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Academia Open

Vol. 11 No. 1 (2026): June
DOI: 10.21070/acopen.11.2026.13162

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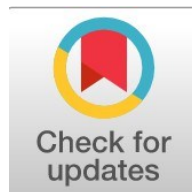
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Parental Supervision Strategies for Reducing Gadget Addiction in Elementary Children

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Abstract

General Background: Rapid technological development has increased gadget use among children, creating risks for academic, social, and physical development. **Specific Background:** In RT 004, Pesu Village, Magetan, many elementary school-aged children frequently engage in prolonged mobile phone gaming, often with limited parental supervision. **Knowledge Gap:** Although parents recognize negative outcomes such as addiction, reduced learning focus, and declining social interaction, consistent and firm parental guidance remains insufficiently implemented. **Aims:** This study aimed to describe the role of parents in addressing the negative impacts of gadget use among SD/MI children in Pesu Village. **Results:** Using descriptive qualitative methods through observation, interviews, and documentation, findings showed that parental roles were relatively low, despite efforts such as setting time limits, supervising usage, encouraging peer interaction, selecting safe content, modeling responsible gadget behavior, and balancing screen time with other activities. However, inconsistent monitoring and permissive attitudes increased children's vulnerability to gadget addiction and developmental problems. **Novelty:** The study highlights specific parental strategies applied within a rural community context where children's gadget use is socially concentrated and difficult to control. **Implications:** Strengthening parental consistency, discipline, and cooperation with schools and communities is essential to reduce gadget-related risks and support healthier child development in the digital era.

Highlights:

- Parents applied time scheduling, content selection, and direct monitoring to manage
 - ♦ children's screen habits
- Inconsistent discipline and permissive practices increased risks of reduced learning focus,
 - ♦ social withdrawal, and health complaints
- Community-based challenges required stronger collaboration between families, schools, and
 - ♦ local environments

Keywords: Parental Role, Gadget, Technology Addiction.

Published date: 2026-02-06

Introduction

In the era of globalization, technology is rapidly developing along with the progress of the times. This fast-paced technological advancement has brought about various types of devices, such as televisions, laptops, smartphones, and many others [1]. The wide range of technological options is also supported by price variations, from affordable to expensive, adjusted to the economic conditions of each individual. Today, almost all aspects of life, such as education, economy, sports, and politics, rely on technology [2]. Its development is widespread across all groups, both adults and children, although misuse is not uncommon. Erin Hahn, through a Pew Research Center survey in August 2022, revealed that 95% of teenagers under 15 years old have access to smartphones, while 98% of teenagers over 15 years old also have the same access [3].

Along with the passage of time, Syamsul Bahri Thalib stated that the mindset of parents today has undergone significant changes compared to previous generations [4]. Nowadays, parents are required to better understand child development in line with the progress of the times and not be fixated on past parenting patterns, as each era continues to bring new innovations, including in the field of communication. Therefore, parents need to understand global developments and their impacts on the family, particularly in the aspect of technology [5]. Parenting that places excessive trust in a child's activities without supervision can shape a personality that tends to be spoiled and less receptive to parental control [6].

The family is the only social system recognized by all layers of society, both dynamic and static. In community life, the family holds various roles, positions, and statuses. Education within the family plays an important role in shaping a child's personality [7]. From an early age, children receive education from their parents through the examples set and the habits applied in daily life. The quality of education provided, as well as the lifestyle of the parents within the family, will influence the development of the child [8].

Parents play a crucial role in guiding their children in utilizing the continuously evolving digital technology [9]. In guiding their children, parents need to understand both the positive and negative impacts of technology. This supervision becomes an important part of the parental role in the era of globalization, where technological advancements bring both benefits and risks. For elementary school-aged children, the use of technology cannot be separated from parental guidance [10]. Therefore, parents need to monitor the duration of gadget use, introduce media as an educational tool, and teach children how to operate devices properly and correctly. In addition, parents should also introduce useful websites as learning resources. Digital technology can be likened to a knife: if used properly, it provides great benefits, but if misused, it can pose risks. Therefore, children need to be equipped with an understanding of how to use technology wisely and be aware of the impacts of its use [11].

Excessive use of technology can affect a child's development [12]. The intensity of digital media use can be measured by how often a child uses gadgets in a day. If this intensity increases, it may lead to gadget addiction, which can affect the child's physical health. Children who spend more time playing with gadgets tend to be less active and reluctant to move. To reduce excessive gadget use, parents need to implement certain strategies to limit their children's screen time. Parental involvement in technology use comes with its own challenges and supports. One obstacle in controlling gadget use is parents' busy schedules, which limit their engagement in their children's activities. In addition, a lack of parental understanding of technology can allow children to use gadgets more freely without supervision [13]. If parents do not keep up with the times in supporting their children's education, it can result in reduced learning effectiveness and a lack of rules within the family [14].

