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THE INFLUENCE OF A MINIMAL INTERNET ENVIRONMENT ON THE EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DIGITAL DEVICE USERS

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ABSTRACT:
This study aims to analyze the impact of an environment without internet access on the emotional development of early childhood children who are accustomed to using digital devices. The focus of this research is children aged 4–6 years with a relatively high intensity of gadget use who are subsequently exposed to an environment with limited internet access. This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. Data were obtained through a review of various relevant literature sources, including books, scholarly journal articles, and previous studies related to early childhood emotional development, gadget use, and the impact of digital environments on children's psychology. Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques, while data analysis utilized content analysis methods, involving data reduction, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that, in the initial stage, children exhibit negative emotional responses such as frustration, boredom, and tantrums due to reduced access to digital media. However, over time, children demonstrate positive developmental changes, including increased social interaction, greater engagement in creative play activities, and improved emotional regulation. This study concludes that an environment without internet access can have a positive impact on children's emotional development, particularly when supported by parental guidance and the provision of constructive alternative activities. Therefore, a balance between digital technology use and social interaction is essential in early childhood parenting.

Keywords: *Early Childhood, Emotional Development, Digital Environment, Gadget Use, Internet*

ABSTRAK:
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh lingkungan tanpa akses internet terhadap perkembangan emosional anak usia dini yang terbiasa menggunakan gadget. Fokus penelitian adalah anak usia 4–6 tahun dengan riwayat penggunaan gadget yang relatif tinggi dan kemudian berada dalam lingkungan dengan keterbatasan akses internet. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research). Data diperoleh melalui penelusuran berbagai sumber literatur yang relevan, seperti buku, artikel jurnal ilmiah, dan hasil penelitian terdahulu yang berkaitan dengan perkembangan emosional anak usia dini, penggunaan gadget, serta dampak lingkungan digital terhadap psikologi anak. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan teknik analisis isi (content analysis) dengan langkah reduksi data, klasifikasi, interpretasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada tahap awal anak mengalami respons emosional negatif, seperti frustrasi, kebosanan, dan tantrum akibat berkurangnya akses terhadap media digital. Namun, seiring proses adaptasi, anak menunjukkan perkembangan positif berupa peningkatan interaksi sosial, keterlibatan

dalam aktivitas bermain kreatif, serta kemampuan regulasi emosi yang lebih baik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa lingkungan tanpa akses internet dapat memberikan dampak positif terhadap perkembangan emosional anak, khususnya apabila didukung oleh pendampingan orang tua dan penyediaan aktivitas alternatif yang konstruktif. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan keseimbangan antara penggunaan teknologi digital dan aktivitas sosial dalam pengasuhan anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: *Anak Usia Dini, Gadget, Lingkungan Digital, Perkembangan Emosional, Internet*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to society, including in parenting patterns and the developmental environment of early childhood. The increasingly widespread access to the internet, particularly through digital networks, has made the use of gadgets an integral part of children's daily lives. During the golden age, early childhood is highly responsive to environmental stimuli that shape their cognitive, social, and emotional development (Aisyah 2018). In this context, the ease of internet access tends to increase the intensity of gadget use, which in turn affects children's emotional development (Rideout, 2017). Conversely, environments without internet access present different dynamics, especially for children who are accustomed to using gadgets as a means of entertainment and learning.

Empirical phenomena in society indicate that children who are accustomed to using gadgets often experience changes in their emotional aspects, such as increased tantrum behavior, difficulties in emotional regulation, and decreased quality of direct social interaction (Anderson & Subrahmanyam, 2017). When access to gadgets is restricted, for instance due to the absence of internet connectivity, children exhibit a range of emotional responses, including frustration, anxiety, and eventual adaptation to non-digital environments (Coyne et al., 2020). This phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant in the context of disparities in technological access between urban and rural areas, which indirectly create differences in early childhood emotional development experiences.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between gadget use and child development. Research by Twenge and Campbell shows that high screen time is correlated with increased emotional and behavioral problems among children (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Meanwhile, other studies suggest that excessive gadget use may hinder the development of empathy and children's emotional regulation abilities (Radesky & Christakis,

2016). Research by Radesky et al. also highlights how uncontrolled exposure to digital media can disrupt parent–child relationships, thereby affecting socio-emotional development (Radesky et al., 2014). However, most of these studies focus on the direct impact of gadget use, rather than on environmental conditions that limit access to such technologies.

