

The Impact of Smartphone Use on Student Behavior a Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia

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Abstract

The use of smartphones has reached all levels of society in Indonesia. It is necessary for parents to supervise smartphone use at home and for teachers to supervise smartphone use at school for the sake of students' development both at home and at school. Incorrect use of smartphones can have a negative impact on student behavior. This study aims to investigate the impact of smartphone use among students a Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia. The research questions are: What are the reasons for smartphone use, and how does smartphone use affect student behavior at school? This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that students use smartphones for entertainment at school, such as playing offline or online games, watching videos obtained from friends, taking photos with friends, completing group assignments assigned by teachers, searching for answers while doing assignments, and searching for answers during exams or quizzes. The apps that students use a lot at school are Free Fire, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Google, WhatsApp, AI, and ChatGPT. Students' social behavior changes when they're busy with their smartphones. When students are given smartphones during class, they don't listen to the teacher and are busy with their phones. When it's break time, students follow the moves in the videos on their smartphones, which affects their behavior at school.

Keywords: Impact, The Use of Smartphone, Social Behavior

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology and information in this era has greatly influenced the fields of communication and information. This is due to the many innovations found in technology and information. Today, the world has become borderless with the advent of smartphones, which offer many benefits such as communicating with each other even over long distances. The development of technology, which is becoming increasingly advanced, includes advancements in the field of communication. Communicating with friends and relatives who are far away is no longer a problem since the emergence of smartphones. Smartphones are the most dominant communication tools used and favored by many people, from urban communities to coastal or rural areas. This includes children, adults, businesspeople, academics, students, and learners. With various reasons and interests behind smartphone ownership, this has given rise to the term “cybercommunity” (virtual community), where people can communicate without being limited by space and time through the virtual world and obtain all the information they desire in just a matter of seconds.

Teaching and learning is one of the main activities in schools. The hope that never fades from a teacher is that their students will succeed in their learning activities. This success is always accompanied by efforts from both the teacher and the students themselves. A teacher employs various methods in conveying knowledge. The purpose of using diverse teaching

methods is to prevent students from feeling bored and to maintain their interest in the learning process. Additionally, teachers consistently provide various forms of motivation to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning. Students will achieve optimal learning outcomes if they are genuinely committed to their studies. Learning activities carried out both at school and at home must be based on desires that arise from within. If a student has an inner desire to learn, they will have an interest in learning. The interest referred to here is motivation. Students who are motivated to learn will strive to achieve the goals of their learning activities. As of February 2025, approximately 5.56 billion people worldwide are internet users, equivalent to 67.9 percent of the global population. Of this number, 5.24 billion or 63.9 percent of the world's population are social media users (Petrosyan, 2025). The latest estimates show that there are around 7.21 billion smartphone users worldwide, representing around 90% of the world's population. Smartphones have become an integral part of modern life, significantly changing the way we communicate, access information, and interact with our surroundings (Kumar, 2025). Indonesians are now officially ranked as the number one mobile phone users for internet access in the world. According to the Digital 2025 Global Overview Report, 98.7% of Indonesians aged 16 and above use mobile phones to access the internet, surpassing the Philippines and South Africa, which both recorded 98.5%.

Internet usage via mobile phones in Indonesia also exceeds the global average. Indonesians spend an average of 4 hours and 38 minutes per day on their mobile phones, while the global average is only 3 hours and 46 minutes. Women aged 16-24 are the group that most frequently accesses the internet via mobile phones, with a duration of 4 hours and 44 minutes per day. Meanwhile, men, especially those aged 25-44, are more likely to use computers to access the internet, though their usage time is not as long as that of smartphone users (Nadira, 2025). The five countries with the highest number of smartphone users are China, with 974.69 million smartphone users out of a population of 1.43 billion. India has 659 million users with a population of 1.42 billion, the United States has 276.14 million users with a population of 338.28 million, Indonesia has 187.7 million users with a population of 275.5 million, and Brazil has 143.43 million users with a population of 215.31 million. The survey found that internet penetration among Millennials (ages 28–43) was 93.17 percent, among Generation Z (ages 12–27) was 87.02 percent, and among Generation X (ages 44–59) was 83.69 percent (Tempo, 2025).

