



# THE USE OF GADGETS IN BUILDING ACADEMIC SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OF ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT ATHIRAH 2 BUKIT BARUGA MAKASSAR

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## ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, gadgets have become an inseparable part of daily life, influencing individuals across all age groups, from children to the elderly. The education sector is no exception; teachers, lecturers, graduates, and students alike are significantly impacted by the presence of gadgets in academic settings. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to explore how learners utilize gadgets to build and maintain their academic social interactions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with students, participatory observations, and document analysis. Research participants were selected using a random sampling technique, considering grade-level representation and the intensity of gadget use. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that gadgets serve as a primary medium for facilitating academic social interactions among students at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Makassar. Learning applications, social media platforms, and online discussion groups have proven effective in fostering collaboration, sharing academic information, and enhancing communication between students and teachers. However, the study also highlights challenges, including the risk of gadget dependency and a decline in face-to-face interactions within academic environments.

**Keywords:** Digital learning; high education; academic social interaction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology have significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including education. One noteworthy phenomenon is the use of gadgets by students at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga in shaping their academic social interactions.

One of the rapidly evolving information technology tools is the gadget. In today's fast-paced world, gadgets have become an essential part of daily life, offering functionalities beyond mere communication. They serve as business tools, data storage devices, sources of entertainment, information providers, and even documentation tools.

The widespread use of gadgets has influenced students in numerous ways, particularly in diminishing face-to-face communication habits. Many students become more engrossed in their devices than engaging in direct social interactions, leading to a decline in interpersonal relationships. Academic social interactions, which traditionally involved face-to-face engagement, are now increasingly mediated by gadgets. People rely on their devices at all times, often prioritizing virtual interactions over real-world connections. Many prefer social media friendships over building meaningful relationships with peers in their immediate environment.

In the school setting, this shift is evident as students frequently focus on their gadgets rather than interacting with their classmates. For instance, during breaks, many students prefer scrolling through their screens rather than participating in conversations or activities. The rise of social media, messaging apps, and other digital platforms has altered traditional communication methods, potentially impacting students' social skills and their ability to empathize.

Additionally, excessive and uncontrolled gadget use can lead to addiction, further affecting students' ability to engage effectively in social settings, particularly within the school environment.

On the other hand, gadgets can also serve as a medium for fostering new forms of academic social interactions. Some students utilize instant messaging apps and social media to collaborate with peers, including students from other schools, thereby expanding their academic engagement beyond traditional classroom boundaries.

This phenomenon raises important questions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of gadget use in academic social interactions at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga. Do gadgets facilitate or hinder students' academic social interactions? How do students strike a balance between gadget use and direct academic engagement?

#### *a. Use of Gadgets*

Technological advancements have reshaped the way students interact academically. Digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and various online collaboration tools have created new spaces for academic engagement, transcending the physical constraints of traditional classrooms. Students can now collaborate on projects, share learning materials, and participate in real-time discussions regardless of time and location.

A gadget is a small, portable electronic device designed to perform specific functions that facilitate human activities through advanced and practical technology. Examples of gadgets include computers, smartphones, tablets, and other digital devices. Beyond their functionality, gadgets have become an integral part of modern life and a symbol of contemporary lifestyle.

Among the most commonly used gadgets is the mobile phone. Klemes highlights that mobile phones are among the most powerful and widely accepted gadgets globally. In addition

to making and receiving calls, mobile phones allow users to send text messages via Short Message Service (SMS), browse the internet, and engage in various digital interactions.

#### *b. Purpose of Gadget Use*

Gadgets have evolved from simple technological tools into transformative devices that serve multiple human needs. They bridge long distances, enabling real-time communication across the globe.

Gadgets facilitate seamless communication between individuals and groups through various telecommunication services, surpassing traditional landline telephones. Mobile technology continues to evolve, ensuring its relevance in modern life. Additionally, gadgets play a crucial role in enhancing the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of learning.

While these are common uses, the specific purposes of gadgets vary based on individual needs and preferences. Understanding these purposes helps developers design devices and applications that meet users' requirements while enabling organizations and institutions to optimize their use for achieving targeted goals.

#### *c. Benefits and Functions of Gadgets*

Gadgets serve various functions and offer numerous benefits depending on their use. These include:

1. Communication Functions: Global real-time communication, cross-geographical connectivity, multimedia messaging, and digital networking.
2. Social Functions: Digital identity, online friendship networks, platforms for self-expression, and psychological support.
3. Educational Functions: Digital libraries, online classes, adaptive learning platforms, and access to global knowledge.
4. Entertainment Functions: Interactive gaming, streaming services, social media engagement, and digital creativity.
5. Health Functions: Physical activity tracking, digital medical consultations, nutrition monitoring, and medical condition management.
6. Economic Functions: Digital transactions, e-commerce, mobile banking, and online investments.

