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## DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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# JEAN PIAGET THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN THE STAGE OF GADGET ADDICTION

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze how interpersonal communication occurs between parents and children in the stage of gadget addiction using the perspective of Jean Piaget's theory. Researchers used the phenomenological paradigm to explore informants' experiences about the interpersonal communication process that occurred. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants to explore communication patterns between parents and their children. The results showed that the forms of communication carried out by parents to children in gadget addiction were divided into 3 groups, namely in a liberating, democratic, and authoritarian manner. The most intense communication process occurs in groups that use democracy. Using Piaget's perspective, the process of children's addiction begins at the Preoperational stage, where children begin to represent the world with symbols, words, language, and images.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication; Parents and Children; Gadget Addiction.

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### Introduction

The Internet as a new media "New Media" offers so many opportunities and challenges. In the field of communication science, social media is one of the new media. Flew (in Julyansyah, 2020) defines new media as a form that combines three components: computers and information technology; communication networks; media content and digital information. At the same time, Power and Littlejohn describe new media as a new period in which interactive technology and online communication, particularly the Internet, transform society. The last equation on the concept of new media shows that the power of new media lies in the mastery of technology (especially the internet) that can cause changes in society (Andinata, 2023).

Internet users in Indonesia in the period 2022 - 2023 reached 215 million, or 78% of the total population in Indonesia (APJII). This is related to the number of electronic goods manufacturers who sell at low prices. This condition triggers an increase in consumptive behavior from the community, even minors now have their own gadgets. Personal ownership of gadgets for minors has several impacts on their developmental process, one of which is the reduction of the direct communication process with parents (Jayanti, 2022).

The length of time between parents and children is a measure of the effectiveness of communication, the longer parents communicate with children the more effective the communication is. However, one communication cannot influence children to immediately remember and carry out parental orders. Children need to be told several communications to remember and carry out parental orders (Syaidah & Suheraman 2020). In the condition of children who are accustomed to using gadgets daily, the supervision carried out by parents becomes less than optimal. According to Syaidah & Suheraman's research (2020), parents only supervise children playing gadgets when they are inside the house, when playing outside the house with their friends, parents cannot always supervise their children.

In this modern era, many minors are good at using gadgets whether under parental supervision or not. In 2022, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) stated that 88.99% of children aged 5 years and over have accessed the internet for social media. This causes them to recognize technology earlier than previous generations. As many as 98.70%, children aged 5 years and over access the internet using smartphones. The rest use laptops 11.87%, desktop computers 2.29%, and others 0.18%. Apart from social media, 66.13% of children aged 5 years and over in Indonesia also access the internet to get information or news. There are also those who access the internet for entertainment as much as 63.08%. (BPS, 2022)

Based on Jean Piaget's cognitive theory perspective, he revealed a cognitive structure explanation of the process of developing children with the concept of the world in the surrounding environment. (Syahadaw, 2019). Piaget's theory is also called genetic epistemology (genetic epistemology) because this theory seeks to trace the development of intellectual abilities and genetics refers to developmental growth rather than biological inheritance. According to Piaget, children are born with some sensorimotor schemata that provide a framework for children's early interactions with their environment. The child's initial experience is determined through sensorimotor schemata, so to speak, only by events that can be assimilated into the schemata and then can be responded to by the child. This will determine the limits of the child's experience through modified early schemata experiences.

Every child has experiences that contain unique elements that must be accommodated by the cognitive structure. With environmental interactions, cognitive structures will change and it is possible that the development of experience continues to occur. Piaget argues that this process can run slowly because new schemata are always developing rather than pre-existing schemata. With this, intellectual growth that begins with a reflective response to the environment will continue to develop to the point that the child is able to think of potential events that can mentally explore the possible consequences. (Oktafia et al, 2021).

In January 2018, the Koesnadi Regional Hospital in Bondowoso, East Java treated two junior and senior high school students who were addicted to gadgets at a severe level. They wanted to kill their parents who prohibited them from using gadgets. The phenomenon of children addicted to gadgets according to Dr. Tjhin Wiguna, a child psychiatrist at the Department of Mental Health Medicine FKUI-RSCM began to increase in 2015. (Kominfo, 2018).