Hutagaol stated that the West Java Provincial Mental Hospital (RSJ) has treated many children experiencing mental disorders due to gadget addiction. According to medical team examinations, the mental health problems faced by these children are caused by excessive gadget use, such as playing online games, browsing the internet, and using various other applications. According to the Director of the West Java Mental Hospital, Elly Marliyani, the number of outpatient visits at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinic in West Bandung from January to February 2021 reached 14 patients, five of whom suffered from mental disorders and online game addiction. Meanwhile, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Subspecialist at RSJ, Dr. Lina Budiyantri, explained that the increase in internet use is unavoidable, especially because during the pandemic the government encouraged people to spend more time at home and implement social restrictions. Children who experience gadget addiction are generally between 9 and 15 years old, with many elementary school students spending increasing amounts of time using gadgets [15].

Mahajan and Bansal revealed that 43.1% of children under 15 years old use gadgets for one to three hours per day, while 28.8% use them for more than four hours a day [16]. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) recommends that the ideal duration of gadget use for elementary school-aged children should not exceed two hours per day. In other words, the maximum allowable gadget use for elementary school students is two hours per day, and exceeding this duration is considered excessive or not ideal [17]. According to child psychologist Ifa H. Misbach, the light emitted from screens used in online learning can become too intense if viewed for long periods. Therefore, online learning at home should be more flexible, with parents setting clear time limits for screen use to reduce radiation exposure.

Amri, Bahtiar, and Pratiwi stated that gadget use among elementary school-aged children has both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, gadgets help children access learning materials more easily and facilitate long-distance communication. However, on the other hand, excessive gadget use can lead children to spend more time on devices rather than interacting with their peers [18]. This has the potential to make children more individualistic, making parental supervision of gadget use extremely important [19].

In Pesu Village, Magetan, particularly in RT 004, many elementary school (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) children spend their time after school playing games on their mobile phones. This phenomenon becomes especially intense on Saturday and Sunday nights, when the children gather at one house, which happens to be the house of the neighborhood head (RT), to play games together until late at night. This activity not only affects the children's development but also causes discomfort for the surrounding community due to the noisy environment. However, this situation is difficult to control because no residents dare to intervene directly, considering that the gathering takes place at the RT head's house.

Uncontrolled gadget-playing habits can have negative impacts on a child's development, affecting their health, social life, and academic performance [20]. Some of the negative impacts that may arise include game addiction, reduced social interaction with family, declining academic performance, sleep disturbances, and increased aggression due to the influence of the games played [21]. If not properly addressed, this condition can have long-term effects on the mental development and character of children.

In this situation, the role of parents is crucial in controlling and guiding children in their use of gadgets [22]. Parents must be able to set limits on playtime, educate their children about the negative impacts of excessive gaming, and find alternative solutions so that children can still socialize without relying on online games [23]. Therefore, this study aims to explore the various roles of parents in addressing the negative impacts of gadget use on children in RT 004, Pesu Village, Magetan.

The reason for conducting this study in RT 004, Pesu Village, Maospati District, Magetan Regency, is that this area is one of the rural communities experiencing rapid development in technology use, including gadgets (mobile phones), not only among adults but also among elementary school-aged children (SD/MI). Based on initial observations, there are quite a number of elementary school children in RT 004 who own or frequently use gadgets, both for entertainment and learning purposes. However, uncontrolled gadget use has begun to produce various negative impacts, such as decreased learning interest, reduced social interaction, and addiction to games and social media. On the other hand, parental involvement in supervising and guiding their children in gadget use still varies. This becomes a strong reason for the researcher to choose RT 004 as the study location, as it is considered representative and relevant in illustrating the phenomenon of gadget use among children and the important role of parents in addressing it.

Method

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive type [24]. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining complex and dynamic social phenomena, namely the role of parents in addressing the negative impacts of gadget (mobile phone) use on elementary school-aged children (SD/MI). Descriptive qualitative research allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how parents carry out their roles, the strategies they use, and the challenges they face in guiding their children in today's digital era. With this approach, the data collected are narrative in nature and depict reality based on the direct experiences of the informants.

