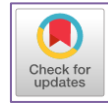# Analysis of factors in gadget addiction behavior (phone snubbing) among vocational students

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and identify the factors contributing to gadget addiction in the form of phubbing (phone snubbing) among students at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung. A qualitative approach with a phenomenological design was employed to capture the lived experiences of the subjects. Data were collected through source and technique triangulation involving nine purposively selected informants: three students, three parents, the vice principal for student affairs, a guidance counselor, and a Pancasila education teacher. The findings indicate that phubbing behavior is driven by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include high intensity of gadget use, habitual patterns, boredom coping strategies, and the need for emotional satisfaction or entertainment. External factors encompass peer influence, easy internet access, and insufficient supervision or regulation from parents and teachers. The study concludes that phubbing among students is a multifaceted behavior shaped by both personal and environmental dynamics, necessitating comprehensive intervention from schools and families.

Keywords: Gadget Addiction; Phubbing Behavior; Internal Factors; External Factors; Student
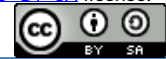
INTRODUCTION

In line with the progress of the times, humans today consistently utilize technology in their daily activities. This is further reinforced by the emergence of the Industrial Revolution 5.0 (Society 5.0) (Setianto et al., 2023). The rapid development of technology and communication has given rise to various media, one of which is known as the Internet. One of the functions of the Internet is to deliver messages quickly and accurately (Abivian, 2022). Nowadays, gadgets and the Internet positively impact long-distance communication and can lead to adverse effects if used in inappropriate situations and conditions (Hafizah et al., 2021).

Gadgets, as the primary medium for accessing the Internet, offer many advantages, particularly in facilitating long-distance communication and access to information. When used appropriately, they can support learning processes, enabling students to complete assignments and develop their digital skills (Alamianti & Rachaju, 2021). In this regard, gadgets contribute positively to both academic growth and everyday convenience.

However, the ease and accessibility of gadget use also carry significant risks. The tendency to spend excessive time on gadgets can lead to dependency and behavioral addiction. This is especially evident among teenagers, whose developmental stage makes them more vulnerable to forming habits that affect their emotional regulation

and social interactions (Salsabila et al., 2024). One social impact of gadget addiction is ignoring others due to being preoccupied with their phones, known as phone snubbing (phubbing) (Kurniawan & Widiyanti, 2023). Phubbing is derived from combining "phone" and "snubbing." According to Haigh (2015), this term refers to the behaviour of someone who neglects others during social interactions because they are more focused on their gadgets.

Table 1. Gadget usage based on several studies

Source	Category	Percentage/Average	Year
Data. Ai "State of Mobile 2023" (Andani et al., 2023)	Average daily gadget usage	6.05 hours/day	2022
APJII (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia)	Internet users aged 13-18 years	99.16%	2022
APJII (Laili et al., 2024)	Internet users aged 19-34%	98.64%	2022
(Miskahuddin, 2017)	Internet users aged 12-34 years	64.4%	2017
(Poushter & Chew, 2018)	Dominant age group of gadget users	18-36 years old	2018
APJII	Internet penetration rate	64.8% (2018), 73.7% (2020), 77.01% (2022), 78.19% (2023)	2018-2023
APJII	Gender distribution of users	Males: 50.7%, Females: 49.1%	2023

The convenience offered by gadgets often leads users to spend more time than necessary. Teenagers frequently become engrossed when using gadgets and neglect essential tasks such as completing schoolwork and studying for exams. Ideally, teenagers should focus on developing social responsibility towards the environment and applying ethical values upheld in society. However, in reality, excessive gadget use causes teenagers to focus more on their devices and be less concerned about their surroundings (Pratiwi & Malwa, 2021). This phenomenon is particularly concerning in the context of vocational high schools (SMK) such as SMK Negeri 8 Bandung, where students are expected to develop not only technical competencies but also character, discipline, and responsibility in preparation for the professional world.

Research conducted by Zega & Harefa (2023) at SMA Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli showed that gadget use hurts students' learning outcomes. Based on the biology scores obtained, the students' average scores were below the minimum completion criteria (KKM). This occurs due to excessive gadget use and not utilizing it effectively. Another study was conducted by Putri & Rina (2023) regarding interpersonal communication between parents and children in SMA BPI 1 Bandung. The result showed that high phubbing behaviour among parents and children could lead to a decline in their interpersonal communication quality.

