

The Role of Counselors in Reducing Mobile Phone Usage Habits Among Students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung

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Abstract

The study aims to understand the role of counselors in reducing the habit of mobile phone usage among 10th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tulungagung. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method. Data collection techniques include interviews and observations. The subjects of this study are counselors and several 10th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tulungagung. The results indicate that mobile phone usage habits among students impact their self-awareness, decrease their motivation to learn, and reduce their empathy. In addressing this issue, counselors play a role by providing informational services, classical guidance services on appropriate mobile phone usage, and counseling services. Additionally, home visits and parent or guardian meetings are conducted as follow-up measures for students. Counselors at SMA Negeri 1 Tulungagung also perform referrals for cases of students who are severely addicted to their mobile phones.

Keywords: Counselors; Role, Reducing, Mobile Phone Usage, students

1. Introduction

The influence of technology is rapidly evolving in the current era of globalization, where the digital world has provided humanity with various benefits. Technology is the science that examines the ability to create various tools and processes that can assist humans in performing various tasks (Putri, 2023). Technology creates various innovations that foster sustainability in daily life within society. The development of science and technology has been accompanied by rapid advancements in the field of information media (Ameliola & Nugraha, 2013). In Indonesia, every sector utilizes technology to facilitate work, including the field of education. Education is related to human culture and civilization, which have undergone significant changes worldwide during the globalization era. The world has witnessed many advancements in technology and science in various fields, particularly in the field of education (Lestari, 2018).

Education has become one of the foundations for a nation's progress in creating human resources that possess the quality to keep up with the advancing times (Widari, Nabillah, & Delima, 2023). In the field of education, technology has a primary influence on knowledge (Putri, 2023). One of the benefits of technology in learning is the accessibility of the internet by various groups; in the field of education, the internet can be accessed by students, teachers, lecturers, university students, and stakeholders. The development of internet-based technology has penetrated various aspects of the education world, where technology itself has become a necessity in the learning process.

As information and communication technology continues to develop, the needs in the learning process also increase to adapt to the times. The advancement of science and technology in the educational sphere demands that teachers be more creative in the learning process (Sibuea, Harahap, Dalimunthe, & Marpaung, 2023). The current rapid development of technology has resulted in mobile devices, such as cell phones, becoming commonplace.

Since their inception, cell phones have undergone numerous transformations and have now become multifunctional devices in daily life. Cell phones facilitate communication, access to information, and various entertainment applications (Sitompul, Stevani, Fauziah, & Putri, 2021). This expands the reach of communication and allows for more efficient information exchange. On the other hand, uncontrolled use of cell phones can cause various problems, especially for students (Muslih, 2020). Many students misuse cell phones under the pretext of entertaining themselves or assisting with their education (Prensida & Nugoho, 2023).

Uncontrolled use of cell phones can cause various problems, especially for students who are still in school. Improper use of cell phones by students can be harmful and can negatively impact their personality and character (Juwanto, 2020). In general, the negative effects of cell phones on students can span various areas such as personal, social, and academic domains. In the personal domain, improper use of cell phones can lead to several issues, including 1) lack of physical activity such as exercise, 2) decreased mental skills such as concentration (Kurniawan & Garvin, 2022), 3) diminished emotional skills resulting in students becoming easily angered and unable to control their emotions effectively, and 4) poor time management (Azizah & Muslikah, 2021).

In the social domain, improper use of cell phones can lead to various negative effects that impact socialization tendencies. According to Retalia, Soesilo, and Irawan (2022), prolonged cell phone use makes people more accustomed to being alone and less inclined to engage in direct interaction. This statement is supported by research conducted by Rahmad (2022), which indicates that the negative impact of improper cell phone use tends to manifest in changes in social behavior, such as students becoming more individualistic, prone to isolation, and experiencing diminished interpersonal relationships. This observation is further corroborated by a study conducted by Muflih, Hamzah, and Puniawan (2017) on cell phone use and social interaction among teenagers at SMAN 1 Kalasan Sleman Yogyakarta. The study found that the majority of students, 121 (58%) out of the sample, had poor cell phone use habits, resulting in a significant number of students developing dependency on their cell phones.

