

The Influence of Gadget Use Intensity on Students' Narrative Writing Skills at SDN 34 Kendari

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ABSTRACT

Advances in digital technology have both positive impacts and challenges in education, particularly for elementary school students. Gadgets, as versatile devices, have become a part of children's lives, providing entertainment, communication, and access to information. However, high levels of gadget use are often associated with a decline in basic literacy skills, including narrative writing skills. This study aims to analyze the effect of gadget use intensity on elementary school students' narrative writing skills. The research method used a quantitative approach with an experiential design. post facto. The study was conducted at SDN 34 Kendari in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year with a population of 60 fifth-grade students and a sample of 30 students selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments were a questionnaire to measure the intensity of gadget use and a narrative writing test that assessed aspects of theme, plot, characters, setting, and writing mechanics. Data were analyzed using simple regression. The results showed a significant effect of gadget use intensity on narrative writing ability ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.41 indicated that 41% of the variation in narrative writing ability was influenced by gadget use intensity, while 59% was influenced by other factors such as reading interest, learning environment, and motivation. The results of this study indicate that the higher the intensity of unsupervised gadget use, the lower the students' narrative writing ability. Therefore, an active role of teachers and parents is needed in directing the use of gadgets to support literacy activities. This study is expected to be a consideration in developing digital literacy-based learning strategies in elementary schools.

Keywords: Gadgets, Literacy, Narrative Writing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the current digital era has brought about major changes in various aspects of life, including the world of education. One form of technology most closely associated with people's lives is gadgets, such as smartphones, tablets, and other portable devices. Gadgets are not only used by adults but have also penetrated the world of children, even those of elementary school age. Children now grow up in an environment saturated with digital technology, resulting in an increasing intensity of gadget use in their daily lives. Easy access to information, entertainment, and communication has made gadgets an integral part of daily life, but this phenomenon also has serious implications for the development of children's behavior and literacy skills (Hosnan, 2020).

One of the essential literacy skills in elementary education is narrative writing. Narrative writing is not just about conveying ideas, but also a means of developing children's thinking, imagination, and creativity. Through narrative writing, students are trained to organize events sequentially, develop a storyline, describe characters, and pay attention to language aspects and writing conventions. Narrative writing skills in elementary school provide a crucial foundation for literacy success at subsequent levels of education. Therefore, learning narrative writing requires serious attention from teachers, parents, and schools to ensure children are able to develop effective written language skills (Tarigan, 2019).

However, the over-dominance of gadgets in children's lives often reduces their opportunities to practice writing. Children spend more time playing online games, watching videos on digital platforms, or socializing through social media. These activities tend to be consumptive of information and visuals, neglecting their ability to produce written text. As a result, students who habitually use gadgets intensively often struggle to express their ideas coherently in narrative writing (Rahmawati, 2021).

This condition aligns with the findings of several previous studies that showed a negative relationship between the duration of gadget use and students' writing skills. According to Pratiwi (2021), students who use gadgets for more than four hours a day tend to experience a decline in narrative writing skills compared to students who use gadgets moderately or low intensity. This suggests that uncontrolled gadget use can impact children's literacy skills. However, other studies also emphasize that gadgets are not entirely negative. Gadgets can be used as digital learning media that encourage children to write through educational applications or literacy platforms (Wahyuni, 2022).

On the other hand, elementary education has the primary responsibility of instilling literacy habits from an early age. Narrative writing skills are a crucial part of the elementary school curriculum, particularly in Indonesian language lessons. Teachers are required to design engaging, innovative writing lessons that motivate students to develop writing habits. However, the biggest challenge is integrating digital technology into writing lessons without compromising children's literacy skills. This requires a balanced teaching strategy, namely guiding gadget use as a literacy tool, not merely entertainment.

