

The Influence of Gadget Use Intensity on Reading Comprehension Skills of Fourth Grade Elementary School Students

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Abstrac: The development of digital technology has increased the intensity of gadget use among elementary school students, potentially affecting their reading literacy skills. This study aims to analyze the effect of gadget use intensity on reading comprehension skills in the material of determining the main idea of fourth-grade students of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya. The study used a quantitative approach with a causal associative design. The research sample consisted of 27 fourth-grade C students selected through a purposive sampling technique, while the instrument trial involved 25 fourth-grade B students. Data collection was carried out using a gadget use intensity questionnaire and a reading comprehension ability test. Data were analyzed through validity, reliability, normality, linearity, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression tests. The results showed that gadget use intensity had a negative and significant relationship with reading comprehension ability ($r = -0.518$; $p = 0.006$). The regression analysis produced a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.268, indicating that gadget use intensity contributed 26.8% to reading comprehension ability, while 73.2% was influenced by other factors. These findings indicate that the higher the intensity of gadget use, the lower students' ability to identify the main idea of a reading. Therefore, monitoring and educational use of gadgets are necessary to support the development of students' reading literacy.

Keywords: Intensity of gadget use, Reading comprehension, Main idea, Indonesian, Elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including the implementation of education in elementary schools, which increasingly utilize digital devices as learning media. Gadgets such as smartphones and tablets now function not only as communication tools but also support learning activities, entertainment, and access to information for students (Savva et al., 2022). The ease of accessing information through various digital platforms provides students with opportunities for more flexible learning without being limited by space or time. Despite these benefits, the increasing intensity of gadget use also raises concerns about changes in learning habits, particularly a decrease in in-depth reading activity among elementary school-aged children. This condition is a critical concern because reading skills are the main foundation for supporting students' success in understanding various learning materials (Furenes et al., 2021; Savva et al., 2022).

Reading ability is a basic skill that students must possess to obtain, process, and utilize information in the learning process in elementary schools (Apfani et al., 2026). Reading is not only interpreted as the ability to recognize language symbols, but also as a process of understanding, interpreting, and constructing meaning based on the content of the reading material studied. Reading comprehension skills play an important role in helping students develop critical thinking skills, solve problems, and make decisions based on the information obtained (Kruidenier, 2002). Low reading comprehension skills can cause students to have difficulty understanding the subject matter, thus impacting the achievement of competencies expected in the curriculum (Apfani et al., 2026; Tiatri et al., 2025).

In Indonesian language learning in fourth-grade elementary schools, reading comprehension skills are demonstrated through various indicators that measure students' level of understanding of the information in a reading (Sabaniah et al., 2026). One important indicator is the ability to determine the main idea that is the core of the discussion of each paragraph in a reading text (Lord, 2015). The ability to determine the main idea requires students to analyze the relationships between sentences, distinguish main ideas from supporting ideas, and conclude information logically (Damaiyanti et al., 2024). Mastery of these skills forms the foundation for students to develop advanced

reading skills, such as making inferences, evaluating information, and understanding the meaning of the reading as a whole (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

Despite its important role, the ability to determine the main idea remains a common difficulty for elementary school students in learning Indonesian. Some students are able to read texts fluently, but do not fully understand the content of the reading, thus having difficulty identifying the main idea of each paragraph (Gusmiva et al., 2026; Yahya & Husni Mubarak, 2024). Some students also still choose sentences that are considered interesting as the main idea without considering the relationship of meaning between parts of the paragraph. This condition shows that reading comprehension ability is influenced by various interrelated factors, both originating from within the student and the learning environment (Prameswari & Subayani, 2024; Rahmawati & Roshayanti, 2024).

