

The Impact of Gadget Addiction on the Emotional Stability of Adolescents

Himatussa'adah¹, Dini Rakhmawati², Yovita Julijatiningih³

¹, Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

², Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

³, Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

Corresponding author: dinirakhmawati@upgris.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of gadget addiction on the emotional stability of tenth-grade students at Sultan Agung 1 Islamic High School, Semarang. The research employed a quantitative correlational design involving a sample of 83 students who were selected to represent the population. Two primary instruments were used in data collection, namely a gadget addiction questionnaire and an emotional stability scale, both of which were developed to measure students' tendencies in using gadgets excessively and their ability to regulate emotions in daily life. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and simple linear regression, preceded by prerequisite tests including normality and linearity assessments. The results of the descriptive analysis indicated that the average score for gadget addiction was 73.70, which falls into the moderate category, while the emotional stability score averaged 71.84, categorized as high. Furthermore, the simple linear regression analysis revealed that gadget addiction contributed 50.6% to the variation in emotional stability, demonstrating a substantial influence. These findings suggest that although students' emotional stability remains relatively good, excessive gadget use poses a significant risk factor for emotional decline. Therefore, the study highlights the crucial role of parents and schools in monitoring, guiding, and limiting students' gadget use to maintain their emotional well-being.

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Introduction

In today's rapidly developing technological era, gadgets such as *smartphones* have become an important part of adolescents' lives. Gadgets are not only used as a means of communication, but also for entertainment, education, and social networking. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, involving biological, psychological, and

social changes (Pratiwi & Malwa, 2021). This is because in this increasingly advanced modern era, humans are required to keep up with technological developments that encourage various activities to be carried out in a more practical, effective, and efficient manner through the use of digital devices. This phenomenon raises concerns about the potential for gadget addiction that can affect their psychological condition, including their emotional stability.

Gadgets are not only used in business or work circles, but by almost all circles, especially students who often use *gadgets* as a learning medium. Gadgets have many positive impacts on various circles, but excessive use of gadgets has caused many negative impacts on students, especially in their social-emotional aspects. Therefore, adolescents are highly vulnerable to emotional disturbances, which are various emotional influences on individual behavior, such as weakened motivation, feelings of disappointment when faced with failure, and feelings of despair when the situation reaches its peak (Setiawan & Winarti, 2021).

Gadget addiction can occur due to a lack of self-control in using *gadgets* on a daily basis. Self-control can be influenced by internal factors (within the individual) and external factors (outside the individual or environment). Gadget use has become not only a habit, but also an emotional need that is difficult to control. Meanwhile, individuals with normal usage are able to limit themselves and realize the negative consequences of excessive use (Jameel et al., 2019). There are many negative effects caused by gadget addiction on individuals, especially in the socio-emotional aspect, namely individuals experience emotional instability, making them easily angry, anxious, and even socially isolated.

Individuals who are addicted to gadgets cannot tolerate being separated from their gadgets for too long (Baderi & Ekawati, 2020). When access to gadgets is cut off, individuals often experience reactions such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating, irritability, or feeling out of control, which are signs of withdrawal or symptoms of technology withdrawal. This response arises because the brain has become accustomed to receiving rapid stimulation from gadget use, so the absence of the device makes individuals feel psychologically uncomfortable.

Emotional stability is an individual's ability to manage emotions in a healthy and adaptive manner. For students, emotional stability is very important to support academic achievement, foster positive social relationships, and cope with pressures in daily life. When students experience emotional imbalance due to gadget addiction, they tend to exhibit impulsive behavior and find it difficult to solve problems properly. Another related study conducted by Juliani (2022) on the relationship between the level of gadget addiction and emotional and behavioral disorders in adolescents found high addiction rates (48%) and

abnormal emotional disorders (29%). According to Sherman (in Azmi, Mustika, Supriatna, 2021: 235), emotional stability is the ease with which an individual responds to their emotions in a given situation and is proportional to the intensity of the stimulus that triggers an emotional reaction.

In addition, gadget addiction also has an impact on students' emotions, especially on their mental health. Emotions that often arise are usually feelings of anger, such as irritation, distraction, rage, and anxiety due to not having a gadget. Symptoms of anxiety and depression may arise due to dependence on technology, causing difficulty sleeping. Students who are overly focused on gadgets tend to lose their understanding of the real world around them, making it difficult to regulate their emotions and behavior. In addition to affecting emotional well-being, gadgets also impact the moral development of adolescents, including reducing discipline, making them reluctant to engage in activities other than using gadgets, and neglecting religious obligations while decreasing time spent reviewing lesson materials (Fauziah Fatah et al., 2022).