Smartphones or mobile phones have become an essential part of people's daily lives. A study conducted in 2024 revealed that smartphone users in Indonesia account for approximately 85 percent of the population, with projections indicating further growth in

2025. Another shocking finding is that Indonesians are the only people in the world who spend more than six hours a day staring at their mobile phone screens. This makes Indonesia the number one country in the world in terms of smartphone addiction (SMANSakuNews, 2025). Smartphone usage among vocational high school students is predominantly in the high category, with 22 students (63%), followed by the very high category with 12 students (34%), and finally the low category with 1 student (3%). Thus, the trend or tendency of vocational high school students in Banten Province regarding smartphone usage is at a high level (Solehah & Ramdani, 2022).

Smartphones are not only communication tools, but also information search engines for completing assignments from teachers and learning media that have a positive impact on students, namely that students can more easily find the information they need during the learning process. Smartphones have broad benefits in education, such as browsing materials, downloading digital books, recording or taking pictures of important notes on the blackboard, and children can take online tutoring through an application. Excessive use of smartphones can disrupt students' social behavior. The effects may include reduced social interaction, self-isolation, and difficulty in building interpersonal relationships. Additionally, students may mimic negative behaviors observed online and become less concerned about their surroundings. Excessive smartphone use can also lead students to become indifferent to their environment. Children who frequently play with smartphones no longer pay attention to their surroundings because their concentration is focused on their smartphones, which can make it difficult for them to interact and adapt to their surroundings, causing them to become more withdrawn or solitary. Smartphone dependency can also occur among students who rely solely on their smartphones to complete all school assignments without giving it a second thought. This results in reduced reading activities, a lack of awareness that learning is important, and low motivation to study (Sulaiman, 2020). Students may find it difficult to complete their work without a smartphone, leading to uncontrolled emotions. This condition prevents students from developing the problem-solving skills required in the 21st century (Zulfa & Mujazi, 2022).

METHOD

The research was conducted at a Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia. The research method used was qualitative descriptive research, which describes the impact of smartphone use on students' social behavior. This study focuses on the reasons why students use smartphones and the impact of smartphone use on students' social behavior. Qualitative research is a scientific method aimed at understanding a phenomenon in natural

social settings by emphasizing in-depth communication interactions between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied (Nanda, 2025). The reason researchers use purposive sampling is to obtain samples that represent the objectives of the research being conducted and meet the criteria for providing information and respondents who actively use smartphones and have less social interaction with their friends.

Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The data sources in this study were students Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia. The population is the entire set of objects, individuals, or entities that are the target or scope of the research. The population includes all elements that have certain characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The population can be humans, objects, phenomena, or specific concepts. A sample is a part of the population (Rifa'i, 2025). The research sample is a portion of the population taken as a data source and can represent the entire population (Tekno, 2023). The sample in this study consists of 70 eleventh-grade students. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques in accordance with the research needs. Purposive sampling is an important sampling technique to ensure that the data collected is relevant to the research objectives. By using this method, researchers can save time and costs while obtaining more specific and meaningful data (Wibowo, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for Using Smartphones

Students use smartphones at home, they do so for reasons such as searching for information related to lesson materials, news, practical tutorial videos, and to keep up with technological developments. Additionally, they use smartphones to review and re-learn materials they did not fully understand during the learning process. In observing technological advancements, particularly in the field of smartphone technology, it is highly beneficial to stay abreast of the times and to keep pace with the cutting-edge technologies being developed by major companies worldwide.

Students use smartphones at school or in class during lessons, some students use smartphones to search for answers to questions given by teachers. During quizzes or daily tests, students also search for answers using smartphones. During breaks, students are more active in using smartphones with various applications, ranging from offline or online games, watching videos, or simply taking photos with their classmates. During class, some students play games in the classroom without listening to the teacher's explanation. Based on interviews with students Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia, students use smartphones as a form of entertainment when they feel bored or tired during

lessons, to alleviate sleepiness in class, and as a means of communication with classmates or others outside their class. Another reason for using smartphones in class is when faced with difficult questions from the teacher, students search for answers using Google, AI, or other apps that can simplify finding answers. Additionally, students use smartphones to be accepted by their peers as having a smartphone. Based on the interview results, the apps that students frequently open are Free Fire, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Google, WhatsApp, AI, and ChatGPT. Students use the Free Fire app to play with friends, commonly referred to as “mabar.” Students also open TikTok for entertainment, as mentioned by student MF, who stated that they use TikTok to find entertainment by viewing the “For You Page” (FYP) of people who create TikTok content. Students use Google, AI, and ChatGPT to find answers to questions given by their teachers.

