

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented background of the study, formulation of research problem, research objectives, research hypothesis, the significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, definition of key term, and the thesis structure.

A. Background of Study

In the digital era, the use of smartphones among students has increased rapidly, shaping not only the way young people communicate but also how they learn, socialize, and behave inside the classroom.¹ This technological expansion has contributed to the widespread integration of smartphones into students' everyday routines, shaping their study habits, leisure preferences, and even aspects of their personal and social identities.² Originally designed as simple communication tools, smartphones have evolved into multifunctional devices that integrate internet access, entertainment, social networking platforms, educational applications, and productivity features.

Recent research further shows that adolescents increasingly rely on smartphones as their primary means of accessing digital content, a trend supported by rising ownership rates each year.³ In addition, studies on mobile learning highlight how smartphones now serve as crucial devices that

¹ Islamiah et al., "Smartphone Use as a Driver of Social Behavior Changes in Daily Life."

² Giansanti, "Smartphone Addiction in Youth."

³ Gamage and Perera, "Undergraduate Students' Device Preferences in the Transition to Online Learning."

support various educational activities through applications, digital resources, and online communication.⁴ Collectively, these findings demonstrate that smartphones have become an inseparable component of modern student life, influencing not only how young people communicate but also how they learn, engage socially, and navigate daily academic tasks.

Many students bring their phones to school and use them not only for communication but also for various forms of entertainment such as social media, online games, and streaming videos.⁵ Social media platforms, for example, are designed to capture students' attention through notifications, visual stimuli, and continuous content updates. Studies show that the constant urge to check social media can reduce academic focus and disrupt learning flow due to repeated attentional shifts. Online games also appeal strongly to teenagers because they provide instant gratification, reward systems, and immersive experiences that can overshadow academic responsibilities.⁶ Games and online videos on smartphones can strongly distract students during class because they offer instant enjoyment and stimulation. When students open these apps during lessons, their focus quickly shifts away from the teacher and the material. As a result, their attention becomes divided, and it becomes difficult for them to stay fully engaged in the learning process.

⁴ Pacheco et al., "Transition Issues in Higher Education and Digital Technologies."

⁵ Rafee et al., "Addiction of Students through Usage of Smart Phone and Its Impact on Human Resources in India."

⁶ Scholar, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Annamalai University, Chidambaram (Tamil Nadu), India. et al., "Study of Online Gaming on Adolescent through the Lens of G. Stanley Hall's 'Storm and Stress.'"

One behavior that has recently gained attention due to excessive smartphone use is phubbing (phone snubbing). It refers to a situation where someone ignores the people around them or ongoing activities because they are more focused on their smartphone. This behavior can interfere with interpersonal communication and reduce the quality of social interaction.⁷ This behavior frequently appears in social settings, but it is increasingly observed in school environments as well.⁸ In the classroom, phubbing occurs when students check their phones, scroll through social media, reply to messages, or respond to notifications while the lesson is in progress. Although students are physically present, their psychological and cognitive engagement shifts to their smartphone screens. Research has shown that phubbing is often associated with smartphone addiction or compulsive usage patterns.⁹ In addition to that research, mentioned that higher levels of smartphone addiction significantly predict the tendency to engage in phubbing behaviors.

From an educational perspective, phubbing can interfere with two essential aspects of the learning process: students' attention and classroom engagement.¹⁰ Attention, particularly in English language learning, plays a vital role in understanding teacher explanations, processing new vocabulary, listening to instructions, and participating in classroom activities.¹¹ When

⁷ Roberts and David, "My Life Has Become a Major Distraction from My Cell Phone."

⁸ Lofland and Lofland, *A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*.

⁹ Safdar Bajwa et al., "Smartphone Addiction and Phubbing Behavior among University Students."

¹⁰ Nazir, *Impact of Classroom Phubbing on Teachers Who Face Phubbing during Lectures*.

¹¹ Qureshi et al., "Significance Of Vocabulary Learning For EFL Learners."

students' attention is repeatedly drawn away by smartphone use, their ability to absorb and retain information decreases.¹² The researcher argues that, based on the literature and common classroom observations, phubbing has become one of the critical challenges in modern education. The presence of smartphones in students' hands has created a learning environment where distractions are more accessible than ever. Therefore, teachers and schools must understand the impact of phubbing, develop strategies to manage smartphone use, and guide students toward healthier digital habits.

Unlike many other subjects, English learning is fundamentally a social and interactive process that requires continuous engagement between speakers and listeners. Language acquisition occurs through meaningful interaction, where students must actively listen, interpret meaning, and respond in real time.¹³ Therefore, the act of ignoring a speaking partner as happens in phubbing directly disrupts the core mechanism of language learning. In subjects such as mathematics or science, students may still recover missed information through notes or independent review. However, in English classes, missed interaction often means lost opportunities for authentic communication practice, which cannot be easily replaced.

Furthermore, English classrooms rely heavily on active listening and oral interaction, such as dialogues, discussions, and role plays. These activities require immediate attention, turn-taking, and mutual

¹² Hsieh, *The Impact of Smartphone Usage Frequency on University Students' Academic Performance: A Meta-Analysis of Moderating Factors*.

