The Effectiveness of Gather Town ICT Media on The Interpersonal Skills of Elementary School Students

Uus Kuswendi[1*], Ruli Setiyadi[2]

[1,2] Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Siliwangi. Indonesia

**Article Info**

Abstract

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of using Gather Town ICT media to improve the interpersonal skills of elementary school students. The research method used is a quasi-experiment method or real experiment. Meanwhile, this research design uses a pretest-posttest control group design. In this design, the experimental and control groups are not randomly selected. The research population was 54 elementary school students in Cimahi. The research sample was selected using random sampling techniques or random samples. Researchers will choose randomly selected classes to be used as research samples. Data collection in this research used a questionnaire filled out by students to measure student interpersonal skills. The results showed that there were differences in the interpersonal skills of experimental class students with control class students. Experimental class students showed better interpersonal skills than the control class. The interpersonal skills of experimental class students are in the beginning to develop category, while control class students are in the undeveloped category. Based on the research results, the researchers concluded that the ICT Gather Town media had an effect on the interpersonal skills of elementary school students.
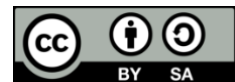
Corresponding Author:

Name Author: Uus Kuswendi
IKIP Siliwangi. Indonesia
Email Author: uus@ikipsiliwangi.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments have led to a world without borders, by accessing the internet almost all human needs are available, starting from fulfilling daily needs, socializing, searching for information and entertainment needs. People use the internet to access social media as a means for communication and self-existence. Internet technology can be accessed by all levels of society. Teenagers are one of the active internet users (Chastanti. 2020). Teenagers tend to access the internet just to chat with strangers using various applications. The largest internet users in Indonesia are teenagers aged 15-24 years with a percentage of 26.7% - 30%. The internet used by teenagers tends to have a negative impact (Hapsari & Ariana, 2015). Nearly 80% of teenagers aged 10-19 years spread across 11 provinces in Indonesia are addicted to the internet, and most teenagers use the internet for things they shouldn't. As many as 24% admitted to using the internet to interact with unknown people, 14% accessed pornographic content, and the rest for online

29

games and other purposes (Adiarsi, Stellarosa, & Sibaban, 2015). The more internet users there are, the more internet addiction will occur.

Addiction is a continuous involvement with an activity even though it results in negative consequences. A person can be categorized as internet addicted if they use it for more than thirty minutes a day or if they look at their frequency, they can use it more than three times a day. Internet addiction can have side effects in students' daily lives such as anxiety, depression, physical and mental decline, as well as decreased interpersonal skills which result in teenagers being unable to socialize with their surrounding environment. The impact of the intensity of internet addiction causes a person to not know the time, be more selfish, lazy about studying and doing other activities, lack of manners, reluctant to communicate with the real world. Someone who is addicted to the internet tends to experience depression and become individualized because they do not engage in social communication (Widiana, Retnowati, & Hidayat, 2014).

According to Campbell (in Shidqiyah, 2022), there are seven types of intelligence in humans which include linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. These potentials show that basically no one is smarter or dumber than another person. Everyone has different levels of intelligence, so it is important to be able to internalize and develop or explore the potential of each individual, so that they will be able to improve their quality in all aspects.

Meanwhile, Goleman put forward five types of emotional intelligence constructs, namely self-awareness, managing emotions and using them productively, empathy, and building relationships. Nowadays, the social relationships that students build with other students will determine the direction of their intelligence development, one of which is interpersonal intelligence which is part of the social-emotional aspect of development. Students need high interpersonal skills to be able and skilled at getting along with their peers. This interpersonal intelligence is not carried by children from birth, but is acquired through a continuous learning process. Students need training and guidance to improve their interpersonal skills.

Salsabilla & Zafi's (2020) research explains that students with strong interpersonal skills can help friends who have learning difficulties and care for sick friends. They can also help teachers by explaining to friends who have difficulty understanding what they have been taught. Students who lack interpersonal intelligence may be passive and ignore their environment. The school environment has an important function in developing students' social abilities. In order for students to use their interpersonal skills to the maximum, teachers must help them. It is natural for schools to play a broader role than just being a place for students to develop their intellectual abilities. This argument supports the assumption that one of the roles of schools is to develop students' attitudes towards working with groups. This is included in students' social skills, therefore schools must teach these values to students through various methods and efforts so that each student can make maximum use of their social skills.