Cilandak Barat is one of the urban villages in South Jakarta. The DKI Jakarta Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) said that South Jakarta is the area with the highest internet users at 90.1%. From the data mentioned, most of those who use gadgets are millennials with a proportion of 26.78% followed by gen Z with a proportion of 26.65%. In this study, researchers are interested in reviewing how parents' interpersonal communication with children in the age range of 7-12 years who are addicted to playing

gadgets in the West Cilandak village. In this age range, children are already in elementary school, in this phase of course parents must pay special attention to children to educate, guide, and provide direction efficiently so that children are not affected by the negative impact of gadget facilities provided by parents. Parents must also apply effective interpersonal communication patterns in accordance with the growth and development of children according to their age stage so that the information to be conveyed can be understood by children so that researchers will relate this to Jean Piaget's cognitive theory.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Interpersonal Communication**

William Schutz, a psychologist, developed a theory of interpersonal needs. In Liliweri (2015), Schutz asserts that a sustainable interpersonal relationship depends on how well it relates to three basic needs. The first need is affection, which is the desire to give and receive affection. The second is inclusiveness, which is the desire to belong to a particular social group. The third is control, which is the need to influence people or events in life.

Bahri (2004) explain interpersonal communication has several functions including:

1. Information: collection, storage, processing, dissemination of news, data, images, facts, opinions, and comments needed to be understood.
2. Motivation: encouraging people to determine their choices and desires, encouraging individual and group activities based on common goals to be pursued.
3. Debate and discussion: providing and exchanging facts necessary to enable agreement or resolve differences of opinion on public issues.
4. Education: the transfer of knowledge so as to promote intellectual development.
5. Entertainment: the dissemination of signals, symbols, sounds and images from drama, dance, art, etc. for recreation, group and individual enjoyment.

### **Parental Communication Patterns with Children**

Research results suggest that parent-child communication can influence overall family functioning and psychosocial well-being in children. Clark and shield (2012) found evidence that good communication between parents and children correlates with lower involvement in delinquent behavior. Ginott (2008) says the new way of communicating with children should be based on respect and skill. This explains that the act of respect and skill is in the form of greeting activities that should not hurt the child's self-esteem and vice versa.

Parents in this case act as the first educators so they must provide examples and understanding attitudes to children, then give advice. Communication between parents and children is very important for parents in an effort to control, monitor and support children. Parents' actions to control monitor and provide support can be perceived positively or negatively by children, which is influenced by the way parents communicate. Communication patterns are the relationship between two or more people in receiving and sending messages in an appropriate way so that the message can be understood (Bahri, 2004).

According to Yusuf Syamsu quoted from Djamrah (Bahri, 2004), there are various kinds of communication patterns of parents in children as follows:

#### **Permissive Communication Pattern**

Permissive communication patterns are characterized by unlimited freedom for children to do and behave as they wish. Permissive communication patterns or also known as all-allowing communication patterns are parents who give in, obey all wishes, protect excessively, and provide or fulfill all children's wishes excessively.

Permissive communication patterns are one of the communication patterns in communication relationships where parents do not care about what will happen to their children. Parents tend not to respond or do not respond if children talk or express their problems. In many ways, children do not feel cared for by their parents, even when the child makes a mistake the parents do not respond so that the child does not know where the mistake he has made is located or things that should not happen can be repeated many times. So, the child will feel that there is still a lot missing or the child still feels that he is not capable so that the child loses self-confidence. Not only that, the child will have a domineering nature, unclear direction of life, low achievement sometimes the child does not appreciate others always put himself first, the child does not have a sense of empathy for others.

The characteristics of parents who apply permissive communication patterns are as follows:

1. Parental control over children is very weak.
2. Giving freedom to children for their impulses or desires.
3. desire.
4. Children are allowed to do something that is considered right
5. Punishment is not given
6. Lack of guidance

### **Authoritarian Communication Pattern**

Authoritarian communication patterns are characterized by parents who prohibit their children at the expense of children's autonomy. Authoritarian communication has rigid rules from parents. In this communication pattern, acceptance is low but control is high, like punishing, commanding, requiring children to do something without compromise, being rigid tends to be emotional, and rejecting.

The authoritarian type of communication pattern is a type of communication pattern that imposes its will, with this type of parent tending to be a controller or supervisor of its opinion, it is very difficult to accept suggestions and tends to impose its will in differences too confident in itself so that it closes the valve of deliberation. In an effort to influence children, parents often use approaches that contain elements of coercion or threats. The words spoken by parents are laws or rules and cannot be changed.

The characteristics of parents who apply authoritarian communication patterns are as follows:

1. Parents determine what children need to do without giving an explanation of the reasons.
2. If the child violates the provisions that have been outlined, the child is not given the opportunity to give reasons.
3. In general, punishment is in the form of corporal punishment
4. Parents do not or rarely give gifts or rewards in the form of words or other forms when children do what parents expect.