¹³ Philp, *peer interaction and second language learning*.

responsiveness among students.¹⁴ In the researcher's opinion, phubbing weakens these processes by breaking conversational flow, delaying responses, and reducing students' willingness to participate. As a result, not only individual learning is affected, but also the overall quality of classroom interaction declines.

However, although many studies have discussed the negative effects of smartphone use in general, there is still limited research that specifically examines the relationship between phubbing behavior and students' attention, particularly in English language classrooms at the junior high school level. Most previous studies tend to focus more on academic performance or learning outcomes rather than on the process of attention itself during learning activities. In fact, attention is a more fundamental aspect of learning because it determines whether students are able to receive, process, and understand instructional input in the first place. Without adequate attention, information cannot be effectively processed into comprehension or long-term memory, making successful learning difficult to achieve.

Considering these issues, the study entitled "The Correlation between Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention in English Classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung" becomes relevant and necessary. This research seeks to explore how phubbing influences students' attention during English lessons a subject that demands continuous focus, listening, and active participation.

¹⁴ Wang et al., "Researching and Practicing Positive Psychology in Second/Foreign Language Learning and Teaching."

The results of this study are expected to provide insights for educators, enabling them to create more effective learning environments and develop policies that minimize digital distraction while maintaining productive classroom engagement.

B. Formulation of Research Problem

Based on the background of the study described previously, the researcher formulates the research questions:

1. What is the level of phubbing behavior among students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung?
2. What is the level of students' attention in English classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung
3. Is there significant Correlation between Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention in English Classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the research problems above, this study aims to:

1. To identify the level of phubbing behavior among students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.
2. To determine the level of students' attention in English classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.
3. To examine whether there is a significant correlation between phubbing behavior and students' attention in English classes at MTsN

1 Tulungagung.

D. Research Hypothesis

Based on the research question and objectives, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant Correlation between Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention in English Classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.
2. **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant Correlation between Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention in English Classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.

E. The Significance of The Research

The results of this research are expected to contribute theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically:

This research provides insight about how the Correlation between Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention in English Classes at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.

2. Practically

- a. For the future researcher

This study is expected to provide a useful foundation for future researchers who wish to investigate phubbing behavior among young learners. The affects children's attention, motivation, and socio-

emotional development.

b. For teachers

English teachers are encouraged to be more aware of students' smartphone usage during classroom activities. Since phubbing behavior can reduce students' attention and engagement in learning, teachers should implement effective classroom management strategies and create interactive learning activities that help students stay focused during English lessons. Teachers may also educate students about the negative impact of excessive smartphone use on their learning performance.

c. For students

Students are suggested to use their smartphones wisely during English classes and avoid engaging in phubbing behavior. By paying more attention to classroom activities and minimizing distractions from mobile devices, students can improve their concentration, participation, and overall learning outcomes in English lesson.

F. Scope and Limitation of The Research

This study will be directed to investigate the correlation between students' phubbing behavior and their attention in English classes. This study will be conducted at MTsN 1 Tulungagung and will only involve eighth-grade students.

The study examines two main variables: phubbing behavior as the independent variable (X) and students' attention in English class as the

dependent variable (Y). The instruments used in this study consist of a questionnaire to measure phubbing behavior and another questionnaire to assess students' attention during English lessons. In terms of content, this research is restricted to investigating the correlation between phubbing behavior and attention. Thus, the study aims to provide a focused analysis within these specified boundaries.

G. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding, the key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. Phubbing Behavior:

Phubbing behavior refers to a pattern in which students ignore or withdraw from classroom activities, peer interaction, or teacher instruction because they are more focused on their smartphones. This behavior includes actions such as checking messages, browsing social media, playing games, or using the device during lessons, which can interrupt their engagement and participation in the learning process.

2. Students' Attention:

Students' attention refers to the degree of focus, concentration, and cognitive engagement that students demonstrate during English learning activities. It involves the ability to listen, follow instructions, process information, and participate actively in classroom tasks without being distracted by external factors—particularly digital distractions such as smartphone use.

H. Thesis Structure

This thesis is organized into six chapters, each of which is outlined as follows:

1. Chapter I presents the Introduction, which includes the background of the study, formulation of the research problems, research objectives, research hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms, and the organization of the thesis.
2. Chapter II reviews the Related Literature and Previous Studies. This chapter discusses relevant theories on Phubbing Behavior and Students' Attention.
3. Chapter III describes the Research Method, which covers the research design, population and sample, research instruments, validity and reliability testing, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.
4. Chapter IV presents the Research Findings, including data descriptions, results of normality and homogeneity testing, data analysis, and hypothesis testing.
5. Chapter V provides the Discussion, offering interpretations, explanations, and reinforcement of the overall findings of the study.
6. Chapter VI contains the Conclusion and Suggestions, summarizing the main findings, discussing the limitations of the research, and providing

recommendations for teachers, and future researchers.