



READING AS A WINDOW TO THE WORLD: EFFORTS TO REDUCE GADGET ADDICTION AND INCREASE INTEREST IN READING AMONG TEENS

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Abstract

Teenagers are the age group most susceptible to device addiction in the current digital era, which affects their declining interest in reading and eroding literacy culture. Reading does, in fact, play a significant function as a window to the world that broadens knowledge, develops character, and opens insights. The purpose of this article is to look at how reading activities might be utilized as a substitute to lessen reliance on technology while rekindling teens' enthusiasm in reading. This study observes literacy practices in social and educational contexts using a descriptive qualitative method and a literature study methodology. According to the study's findings, creative and contextual approaches, such as providing bacaan materials that meet the needs of the students, encouraging group study sessions, using social media for educational purposes, and fostering relationships between friends and classmates, can be effective strategies for drawing attention away from less productive gadget use. As a result of viewing education as an activity that is enlightening, relevant, and integrated with the lives of the elderly, it is hoped that literature will once again become an important part of their lives, leading to the emergence of younger generations that are more adept at using technology and possess critical thinking skills.

Keywords: reading interest, teenagers, gadget addiction, digital literacy, education strategy.

Abstrak

Remaja merupakan kelompok usia yang paling rentan terhadap kecanduan gawai di era digital saat ini, yang berdampak pada menurunnya minat baca dan terkikisnya budaya literasi. Membaca memang memainkan fungsi penting sebagai jendela dunia yang memperluas pengetahuan, mengembangkan karakter, dan membuka wawasan. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana kegiatan membaca dapat dimanfaatkan sebagai alternatif untuk mengurangi ketergantungan pada teknologi sekaligus membangkitkan kembali antusiasme remaja dalam membaca. Studi ini mengamati praktik literasi dalam konteks sosial dan pendidikan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan metodologi studi pustaka. Berdasarkan temuan studi, pendekatan kreatif dan kontekstual, seperti menyediakan materi bacaan yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan siswa, mendorong sesi belajar kelompok, menggunakan media sosial untuk tujuan pendidikan, dan membina hubungan antar teman dan teman sekelas, dapat menjadi strategi efektif untuk mengalihkan perhatian dari penggunaan gawai yang kurang produktif. Dengan memandang pendidikan sebagai kegiatan yang mencerahkan, relevan, dan terintegrasi dengan kehidupan lansia, diharapkan sastra akan kembali menjadi bagian penting dalam kehidupan mereka, yang akan menghasilkan generasi muda yang lebih mahir menggunakan teknologi dan memiliki keterampilan berpikir kritis.

Kata kunci: minat baca, remaja, kecanduan gawai, literasi digital, strategi pendidikan.

Introduction

In the midst of rapidly increasing technological advances, people's interest in reading, especially teenagers, is often neglected. Many people prefer to spend time in front of gadget screens rather than doing more useful things like reading. Technological advances have a significant impact on many

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aspects of daily life, including the way we get information and knowledge. Currently, many teenagers spend more time using digital devices such as smartphones, computers, and tablets. Social media applications, video streaming, and adventure games are the best ways to spend time. This causes interest in reading books, both physical books and e-books, to decline. This phenomenon is unique, allowing the use of various types of digital devices that are easier to use and provide more ways to obtain information.

However, behind the various difficulties in reading, technological advances also create new opportunities in the digital world. Various reading formats such as books, such as e-books and audiobooks, can be accessed more easily and affordably thanks to various digital platforms and applications. This gives readers the opportunity to enjoy books in various formats that are more manageable and practical. In addition, technology allows for an active academic community around the world that can continuously exchange information, advice, and book reviews, all of which can help increase reading interest. Given the importance of reading for knowledge retention and character development, efforts to increase motivation to read books in the digital era are very relevant.