Therefore, there remains a research gap that has not been widely explored, namely how the emotional development of early childhood who are accustomed to using gadgetsunfolds when they are placed in environments without internet access. The study of this "digital deprivation" condition is important to understand the mechanisms of children's emotional adaptation in response to significant environmental changes. Accordingly, this article offers scientific novelty by examining the interaction between habitual gadget use and environments without internet access in shaping early childhood emotional development.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual approach, which does not merely consider gadget use as a single variable but also incorporates environmental factors as moderating variables influencing children's emotional development. This approach provides a new perspective in early childhood education studies, particularly in understanding the dynamics of children's emotional adaptation under conditions of limited technological access.

Based on this background, the research problems addressed in this article include: (1) how is the emotional development of early childhood who are accustomed to using gadgets in environments without internet access; (2) what factors influence children's emotional responses under such conditions; and (3) how does the process of emotional adaptation occur. The hypothesis of this study is that environments without internet access have a significant impact on early childhood emotional development, both in the form of initial emotional disturbances and in the form of positive adaptation through increased social interaction and emotional independence.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the impact of environments without internet access on the emotional development of early childhood who are accustomed to using gadgets, as well as to identify patterns of emotional adaptation that emerge in response to limited access to technology.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design, aimed at comprehensively examining various concepts, theories, and empirical findings related to the impact of environments without internet access on the emotional development of early

childhood who are accustomed to using digital devices. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth and systematic analysis of the phenomenon through the exploration of relevant scientific literature. The study is descriptive-analytical in nature, meaning that it not only describes phenomena based on scholarly sources but also analyzes the relationship between gadget use and environmental conditions as factors influencing children's emotional development (Moleong, 2017).

In the context of library research, the research subjects are not individuals but rather data sources that are analyzed. Accordingly, the subjects of this study consist of various scientific documents, including accredited national journal articles, reputable international journals, academic books, and research reports relevant to the themes of gadget use in early childhood, children's emotional development, and the influence of the environment on child development. Data sources were selected selectively based on their relevance to the topic, publication within the last ten years, and academic credibility, as indicated by peer-reviewed publication processes (Creswell, 2014).

The primary instrument in this study is the researcher (human instrument), who plays an active role in determining the focus of the study, selecting data sources, and interpreting the research findings. To support this process, additional instruments such as documentation sheets and literature review matrices were employed to systematically organize the data. Through these instruments, each piece of literature was analyzed based on key aspects, including research objectives, methods used, main findings, and relevance to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques by exploring various literature sources from scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Garba Rujukan Digital (Garuda), and international journal databases. The search process utilized relevant keywords, including "gadget use in early childhood," "children's emotional development," "screen time," and "digital and non-digital environments." The collected data were then selected based on predetermined criteria, classified into main themes related to the research focus, and systematically recorded to facilitate the analysis process (Nazir, 2014).

Data analysis in this study employed content analysis techniques, carried out through the processes of data reduction, categorization, synthesis, and interpretation. Data reduction involved selecting information relevant to the research focus, while categorization grouped the data into themes such as the impact of gadget use, children's emotional regulation, and environmental influences on child development. Subsequently, synthesis was conducted by

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integrating findings from various literature sources to construct a coherent conceptual framework. The final stage, interpretation, involved assigning meaning to the results of the analysis in order to address the research questions (Nazir, 2014).

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation by comparing various references from journals, books, and research reports to ensure consistency and credibility of the findings. The use of peer-reviewed sources also served as an effort to enhance the reliability of the data employed in this study (Denzin, 2017).

Thus, this research method is expected to produce a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the impact of environments without internet access on the emotional development of early childhood who are accustomed to using digital devices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotional Development of Early Childhood Accustomed to Gadget Use in Environments Without Internet Access

Emotional development in early childhood constitutes a fundamental aspect of overall human development, as it is closely related to children's ability to interact, adapt, and establish social relationships in the future. At this stage, children begin to recognize various types of emotions, express their feelings appropriately, and develop emotional regulation skills as part of their psychological maturity (Wisudaningsih, 2025). From a developmental perspective, Sroufe emphasizes that emotional development is organizational in nature, evolving through continuous interactions between biological factors and environmental experiences (Sroufe, 1996). Therefore, the quality of the environment in which children grow plays a significant role in shaping their emotional characteristics.

