The Impact of Gadget Use on Students' Character at SDN 1 Danakerta

Evana Rizqoh[1], Sriyanto[2]
[1]SD Negeri 1 Danakerta, Punggelan, Banjarnegara
[2]Magister Pendidikan Dasar, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

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ABSTRACT

The rapid technological advancement of the 21st century has significantly impacted various sectors of life, including education. One phenomenon that has emerged is the increasing use of gadgets among elementary school students, raising concerns about its effects on students' character development. This study aims to explore the influence of gadget use on the character of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Danakerta. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study collected data through interviews with students, teachers, and parents, as well as direct observations of student behavior. The findings reveal that excessive gadget use negatively affects students' discipline, social skills, and empathy. Students who frequently use gadgets tend to have reduced peer interaction, lower social skills, and less adherence to academic tasks and school behavior rules. In response, both the school and parents have implemented strategies such as limiting screen time and encouraging more social interaction. This study emphasizes the importance of more structured management of gadget use both at school and at home and highlights the need for strengthened collaboration between parents and teachers to support positive character development in students.

Corresponding Author:
Evana Rizqoh
SD Negeri 1 Danakerta, Punggelan, Banjarnegara
Email: erizqoh10@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology, particularly in the form of gadgets, has brought significant changes to everyday life, including in the education sector. In this digital age, the use of gadgets among children, especially elementary school students, has become an increasing phenomenon. This phenomenon is clearly evident at SDN 1 Danakerta, where many students spend more time with gadgets rather than interacting directly with their peers or engaging in other physical activities. The widespread use of gadgets raises concerns, particularly regarding its impact on the development of students' character.

According to Sari (2020), excessive gadget use can reduce students' opportunities to engage in healthy social interactions, which are important for developing their social skills and empathy[1]. Przybylski and Weinstein (2017) also state that excessive gadget use at an early age can affect children's emotional development, particularly their ability to empathize and interact with others face-to-face[2]. Additionally, Setiawan (2021) shows that the time

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[1] Sari, R. (2020). Gadget dan peranannya dalam pembentukan karakter siswa di era digital. Jurnal Teknologi dan Pendidikan, 14(3), 56-67.
[2] Przybylski, A. K., & Weinstein, E. (2017). Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality.

spent on gadgets often replaces other more beneficial activities, such as playing outside, exercising, or interacting with friends in real life[3].

One of the most concerning impacts is the influence of gadget use on the development of students' character. Sugiharto and Saputra (2021) emphasize that students' character, which includes discipline, social skills, and empathy, greatly depends on the type of interactions they experience during their childhood. Uncontrolled gadget use can reduce students' opportunities to engage in social activities that support the development of positive character traits[4]. For instance, Mulyasa (2017) states that character education requires a balance between classroom learning and social interactions that take place outside the classroom[5].

Discipline is the first aspect that can be disrupted by excessive gadget use. Samani and Hariyanto (2022) note that students who spend more time with gadgets tend to have lower levels of discipline in completing school assignments[6]. This is due to their tendency to procrastinate or neglect academic responsibilities because of their addiction to games or applications on their gadgets. Furthermore, Kurnia (2023) adds that excessive gadget use can reduce children's time to develop their social skills due to decreased face-to-face interactions[7]. In the virtual world, children do not get the opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively, manage conflicts, or show empathy toward their peers. These social skills are crucial in forming good character, especially at a young age.

This study aims to analyze the impact of gadget use on students' character at SDN 1 Danakerta, with the hope of providing deeper insights into how technology influences the development of children's character in elementary schools. Based on this understanding, the research will explore the relationship between gadget use and the development of discipline, social skills, and empathy in students. Thus, this study is expected to provide valuable information for educators, parents, and other relevant stakeholders in formulating more effective strategies for managing gadget use to support the development of positive student character.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of gadget use on the character of students at SDN 1 Danakerta. According to Bogdan and Taylor (2025), the qualitative approach allows researchers to explore social phenomena in depth and holistically[8].

2.1 Data Collection Techniques:

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of gadget use on the character of students at SDN 1 Danakerta. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the exploration of social phenomena in a holistic and in-depth manner, with the goal of understanding the meaning, experiences, and views of participants in a broader context.