This study was conducted in RT 004, Pesu Village, Maospati District, Magetan Regency, during the 2025 academic year. This location was chosen because, based on initial observations, there is a tendency for increased gadget use among elementary school-aged children, which has not been accompanied by optimal parental supervision. This makes the location relevant for study, considering the importance of parents' roles in limiting and guiding gadget use to prevent negative impacts on children's development.

The subjects of this study are parents who have elementary school-aged children (SD/MI) and reside in RT 004, Pesu Village. Meanwhile, the object of this study is the role and actions of parents in addressing the negative impacts of gadget use, such as addiction, decreased learning interest, communication problems, and reduced social interaction. The technique for selecting informants was purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants based on specific criteria relevant to the focus of the study, such as the age of the children, the intensity of gadget use, and parental involvement in supervision.

Data were collected using several techniques, namely in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation [25]. Interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and concrete actions taken by parents in guiding their children. Observation was used to directly examine children's behavior while using gadgets, as well as the interactions that occur within the family. Meanwhile, documentation was employed to complement the data through daily notes, photos, or household rules implemented regarding gadget use [26].

To analyze the data, the researcher used the Miles and Huberman analysis technique, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions [27]. Data reduction was carried out by filtering and simplifying the information obtained to focus on relevant aspects. Data presentation was done in the form of narratives, interview excerpts, and matrices to facilitate understanding. Meanwhile, drawing conclusions was conducted gradually by verifying the data through triangulation, which involves comparing data from various sources and methods. The validity of the data was also tested using member checks, which involved confirming the interview results and the researcher's interpretations with the informants to ensure that the findings accurately reflected reality [28].

Results and Discussion

The role of parents in addressing gadget addiction among children in Pesu Village, Magetan, appears minimal in terms of supervision and discipline in educating and monitoring their daily activities. Generally, parents in Pesu Village pay little attention to their children's activities, so they are unaware of their children's development within their play environment. As

a result, children rarely play outside with their peers, preferring instead to spend time on gadgets. Parents tend to give children the freedom to use gadgets for various reasons, such as communication, learning, or to distract them when they are fussy. Some even provide gadgets to their children to prevent them from feeling left behind [29]. Parents should be more assertive in guiding and supervising their children's habits, including by setting positive examples, particularly regarding gadget use. However, in reality, many parents tend to spoil their children by fulfilling every desire without considering the long-term consequences that may arise from the negative impacts of excessive gadget use [30].

1. The Role of Parents in Addressing the Negative Impacts of Gadget Use on Elementary School-Aged Children (SD/MI)

After in-depth investigation and observation through interviews, various steps taken by parents to reduce the impact of gadget use on the learning outcomes of children under 10 years old in the Pesu Village community, Magetan, were identified. The steps taken by parents include: (1) setting schedules and limiting gadget use, (2) accompanying children while using gadgets, (3) encouraging children to socialize, (4) being more careful in selecting features or applications used by children, (5) avoiding gadget use by parents while spending time with their children, and (6) balancing gadget use with other children's activities.

a. Setting Schedules and Limiting Gadget Usage Time

Parents make efforts to create a specific schedule that regulates when children are allowed to use gadgets and sets a maximum daily usage duration. Children are only permitted to access gadgets after completing all their school assignments or when they encounter difficulties with their tasks that parents are unable to help explain. In addition to scheduling, parents also set time limits for gadget use, both at home and outside, with a maximum of 60 minutes per day.

This is in line with what Parent A stated: *"When I give my child a gadget, I already limit the time. The child is only allowed to use the gadget while studying or eating."*

The opinion from the interview with Parent B stated that:

"If the child is not given a gadget during mealtime, they usually refuse to eat. Therefore, to make them eat, I let them use the gadget for a short while first."

Thus, excessive gadget use can lead to addiction, where users unconsciously spend hours staring at screens. Therefore, wise parents should be able to regulate and limit their children's gadget use. In Pesu Village, Magetan, most parents limit their children's gadget use to around 2–3 hours per day. To reduce children's dependence on gadgets, parents are encouraged to replace them with Educational Play Tools (APE) that can support early childhood development. However, on the other hand, to ensure children are not left behind in keeping up with technological advancements, gadget use still needs to be allowed under supervision. In today's era of advanced technology, many activities heavily rely on digital devices. Therefore, it is important for parents to introduce gadgets wisely as part of preparing children to face the challenges of the 4.0 era [31]. A study conducted by Sisbintari & Setiawati (2022) stated that one method for regulating children's gadget usage is by setting specific time allocations determined according to the parents' decisions and preferences [32].

b. Accompanying Children While Using Gadgets

Parental supervision when children use gadgets is a very positive step. This action aims to protect children from accessing content that is negative or inappropriate for their age. As we know, gadgets provide a wide range of information from around the world, both educational and potentially harmful. In addition, the presence and guidance of parents can help children when they encounter difficulties while learning or accessing certain information, as they can ask questions and receive explanations directly from their parents. This aligns with the results of the interview with Parent B:

"When my child uses a gadget, I always stay by their side to directly monitor what they are accessing. Young children usually do not know whether it is negative or positive; what matters to them is that they enjoy it."