One external factor suspected of being related to reading comprehension ability is the intensity of gadget use in students' daily activities at home and school (Rukmana et al., 2021). The intensity of gadget use reflects the level of digital device usage based on frequency, duration, purpose of use, and the types of activities carried out while accessing various services. High gadget use has the potential to form a habit of reading quickly, making students less accustomed to in-depth reading to understand the content of the reading, although this influence is also influenced by media design and guidance during reading (Furenes et al., 2021). Conversely, gadgets can also be used as learning media that provide various digital reading resources, thus potentially supporting reading improvement when used appropriately (Istiq'faroh et al., 2025). Therefore, the relationship between the intensity of gadget use and reading comprehension ability still requires proof through research supported by empirical data because it is influenced by various interacting factors (Chen et al., 2021).

Previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the relationship between gadget use and the academic abilities and literacy development of elementary school students (Dorris et al., 2024; Lei et al., 2021). Some studies report that excessive gadget use can potentially reduce students' learning concentration, reading quality, and academic achievement, although the magnitude of the effect varies across research contexts (Furenes et al., 2021). Other studies indicate that gadget use does not always have a negative impact when used as a targeted learning medium with parental and teacher

guidance and supported by appropriate learning design (Dorris et al., 2024; Ostiz-Blanco et al., 2021). These differing results indicate that the influence of gadget use is influenced by various other factors, such as the purpose of use, the quality of digital content, parental supervision, learning motivation, and the student's learning environment (Furenes et al., 2021; Lei et al., 2021). These diverse findings indicate that the relationship between the intensity of gadget use and reading comprehension skills still requires further study through empirical research in the elementary school context.

Most previous studies have focused more on examining the relationship between gadget use and learning outcomes, learning motivation, or academic achievement in various elementary school subjects rather than on reading comprehension, a more specific competency (Dorris et al., 2024). Research specifically examining the effect of gadget use intensity on reading comprehension skills in the area of determining the main idea of fourth-grade elementary school students is still relatively limited, resulting in inadequate empirical evidence in this context (Hare et al., 2024). In fact, the ability to determine the main idea is a basic competency that plays a crucial role in building students' reading literacy skills because it forms the basis for understanding information and developing advanced reading skills (Triana et al., 2024). These research limitations suggest an opportunity to develop a more specific study on the relationship between gadget use intensity and reading comprehension skills in Indonesian language learning, particularly in fourth-grade elementary school students.

Initial observations at SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya showed that almost all fourth-grade students had access to gadgets and used them daily for various purposes. Teachers also reported that some students still had difficulty identifying the main idea despite their relatively good reading aloud skills, as also found in research (Manuain et al., 2024) which showed that elementary school students still had difficulty identifying the main idea of paragraphs. Some students were unable to connect important information in each paragraph and therefore required teacher guidance to fully understand the reading content, in line with findings (Hafid et al., 2024) regarding the low reading comprehension skills of elementary school students. This condition indicates a phenomenon that requires further study regarding the relationship between the intensity of gadget use and students' reading comprehension skills, considering that empirical

evidence regarding the relationship between the two variables still shows mixed results (Dorris et al., 2024; Lei et al., 2021).

This study is novel because it focuses its analysis on reading comprehension skills and determining main ideas as an important competency in Indonesian language learning in fourth-grade elementary schools. While most previous studies have focused on examining gadget use in relation to learning outcomes or general literacy (Dorris et al., 2024). This study also measures the intensity of gadget use through several indicators, namely frequency, duration, purpose of use, and forms of students' digital activities, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the characteristics of gadget use (Rukmana et al., 2021). This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between gadget use and elementary school students' reading comprehension skills. The research findings are expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of reading literacy and serve as a basis for consideration in optimizing the use of gadgets as a learning medium.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design through a causal associative method to analyze the effect of gadget usage intensity on reading comprehension skills in the material of determining the main idea of 4th grade elementary school students. The study did not provide treatment to the subjects, but examined the relationship between the independent variable, namely the intensity of gadget usage (X), with the dependent variable, namely reading comprehension skills (Y), based on the actual conditions of the students. The study was conducted at SDN Lidah Wetan II, Surabaya in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The study population was all fourth-grade students of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya, consisting of two classes. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, considering the equality of academic characteristics and ease of research implementation. The sample was divided into two groups: class IV B as the instrument trial group and class IV C as the research sample. Data from class IV B were used to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, while data from class IV C were used as the basis for inferential statistical analysis.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Research Sample