Data was collected using several main techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with three groups of participants: students, teachers, and parents. Interviews with students aimed to explore how they use gadgets in their daily lives and the impact on their behavior. Students were asked to describe how often they use gadgets, the types of activities they engage in with gadgets, and the influence of gadget use on their social interactions both inside and outside the classroom.

Interviews with teachers focused on how gadget use affects students' discipline in learning and its impact on their academic performance. Teachers provided perspectives on behavioral changes observed in the classroom and how gadgets affect students' attention to the subject matter. Interviews with parents focused on their views regarding their children's gadget use at home and its impact on their children's behavior. Parents were asked to share their experiences in managing gadget usage time and whether they noticed any changes in their children's behavior or attitudes.

In addition to interviews, direct observation was conducted to understand how students interact with each other, both when using gadgets and when interacting face-to-face without gadgets. This observation included students' behavior during classroom learning, break times, and extracurricular activities. An assessment was made of how students interact with their peers and to what extent gadget use affects their social dynamics at school. In

[3] Setiawan, A. R. (2021). Dampak penggunaan gadget terhadap disiplin dan interaksi sosial siswa di sekolah dasar. Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, 19(2), 85-96.

[4] Sugiharto, B., & Saputra, D. (2021). Pengaruh gadget terhadap perilaku sosial anak sekolah dasar: Studi kasus di Kota Semarang. Jurnal Sosial dan Pendidikan, 13(4), 134-142.

[5] Mulyasa, E. (2017). Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

[6] Samani, M., & Hariyanto, H. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah Dasar: Pengaruh dan Implikasi dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar. Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia.

[7] Kurnia, E. (2023). Pola asuh orang tua dan dampaknya terhadap penggunaan gadget pada anak sekolah dasar. Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan, 15(1), 29-40.

[8] Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (2025). Introduction to qualitative research methods. Wiley.

this observation, attention was given to whether students spent more time with gadgets or participated in social activities with their peers.

Documentation was also used to obtain secondary data that provides a more complete picture of gadget use among students. This documentation includes school records that note students' behavior related to gadget use, reports on student discipline, and academic results that can provide insight into whether there is a relationship between excessive gadget use and students' academic performance. Documentation data also includes reports on students' participation in extracurricular activities, showing their involvement in social activities and character development outside the classroom.

2.2 Data Analysis Techniques:

To analyze the collected data, thematic analysis was used to identify the main themes from interviews, observations, and documentation relevant to this study. Each recorded interview was transcribed to ensure no information was missed. After that, the transcripts and observation notes were analyzed by grouping relevant information into themes related to student character, such as discipline, social skills, and empathy.

The data collected from interviews and observations were then grouped based on emerging themes, such as the impact of gadget use on student discipline in completing school assignments, reduced social interaction in the classroom, and the influence of gadgets on students' empathy. Each emerging theme was further analyzed by linking it to existing theories, including those related to child social development, gadget use theory, and relevant literature on character education. This approach helps to uncover a deeper understanding of the impact of gadget use on student character and to connect it with existing theories.

Additionally, the findings were compared with previous research to examine similarities or differences, and to provide a broader perspective on the impact of gadget use on student character development at SDN 1 Danakerta. This step is important to ensure clarity and validity of the findings, as well as to draw more solid conclusions about the influence of gadgets on student character in the school environment.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
3.1 Character Education

Education is a deliberate effort by society to shape, direct, and regulate individuals to align with collective expectations. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, education aims to create an active and planned learning environment while fostering children's potential in areas such as religion, self-control, intelligence, and noble character. Character itself consists of good values that influence both the environment and the child, manifested through their behavior.

According to Samani and Hariyanto, character is a distinctive feature that every individual possesses in thinking and behaving to live and cooperate in daily life[9]. Character education, which includes moral education, ethics, and noble conduct, is essential in primary education. Character education is a conscious and planned effort to cultivate good behavioral values based on the rules that apply in society and the nation.

3.2 The Influence of Gadgets on Students' Character

The phenomenon of gadget use among students shows a significant impact on the formation of their character. Excessive gadget use affects various important aspects of character development, particularly in terms of discipline, social skills, and empathy. Students' habits of frequently using gadgets, especially for playing games, watching videos, or using social media, lead them to spend more time with gadgets rather than interacting with their peers or participating in other social activities.