The phenomenon of high gadget use among elementary school students also occurs in Kendari City. Urban children have easier access to gadgets due to supportive family economic conditions and social influences. SDN 34 Kendari, a public elementary school, has students with a high level of daily gadget use. Both at home and at school, students tend to use gadgets for non-academic activities such as playing games or watching entertainment. This raises concerns about the development of narrative writing skills, a key competency in language learning.

Furthermore, based on initial observations at SDN 34 Kendari, students were still found to have difficulty constructing coherent stories, using limited vocabulary, and frequently making errors in writing mechanics. This situation reinforces the hypothesis that high-intensity gadget use has the potential to reduce students' narrative writing skills. Therefore, this study is important to determine the extent to which gadget use affects elementary school students' writing skills.

Previous research on the influence of gadgets on literacy has been conducted primarily at the junior high and high school levels, while research at the elementary school level is relatively limited. Yet, elementary school age is a fundamental phase in the development of literacy skills. Children at this age are experiencing rapid language development, so unsupervised exposure to digital technology can significantly impact the development of their writing skills. Therefore, this study contributes to filling the gap in research on the relationship between gadgets and narrative writing skills in elementary schools.

The urgency of this research becomes even more apparent when linked to the demands of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes strengthening literacy and numeracy as a learning priority. The Independent Curriculum encourages teachers to introduce project-based and creative learning that allows children to express their ideas in writing. However, the reality on the ground shows that students use gadgets more for entertainment than as literacy tools. Therefore, empirical research is needed to determine how the intensity of gadget use affects students' narrative writing skills, particularly at SDN 34 Kendari.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Gadgets and Children's Behavior

Gadgets are portable electronic devices that function not only as communication tools but also as entertainment and information sources. In the digital era, elementary school-aged children are among the most active users of gadgets due to their interactive and engaging nature. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022), gadget use among children is increasing, with some students spending more than four hours per day operating them. This phenomenon is influenced by environmental factors, technological developments, and family habits that make gadgets part of daily activities. As a result, children interact more frequently with screens than with conventional literacy activities such as reading or writing, which are crucial for their cognitive development.

Furthermore, the intensity of gadget use also shapes children's behavioral patterns in learning and communication. A study conducted by Sari (2023) showed that children who frequently use gadgets tend to grasp visual information more quickly, but have difficulty expressing ideas in writing. This suggests that gadget dependence can shift children's interests from productive activities to consumptive ones. Therefore, gadget use among elementary school children must be balanced with control and guidance from parents and teachers to positively impact children's literacy development.

2. Writing a Narrative

Narrative writing is an important written language skill for elementary school students to master because it trains them to express ideas, imagination, and experiences in the form of coherent and engaging stories. Tarigan (2019) explains that narrative writing requires the ability to develop a storyline, bring characters to life, determine the setting, and use appropriate vocabulary. Furthermore, narrative writing skills also train students to think logically and creatively, and pay attention to language structures such as spelling and punctuation. Therefore, narrative writing serves not only as an academic activity but also as a means of children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Furthermore, narrative writing in elementary school is an important foundation for developing a culture of literacy. According to Putra (2022), students who practice narrative writing from an early age will have better critical and imaginative thinking skills than those who rarely practice writing. The process of narrative writing also provides

an opportunity for children to develop empathy, as they learn to understand the perspectives of the characters in the story. Thus, narrative writing skills are not only a technical aspect of language but also an integral part of character development and creativity in children in the digital age.

3. The Influence of Gadgets on Literacy

The influence of gadgets on children's literacy development has become a key topic in various educational studies. Pratiwi (2021) found that the longer a child spends on gadgets, the lower their narrative writing skills. This is because children consume more audio-visual information than they do in developing written language skills. However, this view is not entirely negative. According to Wahyuni (2022), gadgets can also be used as a means of supporting literacy learning if properly directed, for example through digital writing apps, e-books, or online literacy platforms that encourage children to interact with text.