Gadgets are not merely technological devices but rather multifunctional ecosystems that shape human experiences. Their optimal use depends on critical awareness and responsible utilization.

#### *d. Academic Social Interaction*

Academic social interaction refers to the reciprocal relationships between individuals within an educational setting, involving the exchange of information, ideas, values, and norms related to teaching and learning activities.

The Symbolic Interaction Theory, proposed by George Herbert Mead and developed by Herbert Blumer, provides a theoretical framework for understanding academic social interactions. This theory emphasizes that human actions are based on the meanings they attribute to symbols exchanged during communication, such as language, gestures, or specific behaviors.

In academic environments, interactions between students and teachers extend beyond mere information exchange. They involve interpreting and responding to symbolic meanings, which influence communication effectiveness. Understanding this perspective can enhance interactions in academic settings, leading to improved teaching, learning, and collaboration.

#### *e. Factors Affecting Academic Social Interaction*

Several factors influence the success or failure of academic social interactions, including:

1. Social Situations: Individuals must adapt their behavior to different social contexts.
2. Group Norms and Power Structures: Social groups have norms that dictate expected behaviors, values, and customs that members must learn and adhere to.
3. Personal Goals: Individual objectives shape behaviors and interactions within an academic setting.
4. Situation Interpretation: The ability to understand and interpret social situations influences appropriate behavioral responses.

Understanding these factors can help educators and students navigate academic interactions more effectively, fostering a more collaborative and engaging learning environment. In conclusion, while gadgets present challenges such as reduced face-to-face communication and potential addiction, they also offer significant benefits in enhancing academic social interactions. The key lies in striking a balance between virtual and direct engagement to ensure meaningful and productive academic experiences.

## **2. METHODS**

This research follows a qualitative approach, aiming to understand and produce descriptive data in the form of written or oral narratives derived from research sources and the experiences of research subjects. The goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of the object under study while depicting real, natural, and concrete conditions in the field through data collection from the surrounding environment.

Qualitative research allows researchers to explore, interpret, and explain various human behaviors and experiences in different contexts. It focuses on formulating the essence of life experiences and the phenomena encountered by individuals.

Theoretically, qualitative research seeks to identify interactive relationship patterns, describe complex realities, and develop a deeper understanding of meaning based on observed field phenomena. In this study, the qualitative approach is employed to explore in depth various

aspects related to the use of gadgets in shaping students' academic and social interactions at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar.

*a. Approach*

The approach is an effort to achieve the target that has been determined in the research objectives. Suharsimi Arikunto(2010 )said that although the research problem is the same, sometimes researchers can choose one of two or more types of approaches that can be used in solving problems. The approach is the point of view used in a particular process of doing something. This means that the research approach is understood as the point of view that will be used in conducting research activities. The approaches used in this research are methodological approaches and scientific approaches.

1) Methodological Approach

The methodological approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with a descriptive type, which aims to provide images that can be in the form of documentation or videos.

2) Scientific Approach

The scientific approach in this research uses a theological-pedagogical-psychological approach that is popularly called an interdisciplinary approach, an approach that combines two or more disciplines.

*b. Data Source*

This research is a qualitative study that requires researchers to find and explore data from direct sources. In the process, researchers divide primary and secondary data groups.

1) Primary Data

Primary data is data obtained directly from research subjects using data collection tools directly on the subject as the source of the information being sought. Primary data sources are recorded through written notes or through video recording or audiotapes, taking photos or films.

2) Secondary Data

Secondary data is data obtained through other parties, not directly obtained by researchers from their research subjects. Secondary data is usually in the form of documentation data or available report data. Secondary data can also be said to be complementary or supporting data, secondary data can be obtained through various references, both sourced from books, articles, research results / scientific works.

*c. Data Collection Method*

Data collection is carried out in various settings, various sources and various ways. Judging from the setting, data is collected with natural settings (natural conditions). For data collection, researchers use several techniques, namely:

### 1) Observation

The observation method is a method used by systematically observing and recording data on the phenomena being investigated. According to Suharsini Arikunto (2010), observation or also called observation includes sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste.

### 2) Interview

Interviews are a commonly used research instrument aimed at obtaining data or information directly from informants. According to S. Margono, an interview involves asking questions orally and receiving verbal responses in return.

### 3) Documentation

The documentation technique is a method of data collection that does not involve direct interaction with the research subject. According to Suharsimi Arikunto (2010), this method is used to gather data on specific aspects or variables in the form of records, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, ledgers, agendas, and other written materials.