The objective of this research is to explore and describe the lived experiences of students related to phone snubbing behavior and identify both internal and external factors that contribute to gadget addiction in the school context. *Internal factors* refer to influences that originate from within the individual, such as emotional dependency, low self-regulation, boredom, or lack of motivation. Meanwhile, *external factors* involve environmental or social elements, such as peer influence, family parenting style, school culture, or unrestricted internet access.

Considering the various data and research mentioned above, it is clear that gadget addiction affects not only students' academic performance but also the quality of interpersonal relationships within families and communities. With the increasing use of

gadgets among students, especially teenagers, it is crucial to identify and understand the underlying factors deeply. Therefore, research on gadget addiction at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung becomes relevant. This study explores the factors driving phubbing among SMK students as a vulnerable age group.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, where the research process is based on subjective assessment without involving statistics or mathematical calculations (Ibrahim, 2015). The qualitative approach is generally used to explore new phenomena and understand individuals' views, feelings, or interpretations regarding meanings and processes (Creswell, 2013). The study involves nine informants, including students, guidance and counselling teachers, Pancasila education teachers, the vice principal in charge of student affairs, and parents. Students were-selected for showing signs of excessive gadget use during social interactions, while teachers and the vice principal were chosen for their close engagement with students. Parents provided insight into gadget use at home.

This study ensures data validity through source and technique triangulation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. As a phenomenological study, it also uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how participants make sense of their experiences related to gadget use. These methods help capture deep insights into the students' behavior and perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Internal Factors Driving Gadget Addiction Behavior (Phone Snubbing) Among Students at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung

High Intensity of Gadget Usage

Indonesia has the highest internet usage rates globally, where the average citizen spends approximately six hours per day surfing the internet. The results of interviews with informants align with this explanation, revealing that students at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung use gadgets at a high intensity. The intensity of gadget usage was described by Informant A1 as follows: "8-10 hours, usually for social media, games, and mostly WhatsApp." Similarly, Informant A2 stated: "About 10 hours when on holiday, but around 6 hours when not on holiday." From these interviews, Informant A2 explained that they use gadgets for about 10 hours during holidays and around six hours during school days. Supporting the statements of the previous informants, Informant B3, the Vice Principal of Student Affairs, also elaborated on the intensity of gadget usage among students as follows.

"Yeah, if it's 8 to 10 hours, that would include their time at school, where they also have study hours. So, perhaps the 8 or 10 hours refer to their entire day, both at home and at school. For those who use gadgets for longer than that, the impact at school might be that they feel sleepy, right?"

Based on the interviews and observations, it was revealed that the average gadget usage ranges from 8 to 12 hours per day. Figure 1 below provides visual evidence that

reinforces the alignment between the interview results and the documentation data, which collectively indicate a high level of gadget usage.
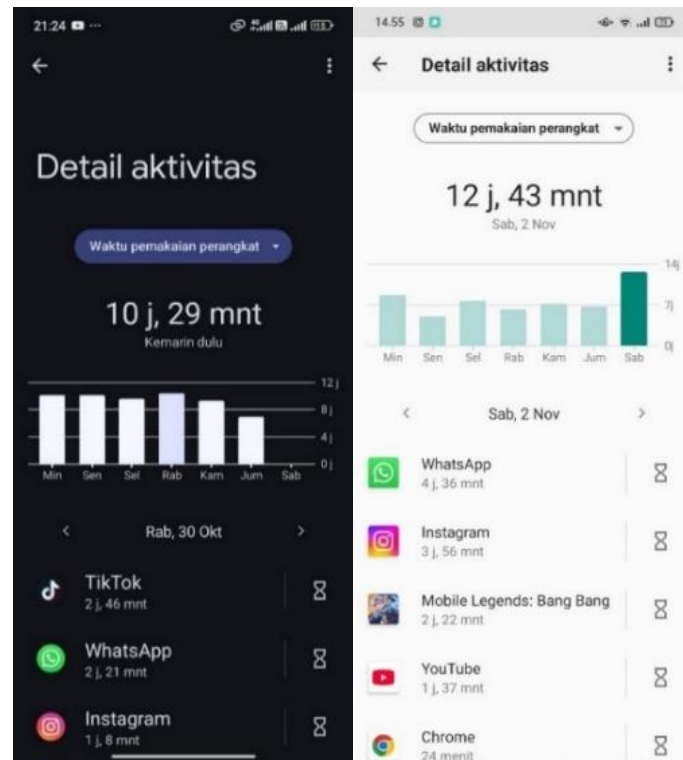

Figure 1. The intensity of gadget usage among students

This data aligns with the interview results, which also revealed similar durations of gadget usage. The consistency between the documentation data and interview findings indicates that gadget usage among students is relatively high. This reflects their significant dependence on digital devices for various activities, ranging from communication through WhatsApp and consuming content on TikTok and Instagram to playing online games like Mobile Legends.