Zahro's (2019) research results show that the application of the role playing learning model can improve students' interpersonal skills. This is proven in cycle I and cycle II, students' interpersonal skills have increased. The research results experienced an increase in each cycle, in the pre-cycle the results were 27%, the first cycle was 54.54%, and the second cycle was 81.81%.

This increase occurred because teachers were able to deliver clear material, provide strong learning encouragement, and the learning model provided attracted students to learn.

Apart from that, this increase is due to the efficient time teachers use to deliver material so that students can socialize and work together to solve problems together. The research results of Fazilla & Sari (2022) also show the influence of YouTube media on improving interpersonal communication for elementary school students. The average pretest score for interpersonal communication in the experimental class was 53.62, while the average pretest score for the control class was 52.12. Meanwhile, the average posttest score for interpersonal communication in the experimental class was 71.72, while the average posttest score for the control class was 65.14. The average interpersonal communication of the two classes, both the experimental class and the control class, both experienced an increase. The average interpersonal communication of students in the experimental class increased by 18.1, while for the control class it increased by 13.02. The data that has been analyzed shows that the interpersonal communication of experimental class students is higher than that of control class students.

Referring to previous research, researchers are interested in conducting research as an effort to improve the interpersonal skills of elementary school students through ICT Gather Town media. Media ICT Gather Town is a video conferencing platform with a retro video game feel that revolutionizes static video conferencing by providing 2D maps with avatar-based gaming features that leverage platform functions with immediacy that increases student engagement and interactions that mimic real-life conditions. Gather Town was launched in 2020 and received a good response from teachers (Zhao & Mcclure, 2022). The Gather Town platform was developed by the company Gather Presence Inc. which was originally called Online Town. Gather Town was designed by three people, namely Kumail Jaffer, Phillip Wang, and Cyrus Tabrizi, which was then officially released on April 3 2021 (Fitria, 2021). If in Zoom Meeting there is a feature called room, then in Gather Town there is a feature called space. Before entering the space, teachers and students are asked to provide a name and choose an avatar which can be customized according to the user's wishes. There are a number of options available such as skin color, hair, clothing and accessories (Zhao & Mcclure, 2022). Space moderators or hosts can easily design their own space to suit the interests and needs of the event through graphics in the templates provided, it is also easy to create and does not require any programming (Andron, 2021).

When two or more avatars are close to each other, video or audio chat is automatically connected. Likewise, mini posters appear when the user approaches another avatar and allow the user to easily roam and browse the room. Compared to Google Meet and Zoom Meeting, the Gather Town app gets closer to the feel of walking around a real conference and being able to meet new people or find friends and collaborators. Although Gather Town is a web conferencing platform, it provides a much more interactive environment than Zoom, providing a more comfortable space where participants can relax and feel as if they are working directly on game-like graphics. In addition, users must be wise in using platforms between formal and informal which will help create a difference between focused learning activities and relaxed social activities even on a screen (Safitri & Puspasari, 2022). Based on the results of previous research and the research background that has been presented, this research aims to measure the interpersonal skills of elementary school students through ICT Gather Town media.

METHOD

Researchers use a quantitative approach with a quasi-experiment method or real experiment. Meanwhile, this research design uses a pretest-posttest control group design. In this design, the experimental and control groups are not chosen randomly (Suharsaputra, 2014). The research population was elementary school students in Cimahi. The research sample was selected using random sampling techniques or random samples. Researchers will choose randomly selected classes to be used as research samples. The sample in the study was 54 class V students. Data collection in this study used a student interpersonal skills questionnaire. The following are indicators used to measure the interpersonal skills of elementary school students.