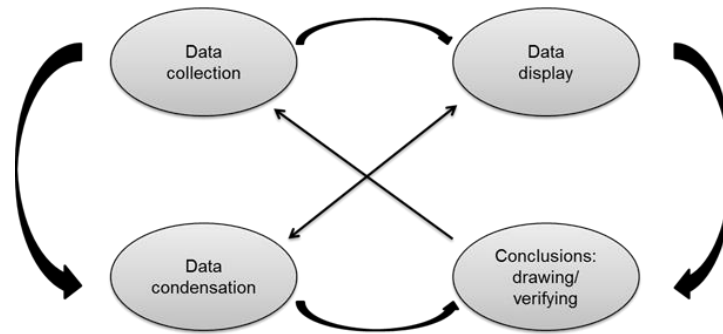
#### *d. Research Instruments*

Compiling research instruments is an important step in research procedures, instruments function as support in collecting the necessary data. Thus in this qualitative research, research instruments cannot be developed before the problem under study is completely clear. Therefore in qualitative research "the researcher is the key instrument". So the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.

#### *e. Data Processing and Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis is the process of searching and systematically compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, compiling patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others.

Interactive model according to Miles and Huberman in view of the interactive model, there are four types of analysis activities (data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying) and data collection itself is a cyclical and interactive process." The following is a picture of the components in data analysis, namely:



#### *f. Data Validity Testing*

Qualitative researchers always try to maintain the credibility of the results of their research. To test the validity of the data, the author matches and compares data from various sources, both oral sources (interview results), writing (literature), and observation data. In qualitative research, it is necessary to establish data validity to avoid invalid data. This is to avoid answers from dishonest informants. In this study, researchers used 3 (three) data validity checking techniques, namely: Observation persistence, triangulation, discussion with peers.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar focuses on how gadgets are used to build academic social interaction. Based on interviews and observations, it was revealed that these digital devices have a central role in creating a more dynamic and efficient learning environment. Teachers, learners, and administrators collectively recognize the benefits of gadgets, including ease in the teaching-learning process, improvement of academic grades, and provision of a platform for remote interaction.

In the context of digital education, it is important to evaluate how gadgets can be optimized as a learning tool as well as a medium for social interaction. Gadgets allow students to access information and learning resources without time and space constraints. This is in line with the findings that controlled use of gadgets can increase learning motivation and support collaborative learning.

However, gadgets also have potential negative impacts, such as students' tendency to withdraw from direct social interactions and lose focus on learning due to distractions from entertainment apps. In another study, this negative impact was detected in high school students, where inappropriate use of gadgets resulted in lower intensity of social relationships.

Research at SMA Islam Athirah 2 shows efforts to productively utilize digital features, such as SIMDIK for online exam management and learning applications such as Quizziz and Quizzlab. This use is considered effective in improving learning efficiency and providing a more interesting and interactive learning experience for students.

By understanding the interaction patterns formed through gadgets, this research is expected to provide new insights for educators in maximizing the potential of digital technology

to support learning. In addition, the results of this study can also serve as a basis for schools to design better policies regarding the use of gadgets in the educational environment. The use of gadgets has become an important element in learning at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar. Its existence not only facilitates access to information but also strengthens academic social interaction between students and teachers. The pattern of gadget use in this school can be divided into two main approaches, namely bound pattern and free pattern.

*a. Patterns of Gadget Use in Building Academic Social Interaction*

In academic social interaction, gadgets are one of the alternative learning media that are very helpful for both teachers and students. Teachers as part of important sources in this study provide relatively the same responses with various steps taken differently.

Through the information submitted, the researcher found that the teachers of SMA Islam Athirah 2 have two different patterns in using gadgets as learning media.

1) Bound Pattern

The researcher calls it a "tied pattern" because the teachers as a whole use the same features and are also a means that has been provided by the school in utilizing gadgets as a medium for building academic social interactions, the feature is SIMDIK.