Habit and Boredom

Based on interviews with the informants, it was found that students use gadgets excessively due to habit and boredom. This habit developed alongside increased exposure to technology, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated remote learning. As a result, gadgets have become an integral part of their daily activities, whether for communication, gaming, social media, or entertainment. According to them, gadgets offer the freedom to choose preferred content, unlike television programs, which tend to be monotonous.

Distraction from Uninteresting Activities (Distraction Seeking)

Gadgets serve as a quick means to gain instant stimulation through entertainment and digital interaction. This behavior can reduce students' engagement in learning and hinder interpersonal communication, thereby affecting the development of social skills and character. In the study of phubbing at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung, distraction seeking was a focus for understanding the factors contributing to students' gadget addiction, particularly during the learning process.

Informant A1 stated that they often get distracted when there is an opportunity in class to use gadgets: *"...but sometimes I get distracted and end up using my phone*

more, like when there isn't much to do, I turn to my phone." Similarly, informant A2 also mentioned frequently checking notifications during lessons: *"Just reading notifications, not using social media, rarely."* These statements indicate the potential for distractions that hinder focus and learning effectiveness.

Figure 2. Students secretly use gadgets during lessons

From the image above, it can be seen that students use gadgets during lessons to access social media, which is unnecessary. The photo shows students replying to messages on WhatsApp and browsing Instagram. This activity demonstrates how gadgets are often misused to access personal applications instead of being used to support learning. Dependency on social media can divert students' attention, reduce their concentration on lesson materials, and potentially hinder overall learning progress.

External Factors Driving Gadget Addiction (Phone Snubbing) in SMK Negeri 8 Bandung Students

Social Environment

Based on the interviews, it was found that students tend to imitate their friends' habits of using gadgets to adapt and strive for acceptance in peer groups. The fear of missing out (FOMO) culture also exacerbates this situation, where students need to remain digitally connected to avoid missing out on information or current trends. This situation makes students increasingly attached to their gadgets, even in situations that should encourage direct social interaction, such as gatherings with peers at school.

Figure 3. Students' use of gadgets during break time

Based on interviews, observations, documentation, and literature studies, there is alignment in the data regarding factors driving phubbing behavior among SMK Negeri 8 Bandung students. Interviews with students, parents, and school authorities reveal that high gadget usage among students is a key factor contributing to phubbing behavior. Further observations show that students use gadgets to escape monotonous or uninteresting activities and for entertainment and social connection through social media and other entertainment applications.

Lack of Supervision and Strict Policies Regarding Gadget Use

Based on interviews, it can be concluded that the lack of supervision and strict policies regarding gadget use, both in schools and at home, is a major factor driving gadget addiction among students. In schools, unclear written rules and minimal supervision from teachers allow students to use gadgets freely, whether during lessons or break times. On the other hand, at home, lenient policies and parents' difficulties in enforcing consistent boundaries further worsen the situation.

Table 2. Triangulation of data collection techniques

Dimensions	Observations	Interviews	Documentation
Nomophobia (Fear of Being Without a Gadget)	The results of the classroom observations show that students secretly use gadgets during lessons.	The results of the interviews reveal that students frequently check their gadgets during lessons.	The documentation shows evidence of students checking their gadgets during lessons.
Interpersonal Conflict	Classroom observations indicate that peer influence plays a significant role in students' phubbing behavior, especially during breaks or free periods.	Interviews reveal that peer influence plays a significant role in students' phubbing behavior.	Documentation shows students gathering in groups but focusing on their own gadgets.
Self-Isolation	Observations reveal high gadget usage among students during lessons, breaks, and free periods.	Interviews reveal that the intensity of gadget usage among students falls into the high category.	Documentation reveals that students use their gadgets an average of 8-12 hours per day.
Problem Acknowledgment	Observations show that the most frequently used applications by students are Mobile Legends, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp.	Interviews reveal that one of the driving factors is the dependence on gadgets as a source of entertainment.	Documentation shows various applications frequently accessed by students, including online games and entertainment media.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the average gadget usage among students of SMK Negeri 8 Bandung exceeds six hours per day. This aligns with a survey conducted by Andani et al., (2023), which found that Indonesians use gadgets for more than five hours daily. The findings also indicate that the applications accessed by students are online games and social media. This phenomenon relates to phubbing, a behaviour characterized by individuals prioritizing their gadgets over social interactions around them (Koç & Ugur, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly contributed to shaping this habit. During the pandemic, gadgets became essential for students' academic and daily needs. Additio-

nally, the habit is further driven by low self-control among students. This aligns with (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell (2019) findings that low self-control significantly impacts the habit of high-intensity gadget usage. Consequently, students often neglect their tasks and responsibilities.