Table 1. Indicators of Students' Interpersonal Abilities

No	Indicator		
1	Social Sensitivity	Empathetic attitude	Students are able to respect and empathize with other people
2	Social Insight	Self-awareness	Students are able to maintain their social relationships in the long term
		Understanding Social Situations	Students are able to develop and create
		Solution to problem	new social relationships effectively
3	Social Communication	Effective Communication	Students are able to solve problems that occur around their environment or within
		A good listener	social relations

The data that has been collected is then analyzed inferential statistics with the help of the SPSS 23 application. The use of inference statistics is useful for testing research hypotheses which are the answers to the problem formulation. Researchers carry out a normality test as a prerequisite test, if the data is normally distributed then proceed to the homogeneity test and t test. If the data is not normally distributed, the researcher uses the Mann-Whitney test. Then, data validity is carried out using content validity. Content validity shows the extent to which questions, test items, or instruments are able to represent the overall content or material that should be mastered proportionally (Bordens & Abbot, 2013). Therefore, the content validity of a test does not have a certain amount that is calculated statistically but the test is valid based on instrument review. Content validity is actually based on logical analysis so it does not take the form of a validity coefficient calculated statistically. Content validity is carried out based on expert considerations according to the field concerned (Gregory, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research aims to measure Gather Town ICT media to improve the interpersonal skills of elementary school students. After carrying out the research, the pretest and posttest results of filling out the students' interpersonal skills questionnaire were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Below is a table of descriptive results of students' interpersonal skills.

Table 2 Average Student Interpersonal Ability Score

Number	Indicator	Skor	
		Experimental Class	Control Class
1	Students are able to respect and empathize with other people	3,80	3,15
2	Students are able to maintain their social relationships in the long term	3,44	3,17
3	Students are able to develop and create	3,32	2,92
4	Students are able to solve problems that occur around their environment or withinhubungan sosialnya	3,84	3,02
5	Students have direct and good communication skills	2,87	2,62
6	Students can communicate both verbally and nonverbally.	3,35	2,93
	Overall average	3,43	2,96

Table 2 shows the students' interpersonal ability scores after taking the post-test. Based on this table, the researcher concluded that the average interpersonal ability score of experimental class students was better than that of control class students. The highest score in the experimental class is shown by indicator 4, namely that students are able to solve problems that occur in their environment or in their social relationships. Meanwhile, the control class's highest score was on indicator 2, namely that students were able to maintain their social relationships effectively. Furthermore, the lowest score for the experimental class is shown in indicator 5, namely students have direct and good communication. Then the lowest score for the control class also lies in indicator 5, namely students have direct and good communication skills. Sourced from the table above, the average interpersonal ability score of experimental class students is 3.43, which is in the beginning to develop category, while the average interpersonal ability score of control class students, namely 2.96, is in the not yet developed category. Below, researchers show the results of statistical inference tests.

Table 3 Results of Inference Statistical Tests

Number	Test Type	Result	
		Significance Value	Conclusion
1	Normality test	0,080	Data is normally distributed
2	Homogeneity test	0,869	Data is homogeneous
3	t test	0,000	H_0 is rejected

Table 3 shows the results of statistical tests carried out through a normality test first as a prerequisite test then followed by a homogeneity test because the data is normally distributed. The results of the homogeny test found that the data were homogeneous so the researcher used the t test to test the hypothesis. The results of the t test indicated that H0 was rejected, so the researcher concluded that Gather Town ICT media had an effect on improving the interpersonal skills of elementary school students.

Discussion

Interpersonal skills are the ability to differentiate and provide perceptions about the motivations, moods and feelings of other people with the ability to respond effectively (Wulandari, 2016). According to Monawati (2015), interpersonal skills are the ability to build relationships with other people, maintain relationships, read a person's condition and character, maintain relationships and how to adapt and place oneself in various conditions. Thus, the researcher concluded that interpersonal skills are a person's ability to communicate, get along with society, have a sense of empathy for someone, understand moods, work together with someone so that a person's relationship with society is created. The characteristics of high interpersonal skills can be seen from the following indicators (1) able to develop and create new social relationships effectively, (2) able to empathize with other people and respect other people, (3) able to maintain social relationships in the long term, (4) able to be aware of both verbal and non-verbal communication, (5) able to solve problems that occur in their environment or in their social relationships, (6) have good and straightforward communication skills (Muniroh, 2009). In line with this statement, the results of this research show that experimental class students have interpersonal skills in the beginning to develop category. Experimental class students have begun to show some interpersonal skills according to the indicators described. The interpersonal skills that get a high score lie in the indicator of being able to solve problems that occur in the environment. Meanwhile, the research results of Nurbaiti, Laily, & Alfiani (2020) show that the interpersonal skills of class IV students have the highest scores in the category of being able to empathize with others and respect others. Furthermore, the research results of Ariawan, Kuswendi, & Subarkah (2019) showed that there was an increase in students' interpersonal skills through traditional games with the highest score, namely students' ability to interact with peers. On the other hand, the results of Kusuma & Dafit's (2023) interview with the homeroom teacher explained that in their experience with students in class, the teacher saw that the majority of students had good communication skills with their classmates. They actively participate in class discussions, answering questions confidently and sharing their ideas. The researchers' findings in the field based on observations showed that several class V students at SDN 015 Tambusai were able to build good communication with their friends.