In the digital era like today, playing gadgets has become an unstoppable phenomenon, especially among young people. Often, the use of more sophisticated electronic devices, such as computers, tablets, and smartphones, distracts from more productive activities, such as studying. On the other hand, reading is one of the most important activities for developing knowledge and cognitive abilities. Unfortunately, the habit of reading that was once very popular has now been replaced by the appeal of technology. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness of household problems related to gadgets and increase reading motivation. In this essay, various strategies will be discussed to reduce gadget use and return to learning as a means to improve one's own quality and well-being.

Method

The data sources in this study are secondary data sourced from:

- Academic books on adolescent psychology, education, literature, and the use of technology.
- National and international scientific journals that discuss the use of gadgets, digital literacy, and reading interest.
- Research reports, scientific articles, and official documents from educational institutions or the government.

Data were obtained through:

- Digital and printed literature searches, using key terms such as "adolescents addicted to gadgets," "reading interest," "digital literacy," and "the impact of technology on reading habits."
- Systematic review and analysis of relevant and useful theories from previous research.

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Data were analyzed using the content analysis method, namely:

- Identifying the main themes that emerged in the literature.
- Building relationships between concepts, such as the relationship between reading interest and gadget addiction.
- Summarizing findings and suggestions based on the synthesis of information from various sources.

The objectives of this analysis are:

- To develop a conceptual framework regarding the influence of gadget use on reading habits.
- To explore approaches or strategies that have proven effective in increasing adolescent reading interest.

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- To provide a strong theoretical basis for the development of relevant literacy programs in the digital era.

The objectives of the analysis are as follows:

- To create a conceptual framework to understand how reading habits are influenced by device use.
- To investigate methods or techniques that have been successful in increasing adolescent enthusiasm for reading.
- To offer a strong theoretical basis for creating relevant literacy initiatives in the digital era.

Discussion

According to data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018, Indonesia is ranked 72nd out of 79 countries with the highest literacy rates. Thus, Indonesia is ranked 72nd with low reading interest among 79 other countries. This position or ranking is still relatively young and can be called an achievement. This shows that the reading interest of the population in the air is still relatively low. In addition, based on a survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, Indonesia is ranked 62nd with low literacy rates and is in the bottom ten in the world.

There are many causes and consequences for teenagers who lose interest in reading because they are busy with their gadgets. The causes include exposure to interesting digital content, lack of reading habits that are instilled from an early age, limited access to literacy books, boredom and disinterest in books and others.

Gadgets provide easily accessible and entertaining content. This entertaining and interesting content is often more interesting and instant than books that require more concentration. The impact is that plans tend to choose entertainment that is faster and does not require much effort so that they get caught up in using gadgets and lose interest in reading. A common consequence of excessive social media use is the tendency to scroll without paying attention, looking at images, videos, or other content that has no educational or informational value. Social media uses algorithms to provide interesting content and encourage responses, such as likes and comments, which make users feel connected and inspired. The negative effects of social media reduce the amount of time that should be used for productive activities such as reading books. Teenagers focus more on social interaction than self-development through literature.

Many teenagers grow up in environments that are less supportive of reading. Teenagers will be reluctant to read if their environment does not provide examples or provide access to books. Teenagers are not required to participate in reading activities, and prefer activities that are more relaxing and satisfying. The lack of book collections that suit teenagers' interests and minimal access to books or libraries are factors that inhibit the desire to read. Many teenagers find it easier to access content from their gadgets than to go to a bookstore or buy books. When reading books, people tend to rely more on digital devices as the main source of information and inspiration. Some teenagers find books difficult to understand, especially if they do not suit their needs or desires. Books that are difficult to understand can make someone lose their mind. When a teenager does not have books that are interesting and suit their interests, they become less interested in reading and choose to use cheaper devices. (Suryaningsih et al., 2021).