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing intensity of gadget use among adolescents, which has the potential to cause addiction and seriously impact emotional stability. Adolescents are in a phase of emotional development that is still unstable, so dependence on gadgets can trigger difficulties in emotional regulation, increased impulsivity, irritability, anxiety, and decreased self-control. If this condition is not handled appropriately, gadget addiction will not only disrupt the psychological well-being of adolescents, but also have implications for the decline in the quality of social interactions, academic achievement, and adjustment in the school and family environments. Therefore, this research is important to provide an empirical picture of the impact of gadget addiction on the emotional stability of adolescents, so that it can serve as a scientific basis for the development of prevention and intervention strategies by guidance and counseling teachers, parents, and education stakeholders in supporting the optimal emotional development of adolescents.

Method

This study used a quantitative method with simple linear regression analysis to examine the effect of gadget addiction on students' emotional stability. The study population consisted of all 122 students in grade X at Sultan Agung 1 Islamic High School in Semarang. The research sample of 83 students was determined using simple random sampling with reference to the Krejcie table at a 10% error rate, so that each member of the population had

an equal chance of being selected (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Data collection was carried out using a Google Form-based questionnaire that measured the variables of gadget addiction and emotional stability. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of the data, as well as simple linear regression tests to determine the relationship and influence between variables. Before the regression analysis was carried out, the data were first tested for normality and linearity using SPSS version 22 to ensure the suitability of the analysis model.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Statistics N	Minimum Statistics	Maximum Statistics	Mean	Standard Deviation Statistics	Skewness Statistics
Gadget Addiction	83	64	99	73.70	6,054	1,590
Emotional Stability	83	67	74	71.84	1.283	-0.836

Based on the descriptive analysis in Table 1, it is known that the gadget addiction variable has a total of 83 student respondents. For the gadget addiction variable, the average score of respondents was 73.70, with a score range between 64 and 99. The standard deviation of 6.054 indicates that there is variation in the respondents' scores around the average value. Meanwhile, the distribution of scores for this variable shows a positive skew (1.590), indicating that the majority of respondents have a moderate level of gadget addiction, but there are a small number of respondents who have a very high level of addiction. For the Emotional Stability variable, the average score obtained was 71.84. This variable shows a very narrow score range, between a minimum score of 67 and a maximum score of 74, with a very small Standard Deviation (1.283). This low standard deviation confirms that the Emotional Stability scores among respondents tend to be homogeneous. The distribution of scores for this variable shows a negative skew (-0.836), which means that the majority of respondents have a high level of Emotional Stability.

Table 2. Results of Simple Linear Regression Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.711	0.506	0.500	0.908

Table 3. ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	68.253	1	68,253	82.873	0.000
Residual	66,711	81	0.824		
Total	134,964	82			

Based on the previous prerequisite test using normality and linearity tests, a significance value of $0.200 > 0.05$ was obtained, so it can be concluded that the residual data is normally distributed. Based on the linearity test results, a significance value of $0.000 (< 0.05)$ was obtained in the Linearity section. This indicates that there is a linear relationship between variable X and variable Y. The results of the simple regression test show that the gadget addiction variable (X) has a negative and significant effect on the emotional stability variable (Y) with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. The R Square value = 0.506 indicates that 50.6% of the variation in Emotional Stability can be explained by gadget addiction, while the remaining 49.4% is influenced by other factors outside this study. Thus, the higher the gadget addiction, the lower the emotional stability of students. The ANOVA test results show an F value of 82.873 with a significance of 0.000, which means that the regression model constructed is significant in predicting emotional stability based on gadget addiction.

According to Sugiyono (2022:184), a relationship or influence with a correlation coefficient value between 0.60 and 0.799 is classified as "strong." The R value of 0.711 in this study shows that the relationship between gadget addiction on emotional stability is strong and significant. Thus, these results reinforce that excessive gadget use has a real impact on the emotional stability of teenagers in grade X at Sultan Agung 1 Islamic High School in Semarang. This finding is in line with Griffiths' (2019) theory of behavioral addiction, which explains that individuals who are addicted to an activity, such as gadget use, will show symptoms such as

withdrawal from the social environment, unstable mood swings, and difficulty controlling emotions. In the context of this study, students who frequently use gadgets for entertainment, games, or social media tend to experience disturbances in their emotional stability, such as being easily angered, having difficulty focusing, and experiencing rapid changes in mood.

Increased gadget use correlates with decreased social skills and increased aggression in children (Oktoberia et al., 2025). When children spend more time with digital devices than communicating with peers or family members, their ability to understand facial expressions, body language, and interpersonal communication skills becomes less refined. In addition, certain digital content, such as games with violent elements or media that trigger emotional reactivity, can increase aggressive tendencies, especially in children who do not yet have mature emotional control. This condition makes children more emotionally triggered in real situations, so that aggression increases along with the weakening of social skills that should develop at their age.