Group	Class	Number of Students (N)	Indicator
Group A	IV B	25	Instrument trial
Group B	IV C	27	Research sample

Data collection used two types of instruments: a gadget usage intensity questionnaire and a reading comprehension test. The questionnaire was structured using a four-choice Likert scale without a neutral option to minimize the tendency for middle responses among elementary school students. This instrument measures gadget usage intensity based on four indicators: frequency of use, duration of use, purpose of use, and digital activity. Meanwhile, reading comprehension was measured using a multiple-choice test structured based on fourth-grade Indonesian language learning outcomes, focusing on determining the main idea.

Table 2. Research Variables and Instruments

Variables	Indicator	Instrumental
Intensity of gadget use (X)	Frequency, duration, purpose of use, digital activity	Likert scale questionnaire (25 items)
Reading comprehension (Y)	Determining main ideas, identifying supporting ideas, determining main sentences, summarizing reading content	Multiple-choice test (25 items)

Before being used on the research sample, the instrument was first tested on a trial group to determine the quality of the instrument items. The validity of the questionnaire was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, while the validity of the test was analyzed using the Point-Biserial correlation. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, while the reliability of the test used the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) formula. The instrument was declared suitable for use if it met the validity criteria at a significance level of 5% and had a reliability coefficient ≥ 0.70 .

The data were analyzed in stages using statistical software. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to obtain an overview of the data characteristics, followed by a normality test using Shapiro-Wilk and a linearity test as a prerequisite for regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of gadget use intensity on reading comprehension skills. In addition, the correlation coefficient (R), the coefficient of determination (R^2), and a significance test of the regression coefficient at the 5% significance level were used to interpret the direction, strength, and magnitude of the contribution of the independent variables to the

dependent variable.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a general overview of the data characteristics of the gadget usage intensity variables (X) and reading comprehension skills in the material determining the main idea (Y). The analysis was conducted on 27 students of grade IV C of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya as research samples. The results of the analysis showed that the gadget usage intensity score was in the range of 45-88 with an average of 68.44 and a standard deviation of 10.35. Meanwhile, the reading comprehension ability score was in the range of 52-92 with an average of 73.19 and a standard deviation of 9.89. Based on these averages, the intensity of students' gadget usage was in the high category, while their reading comprehension ability was in the good category.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maksimum	Mean	SD	Category
Gadget Use Intensity (X)	27	45,00	88,00	68,44	10,35	High
Reading Comprehension Ability (Y)	27	52,00	92,00	73,19	9,89	Good

Instrument Feasibility Test Results

Before being used in the research sample, all instruments were first tested on 25 students of grade IV B as a trial group. The test was conducted to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments so that the data obtained met the requirements as a research measurement tool. The analysis results showed that all items in the gadget usage intensity questionnaire and the reading comprehension ability test had correlation coefficient values greater than the r table value (0.396), so all items were declared valid. In addition, the results of the reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.842 in the gadget usage intensity questionnaire and a KR-20 coefficient of 0.785 in the reading comprehension ability test. Both values were above the minimum limit of 0.70 so the instruments were declared reliable and suitable for use in research.

Table 4. Results of Instrument Validity and Reliability Tests

Instrumental	Number of Items	R_{hitung}	R_{tabel}	Reliability	Description
Gadget Use Intensity Questionnaire	25	0,410-0,781	0,396	Cronbach's Alpha = 0,842	Valid and reliable
Reading Comprehension Test	25	0,428-0,762	0,396	KR-20 = 0,785	Valid and reliable

Prerequisite Analysis Test Results

Before testing the hypothesis, the research data were first tested using normality and linearity tests. The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk method because the sample size was less than 50 respondents. The test results showed that all significance values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data for both variables were normally distributed. Furthermore, the linearity test showed a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.562 (>0.05), indicating that the relationship between gadget use intensity and reading comprehension ability is linear. Thus, all prerequisites for simple linear regression analysis have been met.