Furthermore, improper use of cell phones in the academic domain has negative effects that are often associated with students' decreased motivation to study. These negative effects can become habitual among students (Rahmatillah & Setiawati, 2020). This is supported by research conducted by Nurhalifah, Rizaldi, Muktofan, Nilwan, and Fatimah (2024), which found that the negative impacts of smartphone use on 10th-grade students at MA Plus Nurul Islam Sekarbela include: 1) lack of motivation to study, 2) reduced focus on learning, 3) decreased reading habits, 4) forgetting to complete school assignments, 5) diminished enthusiasm for learning, and 6) a tendency to underestimate assigned tasks due to cell phone use. These negative impacts of cell phone misuse in the learning domain lead to behaviors that conflict with students' responsibilities as learners (Sari, 2019).

The negative impacts described above are the result of students' improper cell phone habits. Common incorrect cell phone habits among students include: 1) playing online games excessively, 2) using entertainment apps that consume significant amounts of time, and 3) accessing inappropriate content, such as material related to violence or pornography. These negative effects align with the findings from interviews conducted by the researcher with the counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. According to the interviews, the counselors reported that: *"Regarding the impact of children constantly using cell phones, it results in students having low empathy, weak self-control, and diminished self-awareness. Students who frequently use cell phones also experience a decrease in their motivation to study"* (FM12062024).

Technology has become an integral part of learning, and it is essential that students use technology effectively in the educational process. However, many students focus more on playing games or accessing social media on their cell phones rather than supporting their learning. Addressing this issue highlights the crucial role of counselors. These counselors must manage improper cell phone usage among students at school. Moreover, students' habits at home also need to be guided to ensure more appropriate use of technology.

In response to the above issue, counselors provide direct understanding to all students about the importance of differentiating between leisure and study time, especially at school, and encourage students to use their cell phones more for learning activities or beneficial purposes. In addition to providing understanding and encouragement, counselors also emphasize the importance of the commitments made by students during the learning process at school. Beyond emphasizing appropriate cell phone use during school hours, especially during lessons or counseling sessions, it is crucial to also focus on appropriate cell phone use at home, including educating students' parents. This aligns with the results of interviews conducted by the researcher with counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung, who stated that:

"We remind students of their initial commitment to put away their cell phones and not use them throughout the lesson. Sometimes we inform students about the prohibition of using cell phones during class time as part of the counseling topic for that session. If students continue to misuse their phones after being guided, counseling services will be provided outside of class hours. If necessary, we may also call in parents or guardians" (TM12062024).

Based on the above statements, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the role of counselors in reducing improper cell phone use habits among 10th-grade students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. The expected outcomes of this research are: 1) to provide further information to counselors to help students develop more positive habits related to cell phone use, and 2) to offer guidance to counselors so they can provide appropriate counseling services addressing the impacts of students' improper cell phone usage habits.

2. Method

This study aims to examine a real issue, a condition that needs attention, and events occurring in the field in a pure manner, considering the context of space, time, and environmental conditions (Fakhrozi, Wahyumiani, & Nurkholidah, 2023). The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. A case study approach requires the researcher to examine a case in depth and detail, utilizing all available resources (Harahap et al., 2023). Additionally, research using case study methods is understood as a form of qualitative research focused on an event or situation that requires understanding and human behavior based on human perspectives (Ilhami, Nurfajriani, Mahendra, Sirodj, & Afgani, 2024).