Referring to the results of research that has been carried out with the results of previous research, each student has interpersonal skills with prominent differences in indicators. This is influenced by the strategies used by teachers in students' interpersonal development. Basically, every student in the world has a variety of intelligence, each with various levels and indicators. This shows that all children are basically intelligent. The level and indicators of intelligence make the difference. One interpretation of intelligence is as a way for humans to overcome problems and produce things in real life (Nurhasanah, 2022). Based on this, Kusuma & Dafit (2023) explained that each student has their own strengths and weaknesses. Material that is too challenging can also be a barrier. Apart from that, the obstacles experienced come from within the students themselves, such as motivation, social background, mental state can also influence and hinder their ability to learn. Therefore, strategies are created by considering class needs. Sanjaya explained that learning is essentially a process of acquiring new skills and knowledge. When considering the knowledge and skills students should have, teachers need to consider the strategies

they will use to do all of this successfully and efficiently. Understanding this is very important because it will help teachers choose the best action (Sanjani, 2021:32).

In this research, the strategy used by the teacher is by implementing ICT Gather Town media. The basis for choosing this media is that it is adapted to the conditions of the times which are currently filled with digitalization. Today's elementary school students are more adept at using digital media so that through ICT media students will become interested in learning. The Gather Town ICT media in this research carries the theme of folklore. When playing this game students will interact with their friends to read folklore and answer problems raised through online group discussion activities. Because Gather Town's ICT media is online learning, students' interpersonal skills on the communication indicator have the lowest scores. This shows the weaknesses of digital media that affect communication abilities. However, Gather Town ICT media is a platform that is superior in the learning process compared to using other online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom or Google Meet. This is based on the research results of Purwanto, et al. (2022) who conducted a survey of school students. The survey results prove that Gather Town ICT media is more interesting in increasing students' learning motivation and can be an alternative for providing learning. Safitri & Puspasari (2022) explained that the advantages of the Gather Town application are 1) it makes it easier for educators to organize classes on just one platform; 2) provides a unique innovation of video conferencing because it has two dimensional visuals; 3) students have control to talk to anyone they want at any time, resulting in student interaction in discussions; 4) able to increase students' motivation in learning activities because it is like in a virtual classroom where they are playing video games; 5) educators can easily arrange when group discussions will be held; 6) educators can design classrooms according to their needs and desires.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, researchers draw the conclusion that the use of ICT Gather Town media is effective in improving the interpersonal skills of elementary school students. The results of students' interpersonal skills are divided into six indicators, namely 1) able to appreciate and empathize with other people; 2) able to maintain long-term social relationships; 3) able to develop and create new social relationships effectively; 4) able to solve problems that occur in their environment or in their social relationships; 5) have direct and good communication skills; 6) can communicate both verbally and nonverbally. The interpersonal ability scores obtained by students in the experimental class were higher than the scores obtained in the control class. The interpersonal skills of experimental class students are in the beginning to develop category, while control class students are in the undeveloped category. Based on the research results, the researchers concluded that the ICT Gather Town media had an effect on the interpersonal skills of elementary school students.

REFERENCES

Adiarsi, G. R., Stellarosa, Y., & Silaban, M. W. (2015). Literasi Media Internet di kalangan Mahasiswa. *HUMANIORA, 6* (4), 1-10.

Andron, D. R. (2021). *International Online Teaching Experiences. Lucian Blaga University*. Publishing House.