Table 5. Results of the Analysis Prerequisite Test

Test Type	Statistical	Sig.	Description
Shapiro-Wilk Variabel X	0,961	0,391	Normal
Shapiro-Wilk Variabel Y	0,954	0,264	Normal
Shapiro-Wilk Residual	0,970	0,598	Normal
Deviation from Linearity	F = 0,923	0,562	Linear

The Relationship between Gadget Use Intensity and Reading Comprehension Ability

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a negative relationship between the intensity of gadget use and reading comprehension skills in the material determining the main idea. The correlation coefficient value of $r = -0.518$ with a significance value of 0.006 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the relationship between the two variables is in the moderate category and is statistically significant. The negative direction of the relationship indicates that the higher the intensity of gadget use, the tendency for students' reading comprehension skills to decrease.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Test Type	Statistical	Sig.	Description
Gadget Usage Intensity - Reading Comprehension Ability	Gadget Usage Intensity - Reading Comprehension Ability	Gadget Usage Intensity - Reading Comprehension Ability	Gadget Usage Intensity - Reading Comprehension Ability

Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to determine the magnitude of the influence of gadget use intensity on reading comprehension ability in the material determining the main idea. The analysis results showed a coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.268, which means that gadget use intensity contributed 26.8% to the variation in students' reading comprehension ability. Meanwhile, 73.2% of the variation in reading comprehension ability was influenced by other factors outside the research model.

The regression equation obtained is:

$$Y = 101,284 - 0,410X$$

The equation shows that every one-unit increase in gadget use intensity is followed by a 0.410-point decrease in reading comprehension. A negative regression coefficient indicates an inverse relationship between the two research variables.

Table 7. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Test Type	Statistical
R	0,518
R^2	0,268
Adjusted R^2	0,239
Constant (a)	101,284
Regression Coefficient (b)	-0,410
Standard Error	8,214

Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Testing	Value	Sig.	Description
F-test (ANOVA)	9,150	0,006	Significant model
T-test	-3,025	0,006	H_0 rejected

The feasibility of the regression model was tested using the ANOVA test, while the significance of the regression coefficient was tested using the t test. The results of the analysis showed that the constructed regression model was suitable for use with an F value of 9.150 and a significance of 0.006. Furthermore, the results of the t test showed a

t value of -3.025 with a significance of 0.006, so that the significance value was smaller than the error level of 0.05. Thus, H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted, which means there was a negative and significant influence between the intensity of gadget use on reading comprehension skills in the material of determining the main idea of grade IV students of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the intensity of gadget use has a negative and significant effect on the reading comprehension ability in the material of determining the main idea of grade IV students of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya. This finding is indicated by the correlation coefficient value of $r = -0.518$ with a significance value of 0.006 ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination value ($R^2 = 0.268$) indicates that the intensity of gadget use contributes 26.8% to the variation in reading comprehension ability, while the remaining 73.2% is influenced by other factors outside the study. These results indicate that the higher the intensity of gadget use, the tendency for students' reading comprehension ability, especially in determining the main idea, to decrease.

These findings can be explained by the characteristics of digital activities frequently engaged in by elementary school students. High levels of gadget use are generally dominated by entertainment activities, such as playing games, watching videos, and accessing social media. These activities tend to present information briefly, quickly, and visually, so students are accustomed to obtaining information instantly without engaging in in-depth reading. This habit has the potential to reduce students' ability to focus when reading longer texts that require understanding the relationships between ideas within each paragraph. As a result, students experience difficulty when asked to identify the main idea that underlies the discussion of a reading.

The results of this study also strengthen the Simple View of Reading theory proposed by Philip B. Gough and William E. Tunmer in (Salwa, 2024), which explains that reading comprehension is the result of the interaction between word recognition and language comprehension. In the context of this study, most students were able to read texts fluently, but the high intensity of gadget use is thought to affect the process of focusing attention and processing information so that the ability to understand the content of the reading, especially determining the main idea, is less than optimal. Thus, the results

of this study indicate that successful reading comprehension is not only determined by mechanical reading ability, but is also influenced by learning habits and the literacy environment that shape how students interact with information.