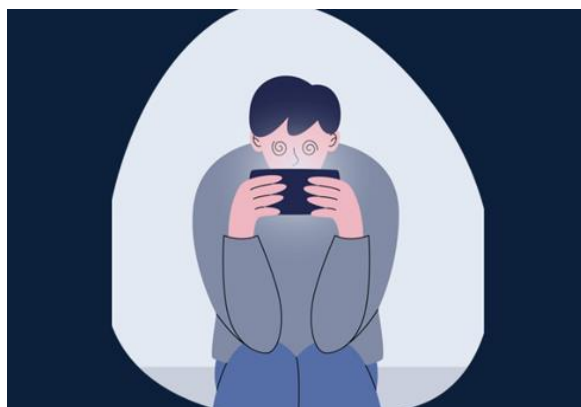
Picture 1: Ignoring the books



Resource: google

There are many consequences of addiction to social media, online games and others. Such as, decreased cognitive abilities, reduced social skills, negative effects on mental health, decreased sleep quality, decreased interest in learning and limitations in general knowledge. The development of cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity, can be helped by spending a lot of time on gadgets and reading books. Books give people the opportunity to think deeper and develop a more comprehensive understanding, while digital technology continues to have a greater impact on their daily information consumption. Teenagers who have difficulty understanding complex concepts, articulating ideas clearly, or having good writing skills. (Rahmadanita, 2022).

Picture 2: Addicted to Gadget



Resource: Google

The number of hours spent on mobile devices limits the amount of time spent interacting with others. Teenagers who interact more with others online sometimes hesitate to communicate openly with their friends or family. This can help them improve their ability to interact with others, build relationships with others, and develop empathy. The use of gadgets, especially social media, can cause mental health problems in women, such as depression, sleep disorders, and anxiety. Misinformation about negative or unrealistic standards on social media can affect a person's self-esteem and self-perception. Those who have more disposable gadgets without productive activities, such as studying, may be more stressed, awkward, and less confident. (Aprilaini & Sari, 2023).

Excessive use of gadgets, especially before bedtime, can affect adolescents' sleep patterns. This can affect the production of the hormone melatonin, which regulates sleep, causing difficulty sleeping.



Inadequate or poor-quality sleep can negatively impact a person's mood, productivity, and self-control in the following days. Gadget use can distract from learning activities. They are less interested in studying or reading books that are useful for self-development than spending time on social media or playing games. This can have a negative impact on their academic performance and make them less interested in exploring new topics or improving their knowledge. (Maulida & Sari, 2017).

Gadgets, although providing access to various information, often provide information that is fast, smooth, and not always accurate. Compared to reading books that provide more in-depth and structured information, the use of gadgets often makes teenagers rely only on fast information without really understanding the topic. Teenagers become easily influenced by fake news or incomplete information, so that their knowledge is limited to inadequate or less credible information.

Picture 3: Hoax in Internet



Resource: Google

However, there are no specific efforts that can be made. Teenagers' addiction to gadgets is like an iceberg phenomenon. This is because addiction to playing games, social media and other things is very difficult to stop. Even just reducing the habit is not easy. Efforts to eliminate this bad habit are very important and can be replaced with something much more useful than just being lazy. One effort that can be made is time management. Time management or managing time is very important in our lives, because it helps us to manage time so that the schedule of activities can be more neatly organized and not just continue to be busy with gadgets.

Time Management or time management is when someone can manage their time and schedule every day so that the day can run well and be directed. Simply put, the term refers to how someone uses their time wisely because time is always limited. Time management is one of the important aspects in life, especially for those who have managerial responsibilities.

Picture 4: Time Management's Mind Mapping



Resource : Google



In addition to time management, there are several other things that can be done so that teenagers reduce playing gadgets and replace them with reading something important and can increase their insight so that they can grow and develop well. Other things that can help teenagers restore or increase their desire to read include integrating technology with reading, creating fun reading activities, presenting books with interesting and relevant themes, providing easy access to books and others.

Reading can be integrated with technology. In this digital era, there are already many e-books, audiobooks and other digital platforms that can be interesting alternatives. For example, the kindle application, audible or reading platforms such as storytell which offer books in digital format and are easily accessible by cellphones or tablets. This can make it easier for teenagers to switch to devices if it can be done through the devices they already use.