### **Democratic Communication Pattern (Authoritative)**

Democratic parental communication patterns are generally characterized by an open attitude between parents and children. They make some kind of rules that are mutually agreed upon. These democratic parents are parents who try to appreciate their children's abilities directly. The democratic type of communication pattern is the best type of communication pattern of all existing types of communication patterns. This is because this democratic type always puts the common interest above the individual interests of parents or children. The characteristics of parents who apply democratic communication patterns are as follows:

1. Parents always try to harmonize personal interests and goals with the interests of children.
2. Parents are happy to receive suggestions, opinions, and criticism from children.

3. Mentoring children
4. Make mistakes by providing education to children
5. so that they do not make mistakes by not reducing their
6. creativity, initiative, and initiative of children.
7. More emphasis on cooperation in achieving goals.
8. Parents always try to make their children more successful.

From the three types of parenting, democratic parenting is considered a good communication pattern in overcoming gadget addiction, but still maintaining the principles of universal and absolute values, especially those related to religion. Authoritarian patterns are appropriate when related to issues of aqidah and worship and things that are considered harmful to the child. Meanwhile, permissive parenting should be applied by parents when the child has grown up where the child can think for himself, able to take responsibility for his actions and actions.

### **New Media**

Quoted from the book "Communication Ethics in Social Media: Filter Before Sharing" (2021) by Rahmanita Ginting, et al, new media is media that uses internet-based online technology, is flexible in character, has interactive potential, and can function privately or publicly. Literally, the word "new" means new, while "media" means the tool used by communicators to send messages to communicators. So, new media is a new tool used by communicators to send messages to communicators.

New media was born from the rapid development of technology that humans often use. Whether we realize it or not, new media has provided many benefits to human life today. Here are some of the benefits of new media:

1. Easier and faster information search
2. Ease of getting needs
3. As entertainment media
4. Efficiency in communication
5. As a means of education

### **Children with Gadget Addicts**

Living in modern times, gadgets have become a necessity for every individual. Various reasons are used by parents to allow their children to use gadgets such as to search for information or school online. Although there are many benefits of children using gadgets, it cannot be denied that internet access can also have a negative effect on development.

According to research from Deni Irwanto (2019), the negative impact of gadgets on children is that children forget their main task as students, which is learning. Children will also be passive in communicating with the outside world. In addition, gadget addiction can cause:

1. Mental disorders in children
2. Inhibit child development
3. Less social interaction with the surrounding environment
4. Insomnia
5. Obesity
6. Not enjoying physical activity
7. Not concentrating while studying
8. Exposure to electronic radiation and others.

In addition, other impacts of gadget addiction include inhibits children's cognitive development, likes to be alone, is more irritable, and lacks focus. These things can certainly affect children's performance at school.

## **Piaget's Cognitive Theory**

Jean Piaget researched and wrote about cognitive development from 1927 to 1980. In the results of his research, Piaget said that the difference in the way children think with adults is not only because they lose knowledge, but qualitatively different. In addition, Piaget also conducted research that resulted in the fact that the stages of individual development and age changes greatly affect the individual's learning ability.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development is a comprehensive theory of the nature and development of human intelligence. Jean Piaget believes a child plays an important and active role in the active development of intelligence. The child in essence does not just passively accept things that are known but he does the exploration to get the information. Piaget views cognitive development as highly dependent on human biological development, so Piaget states that the stages of human thinking are in line with the stages of a person's age.

Piaget suggested that the growth of intelligence is influenced by the physical and social environment, maturity, and equilibration. If the schema is already owned, the child is able to explain the things that the child feels from his environment. However, when children encounter new situations that cannot be explained by existing patterns, children experience a sensation of disequilibrium, which is an unpleasant condition.

According to Piaget, children's thinking develops according to stages that continue to grow in complexity. The following are the stages of early childhood cognitive development according to Jean Piaget's theory, among others:

### 1) Sensorimotor Stage

The stage that takes place at the age from birth to about 2 years of age. At this stage the baby shows nothing more than a reflective pattern to adapt to the world, towards the end of this stage, the baby shows a complex sensorimotor pattern.

### 2) Pre-Operational Stage

This stage lasts from 2 to 7 years of age. At this stage, the child begins to represent the world with words and pictures. These words and pictures show an increase in symbolic thinking and go beyond the relationship of sensor information and physical actions.