Discussion

This study is also in line with (Wijoyo et al., 2023), which found that gadget addiction has a significant negative correlation with the emotional stability of adolescents. This means that the higher the level of uncontrolled gadget use, the lower the individual's ability to regulate and express emotions in a healthy manner. Therefore, excessive gadget use needs to be controlled so that it does not have a negative impact on students' psychological balance. Excessive gadget use has a negative impact on adolescent behavior within the family, such as emotional instability that causes adolescents to become easily angry, emotional, anxious, and even withdrawn as a result of being separated from their gadgets (Sofiyah et al., 2024).

These findings are consistent with various studies showing that gadget addiction can trigger an increase in negative emotions such as anxiety, irritability, stress, and feelings of depression in adolescents. This condition generally occurs because excessive gadget use tends to disrupt sleep patterns, reduce the quality of social interactions, and increase exposure to emotionally stimulating content. Adolescents who are addicted to gadgets show higher levels of negative emotions. This effect is more pronounced in rural adolescents than in urban adolescents, and in male adolescents than in female adolescents in the same place of residence (Luo et al., 2025).

Psychologically, excessive gadget use can disrupt emotional regulation mechanisms because students tend to rely on gadgets as a coping strategy for stress (Nurajizah et al.,

2023). The inability to manage emotions adaptively ultimately leads to emotional instability, manifested through mood swings, irritability, and anxiety. In the context of school-age adolescents, this can affect the learning process, social interactions, and interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. When emotions are unstable, students find it more difficult to accept criticism, are easily offended, and have low tolerance for frustration.

The results of a study by Jameel et al. (2019) confirm that smartphone addiction is associated with behavioral symptoms such as decreased empathy, concentration disorders, and feelings of anxiety when away from the device. This condition is known as nomophobia or 'no-mobile-phone phobia'. When someone is accustomed to receiving quick stimulation from notifications, social media, or digital content, their ability to maintain attention in direct interactions decreases. As a result, they find it more difficult to show empathy and focus on face-to-face conversations. Additionally, the anxiety that arises when away from smartphones, a hallmark of nomophobia, occurs because these devices have become the main source of psychological comfort and social validation. This makes individuals feel insecure when they lose access, thereby reinforcing the cycle of dependence and negatively impacting overall emotional well-being.

Studies show that excessive gadget use can cause emotional changes, including anxiety and depression, especially in adolescents (Jannah et al., 2023). Constant exposure to digital media makes adolescents more vulnerable to social pressure, comparing themselves to others, and cognitive fatigue resulting from overstimulation. This condition can trigger increased anxiety because adolescents feel they must always be connected, responsive, and follow digital social trends. In the long term, this uncontrolled pattern of use can decrease self-satisfaction, worsen mood, and increase the risk of depressive symptoms. Thus, the results of this study confirm that excessive gadget use not only affects behavior but also the overall mental health of adolescents.

Excessive gadget use can interfere with an individual's ability to regulate and control emotions due to intense exposure to information, overstimulation, and dependence on superficial digital interactions. When emotional regulation is disrupted, adolescents tend to become more emotionally triggered, experience frustration, and exhibit aggressive behavior as a response to pressures arising from online activities, such as conflicts on social media, provocative content, or failure in online games. However, psychological resilience plays an important role as a protective factor that can minimize these negative effects. Adolescents with good resilience are better able to manage stress, adapt to digital pressures, and choose

healthier emotional responses. Excessive internet use disrupts emotional regulation, leading to increased anger and aggressive tendencies. Psychological resilience can reduce these negative effects, highlighting the importance of resilience-building interventions (Bakan Kıraç et al., 2024).

Environmental factors also play an important role in strengthening the relationship between gadget addiction and emotional stability. Low parental support, lack of time limits on gadget use, and lax supervision from schools have the potential to increase the risk of addiction. Research by Pamungkas et al. (2025) found that the role of parents has a significant relationship with children's emotional stability. Children who receive consistent guidance and supervision demonstrate better emotional regulation skills than children who are allowed to use gadgets freely.

Uncontrolled gadget use contributes to procrastination, which can lead to negative emotions such as guilt and stress (Kartika & Azhar, 2024). These activities provide instant gratification that causes individuals to delay important tasks, resulting in a backlog of work. When responsibilities are not completed on time, internal pressure arises in the form of guilt, anxiety, and stress due to feelings of unproductivity. This process can become a recurring cycle, where stress due to procrastination drives individuals to return to using gadgets as an escape, thereby worsening their emotional state and reducing their overall mental health.