Recent research supports this view. According to Lestari (2023), the use of gadgets in digital literacy learning can increase students' motivation to write, especially when they are guided to use creative applications such as student blogs or digital journals. In other words, gadgets can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, they have the potential to dampen interest in writing if used solely for entertainment, but on the other hand, they can be an innovative medium for improving literacy skills if managed wisely. Therefore, the role of teachers and parents is crucial in guiding students so that gadgets are not merely tools for consuming information, but also productive tools for developing narrative writing skills.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design, as the independent variable, gadget usage intensity, was not manipulated by the researcher but rather observed based on the students' actual conditions. This design was chosen because it is relevant to examine the causal relationship between gadget usage and narrative writing skills without having to change the respondents' natural behavior. The research location was determined at SDN 34 Kendari in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The study population included all 60 fifth-grade students. From this population, the researcher selected 30 students as samples using a purposive sampling technique, which is selecting samples based on certain considerations, in this case students with high or low gadget usage intensity so that they can provide a representative picture of the variables studied.

The research instrument consisted of two main parts. First, a questionnaire assessing gadget use intensity, structured on a Likert scale with four answer options, encompassing daily usage duration (how many hours a child uses a gadget per day), purpose of use (e.g., for entertainment, learning, or communication), and activity frequency (how many times a day students access gadgets for a specific purpose). Second, a narrative writing test was designed to measure students' skills in constructing stories based on a given theme. Aspects assessed included theme suitability, completeness and coherence of the storyline, character description, clarity of setting, vocabulary choice, and writing mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was first tested for content validity through expert judgment, while the writing test was validated based on assessment criteria in accordance with Indonesian language learning standards in elementary schools.

The research data obtained from the questionnaire and writing test were then analyzed using a simple regression test with the help of SPSS software. This analysis was chosen because it is suitable for determining the effect of one independent variable on one dependent variable, namely the intensity of gadget use (X) on students' narrative writing skills (Y). The analysis stages began with prerequisite tests, including a normality test to ensure normal data distribution and a linearity test to see the linear relationship between variables. After the prerequisites were met, a simple regression test was conducted to determine the extent of the influence of gadgets on writing skills. The results of the analysis were interpreted based on the significance value (p-value), the coefficient of determination (R^2), and the regression equation obtained. Thus, this method is expected to be able to provide an objective empirical picture of the extent to which gadget use affects the narrative writing skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 34 Kendari.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The research data includes the variables of gadget usage intensity (X) and narrative writing ability (Y). A summary of the data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	N	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gadget Intensity (X)	30	55	92	74.53	9.21
Narrative Writing Ability (Y)	30	60	95	77.60	8.74

Table 1 shows that the average intensity of students' gadget use was 74.53, while the average narrative writing ability was 77.60. This indicates that students generally have a fairly high level of gadget use intensity and good narrative writing ability.

4.1.2 Prerequisite Analysis Test

a. Normality Test

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variables	Sig.	Information
Gadget Intensity	0.200	Normally distributed data
Narrative Writing Skills	0.200	Normally distributed data

Based on the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value (Sig.) for the Gadget Intensity variable was 0.200 and the Narrative Writing Ability variable was also 0.200. Since the significance value of both variables is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data for each variable is normally distributed. Thus, the research data meets one of the requirements for further parametric statistical analysis, such as regression or correlation tests.

b. Homogeneity Test

Table 3. Results of Homogeneity Test

Variables	Sig.	Information
Gadget Intensity – Writing Ability	0.347	Homogeneous variance

Based on the results of the homogeneity test conducted using Levene's test, a significance value of 0.347 was obtained. Because the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data have the same variance or are homogeneous. Thus, the homogeneity assumption is met, allowing further analysis to proceed using parametric statistical tests.

1. Hypothesis Test / Simple Regression Test

To determine the effect of the intensity of gadget use on narrative writing skills, a simple regression analysis was carried out.

