other activities outside the digital world, such as sports, arts, and social interactions with peers. These activities not only reduce dependence on gadgets but also help develop physical, social, and emotional skills. According to Turkle (2011), children who engage in non-digital activities tend to maintain a balance between the online and offline worlds, which is beneficial for their mental and social development.

##### 6. Provide a Positive Example in Using Gadgets

Children tend to imitate their parents' behavior, including their use of gadgets. Parents who model wise gadget use will help children understand the importance of managing screen time effectively. Parents can demonstrate this by turning off gadgets during family gatherings or setting gadget-free times at home. According to McDaniel and Radesky (2018), positive gadget use behavior by parents helps establish healthy technology habits in children.

To prevent gadget addiction in children, appropriate educational and advocacy strategies and approaches are needed. Here are some strategies and techniques that can be applied, along with sources from articles and research in Indonesian for further reference:

- 1. Create Clear Gadget Usage Rules**  
Setting firm time limits on gadget use is a crucial first step. Parents or educators can establish a schedule that balances gadget use with other activities, such as studying, playing outside, or spending time with family. These limits help children understand that there are designated times for using gadgets and other times for engaging in different activities (Yulianti, D., & Saputra, D. 2020).
- 2. Encourage Interesting Alternative Activities**  
Children are more likely to set aside gadgets if they have other interesting and enjoyable activities to engage in. Parents or teachers can encourage children to participate in physical activities, sports, arts, or other social activities that are beneficial to their physical and mental development. These activities can reduce children's dependence on gadgets by providing them with alternative options to fill their free time (Supriyanto, A., & Wulandari, S. 2021).
- 3. Educate Children about Healthy Gadget Use**  
Providing children with education about the positive and negative impacts of gadget use is an important step. This education can be facilitated through simple discussions about how gadgets can assist in learning but can also be detrimental if used excessively. Children also need to learn about the importance of maintaining privacy and security on the internet (Susanto, F.M., & Nurcahyo, A. 2019).
- 4. Provide Examples of Good Gadget Usage**  
Parents need to set a good example in using gadgets. Children tend to imitate their parents' behavior, so parents who regulate gadget use well will also help children understand that gadget use should be done wisely. For example, parents can avoid using gadgets when gathering with family or before going to bed (Pratama, Y., & Nugroho, S. 2020).
- 5. Using Advocacy Techniques for Parents and the Community**  
To create an environment that supports healthy gadget use, it is important to advocate in the community. Advocacy programs can be carried out through seminars or community discussions involving parents, teachers, and child development experts. With this advocacy, the community can better understand the impact of gadget addiction and collaboratively implement strategies to reduce its negative effects (Kurniawan, E., & Puspitasari, D. 2021).
- 6. Utilize Applications that Support Gadget Usage Control**  
Several applications are available to help regulate and limit children's screen time. Parents can use these applications to control gadget usage time, set limits, and monitor children's activities on the internet. With the help of these applications, controlling gadget usage can be done more practically (Wicaksono, R., & Widodo, H. 2020).

Typical activities community service that is titled "Gadget Dangers & Internet for Children in Elementary School Negeri 2 Lilialy" which was held on October 22, 2024, shows that many students are familiar with gadgets and the internet, but some are unaware of the risks associated with excessive use. Based on socialization, about 70% of students believe that gadget usage and internet access only have positive impacts, such as providing entertainment and assisting in learning.

During socialization activities, students are given information regarding the impacts of gadget usage and the internet, such as dependency, cognitive disturbances, and problems related to physical health, including eye strain and sleep disorders. Furthermore, it is important to educate students on safe content and how to select applications or sites that are suitable for their age.

Result evaluation from the socialization shows that about 85% of students can identify and understand the potential negative impacts of excessive gadget usage and how to manage their screen time wisely. Students also learn how to avoid content that is inappropriate for their age.



Figure 1. Socialization at SD Negeri 2 Liliyal



Figure 2. Group Photo with Students

The results of this socialization show that providing students with an understanding of the impact of gadgets and the internet at the elementary school age is an important step to prevent dependency and other risks that can interfere with child development. By sending information directly to students, they can better understand the limitations in technology usage and how to use gadgets wisely. While technology can provide access to useful educational resources, without guidance and control, gadgets can also have negative impacts. A child who is always using gadgets may become less physically active, which can hinder their motor development and cause disturbances in body posture. Additionally, exposure to inappropriate content can negatively affect behavior and mental health.

The lessons learned during this socialization, conducted through friendly methods, discussions, and simulations, proved to be effective. Children found it easier to engage and be actively involved in the interactive sessions. They were also able to discuss their personal experiences and share tips with

each other on how to use gadgets wisely. With these results, it is hoped that the school can hold a follow-up program focused on technology usage, such as a digital constellation program that teaches students to take advantage of gadgets as a means of learning and engaging in productive activities. This lesson can also be reinforced in the school environment to encourage students in responsible technology usage.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Socialization regarding the impact of gadget usage and the internet at SD Negeri 2 Liliyaly has resulted in an increased understanding among students about the risks of excessive technology usage. Results from this activity show that prior to socialization, many students viewed gadgets merely as a means of entertainment or as tools to assist in learning, without considering the potential negative effects. However, following the socialization, many students were able to identify the negative impacts, such as dependency, interference with physical activity, and the risk of exposure to inappropriate content. The interactive methods used in socialization, including friendly discussions in groups and simulations, proved effective in engaging students and making the material easier to understand. Education of this kind is very important, especially for elementary school-aged children, so that students can use gadgets wisely and avoid the adverse impacts that can disrupt their physical, mental, and social development. Based on that, we suggest:

1. **Continuous Socialization**  
Schools are encouraged to organize similar socialization sessions periodically. Consistent efforts in educating students will reinforce their understanding and promote long-term habits of responsible gadget usage.
2. **Developing Digital Literacy Programs**  
Recognizing the growing role of gadgets as learning tools, schools can implement digital literacy programs to teach students how to use technology positively. For example, programs can introduce educational apps that support learning or guide students in creating creative and educational content.
3. **Enhanced Supervision in Schools**  
While socialization improves students' awareness, direct supervision of gadget use within the school environment is also essential. Schools can establish policies regulating gadget usage during school hours to prevent misuse or exposure to inappropriate content.
4. **Teacher Involvement in Mentoring Students**  
Teachers play a pivotal role in supervising and guiding students on healthy gadget habits. Providing teachers with specialized training in digital literacy will enable them to educate students effectively and model appropriate technology usage.
5. **Providing Alternative Physical and Social Activities**  
To foster a balanced lifestyle, schools should offer extracurricular activities that encourage physical movement and social interaction. These programs will help reduce students' dependence on gadgets for entertainment while promoting holistic development.

By implementing these recommendations, students at SD Negeri 2 Liliyaly can develop a healthy, wise, and responsible approach to using technology. This foundation will enable them to leverage gadgets as positive tools that support their growth and learning.

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