Teenagers who are addicted to gadgets tend to spend excessive time interacting in the virtual world rather than connecting directly with their real social environment, making them more prone to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Dependence on digital validation, such as the number of likes or comments, also makes them more sensitive to rejection or lack of response from other users, which ultimately weakens their psychological resilience. When psychological resilience declines, adolescents find it more difficult to cope with emotional pressure, become more prone to anxiety, and are less able to break away from unhealthy social media usage patterns. Teens who are addicted to social media often experience loneliness, which negatively impacts their psychological resilience. Interventions aimed at increasing resilience can help reduce social media addiction and improve mental health (Yam et al., 2024).

In addition, the dominant use of gadgets for entertainment, social media, and online games contributes significantly to decreased emotional stability compared to their use for learning activities. This is due to the nature of entertainment content, which provides instant gratification, thereby forming impulsive behavior patterns. When students become

accustomed to getting pleasure quickly through games or social media, they become less patient in facing real situations that require a long process. This condition has an impact on the decline in self-control and an increase in negative emotional reactions such as anger or frustration when facing difficulties. This is in line with the research by Pratiwi & Malwa. (2021) that not only the duration of gadget use is important, but attachment or addiction to these devices can also have a real impact on adolescent behavior.

High levels of gadget addiction have the potential to disrupt the emotional balance of adolescents, where excessive use of devices, as seen in intense and uncontrolled gaming, can trigger stress, frustration, and mood instability (Ramli et al., 2025). In addition, long playing hours often disrupt sleep patterns, which ultimately worsens emotional conditions and reduces the ability to concentrate on daily activities such as studying, socializing, and carrying out household responsibilities. Male adolescents and younger age groups are the most vulnerable because they are more actively involved in competitive games, have immature self-control, and are more easily influenced by intense digital stimuli.

Findings from Hidayat et al. (2023) show that there is a significant negative relationship between the intensity of social media use and emotional stability in early adulthood. This means that the higher the use of gadgets, the lower the ability to control emotions in a stable manner. If students use gadgets very frequently and without proper regulation, they are more likely to experience greater emotional fluctuations, difficulty in regulating emotions, and vulnerability to negative emotional reactions. Therefore, interventions that limit the duration of gadget use or teach emotion regulation strategies can be important steps to maintain students' emotional stability while reducing the potential negative effects of gadget addiction. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the better students are at maintaining emotional stability, the less likely they are to experience high levels of anxiety, especially in situations that cause uncertainty. High self-control is necessary to minimize delays and emotional disturbances caused by gadget use (Kartika & Azhar, 2024).

According to Wacks & Weinstein (2021), excessive gadget use not only poses risks to mental health but also impacts cognitive function, emotions, and physical health. These findings are highly relevant in the context of students' emotional stability because they show that gadget addiction, especially smartphones, can weaken emotional and cognitive regulation mechanisms and trigger neurobiological changes that underlie emotional stability. Therefore, the implications of this study emphasize the need for attention from educators and health workers in schools, not only to control the duration of gadget use, but also to provide

intervention programs that help students regulate their emotions and prevent long-term consequences.

Active monitoring and guidance from parents and educators are crucial in helping students balance technology use with emotional well-being (Rahman, 2023). With consistent guidance, children can learn to distinguish between productive gadget use and use that has the potential to harm their emotional health. Active guidance also helps students build time management skills, self-control, and the ability to recognize signs of digital fatigue. Additionally, open dialogue between parents, teachers, and students can create a supportive environment where children feel comfortable discussing their experiences and pressures related to technology. Thus, appropriate monitoring and guidance have been shown to contribute to improved emotional well-being and the prevention of psychological risks associated with excessive gadget use.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that gadget addiction has a negative and significant effect on the emotional stability of 10th grade students at Sultan Agung 1 Islamic High School in Semarang. The higher the intensity of gadget use, the greater the likelihood of students experiencing a decline in emotional stability. This is evidenced by the results of the analysis, which show that the variable of gadget addiction has a 50.6% influence on students' emotional stability, characterized by increased anxiety, frustration, and difficulty in controlling emotions. Most students showed moderate to high levels of gadget addiction, especially in the use of gadgets for entertainment, social media, and digital games, which proved to be more risky in reducing emotional stability than the use of gadgets for academic purposes. These findings emphasize the importance of managing the purpose and duration of gadget use in order to maintain students' emotional balance. Overall, gadget addiction is not only a technological issue but also a matter of mental health and emotional well-being. Therefore, supervision and support from parents, teachers, and schools are essential to create an environment that encourages wise gadget use and supports students' optimal emotional development.

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