In the context of contemporary digital society, gadget use has become an inseparable part of early childhood life. Gadgets function not only as entertainment media but also as learning tools and mechanisms for soothing children's emotions. Many parents utilize gadgets as a "distraction tool" when children become fussy or experience emotional distress (Radesky et al., 2015). Although this strategy may be effective in the short term, it has the potential to create dependency on external stimuli. In the long term, this condition may hinder the development of children's internal emotional regulation, as they are not accustomed to managing their emotions independently.

The emotion regulation theory proposed by Gross explains that the ability to manage emotions involves complex cognitive processes, including situation appraisal, response

control, and adaptive attentional shifting (Gross, 2014). Children who frequently receive instant distractions through gadgets tend to have limitations in developing these skills. This is supported by research indicating that excessive gadget use is associated with increased emotional problems, such as impulsivity, anxiety, and difficulties in emotional control (Twenge & Campbell, 2018).

When children who are accustomed to using gadgets are placed in environments without internet access, a significant shift occurs in the stimulation patterns they receive. In the initial stage, children tend to exhibit negative emotional responses, such as tantrums, frustration, and mild aggressive behavior. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of the withdrawal effect, which refers to psychological reactions arising from the cessation of stimuli that previously provided satisfaction (Christakis, 2017). In this context, gadgets function as sources of instant gratification; thus, their absence leads to emotional discomfort.

Children who grow up without exposure to gadgets or internet access from an early age tend to exhibit more stable and well-regulated emotional responses. This is because their emotional development occurs naturally through direct interaction with their social environment, such as parents, peers, and conventional play activities. In this context, children learn to recognize, express, and manage emotions through real-life experiences rather than through instant digital stimulation (Christakis, 2018).

Research in developmental psychology indicates that children's involvement in direct social interaction plays a crucial role in the development of emotional regulation. Intensive engagement with the social environment enables children to understand emotional expressions, develop empathy, and enhance self-control (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2007). Furthermore, non-digital play activities have been shown to contribute positively to healthy emotional development, as children are actively involved in exploration, social negotiation, and problem-solving processes (Ginsburg, 2007).

Several empirical studies also demonstrate that children with minimal exposure to digital screens in early childhood tend to have better emotional stability compared to those who frequently use gadgets. Longitudinal research has found that lower screen exposure is associated with reduced levels of aggressive behavior, anxiety, and emotional disorders in young children (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). This is because children develop emotional regulation skills through real social experiences rather than relying on digital distractions.

Moreover, studies in child development journals reveal that direct interaction between children and parents without digital interference enhances emotional bonding and improves children's ability to manage stress (Radesky, Schumacher, & Zuckerman, 2015). Childrenwho are accustomed to face to face interaction also demonstrate better delayed gratification the ability to postpone immediate desires for long-term goals which is an important indicator of emotional maturity.

In such conditions, children's emotional responses tend to be more proportional and contextually appropriate. Although children still experience negative emotions such as anger or disappointment, these expressions are easier to guide and regulate because they have direct experience in dealing with various social situations. Therefore, the absence of early dependence on gadgets actually helps children develop a stronger and more adaptive emotional foundation.

From the perspective of behaviorism, as proposed by Skinner, children's behavior is shaped through reinforcement processes (Skinner, 1953). Gadget use, which provides immediate pleasure, acts as positive reinforcement that strengthens the behavior. When this reinforcement is abruptly removed, children exhibit negative responses due to difficulties in adaptation. Furthermore, Piaget's theory of cognitive development explains that children in the preoperational stage have limited capacity to understand environmental changes rationally, making them more vulnerable to emotional disturbances when confronted with unfamiliar situations (Piaget, 1972).

However, children's emotional development does not cease at this disruptive phase. Over time, children begin to adapt to environments without internet access. Under such conditions, they are encouraged to seek alternative sources of stimulation, such as playing with peers, interacting with family members, and exploring their physical surroundings. These activities provide richer and more contextual emotional experiences, as they involve direct interactions that cannot be fully replaced by digital media (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015)

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory emphasizes that children's development is strongly influenced by social interaction and cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). In this regard, environments without internet access create opportunities for more intensive social interaction, thereby supporting the development of empathy, cooperation, and perspective-taking skills. Additionally, Bowlby's attachment theory highlights that secure emotional bonds between children and caregivers serve as the foundation for healthy emotional

development (Bowlby, 1969). Reduced gadget use tends to increase direct interaction between children and parents, thereby strengthening these emotional bonds.