### 3) Concrete Operational Stage

This stage takes place at the age of about 7 to 11 years. At this stage children can think logically about real events and can clarify different forms. At this stage children actively ask questions to gather information and already understand the concept of cause and effect of each event. Children also begin to predict the consequences of an action and make plans in doing something.

### 4) Formal Operational Stage

This stage begins to be experienced by children aged 11 years or during puberty until adulthood. At this stage, the ability to think abstractly, reason logically, and draw conclusions from available information begins to be acquired. At this stage one can also understand things like love, logical proof and value. They see things not only in black and white, but there are "shades of gray" between them.

## **Material and Methodology**

The object of this research is an interpersonal communication process where parents as communicators convey information to their respective children to provide messages containing

knowledge, guidance, advice and rules for using gadgets. This communication needs to be done in order to direct children into good behavior and not depend on gadgets in the future.

The research subject is something that is studied either people, objects, or institutions (organizations). The subject of this research is an informant who provides information about the research topic. So, the subjects of this research are parents and gadget-addicted children who can provide information about the ongoing forms of interpersonal communication. The informants were researched using the Purposive Sampling method, which is taking informants using certain considerations that are in accordance with the specific characteristics of the researcher (Nasution, 2005: 98). The criteria for informants in this study are as follows:

- a. The informant is the community of RT.14 RW.02 Cilandak Barat Urban Village.
- b. Informants in this study are parents who have children aged 7-12 years.
- c. Informants have children who play gadgets for more than three hours.

This research uses qualitative research. Kirk and Miller define that qualitative research is a certain tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on observing humans in their own areas and dealing with these people in their discussions and in their terms.

Phenomenology can be interpreted as a study of a person's lived experience or a method for studying how individuals subjectively feel experiences and give meaning to these phenomena. The phenomenological approach is a research approach that tries to explore and discover the human experience of self and life.

This study uses a phenomenological paradigm, this is based on the researcher's interest in examining more deeply the phenomena experienced by informants. Phenomenology is carried out in a natural situation, so there are no restrictions in interpreting or understanding the phenomena studied and researchers are free to analyze the data obtained.

## **Result and Discussion**

Researchers will conduct research in West Cilandak, South Jakarta, which is located on Jalan Cilandak Permai RT.14 RW.02, West Cilandak Village, Cilandak District, South Jakarta. The neighborhood is bordered by Cipete Selatan Urban Village to the north, Pondok Pinang Urban Village to the west, Cilandak Timur Urban Village to the east, and Pondok Labu Urban Village to the south.

In this neighborhood, there are several excellent schools, such as HighScope Indonesia, Jakarta International School. There are also office buildings here, one of which is called Talavera. The West Cilandak urban village office is located on Jalan Terogong Raya. This village has a postal code of 12430 with an area code of 31.71.030.003. This village has a population of 60,918 people and an area of 6.044 km<sup>2</sup>.

Gadget-addicted children spend more than three hours playing gadgets. There are various applications contained in the gadget such as YouTube. then there are social media Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others. Communication that occurs between parents and children who use active gadgets can be said to be interpersonal communication because it is dialogic. Parents know directly whether the message conveyed is well received by their children. With interpersonal communication, parents can change their children's attitudes for the better, with examples of giving understanding about the positives and negatives of playing gadgets.

From the interviews that have been conducted by researchers who discuss how the form of interpersonal communication between parents and children in gadget addiction, it can be seen that most parents urge and explain the negative effects of gadgets. In addition, there are also parents who give rules to their children, so that they do not always look for and play gadgets. As researchers have

explained that interpersonal communication has various functions, such as providing information, education, discussion with children, and motivation.

Parents like to discuss and make agreements with their children to limit the use of gadgets. Based on what has been described by researchers, democratic communication patterns are communication patterns that prioritize common interests over personal interests. Parents provide low supervision with rules in using gadgets. Parents entrust the use of gadgets to children, for parents their children already understand and know their limits in using gadgets.

Parents' actions to control monitor and provide support can be perceived positively or negatively by children, including influenced by the way parents communicate. Communication patterns are the relationship between two or more people in receiving or sending messages in an appropriate way so that they can be easily understood.

Cognitive development in early childhood is very important, so that children can explore the world around them. Through the knowledge they have, children can continue their lives and become complete human beings as creatures of God to be useful for themselves, others and their environment. Cognitive development is a change in thinking or intellectual abilities in children. Piaget & Inhelder (1969) provide the concept that cognitive development is a process of change through the construction of biological mechanisms and operates or adjustments through observation to regulate the entire intellectual development of children based on phases and schemes sensori motori or mental power of children.