2) Free Pattern

The second pattern, which researchers call the "free pattern" because this pattern shows that each teacher (informant) in addition to using the same features that have been provided by the school (SIMDIK), also uses different features in the process of building academic social interactions, where these features are utilized based on the needs of each subject teacher and of course adapted to the learning needs of students. Such as: Quizziz, Kahot, Word Wall, and Hiragana Memorizing and Katakana Memorizing. For more details about this free pattern, researchers divide it into several sub-discussions that show what features are used by informants in building academic social interactions at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar.

a) Quizziz

One platform that is very often used by informants in utilizing gadgets as a means of academic social interaction is the quizziz platform. Seeing the large number of students in one class (30 students), informants believe that online quizzes such as quizziz are very flexible to be used as learning media.

b) Kahot

With the same purpose of use as quizziz, namely to increase students' academic social interaction with gadget learning media, the kahoot platform is also an online quiz used by informants in PBM. This of course has a positive impact on students, where students will learn to improve concentration and be enjoyable in the learning process.



c) Word Wall

Apart from Kahoot, informants also use the Word Wall platform as a means of academic social interaction through gadget media as part of PBM. In a different way from kahoot, word wall is also able to present interesting features that are interactive. The use of Wordwall as a means of academic social interaction is very helpful in providing easy, interesting and interactive questions which can then be used by educators as a medium for assessing the learning process of each student.

d) Hiragana Memorizing and Katakana Memorizing

Each subject teacher typically uses specialized applications relevant to their field of study. For Japanese language teachers, the informants reported using *Hiragana Memorizing* and *Katakana Memorizing*. These applications are widely used by students learning Japanese to reinforce their recall of Hiragana and Katakana characters they have previously studied.

Thus, both patterns mentioned above contribute to the use of gadgets in fostering academic social interactions. However, effectively building such interactions is not a simple task. Educators and education staff must have a clear understanding of the patterns they implement. Additionally, students also play a crucial role in this process. As users of gadgets in a learning environment, they must fully grasp the purpose of incorporating these tools into the teaching and learning process, both inside and outside the classroom.

b. Social Interaction Through Technology

The use of gadgets in educational settings is becoming increasingly influential in enhancing academic and social interactions. At SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar, gadgets serve as the primary communication tool, facilitating connections among students, teachers, and administrative staff. Applications such as WhatsApp and Google Meet play a crucial role in both formal and informal communication, ensuring efficient and seamless interaction.

c. Implementation of Collaborative Learning

Gadgets play a crucial role in facilitating collaborative learning. For instance, students use Canva to design posters for group projects, while Google Drive enables them to collaborate on shared documents in real time. This integration of technology enhances their communication, time management, and teamwork skills. Moreover, school-provided Wi-Fi ensures seamless access to these applications, further supporting an efficient and technology-driven learning experience.

d. Effect of Gadgets on Student-Teacher and Inter-Student Relationships

Gadgets also play an important role in strengthening the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students. Teachers use gadgets to provide immediate feedback to students on their assignments, as well as to facilitate more dynamic class discussions. In addition, in group projects, students are encouraged to utilize gadgets in organizing schedules, sharing documents via Google Drive, and strategizing to complete assigned tasks.

e. The Role of Teachers and Administrative Staff in Gadget Use

Teachers and administrative staff play a crucial role in guiding and optimizing the use of gadgets in the educational environment. At SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar, they have a strategic responsibility to ensure that gadgets are utilized effectively to enhance both the learning process and academic management.

f. Challenges and Solutions

Despite the great benefits, the use of gadgets in academic social interaction is not free from challenges. Distractions from entertainment apps such as social media can reduce students' focus. Therefore, supervision from teachers and parents is crucial to ensure that gadgets are used productively. Limiting screen time and strategically integrating it into learning can be an effective solution to maximize the benefits of this technology.

g. Positive Impact of the Role of Teachers and Administration

With the active involvement of teachers and administrators, the use of gadgets at SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar has had a significant positive impact. Students have become more engaged in learning, gained greater independence in accessing information, and participated more actively in group projects. Additionally, digital management systems such as SIMDIK have streamlined coordination between teachers, students, and parents, fostering a more integrated learning environment.

However, challenges persist, particularly in maintaining a balance between the benefits and potential risks of gadget use. With the right strategies and strong collaboration among all stakeholders, gadgets can continue to serve as a valuable tool in education.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The use of gadgets in SMA Islam Athirah 2 Bukit Baruga Makassar shows a significant positive impact on students' academic social interaction. Gadgets have become an important tool in the learning process, both to increase student participation and strengthen communication between students and teachers. Key findings include:

- a) Ease in the Teaching and Learning Process: The use of applications such as Quizziz, Quizzlab, and SIMDIK has made it easier to deliver materials, conduct evaluations, and manage education administration. This technology also allows for the saving of resources, such as paper, as well as creating a more efficient learning environment.
- b) Increased Enthusiasm and Academic Value: Gadgets increase student engagement during the teaching-learning process by providing interactive platforms and features that support self-directed learning. This positive impact is seen in the improved academic scores of students who make productive use of gadgets.
- c) Enhanced Digital Social Interaction: In the digital realm, gadgets allow students and teachers to stay connected through social media, discussion groups or online learning platforms. This makes academic communication easier while creating opportunities for more flexible interactions.

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