This study is conducted at SMAN 1 Tulungagung, with the subjects or informants being the counselors from SMAN 1 Tulungagung, totaling two counselors, and six students. The selection of subjects or informants is based on their alignment with the research targets, specifically 10th-grade students who use cell phones during learning activities. The criteria for selecting students include: 1) 10th-grade students who continuously use cell phones during counseling sessions and learning activities, and 2) students who use cell phones for online games, social media platforms like YouTube or TikTok, or WhatsApp, rather than for educational purposes. Data collection techniques involve observation and interviews, while data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman model. The data analysis process includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Harahap et al., 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Table 1. Data Reduction

No	Focus	Answers		Interpretation
		1th Informant (FR)	2nd Informant (TM)	
1	The Perspective of Counselors on Students Using Smartphones During Instruction	Smartphones are now inseparable from the learning process. In schools, it has become a requirement in some subjects to use these devices. The impact of continuous smartphone use on students includes reduced empathy, weak self-control, and diminished self-awareness. Moreover, students who frequently use smartphones may experience a decline in their motivation to learn.	In my view, the use of smartphones has become increasingly prevalent and contributes to a diminished self-awareness among students. Students are permitted to bring smartphones to school, primarily for completing e-modules for Project-Based Learning (P5) and for online examinations. However, students should be aware of and understand appropriate times for smartphone use. In my opinion, these students are at a level of addiction. Several factors contribute to this, including environmental influences (such as peers in their class), self-control, and self-awareness. All of these factors are interconnected.	All students in 10th-grade at SMAN 1 Tulungagung frequently use smartphones in class due to the allowance of bringing phones for educational purposes, including the use of e-modules and online examinations.
2	The Role of Guidance and Counseling	We have made efforts to admonish and inform the students, but there has been no change. If reports indicate that a student frequently uses their smartphone, we will call them in for counseling up to three times. If there is still no improvement, we will contact the student's parents.	Two years ago, we encountered a similar, but more severe case. We conducted counseling sessions, contacted the parents, and performed home visits, but there was no improvement. The student refused to attend school, stayed in their room, and even ordered food delivery to eat in their room. Ultimately, we had to transfer the case.	The counselor issues reprimands and warnings to students who frequently use smartphones. Counseling services, parental contact, home visits, and case transfers (for students with severe addiction) are provided as follow-up measures for students who have not been able to reduce their smartphone use.

3	Interventions and Strategies in Guidance and Counseling	I used to do the same thing; I asked my child to place their smartphone in a box that I had provided. I also frequently develop guidance topics related to smartphone use.	We remind students of their initial commitment to place their smartphones away and not use them during lessons. Sometimes, informing students about the prohibition of smartphone use during class time is incorporated as a topic in the guidance services. If students continue to exhibit the same behavior after receiving guidance, counseling services will be provided outside of class hours. If necessary, contacting the parents or guardians may also be considered.	The counselors provide warnings, counseling services, and contacts the parents. However, these efforts have not been effective, as students continue to use smartphones, particularly outside of school supervision.
4	Challenges	At school, teachers can monitor, remind, and provide counseling. However, once the students return home, they are with their parents, and we cannot oversee them. Additionally, parents are often busy with their own work.	Each counselor faces different challenges. For me, the challenge lies in enhancing students' self-awareness.	Controlling smartphone use at home is a major challenge for counselors, highlighting the need for new strategies and collaboration between teachers, parents, and students.
5	Significance of Strategy	In our view, the efforts made by the counselors here have been unsatisfactory. There is a need for increased parental support and a stronger emphasis on moral and character education.	The efforts have not been maximized or optimized. Whether or not there is any change following the guidance services provided by the counselor ultimately depends on each student's self-awareness.	The efforts made by the counselors have been unsatisfactory. There is an urgent need for effective collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, as well as a strong focus on moral and character education, to achieve optimal results.

Based on interviews and analysis conducted by the researcher with two counselors, it was found that nearly all 10th-grade students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung frequently use smartphones in class. This is due to the allowance for students to bring smartphones during classroom learning and within the school environment. The permissibility of bringing smartphones is also due to the requirements of certain subjects that necessitate the use of smartphones in class. Moreover, the current Merdeka Curriculum includes the Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), which requires smartphones for students to access and complete P5 modules. This is because some teachers serving as P5 facilitators use e-modules for P5 activities in the classroom.