It is known from the results of the interviews above that the informants do not agree if children aged 0-2 years are introduced to gadgets even as a learning medium, they consider children aged 0-2 years are still too young to play gadgets, and can damage the health of children's eyes. the informants also entrust learning through parents rather than gadgets.

Based on the interviews that the author conducted, it can be seen that the interpersonal communication between parents and children in gadget addiction in West Cilandak, there are various ways of parents communicating with their children, there are parents who free their children in using gadgets by not controlling their children in their use, then there are parents who are prohibiting (authoritarian) to children, and there are also parents who are democratic to children. Parents who do not control children in using gadgets, then what happens is that children have the freedom to play gadgets without knowing the time and do not care about parental reprimands such as the interviews above that have been conducted by researchers.

Based on interviews conducted by researchers with parents who allow their children to use gadgets. From this freedom, parents give trust by not controlling children who use gadgets. However, what happens is that children forget time because they use gadgets too often, but there are rarely reprimands from parents.

In addition to the lack of control from parents over their children who use gadgets, it is also known that there is punishment for children who play gadgets too often. It is known that there is punishment for children who make mistakes such as using gadgets too often. The punishment given is in the form of an outburst of frustration, anger from parents towards their children who play gadgets too often.

In addition, there are also parents who prohibit their children at the expense of children's autonomy, which is called an authoritarian communication pattern. Authoritarian communication patterns have rigid rules from parents. In this communication pattern, acceptance is low but control is very high, parents like to punish, command, require children to do what they are told without compromise, are rigid or harsh, and tend to be emotional.



Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, there is an authoritarian parental communication pattern. Parents who have children who use gadgets provide rules, tighten supervision, and duration when children use gadgets. Giving punishment is physical punishment in the form of pinching so that it can make children traumatized and lie. The child is traumatized by his mother because he is afraid of the punishment given by his mother, the child often borrows his father's gadget secretly so that his mother does not know.

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, it is known that there is a democratic communication pattern in parents to children. It is reasoned that their children have understood the use of gadgets. As for parents who make agreements with their children in the use of gadgets, namely the duration of playing gadgets and what content can be opened, thus the child more easily understands what parents instruct. This is an effective way of communicating with children, although children often get angry and sulk at parents when their gadget playing time is over, as parents we still have to be firm for the good of the child. On the other hand, parents have alternatives to distract children's attention from gadgets such as increasing children's activities outside the home. In addition to advising children, parents must also set a good example to children such as not playing gadgets in front of their children.

According to Jean Piaget's cognitive theory, cognitive development is a genetic process, a process based on biological mechanisms, namely the development of the nervous system. Cognitive ability can be understood as a child's ability to think more complexly and the ability to reason and solve problems. In its development, cognitive abilities will make it easier for children to master broader general knowledge so that children are able to continue to function reasonably in their interactions with society and their environment.

So, the role of parents here is not only to advise children not to always play gadgets, but as parents must model to their children such as not playing gadgets in front of children and more often helping children in their lessons, because according to Jean Piaget's theory children at the age of 7-12 years understand as they appear or as the reality they experience.

## **Conclusions**

From the results of the research that has been obtained by researchers, there are various ways of communication between parents and children in overcoming children at the stage of gadget addiction, namely by liberating, authoritarian, and democratic ways. Each method has its own positive and negative sides. Based on interviews, the most effective way is the democratic way, which is to make an agreement between parents and children in using gadgets. with a democratic communication pattern, parents are open to children so that children can express their feelings. This is in line with Jean Piaget's cognitive theory, children at the age of 7-12 years (concrete operational stage) already understand the concept of cause and effect and are better at using logic in thinking so that children tend to think more critically about what they know. So, parents play an important role in communicating to children about the consequences of using gadgets in an open and two-way manner. In addition, parents must also model good things in using gadgets such as not playing gadgets in front of children because at the concrete operational stage children can only understand as they appear (physical objects) or as the reality they experience. In addition, the communication pattern of freeing and forbidding also has a positive side because being freed in using gadgets, children can learn more about technological advances, such as children who are smart in using technology, namely in the field of editing as explained by Jean Piaget, children aged 7-12 are in the stage of development in terms of reasoning. However, children who are too free are afraid of falling into the negative things in the gadget and can affect the child's health if they are protracted in using the gadget. Children who are too restricted in playing are good in terms of keeping children away from the negative side of gadgets but children become less knowledgeable about technology, especially now that it is an age of all technology, it is feared that children will become unfamiliar with technology. In addition, children become traumatized by their parents if parents are too strict with their children.

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