In the long term, environments without internet access can contribute positively to children's emotional development. Children learn to cope with frustration, regulate their emotions without relying on digital distractions, and develop the ability to delay gratification (Wicun, 2025). This concept, as proposed by Mischel, is an important indicator of emotional maturity and is associated with long-term success (Mischel, 2014). These abilities enable children to become more patient, resilient, and capable of facing life challenges effectively.

Furthermore, from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the transition from a digital to a non-digital environment can be understood as a macro-system change that influences interactions within the micro-system, such as family and social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The absence of internet access encourages children to engage more actively with their immediate surroundings, thereby enriching their emotional experiences. Thus, environments without internet access function not merely as restrictions but also as alternative stimuli that support more balanced emotional development.

In conclusion, the emotional development of early childhood accustomed to gadget use in environments without internet access is dynamic in nature. Although children may initially experience emotional disturbances as a response to changes in stimuli, in the long term, such conditions have the potential to strengthen emotional regulation, enhance social interaction, and foster more mature and adaptive emotional characteristics.

Factors Influencing Children's Emotional Responses in Environments Without Internet Access

Children's emotional responses to environments without internet access constitute a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors. From a developmental psychology perspective, children's emotional responses are shaped by the interaction between prior experiences, current environmental conditions, and individual characteristics. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of children's emotional responses in such contexts requires a comprehensive approach that simultaneously considers both internal and external factors.

One of the primary factors influencing children's emotional responses is the intensity of gadget use prior to the restriction of internet access. Children who are accustomed to prolonged gadget use tend to develop a higher level of dependence on digital stimuli. This dependence is not only behavioral but also associated with neuropsychological aspects. Research indicates that excessive screen exposure may affect the development of brain

regions associated with self-control and emotional regulation, particularly the prefrontal cortex (Rich & Christakis, 2016). Consequently, when access to gadgets is restricted, children tend to exhibit more intense emotional responses, such as anger, frustration, and anxiety.

This phenomenon can be explained through the reward system theory in psychology, in which gadget use stimulates dopamine release, creating a sense of instant pleasure (Lembke, 2021). In environments without internet access, children lose this primary source of gratification, resulting in negative emotional reactions due to imbalances in emotional regulation. This is consistent with the concept of behavioral addiction, where individuals experience difficulty controlling behaviors that provide immediate satisfaction despite their long-term negative consequences.

In addition to the intensity of gadget use, parenting style is another crucial factor influencing children's emotional responses. According to Gottman's emotion coaching theory, parents play a vital role in mediating children's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions (Gottman, 1997). Responsive parenting, characterized by emotional support and appropriate guidance, helps children develop better emotional regulation skills. Conversely, permissive or uninvolved parenting tends to increase children's dependence on gadgets as a primary tool for coping with negative emotions.

The emergence of negative emotions in children, such as anger, frustration, and tantrums, can be analyzed through the framework of the hierarchy of needs proposed by Abraham Maslow. This theory explains that negative emotions arise when an individual's basic needs are not fulfilled, including physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In early childhood, the most dominant needs are the need for security and affection (attachment), as well as the need to play and explore (Bowlby, 1969).

In the context of gadget use, it is important to distinguish between essential needs and those that are secondary or socially constructed. Gadgets are not fundamentally basic needs within Maslow's hierarchy; rather, they function as tools or media that provide entertainment stimulation and instant gratification. However, when children become accustomed to intensive gadget use, these devices may shift in function into a "perceived need," as children associate them with comfort and pleasure (Kardefelt-Winther, 2017).

Therefore, the emergence of negative emotions in children when they do not have access to gadgets is not solely due to unmet basic needs, but rather to dependence on digital stimuli that previously served as a source of emotional regulation. This condition is consistent

with research findings indicating that excessive screen use is associated with increased difficulties in emotional regulation, including aggressive behavior and frustration in children (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Furthermore, the restriction or removal of access to digital media may trigger responses such as restlessness and irritability, resembling withdrawal symptoms (Radesky, Schumacher, & Zuckerman, 2015).