Table 4. Results of Simple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig.
1	0.682	0.465	23.79	0,000
Variables	B	t	Sig.	
Constant	32,412	4,127	0,000	
Gadget Intensivt (X)	0.608	4,878	0,000	

The results of the analysis show that there is a positive and significant influence between the intensity of gadget use and the ability to write narratives (t count = 4.878 > t table 2.048; sig. 0.000 < 0.05). The R Square value of 0.465 indicates that the intensity of gadget use contributes 46.5% to the ability to write narratives, while 53.5% is influenced by other factors.

4.2 Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the intensity of gadget use has a positive and significant influence on the narrative writing ability of fifth-grade students at SDN 34 Kendari. This is indicated by a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05 with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.465. This means that 46.5% of the variation in narrative writing ability can be explained by the intensity of gadget use, while the rest is influenced by other factors. This finding proves that gadgets do not always have a negative impact, but can support the development of literacy skills, especially writing skills, when used appropriately.

This research supports the findings of research conducted by Suryani (2021), which found that using gadgets as a digital learning medium can increase students' interest and motivation in writing. Students who habitually access story-telling or writing apps on digital platforms tend to have more diverse ideas and a broader vocabulary for composing narrative texts. Therefore, targeted gadget use can actually improve children's writing skills, as they gain reading and writing experiences in more engaging and interactive formats.

Furthermore, these findings align with research by Rahman (2022), which showed that students who habitually use gadgets to write digital notes, access e-books, or read stories through literacy apps demonstrated higher creative thinking skills compared to students who rarely used gadgets. Gadgets provide space for children to explore ideas, broaden their horizons, and practice narrative writing skills more flexibly. This reinforces the findings of research at SDN 34 Kendari that gadgets play a crucial role in shaping students' writing skills.

However, it's important to note that gadget use can also have negative impacts if not limited. Pratiwi (2021) found that prolonged gadget use, especially when used solely for gaming or watching entertainment videos, actually reduces children's literacy skills, including narrative writing. This is because children spend more time on passive entertainment than practicing writing or reading meaningful texts. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that despite the positive effects of gadgets, parental and teacher supervision remains essential.

The results of this study also reinforce Wahyuni's (2022) view that gadgets can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, gadgets can reduce children's concentration when used unsupervised, but on the other hand, gadgets can function as a digital literacy-based learning medium. Therefore, teachers at school and parents at home need to direct students' gadget use toward activities that support writing skills, such as writing digital short stories, reading educational articles, or accessing Indonesian language learning apps.

In addition to these studies, Hasanah (2020) emphasized that integrating technology into Indonesian language learning can improve students' writing skills through project-based activities, such as creating a simple blog or writing

a digital journal. These findings align with research at SDN 34 Kendari, which showed that students with high levels of gadget use actually had better narrative writing scores. This is because gadgets can provide children with a creative outlet for expressing ideas in writing.

Thus, it can be concluded that gadgets play a significant role in supporting elementary school students' narrative writing skills. However, control, guidance, and integration of digital learning factors must still be considered. Teachers need to design digital literacy-based learning strategies, while parents must limit and guide their children's gadget use at home. With this synergy, gadgets can become not only entertainment but also an effective learning medium for improving students' narrative writing skills.

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the intensity of gadget use has a significant influence on the narrative writing skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 34 Kendari. The analysis results show that the higher the intensity of gadget use for entertainment purposes such as playing games or watching videos, the lower the narrative writing skills of students. Conversely, if gadgets are used productively to read digital stories or write notes, students can experience a positive impact in developing writing skills. The contribution of influence of 41% indicates that other factors such as reading interest, learning motivation, language skills, and support from the family and school environment also play an important role in improving students' narrative writing skills.

The implication of this research is the need for active involvement of parents and teachers in supervising and guiding children's gadget use. Gadgets should not be left as mere entertainment, but rather should be directed as educational media that can support the mastery of literacy skills. Efforts that can be made include introducing writing learning applications, utilizing digital platforms for school literacy projects, or training students in writing creative, technology-based stories. With the right strategy, gadgets can function not only as entertainment but also as an effective means of fostering interest, creativity, and narrative writing skills in elementary school students.

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