The use of smartphones within the school environment is also mandated by SMAN 1 Tulungagung for accessing learning materials. Additionally, during school examinations, students are required to bring smartphones and use Google Forms, which are accessible to each student, making smartphone use deeply integrated and inseparable from learning activities at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. However, alongside this usage, there are negative impacts that disrupt the teaching and learning process at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. This assertion

is consistent with the research conducted by Julita, Yuline, & Yusuf (2019) titled 'Negative Impacts of Gadget Use on Students at SMP Negeri 13 Pontianak,' which indicates that one negative effect of smartphone use by students is a lack of concentration in learning.

The observations conducted by the researcher on students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung revealed that a significant number of students continue to use smartphones during class. It is not uncommon for students to use their smartphones even when a teacher is present in the classroom. When lessons begin and smartphones are needed—for reading e-modules, accessing PowerPoint presentations, educational videos, and other materials—students often engage in alternative activities such as checking and responding to WhatsApp messages, browsing entertainment apps like TikTok and YouTube, playing online games, and scrolling through social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and other applications. These activities lead to many students being unfocused during class, with some choosing to concentrate on their smartphones rather than on the teacher's instruction or the material available on their devices.

The researcher also interviewed the counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung to obtain their feedback and understand how they address disruptions in the teaching and learning process caused by smartphone use among students, including those using smartphones for online gaming, social media such as YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp, which are not related to educational activities. The interviews revealed that the counselors handle cases of excessive smartphone use among grade X students by first issuing one to three verbal warnings. If there is no improvement, the student is then called to the counselor's office for counseling. If these measures prove ineffective, the counselor will send a notification letter to the student's guardian or parents.

Furthermore, the counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung also refer or transfer cases involving students who are severely addicted to their smartphones. This severe addiction includes students who cannot be corrected with verbal warnings and cannot control their smartphone use. According to the interviews, it was also found that the counselors view the continuous use of smartphones, even during class time, as a result of the students' lack of self awareness or self-control. Additionally, parental support at home and peer influence in the classroom also significantly affect students' behavior at school.

Counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung have made efforts to address this issue by providing both individual and group guidance services, focusing on the importance of appropriate smartphone use at school and at home. They also offer counseling to students who continue to use smartphones during lessons and during guidance sessions. Additionally, they contact students' parents if previous measures are not well-received by the students. The counselors also conduct home visits to address issues with students who frequently use smartphones in class. However, these efforts are still perceived as insufficiently effective. The challenge faced by counselors is controlling students when they are at home. At school, students can be reminded and managed, but once they are at home with their parents, the counselors cannot supervise or regulate their behavior. Therefore, counselors encounter difficulties in managing cases of students who frequently use smartphones in class.

Based on our observations during the implementation of classical guidance services, many students do not pay attention to these services. Instead, they are more engrossed in using their smartphones, accessing online games, shopping websites, and watching YouTube. This situation indicates that uncontrolled smartphone use during lessons poses a serious challenge to the effectiveness of guidance services. Counselors need to find new strategies to capture students' attention and enhance their engagement in classical guidance services.

Additionally, closer collaboration between teachers, parents, and students is required to address this issue comprehensively.

3.2 Discussion

It has become a common topic of discussion that incorrect guidance on smartphone use by counselors can have negative impacts on students. Many students tend to spend their time at school using smartphones, whether for social media, online gaming, or seeking various forms of entertainment, rather than focusing on their studies. The growing number of students choosing to replace their learning time with smartphone activities cannot be allowed to become a habit without addressing the issue or finding solutions. Therefore, it is crucial to explore the counselors' perspectives on student behavior related to smartphone use and the factors influencing it, understand the role of guidance and counseling in addressing these issues, and examine the various interventions and strategies implemented by the counselors. Additionally, it is necessary to evaluate the challenges faced by counselors in this process and analyze the significance of the results from the efforts made.