In this context, gadget use without parental supervision may reinforce maladaptive emotional regulation patterns. Children become accustomed to avoiding negative emotions through digital distractions rather than confronting them constructively. When such distractions are unavailable, children experience difficulty managing their emotions independently. Studies have shown that the use of digital devices as a "soothing tool" is associated with increased behavioral and emotional problems (Radesky et al., 2015). Therefore, the quality of parent–child interaction becomes a determining factor in how children respond to environments without internet access.

Social environmental factors also play a significant role in shaping children's emotional responses. Children who have opportunities to interact with peers and family members tend to adapt more easily to conditions without gadgets. Social interaction provides a context for children to recognize others' emotions, develop empathy, and enhance interpersonal communication skills (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011). In situations without internet access, a supportive social environment can function as a substitute for digital stimuli, helping children redirect their attention toward more meaningful activities.

Bandura's social learning theory further explains that children learn through observation and imitation of others' behaviors (Bandura, 1977). In socially active environments, children are more likely to imitate positive emotional behaviors demonstrated by those around them. In contrast, children with limited social interaction may struggle to develop emotional regulation skills due to the lack of behavioral models.

Beyond external factors, individual characteristics also play a crucial role in determining children's emotional responses to environmental changes. One key aspect is temperament, defined as individual differences in emotional reactivity and self-regulation. According to Rothbart, temperament represents the biological foundation of personality that influences how individuals respond to environmental stimuli (Rothbart, 2006). Children with an easy temperament tend to adapt more flexibly to changes, including environments without internet access. Conversely, children with more reactive or difficult temperaments tend to exhibit stronger emotional responses.

These differences in temperament explain why children respond differently to the absence of internet access. Some children adapt quickly, while others require more time and support. Therefore, interventions and guidance strategies must be tailored to each child's individual characteristics.

Another important factor is the quality of the physical environment and the availability of alternative activities. Environments that provide positive stimuli, such as play spaces, educational toys, and opportunities for creative activities, can help children shift their attention from gadgets to more constructive engagements (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015). Activities such as outdoor play, drawing, and role-playing offer richer and more meaningful emotional experiences compared to digital interactions (Yulianto, 2025).

Conversely, environments that lack supportive conditions—such as limited play space or minimal parental involvement—may exacerbate children's emotional difficulties. In such situations, children lack adequate alternatives for self-expression, leading to boredom, frustration, and even stress. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory emphasizes that the quality of the microsystem, including family and physical environment, has a direct impact on child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Thus, environments without internet access do not inherently produce negative outcomes, provided that they are supported by rich and positive environmental stimuli. It is also important to recognize that children's emotional responses in such environments are dynamic. In the initial phase, children may exhibit resistance and emotional disturbances; however, over time, they can adapt if supported by a conducive environment. This process demonstrates that children's emotional development is plastic and can be shaped through appropriate experiences and interventions (Maisaroh, 2024).

In conclusion, children's emotional responses in environments without internet access result from a complex interaction of multiple factors, including prior gadget use intensity, parenting style, social environment, individual characteristics, and physical environmental quality. A holistic and contextual approach is essential to effectively understand and manage these dynamics. Limiting gadget use alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by the provision of supportive alternatives that promote optimal emotional development in children.

The Emotional Adaptation Process of Early Childhood in an Without Internet Access

The emotional adaptation process of early childhood in an environment without Internet access is a phenomenon that occurs gradually, dynamically, and contextually (Alifa et

al., 2025). This adaptation does not happen instantaneously but unfolds through a series of phases that reflect children's ability to respond to environmental changes, particularly when access to digital stimuli—previously part of their daily routines—is removed. From a developmental psychology perspective, this process demonstrates that children possess a high degree of plasticity, enabling them to adjust to environmental changes if supported by appropriate conditions.

In the initial phase, children generally exhibit intense negative emotional responses. This stage can be categorized as a withdrawal effect, a psychological reaction arising from the cessation of access to pleasurable stimuli (Christakis, 2017). In this context, gadgets and Internet access function as primary sources of entertainment and emotional regulation. When access is suddenly withdrawn, children experience emotional imbalance, manifested in behaviors such as crying, anger, tantrums, and rejection of other activities.

These reactions are part of a normal adjustment process, especially in early childhood, during which emotional regulation is still developing. According to Denham (1998), young children heavily rely on external assistance to manage their emotions. Therefore, when an external source of support such as a gadget is removed, children struggle to regulate their emotions independently. During this phase, parental involvement is crucial to provide emotional guidance and prevent excessive psychological stress.