Ariawan, V.A.N., Kuswendi, U., & Subarkah. (2019). Building interpersonal ability of elementary school students by playing traditional game in digital era. *Pendas, IV* (1), 31-52.

Bordens, K.S. & Abbot, B. (2013). *Research design and methods a process approach.* New York: Mc Graw Hill Education

Chastanti, I. (2020). Analisis adiksi internet terhadap kemampuan interpersonal siswa SMA di Kabupaten Labuhan Batu Utara. *Sosial Horizon Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial, 7* (1), 29-36.

Gregory, R. (2013). *Psychological testing: History, principles, and applications (7th edition)*. Wheaton College: Pearson.

Fazilla, S., & Sari, D.D. (2022). Pengaruh media youtube terhadap komunikasi interpersonal siswa sekolah dasar IT Bunayya Kota Lhokseumawe. *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan, 15* (1), 18-24.

Fitria, T. N. (2021). Creating Sensation of Learning in Classroom: Using "Gather Town" Platform Video Game-Style for Virtual Classroom. *Education and Human Development Journal*, *6*(9), 30–43.

Hapsari, A., & Ariana, A. D. (2015). Hubungan antara kesepian dan kecenderungan kecanduan internet pada remaja. *Jurnal klinis dan kesehatan mental*, 164-171.

Kusuma, T., & Dafit, F. (2023). Strategi guru dalam mengembangkan kecerdasan interpersonal pada siswa kelas V sekolah dasar. *Innovative, 3* (6), 1726-1737.

Monawati. (2015). Hubungan antara kecerdasan interpersonal dengan prestasi belajar. *Jurnal Pesona Dasar*, *3* (3), 1-10.

Muniroh, S. M. (2009). Pengembangan kecerdasan interpersonal anak. *Jurnal Penelitian*, *6* (1), 1-16.

Nurbaiti, E., Laily, I.F., & Alfiani, D.A. (2020). Implementasi metode montessori dalam kecerdasan interpersonal peserta didik di kelas IV sekolah dasar. *Uniedu, 1(2),* 67-86.

Nurhasanah. (2022). Pengaruh kecerdasan intrapersonal terhadap hasil belajar ipa pada siswa Kelas IV Sdit Atssurayya Bekasi. *El-Banar: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran, 5*, 9–18.

Purwanot, E.S., dkk. (2022). Students Experience Testing in the Implementation of the "Gather Town" Meeting Platform as an Alternative Learning Media other than Zoom Cloud Meeting Application," *2022 4th International Conference on Cybernetics and Intelligent System (ICORIS)*, Prapat, Indonesia, 2022, 1-8.

Safitri, R., & Puspasari, D. (2022). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Interaktif Gather Town pada Materi Rapat di SMKN 1 Surabaya. *Jurnal Pendidikan, 10 (3),* 223-232.

Salsabila, S., & Zafi, A. (2020). Kecerdasan interpersonal peserta didik sekolah dasar. *TERAMPIL, 7* (1), 35-42.

Sanjani, M. A. (2021). Pentingnya strategi pembelajaran yang tepat bagi siswa. *Jurnal Serunai Administrasi Pendidikan, 10*, 32–37.

Shidqiyah. (2022). *SDM Sekolah Islam di Sumenep: Pengembangan, penerapan dan problematika*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish.

Suharsaputra, U. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan Tindakan*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.

Widiana, H.S, Retnowati, S., Hidayat. R. (2014). Kontrol diri dan kecenderungan kecanduan internet. *Jurnal Humanitas: Indonesian Psychologycal Journal, 5* (1), 6 – 16.

Wulandari, D. A., Saifuddin, & Muzakki, J. A. (2018). Implementasi metode montessori dalam membentuk karakter mandiri pada anak usia dini. *Awlady: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak, 4* (2),1-18.

Zahro, N. (2019). Penerapan model pembelajaran role playing untuk meningkatkan kecerdasan interpersonal siswa kelas IV SD Integral Luqman Al-Hakim Kabupaten Situbondo. *Education Journal. 3* (2), 149-162.

Zhao, X., & Mcclure, C. D. (2022). Gather. Town : A Gamification Tool to Promote Engagement and Establish Online Learning Communities for Language Learners. *RELC Journal*, 1–6.