3.2.1 Counselors' Perspectives on Students' Smartphone Use Behavior and Its Contributing Factors

Smartphones are now integral to the educational process at schools. This is due to the requirement in several subjects for students to access lessons via smartphones. In addition to their use in certain subjects as a learning tool, smartphones are also required for administering exams, whether daily quizzes or school-wide tests. Excessive smartphone use can lead to reduced levels of empathy, weak self-control, and a lack of self-awareness among students. This habit also has the potential to diminish students' motivation to learn.

This statement is consistent with the research conducted by Harahap, Rambe, Azzura, Ashari, Al Mefa, Rahmayani, Rezky, and Atari (2023), which indicates that smartphone use during the learning process has both positive and negative impacts, depending on how it is used by students. This is due to the demand for smartphones in schools as a support tool for educational activities. To address the negative impacts of smartphone use, counselors will conduct informal meetings and provide informational services for minor cases, while calling parents for more severe cases as follow-up actions. The issue of smartphone use among students who engage in online gaming should be a primary concern for teachers and school staff, particularly counselors. Online game addiction can lead to inappropriate adolescent experiences and career planning (Tanjung, 2019).

3.2.2 The Role of Counselors

Based on the interviews conducted by the researcher, it was found that several efforts have been made by the counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung to help students reduce smartphone use in the classroom. These efforts include directly warning students who violate rules, such as using smartphones during class time. The counselors also provide counseling sessions for students who are experiencing issues, such as smartphone addiction, to help them address these problems. If warnings and counseling services are ineffective, the counselors will contact the students' parents to discuss and resolve the issues collaboratively. This statement is consistent with the research conducted by Juwanto (2020), which states that counselors play a crucial role in addressing smartphone addiction among students, serving as an actualization of their duties and functions in implementing guidance and counseling programs in schools.

Meanwhile, research conducted by Ibrahim (2019) found that group counseling led by counselors has a tangible impact and yields positive results in enhancing the learning motivation of students who are dependent on smartphones. The study also revealed that students who initially used smartphones solely for gaming, social media, and browsing have now utilized smartphones for a variety of educational applications, personal learning through online videos, and subscription to online tutoring services. Furthermore, research by Zamaludin, Mustika, and Rosita (2023) indicated that group counseling is one of the methods used by counselors to address students' online gaming addiction at SMA Al Amanah Ciwidey. In this case, discussion techniques were employed, and it was found that students addicted to online games still require guidance from counselors due to issues such as reluctance to open up to counselors, difficulty changing their mindset and behavior, and challenges in finding solutions on their own.

According to the research conducted by Fakhrozi, Wahyumiani, and Nurkholidah (2023), the handling of online gaming addiction among 8th-grade students at SMPN 16 Yogyakarta has been effective. This includes: 1) providing group counseling services by the counselors, 2) implementing regulations for individual counseling sessions for students addicted to online games, 3) establishing rules for limiting gadget use during learning activities, and 4) fostering collaboration between counselors and students' guardians to monitor students' activities and development at home.

3.2.3 Interventions and Strategies of Counselors

To address the issues related to inappropriate smartphone use among many 10th-grade students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung, the counselors have implemented various interventions and strategies, including: 1) classical and group counseling services focusing on the importance of appropriate smartphone use, 2) individual counseling, 3) contacting students' guardians or parents, and 4) home visits. These interventions and strategies align with previous research on the role of counselors in managing smartphone use by students, which emphasizes counseling services and collaboration with family members who play a crucial role in educating students within the family environment (Juwanto, 2020).