Entering the transition phase, children begin to exhibit changes in behavior and emotional responses. At this stage, they start seeking alternative activities to replace gadget use. This indicates the emergence of adaptive mechanisms in which children attempt to find new sources of stimulation that meet their emotional needs. Activities such as role-playing, drawing, reading, and outdoor play gradually become more appealing (Hirsh-Pasek, 2015).

During the transition phase, the quality of the environment and parental involvement are decisive factors. Environments that offer various engaging activities appropriate to children's developmental stages can accelerate adaptation, whereas less supportive environments may slow adjustment and even prolong emotional resistance. The scaffolding theory by Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that children require adult support to reach higher levels of development. Proper guidance helps children develop new strategies for managing their emotions.

Over time, children enter a stable adaptation phase, in which they demonstrate improved emotional regulation and can enjoy non-digital activities without significant

feelings of loss. Children no longer rely exclusively on gadgets as the primary source of gratification; instead, they find satisfaction in a wider range of contextual activities.

This process reflects the development of self-regulation, the ability to control emotions, attention, and behavior independently. According to executive function theory, this ability is part of higher-order cognitive functions that develop through repeated experiences and practice (Diamond, 2013). An Internet-free environment can serve as an effective training ground, requiring children to manage their emotions without instant distractions.

Furthermore, this adaptation process is closely related to children's ability to cope with frustration. In an Internet-free context, children face situations that do not align with their desires, evoking discomfort. However, through gradual adaptation, children learn to accept these conditions and develop strategies to manage negative feelings. This aligns with the concept of delay of gratification, which refers to the ability to postpone immediate rewards for greater future benefits (Mischel, 2014).

From a resilience theory perspective, children's capacity to adapt to Internet-free conditions is an indicator of emotional resilience (Masten, 2001). Children who successfully navigate this adaptation phase tend to have better coping skills for future stress and environmental changes. They become more flexible, less easily frustrated, and more effective at managing emotions.

This adaptation process also enhances children's social interactions. Reduced gadget use provides more opportunities for direct interactions with parents and peers. Such interactions offer richer and more meaningful emotional experiences, fostering empathy, cooperation, and communication skills. In the long term, this contributes to the development of emotional intelligence.

Within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), the transition from a digital to a non-digital environment represents a modification of the environmental system that affects children's interactions across various social contexts. An Internet-free environment not only reduces exposure to technology but also creates space for more diverse experiences. Therefore, its impact depends largely on how the environment is managed and utilized to support child development.

In conclusion, the emotional adaptation process of children in an Internet-free environment demonstrates that limited access to technology does not necessarily have negative consequences. On the contrary, it can provide constructive opportunities to develop emotional regulation, enhance mental resilience, and enrich social experiences. The success of

this adaptation process is strongly influenced by environmental support, particularly the role of parents in providing appropriate guidance.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that environments without internet access significantly impact the emotional development of young children accustomed to using devices. In the early stages, children tend to exhibit negative emotional responses such as tantrums, frustration, and emotional instability due to the loss of digital stimuli that previously served as a source of satisfaction. However, these responses are temporary. Over time, children adapt by shifting to non-digital activities such as playing with friends, interacting with family, and exploring their surroundings. This process actually encourages the development of emotional regulation skills, patience, and the ability to deal with frustration more healthily.

Furthermore, children's emotional development in conditions with limited internet access is influenced by various factors such as the intensity of previous device use, parenting styles, social environment, and individual characteristics. These findings confirm that restricting technology access is not always negative but can instead be an opportunity to enhance emotional independence and the quality of social interactions. Therefore, the role of parents and the community is crucial in managing device use by providing alternative educational activities and appropriate emotional support, thus achieving a balance between technology use and optimal child development.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Toyyibatut Thowilah acted as the principal investigator, contributing to the study's conceptualization, formulation of the research problem, design of the research framework, and collection, selection, and analysis of relevant literature. Amirul Mukminin contributed to the development of the theoretical framework, critical review and synthesis of the literature, and strengthening the analytical depth of the discussion. Zahra Hudaibiyah was responsible for methodological validation, ensuring the credibility and consistency of the data. All authors actively participated in discussing the research findings and have approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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