Another statement was also expressed by Parent A:

"When my child is using a gadget, I always pay attention and stay by their side to know what they are accessing. I constantly monitor what they open because gadgets contain various content, and children usually do not know whether it is positive or negative."

This statement is reinforced by the findings of Zulfitri (2017), which state that if parents are not optimal in applying parenting patterns related to gadget use, children are at risk of misusing the gadgets they own [33].



Figure 1. Parental Guidance in Gadget Use

c. Get Children Used to Socializing

Parents make this effort by inviting their children to play in the local area, introducing them to various traditional games, and allowing them to socialize with their peers as long as the interaction doesn't have a negative influence. This approach can indirectly reduce children's dependence on gadgets, as they begin to realize that there are other activities or games that are more enjoyable. If children are constantly left indoors and playing with gadgets, their social interaction skills will decline, whether with family members, neighbors, peers, or schoolmates. This condition has the potential to make children more withdrawn, tending to isolate themselves in their rooms, and developing into introverts. This is consistent with the results of an interview with D's parents, who said:

"I often take my child out to interact with other people, so he can broaden his horizons and take his mind off his gadgets. Because if he doesn't have friends at home, he ends up playing with them all the time. Playing or interacting with people keeps his mind fresh and develops."

This was also conveyed by C's parents:

"Interacting with others, especially peers, is very important for your child because socializing or playing outside helps their mind develop. Children also need fresh air and should not stay at home all the time. If a child is rarely taken outside and spends most of their time at home, they can get bored. They will keep asking for gadgets for entertainment, and if this continues unchecked, it can become a habit, which is not beneficial for them."

As explained in previous research by Nugroho, Artha, and Nusantara (2022), parental supervision when children use gadgets is very important because it directly affects their development. To ensure that a child's development remains optimal, parents can divert the child's attention from gadgets by engaging them in physical activities, such as playing jump rope or other traditional games, allowing the child to forget their dependence on gadgets [34].



Figure 2. Socializing While Learning and Playing with Friends

d. Being Selective in Choosing Safe Content for Children

Parents play a role in providing or selecting safe and appropriate programs for children to use on gadgets. For example, they can choose applications that are not only entertaining but also educational and related to the material the child is learning at school. In this context, parental supervision is essential to ensure that children do not access or choose programs on their own indiscriminately. Additionally, teaching children how to use features or applications wisely is very important. When children understand the proper use of gadgets, they are less likely to use them for inappropriate purposes. This is in line with the results of interviews with parents A:

"Sometimes, the content children watch does not align with their parents' preferences because children often switch

programs according to their own wishes. One type of content that children enjoy is YouTube videos about the game GTA, which is known to contain violent elements. Nowadays, children are often more skilled with technology than their parents, making it necessary for parents to keep learning. However, for the time being, parents can redirect their children's attention by selecting safer content, for example, by not topping up the internet quota. This way, children cannot watch YouTube online and can only play games available offline."

This is also in line with the results of interviews with parent B:

"Before giving my child a gadget, I always guide the content according to their age. I delete all applications that are not suitable for children. In addition, I turn off the data so they cannot access anything. However, when I am away and not supervising, they often change the content on their own."

Parents in Pesu Village, Magetan, realize that children's knowledge of using gadgets, even at an early age, is often more advanced than that of their parents. For example, children are already able to turn on mobile data, change Wi-Fi passwords, and organize apps on the home screen—things that parents may not fully understand yet. Therefore, it is important for parents to keep learning and keep up with the technology that their children master. This aligns with previous research conducted by Chusna (2017), which emphasizes that parents need to have the ability to select programs or applications for their children, taking into account the suitability for the child's needs and abilities [35]. The role of parents is not limited to caregiving but also includes educating, accompanying, setting an example, and guiding children in the wise use of technology [36]. The role of parents in the technological era can be said to be increasingly complex, as they bear greater responsibility in nurturing and guiding their children [37].

e. Avoiding Gadget Use While Spending Time with Children

When parents are in the same place or spending time with their children, they should avoid using gadgets and focus their attention on the child. This aims to ensure that the child does not feel neglected and to prevent the child from imitating the parents' habit of using gadgets. Since children tend to mimic what they see from their parents, it is better to fill moments of togetherness with positive activities, such as playing together, encouraging the child to talk about their school experiences, or studying together to review lessons the child has previously learned at school. This is in line with the results of interviews with parent D:

"When spending time with family, I am very strict about avoiding gadgets. I try to stay away from them so that my child does not also want to use a gadget. When parents use gadgets together with their children, the child will naturally want to use them as well."