He research conducted by the researcher is also supported by research conducted by (Saniyyah et al., 2021) regarding the use of gadgets on the social behavior of children in Jekulo Kudus Village on the use of smartphones conducted by the researcher. The similarity in this study is that students spend time using smartphones to open YouTube, TikTok, and games. However, the difference in this study lies in the apps used by the students, which were WhatsApp, Google, and Instagram. The researcher who reinforces this study is the same as the researcher (Syifa, 2020) who studied the use of smartphones on children's social behavior. The similarity between this study and the previous one is that both use smartphones for playing games, watching YouTube, accessing the internet for learning, and communicating via WhatsApp.

The Impact of Smartphone Use on Social Behavior

The use of smartphones by students at home needs to be monitored by parents and at school by teachers so that it does not lead to smartphone addiction. This aligns with relevant research by (Sari et al., 2021) The study found that there are negative effects of students using smartphones, such as frequently neglecting schoolwork and losing track of time when using smartphones for extended periods. The positive impact of smartphone use by students includes accessing information to support classroom lessons and gaining new knowledge. Additionally, communication between teachers and students can be more flexible regarding student absences and school assignments.

This study is in line with Sitorus (2022) research that the dimension of smartphone addiction that has the lowest correlation coefficient, namely “Cyber Space-Oriented Relationship,” with a coefficient value of 0.205 for the ‘procrastination’ dimension and 0.321 for the “task avoidance” dimension. Thus, feelings of anxiety, impatience, and inability to

function without a smartphone, coupled with a desire not to be disturbed while using it, most significantly influence procrastination behavior due to poor time management. Additionally, the comfort derived from smartphone use leads individuals to avoid tasks they dislike. The research findings indicate that students currently lack an understanding of appropriate timing for gadget use. There is a need for supervision and restrictions on students' use of gadgets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, it can be concluded that students use smartphones for several reasons, including entertainment at school. Students use them to play offline and online games together, watch videos or share videos with fellow students, take photos, and communicate or discuss with friends during class. Furthermore, students use smartphones to style themselves, keeping up with their friends who have smartphones and wanting to stay up-to-date with their peers and play together. Interaction between students is minimal, as they are preoccupied with their smartphones. The most commonly used applications by students are Free Fire, Google, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, AI, ChatGPT, and WhatsApp. During break time, some students livestream through TikTok and Instagram.

Recommendations for Vocational Senior High School in Tangerang City, Indonesia are Before the bell rings, students are expected to hand over their smartphones to their respective homeroom teachers, who will store the smartphones in their lockers. Homeroom teachers will collaborate with subject teachers if smartphones are needed during lessons, filling out a permission form beforehand. During lessons, teachers must monitor students' learning activities when using smartphones to ensure students do not have time to open other applications during the learning process. After the lesson ends, students should return their smartphones to the class president, who will then collect them and return them to their respective homeroom teachers. This ensures that students do not use their smartphones while at school, fostering positive interaction and behavior among peers. Cooperation between parents and teachers is essential in monitoring smartphone usage, and clear rules are needed to reduce smartphone use at school.

The advice for parents is to monitor their children's smartphone use at home, monitor the apps they play and the duration of smartphone use to prevent children from becoming addicted to smartphones. Then, keep children busy with other activities such as helping parents clean the house, working with neighbors to clean the neighborhood, exercising, and increasing socialization with friends so that children develop social behavior towards others and avoid smartphone addiction.

Cooperation between schools and parents is needed to monitor smartphone use. Schools can organize parenting programs, while parents can monitor smartphone use at home. Teachers and counselors at school play an important role in building open communication with students through counseling activities, sharing sessions, and extracurricular activities.

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