During break times or leisure periods, students choose to use their gadgets instead of engaging with friends at school. This reduces their opportunities to build social relationships that are essential for their character development. If this habit continues without proper supervision, it can become a difficult pattern to change and can have long-term effects on students' character development.

Moreover, peer influence also plays a significant role in the habit of gadget use among students. Many students have expressed that they feel influenced by their peers who also excessively use gadgets. These peers often encourage them to adopt the same habits. Peer pressure creates similar patterns of gadget use among students, which can worsen their negative habits.

Equally important is the role of parents in supervising gadget use. Many parents give their children the freedom to use gadgets without setting clear time limits. Some parents even admit that they don't pay much attention to how long their children spend with gadgets. A lack of understanding among parents regarding the

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[9] Samani, M., & Hariyanto, H. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah Dasar: Pengaruh dan Implikasi dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar. Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia.

negative impact of gadgets on their children's social and character development exacerbates these habits. Without adequate supervision, children find it more difficult to manage their gadget use, which subsequently impacts their discipline and social interactions.

3.3 The Impact of Gadget Use on Students' Character

Excessive use of gadgets affects various aspects of students' character formation. The impact is particularly evident in students' discipline in completing academic tasks. Many students often delay homework or other school assignments because they are more interested in using gadgets. They prefer playing games or watching videos rather than doing schoolwork, which ultimately causes them to be late in completing their homework.

In addition, excessive gadget use reduces the quality of students' social interactions. Many students prefer spending time alone with their gadgets rather than interacting with their peers. Even during break times, which are typically used for social interaction, students tend to choose playing games or watching videos instead. This significantly reduces their opportunities to develop the social skills necessary for daily life, such as the ability to collaborate, listen, and communicate with others. However, these social skills are crucial in shaping good character.

Another impact is the decline in students' ability to empathize with their peers. The lack of direct social interaction hinders their ability to feel and understand others' emotions. For example, students who spend more time playing games or watching videos tend to be less sensitive to the emotional states of their friends. They focus more on the digital world and activities carried out through gadgets, making it difficult for them to develop empathy for their peers' feelings. Empathy, however, is one of the key aspects in building a good character.

3.4 Efforts to Address the Impact of Gadget Use

To address the negative impact of gadget use on students' character, various efforts have been made at SDN 1 Danakerta. Positive habituation programs are implemented in a structured manner and involve all elements of the school, from the principal to teachers and staff. Several positive habituation activities that have been implemented at the school include flag-raising ceremonies, communal prayers, and class cleanliness duties. These activities have successfully instilled character values such as discipline, responsibility, and religiosity.

By involving students in regularly scheduled activities, the school strives to get students accustomed to performing tasks with responsibility and discipline. These activities are carried out consistently, thus becoming part of the school's positive culture. Additionally, teachers integrate character values into daily lessons. For example, during group discussions, students are not only taught academic content but also trained to collaborate, respect others' opinions, and develop critical thinking skills. With this interactive, collaborative teaching method, students not only gain academic knowledge but also develop the character traits that are essential in everyday life.

The role of parents is also crucial in supporting the formation of their children's character. Collaboration between the school and parents is essential to create a conducive environment for the development of students' character. Parents are encouraged to be more actively involved in supervising their children's gadget use at home, as well as educating them on the importance of limiting screen time. With strong communication between the school and parents, it is hoped that the development of students' character will be more effective both at home and at school.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Uncontrolled use of gadgets has a negative impact on students' character development, particularly in terms of discipline, social skills, and empathy. This impact is evident in students' behavior, such as neglecting school assignments and a decrease in interaction with their peers. Therefore, structured management of gadget use at both school and home is crucial to support better character development in students. Close collaboration between parents and teachers is essential to create a positive environment for students and help them develop good character. The success of this character education program will have a positive impact on students' future as they face greater social life challenges.

Thus, this research is expected to provide valuable contributions to educators, parents, and relevant parties in understanding the importance of managing gadget use among students, as well as providing guidance in implementing more effective character education strategies. This research is also expected to serve as a reference for other schools to develop similar programs that support students' character development in the current digital age.

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