Devices, besides being communication tools, can also serve as a medium to relieve students' boredom through engaging content. The content accessed has its appeal, making devices a quick and practical escape to dispel boredom and restore enthusiasm before returning to their next learning routine. Youarti & Hidayah (2018) stated that using devices is an effective way to avoid discomfort in awkward social situations, including during classroom learning.

Furthermore, an external factor influencing gadget addiction is the social environment. Findings reveal that peers significantly impact students' habits of gadget addiction. The findings show that while they gather in groups, they are engrossed in their own devices, resulting in minimal direct interaction. This aligns with the opinion expressed by Saloom & Veriantari (2021) that peers are an influential factor in students' gadget addiction.

The findings and discussion of this research also align with the Symbolic Interactionism Theory, which serves as the Grand Theory in this study of gadget addiction behavior. This theory analyzes the meanings students attribute to device usage and how their social environment ultimately influences their excessive gadget use (Jermiasa & Rahman, 2022). Additionally, the findings and research align with the Uses and Gratification Theory, the Middle Theory in this study, which emphasizes how individuals use media to meet specific needs, such as the need for entertainment, to avoid boredom, or to escape stress (Riyanto, 2017).

The Symbolic Interactionism Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding how the meanings students assign to device usage influence their behavior (Rahman et al., 2019). These meanings are formed through students' social interactions with peers, family, and the media they consume. Consequently, their self-control over device usage diminishes because these meanings have become an integral part of their social identity (Rengat et al., 2022).

The Symbolic Interactionism Theory, as the Grand Theory in this study, is highly relevant for understanding gadget addiction behavior among students at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung. Observations and interviews revealed that students often use devices to maintain social presence among their peers, such as being active on social media or playing online games together. This indicates that devices are not just communication tools but also symbols of social acceptance and a way to build interpersonal relationships among students (Jermiasa & Rahman, 2022).

In this study, students at SMK Negeri 8 Bandung often use devices as an escape from academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, or boredom at home. Digital media provides instant gratification that is hard to find in their physical environment, leading students to spend more time in the virtual world. This highlights a dependency driven by psychological needs to find comfort and entertainment not available in their immediate social environment (Rohmah, 2020).

From an internal factor perspective, students' psychological conditions such as academic stress, lack of confidence in social relationships, or a need for recognition are primary drivers of phubbing behavior. Dependency on notifications or digital content reinforces this habit, as students feel compelled to keep checking their devices (Prasetya, 2018). The lack of self-control exacerbates the situation, as students struggle

to manage their time and are often unaware of the negative impacts of excessive device usage on their social interactions and responsibilities (Saloom & Veriantari, 2021).

External factors also play a significant role. The ease of internet access, supported by advanced technological infrastructure, allows students to stay connected anytime and anywhere. Peer environments that tend to encourage device usage, such as playing online games together or communicating via social media, further reinforce this behavior (Putri, 2018). The absence of strict rules or consistent sanctions creates space for students to become more engaged in phubbing behavior (Yumarni, 2022).

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratification Theory, it is evident how individuals use devices to fulfill their specific needs. Students use devices as entertainment tools to avoid boredom and derive enjoyment from activities like playing online games, exploring social media, or watching engaging content. These contents are designed to capture users' attention, aligning with the Uses and Gratification Theory, which emphasizes how media fulfills the needs for entertainment, boredom avoidance, or stress relief (Anshori, 2017).

Although the Hypodermic Needle Theory serves as the primary framework for understanding gadget addiction behavior, certain elements also align with the Uses and Gratification Theory. However, the primary focus of this study leans more toward the Hypodermic Needle Theory as it provides a stronger understanding of the direct influence of media in shaping gadget addiction habits without significant user control (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018).

CONCLUSION

These factors ultimately drive the increase in phubbing behavior among students. Phubbing behavior among SMK Negeri 8 Bandung students is driven by both internal factors and external factors. These combined factors lead to reduced social interaction and disengagement from their surroundings. This highlights that gadget addiction is not only personal but also shaped by the environment. It affects students' social skills and character development key aspects of vocational education. The findings suggest the need for clear school policies, digital literacy programs, and stronger parent-teacher collaboration. Future research could examine the effectiveness of specific interventions or track long-term impacts of phubbing on students' behavior.

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