This was also expressed by parent E:

"When I am with my children, I never use a gadget unless it is necessary. The purpose is to prevent them from wanting to use gadgets as well. I try to engage them in activities other than using gadgets to avoid addiction. However, sometimes I still use them because I also have a business that involves gadgets."

This statement is also emphasized by Rismala, Yulita Aguswan Priyantoro, and Dian Eka Suryadi (2021) in their research, which states that parents, as role models, must be able to demonstrate good behavior in using gadgets to their children. In addition, parents are expected to prioritize time for attending to family needs over spending time on gadgets [38].

f. Balancing Gadget Use with Children's Activities

Excessive gadget use in early childhood can hinder optimal development, as it does not involve physical activities that are essential for a child's growth and development. One example of smartphone use is when a child merely presses buttons while sitting for long periods. This habit is not beneficial for young children, as it can lead to negative impacts in the future. Excessive gadget use can cause eye health problems, poor posture due to slouching, and reduced physical strength because of limited movement and activity [39]. One parent in Pesu Village, Magetan, involves their child in helping with household activities, taking walks, and participating in village activities such as qiro'ah and banjari. This aligns with the interview conducted with Parent D;

"Every day, I always involve my children in household activities so that they do not only play with gadgets but also develop their physical skills. Household tasks such as sweeping, cooking, and watering plants keep them from constantly focusing on gadgets."

Another opinion from Parent C also stated that:

"I encourage my child to participate in village activities such as qiro'ah and banjari so that they gain broader knowledge. In addition, they can also gather with their friends, which helps them take their minds off gadgets."

Therefore, parental guidance is essential when children use gadgets, as parents are the closest figures in their lives. The responsibility for a child's growth and development rests entirely with the parents[40].

2. The Negative Impacts of Gadgets on Children

Although gadgets have many benefits, particularly in education and communication, excessive use by children can still cause various negative impacts [41]. When children reach elementary school age, between 6 and 12 years old, their development progresses rapidly, both physically and psychologically. During this period, children also have a high level of curiosity.

[ISSN 2714-7444 \(online\), https://acopen.umsida.ac.id](https://acopen.umsida.ac.id), published by Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

Gadget use has a significant influence on child development, with impacts that can be both positive and negative. According to parents in Pesu Village, Magetan, the negative impacts of gadget use on children include:

- a. Children tend to pay less attention to parental instructions.
- b. Many children who are addicted to playing with gadgets become introverted and tend to isolate themselves.
- c. Decreased focus on learning.
- d. Children's creativity is underdeveloped because when given assignments by teachers, they tend to immediately search for answers on the internet to complete them.
- e. Children experience various health problems, one of which is watery eyes and fatigue due to radiation exposure from frequently used gadgets.

This aligns with the view that one of the negative impacts of gadget use is that children become more dependent on gadgets and experience a decrease in focus during learning [42]

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study in Pesu Village, Magetan, it can be concluded that the role of parents in addressing the negative impacts of gadget use on elementary school-aged children (SD/MI) is still less than optimal. Although some parents have implemented positive measures such as limiting usage time, accompanying children while using gadgets, encouraging social interaction, selecting safe content, and balancing gadget use with physical activities, the reality is that most still allow unrestricted use without adequate supervision. Permissive attitudes and a lack of parental firmness make children prone to gadget addiction, reduce their interest in learning, limit social interaction, and lead to various health problems. Therefore, it is recommended that parents increase their awareness of the importance of supervision and guidance in gadget use. Parents also need to set an example in using technology, apply firm and consistent parenting, and involve children more in positive activities outside the home. In addition, cooperation between parents, schools, and the community is important to create an environment that supports the optimal development of children in this digital era.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express gratitude to STAI Ma'arif Magetan for providing academic support, which allowed this research to be carried out successfully. Appreciation is also extended to the Head of RT 004, Pesu Village, Maospati District, Magetan Regency, as well as all the residents who granted permission, support, and participation throughout the research process. In addition, the author expresses gratitude to the parents who were willing to serve as informants and provide the necessary data for this study. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide benefits for the development of knowledge, particularly in the fields of education and the role of parents in the digital era.

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