Consistent with the above statement, research conducted by Nija and Lianawati (2020) on the use of self-control techniques in group counseling provided by counselors has shown to be effective in reducing online game addiction among students at SMA Sejahtera Surabaya. Implementing treatments in group counseling is one of the effective strategies to assist students who have a tendency to excessively play online games. Although the effects may not always be immediately visible, with consistency, support, and well-designed programs, group counseling can help students reduce online game addiction and develop more appropriate smartphone usage habits.

Counseling services are also among the various services provided within guidance and counseling, with the aim of reducing students' smartphone usage habits. Counseling services can include individual counseling and group counseling, in which both the counselor and the students play crucial roles in the process. This is supported by research conducted by Persada, Hafina, and Nurhudaya (2017), which indicates that one of the counseling methods employed is cognitive restructuring counseling to reduce the tendency for online game addiction among students. Additionally, research by Trisnani and Wardani (2020) shows that the level of online game addiction among students at SMPN 2 Wungu falls into a high criterion and requires special treatment to reduce this addiction. The provision of counseling services has yielded satisfactory results in addressing these issues.

This finding is also consistent with other research conducted by Prizki and Sari (2020), which highlights that counselors play an active role in improving students' academic performance, cognitive, and psychomotor development in the education process for students who are at the stage of gadget addiction. Various counseling services are provided, such as group counseling, informational services, and individual counseling. Additionally, other research reveals that home visit services conducted by counselors, including preparation, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up stages, have a positive impact on students' excessive use of electronic devices such as smartphones (Sholihan, Firdaus, & Mardiana, 2024).

3.2.4 The Challenges Faced by Counselors

Various efforts have been made by counselors to address issues related to students' smartphone use at school. However, controlling smartphone usage at home remains a major challenge for counselors at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. This is consistent with the research conducted by Fakhrozi, Wahyumiani, and Nurkholidah (2023), which indicates that the challenges in addressing students' frequent smartphone use include insufficient peer support and a lack of parental supervision over students' activities in their rooms at home.

Moreover, previous research reveals the challenges faced by school counselors in providing services, particularly the difficulty of changing students' habits that tend to become detrimental (Juwanto, 2020). Guidance and counseling offer targeted interventions for students to reduce excessive mobile phone use, employing various functions such as preventive, understanding, curative, and advocacy functions (Adiningtiyas, 2017). In the preventive, understanding, and curative functions, only school counselors and school personnel are authorized to address the issues with the students. When school counselors and school staff encounter difficulties in managing students, the advocacy function comes into play. This involves collaboration between the school and the students' families to address and monitor students who frequently use mobile phones during classroom instruction. This underscores the need for new strategies and cooperation among teachers, parents, and students.

3.2.5 Significance of the Efforts of Counselors

The efforts made by school counselors have not yet yielded satisfactory results. This is evidenced by interviews with school counselors who indicate that significant changes in students' mobile phone usage habits following interventions largely depend on students' awareness and responsiveness. This highlights an urgent need for improved collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. Emphasizing moral and character education is essential for achieving optimal outcomes. Strategies that incorporate classical guidance services have shown positive effects by enhancing students' understanding of mobile phone addiction or online gaming behaviors. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the guidance approach in providing relevant and in-depth information to students (Zahira, 2024). Therefore, the implementation of classical guidance services should be continuously improved and tailored to students' needs, and strong collaboration among teachers, students, and parents should be reinforced to create a supportive environment for reducing mobile phone usage habits.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of mobile phones during students' learning activities at school and in the classroom will continue to have a significant impact on the students themselves. This is due to various factors, including students' lack of self-awareness, peer influence, and parenting styles that inadequately allow children to use mobile phones without restrictions. The role of school counseling in addressing students' mobile phone habits is crucial. School counselors have provided information services on appropriate mobile phone use, classical guidance services that frequently address suitable mobile phone usage topics, and counseling services for students who lack self awareness regarding improper mobile phone habits. Additionally, home visits and parental meetings conducted by school counselors serve as follow-up actions for students who demonstrate insufficient self-awareness regarding mobile phone use.

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