Teenagers can make reading activities more enjoyable according to their respective wishes. They can form reading groups, watch book reviews on TikTok or Youtube which can increase teenagers' curiosity about a book and decide to read the book. There are many types of books that can be read as well as the genre of each book. Usually, teenagers nowadays tend to like fantasy, romance, horror, thriller, slice of life and many more genre novels. Teenagers can choose the books they like want to read. But if the book they like has a long and rambling story, teenagers tend to get bored and stop reading.

Access to books is also guaranteed to be easy, both in physical and digital formats. Teenagers can visit local libraries or city libraries located in the city center with friends. In city libraries, they usually have a complete collection of books, coupled with an atmosphere that is usually quiet and cool, which can increase a person's desire to immediately read books borrowed from the library. The role of parents is also inseparable from increasing a child's interest. Parents can provide a positive example to their children. If teenagers see people around them who like to read, they will tend to follow in those footsteps. Children will be more motivated to read, especially if their parents themselves are examples for their children. (Trentepohl et al., 2022).

Of course, there are several parties involved in trying this. Initially, it must have come from yourself first. The desire to change and reduce the use of gadgets and do other things that are more useful. Then, the role of parents. Parents must have many roles in their child's development. The role of parents here is to monitor their children in using their gadgets. Parents can also make a schedule for using gadgets, especially for teenagers who are still minors. These teenagers can fill their other activities by reading books, doing hobbies that can refresh their minds, exercising or interacting and playing with friends of the same age, which is definitely more exciting than just lazing around playing with gadgets at home.

Schools also play a major role in increasing reading interest among adolescents. One way is to integrate reading activities into daily learning. Teachers can give fun reading assignments, such as reading short stories, interesting articles, or books that are relevant to the topic of the lesson. In addition, learning that invites adolescents to understand the contents of books more deeply and critically can make them more interested in continuing to read.

Reading programs and competitions in schools or communities can also be an effective way to attract adolescents' interest in reading. With programs such as "Reading Month" or book reading competitions, adolescents will feel more motivated to read more. Giving prizes or recognition for achievements in reading can also be a form of appreciation that encourages them to continue developing reading habits.

In addition, the government and educational institutions have an important role in increasing public interest in learning. Providing library facilities that are comfortable and easily accessible to the general public is one of the main ways to do this. In addition, literacy programs that encourage students to read more and share knowledge with others may be an effective way to increase their desire to read more deeply.



For teenagers who experience psychological disorders, they can visit a psychologist. Nowadays, there are many websites that say "signs that you have psychological disorders", of course this is not necessarily valid. It would be better if the teenager makes an appointment with a psychologist so that they can find out what is happening to their psyche and how to restore their psyche to normal again. (Prasetio & Triwahyuni, 2022)

Picture 5: Psychologist and Her Patient



Resource : Google

Everyone should not be addicted to gadgets or other electronic devices. Especially teenagers who are growing or what is commonly called puberty. Digital technology such as gadgets, computers and others are indeed needed, but it would be better if used only as needed or make a schedule for using them every day. For teenagers, it is the age when there is a desire to do everything. It is better to do a lot of outdoor activities and explore the outside world more so that you can distinguish between good and bad. In addition, you can also read books so that your insights expand, compared to just being busy with digital technology at home. Mental health must also be maintained and it is better to do both in balance. If this can be attempted or implemented properly by involving family, school and other communities such as neighbors and psychologists if something unwanted happens to teenagers who are addicted. (Putri et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Reducing gadget addiction and increasing reading interest are two things that are interrelated and very important for personal and community well-being. In the midst of rapid technological developments, we must be able to manage our time and energy wisely, so as not to get caught up in dependence on electronic devices. Reading as an activity that can enrich knowledge, broaden horizons, and train critical thinking skills, must be a priority in our lives. By creating a pleasant reading habit and realizing the negative impacts of excessive gadget use, we can build a more balanced and productive lifestyle. It takes a joint effort from individuals, families, communities, and governments to create an environment that supports reading habits and reduces gadget addiction. With the right steps, we can not only reduce the negative impacts of technology, but also reap great benefits that can improve the overall quality of life.

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