Furthermore, the results of this study align with the concept of deep reading proposed by Maryanne Wolf. Wolf explains that the process of deep reading requires attention, reflection, and the ability to connect various pieces of information within a text to construct a complete meaning (Wolf et al., 2009). Continuous exposure to digital media has the potential to alter reading patterns to become faster (skimming), making readers less accustomed to conducting in-depth analysis of the content of the reading. This condition is relevant to the results of this study, because the ability to determine the main idea requires students to understand the relationships between sentences before being able to identify the main idea in a paragraph.

Based on regression analysis, the intensity of gadget use only explains 26.8% of the variation in reading comprehension ability. This percentage indicates that gadget use is not the sole factor determining students' reading comprehension ability. Various other factors contribute significantly, such as early reading ability, learning motivation, reading habits at home, parental support, classroom learning quality, the school literacy environment, and students' vocabulary skills. Therefore, improving reading comprehension requires a comprehensive approach and does not solely focus on limiting gadget use.

The results of this study align with several previous studies that reported a negative relationship between the intensity of gadget use and students' learning abilities. Fitri's research showed that the higher the intensity of gadget use, the lower the academic achievement of elementary school students (Fitri et al., 2026). Similar findings were also reported by Ningsih's, who found that uncontrolled gadget use affected students' critical thinking skills (Ningsih et al., 2023). These similar results indicate that excessive gadget use has the potential to reduce the quality of the learning process if not balanced with proper supervision and utilization.

On the other hand, the results of this study also provide the perspective that gadgets do not always have a negative impact on reading ability. The influence found in this study is influenced by how students utilize digital devices in their daily lives. If gadgets are used as learning media to access digital books, interactive stories, or

technology-based reading exercises with the guidance of teachers and parents, these devices have the potential to support the development of reading literacy. Therefore, what needs to be considered is not only the duration of gadget use, but also the quality of the content accessed, the purpose of use, and supervision during student use of digital devices.

The findings of this study have practical implications for teachers, parents, and schools. Teachers need to integrate digital media that supports reading comprehension so that students can utilize gadgets as learning tools, not merely as entertainment. Parents also need to provide guidance and manage gadget use time to balance digital activities with reading habits. At the school level, reading literacy programs can be integrated with the use of educational digital technology so that students gain learning experiences relevant to technological developments without compromising the quality of their reading comprehension skills.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. The number of respondents was relatively limited because it involved only one school with 27 students as the research sample, so the results cannot be generalized to a wider population. Furthermore, this study only examined one independent variable, namely the intensity of gadget use, while various other factors that could potentially influence reading comprehension skills were not analyzed simultaneously. Therefore, further research is recommended using a larger sample size, involving several schools, and adding other variables, such as learning motivation, reading habits, family support, and the school literacy environment to obtain a more comprehensive model in explaining students' reading comprehension skills.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the intensity of gadget use has a negative and significant effect on the reading comprehension ability in the material of determining the main idea of grade IV students of SDN Lidah Wetan II Surabaya. The higher the intensity of gadget use, the tendency of students' ability to understand the content of the reading and determine the main idea of a paragraph decreases. However, the magnitude of the influence found indicates that the ability to read comprehension is not only influenced by the intensity of

gadget use, but also by various other factors, such as reading habits, learning motivation, family environment, and the quality of learning received by students at school.

The findings of this study imply that gadget use among elementary school-aged children needs to be directed in a more educational manner through parental and teacher guidance, as well as by regulating the duration and purpose of use. Schools also need to integrate digital literacy-based learning that encourages students to utilize technology as a learning tool, not just as a medium for entertainment. Further research is recommended to involve a larger number of respondents, cover a wider range of schools, and include other variables related to reading comprehension skills to obtain a more comprehensive model explaining the factors influencing students' reading literacy skills.

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