

## Smartphone Addiction and Psychological Well-being in College Students

Isnaria Rizki Hayati<sup>1 a)</sup>, Fadhila Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Kiki Mariah<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Riau

Kampus Bina Widya Km 12,5 Simpang Baru Pekanbaru 28293 – Indonesia.

a) [isnariarh@lecturer.unri.ac.id](mailto:isnariarh@lecturer.unri.ac.id)

**Abstrac.** *Cell phones are a communication tool that has become a necessity for all groups, including students. Even though it has many benefits, excessive use can potentially cause behavioral disorders that can lead to dependence. Excessive use is said to be a form of addictive or addictive behavior. Individuals who depend on their cell phones are categorized as addicted because they can cause negative emotions such as worry and anxiety if they do not access their cell phones within a certain time. Cell phone addiction not only causes disruption to academic activities and social interactions, but also has implications for mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and decreased life satisfaction as well as decreased psychological well-being, students who experience addiction to technology tend to show higher levels of stress, low self-control abilities, and increased feelings of isolation. This research suggests the need for effective interventions to help students manage cell phone use healthily in order to improve students' psychological well-being*

**Keywords:** *Addiction, Psychological Well-being, Mental Health.*

**Abstrak.** Ponsel merupakan salah satu alat komunikasi yang telah menjadi kebutuhan bagi semua kalangan termasuk mahasiswa. Meskipun memiliki banyak manfaat, penggunaan yang terlalu berlebihan dapat berpotensi menimbulkan gangguan perilaku yang menyebabkan ketergantungan. Penggunaan yang berlebihan dikatakan sebagai salah satu bentuk perilaku kecanduan atau adiksi. Individu yang ketergantungan pada ponselnya dikategorikan sebagai adiksi karena dapat menimbulkan emosi negatif seperti cemas dan kegelisahan jika tidak mengakses ponselnya dalam waktu tertentu. Adiksi ponsel tidak hanya menyebabkan gangguan pada aktivitas akademik dan interaksi sosial, tetapi juga berimplikasi pada masalah kesehatan mental seperti kecemasan, depresi, dan menurunnya kepuasan hidup serta menurunnya kesejahteraan psikologis atau *psychological well-being*, mahasiswa yang mengalami adiksi pada teknologi cenderung menunjukkan tingkat stres yang lebih tinggi, kemampuan pengendalian diri yang rendah, serta perasaan isolasi yang meningkat. Penelitian ini mengusulkan perlunya intervensi yang efektif dalam membantu mahasiswa mengelola penggunaan ponsel secara sehat agar dapat meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis pada mahasiswa

**Kata Kunci:** Adiksi, Psychological Well-being, Kesehatan Mental.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Technological developments at this time are growing very rapidly including the field of information and communication, one of which is cellular phones or mobile phones (Michelle Drouin et al. 2015). The presence of cell phones not only functions as a means of voice communication and short messages (short messages service), but is multifunctional. Prashant B. Kalaskar (2015) explained that in the past the main purpose of individuals using cell phones was to receive calls, send and receive short messages, but along with technological developments, cell phones have been used as a medium of entertainment and communication such as accessing types of applications for games, social connectivity, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, TikTok and so on.

Smartphone addiction is clinically classified as a behavioral addiction caused by excessive problems that can affect the daily lives of its users (Abuhamdah & Naser, 2023). Despite the many positive benefits, excessive use of something is often associated with disturbing behavior that results in behavioral addiction (Billieux, et al. 2015). Excessive behavior with the use of technology such as mobile phone use can lead to addictive behavior (Griffiths and Halley M. Pontes, 2015).

Increased time intensive use of mobile phones can cause various problems known as addiction. The concept of addiction was originally used for individuals who have dependencies and involve drugs (Walker, 1989). As a relatively new phenomenon, many experts have conducted research related to addiction that continues to grow and views that addictive behavior is not only for individuals who consume drugs, but also includes gambling, playing games, social networking (Griffiths, 2015), internet use (Jonathan J. Kandell, 1998) and cellphone use (Billieux et al. 2015, Griffiths and Halley M. Pontes. 2015).

Siti Sarifah Alia and Agus Tri Haryanto (2014) wrote that the tendency of people to depend on smartphones is getting higher and higher. Studies reveal that gadget enthusiasts often check their cellphones on average up to 1,500 times per day. The smartphone owners use their devices fully for an average of 3 hours 16 minutes per day. Then Diah Agil Saputri's (2016) research on UNY students showed that excessive cell phone use can lead to a high risk of misunderstanding, wasted time, difficulty filtering information, and fading of manners and manners in interaction.

Michelle Drouin et al. (2015) explained that people who lose their cell phones will be afflicted with feelings of anxiety and fear. Then King et al. (2012) explained that

addiction is characterized by feeling uncomfortable and anxious due to not having a cellphone, PC, tab, or other virtual communication tool. Then M. Sapacz et al. (2015) examined that using a cellphone with a high frequency makes a person feel anxious if he does not access his cellphone. Individuals who have an addiction to cell phones consciously or unconsciously that they have an ambivalence problem in the form of fear if they do not use cell phones. The way of life that has been accustomed to cell phones makes individuals able to face pressure if they stop using them. The tendency of self-destructive thoughts, such as feeling always restless, anxious, afraid and thinking more about failure so that they interpret everything negatively and bring up negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. This is supported by the opinion of Li Chen, et al (2015) that the increasing number of smartphone users causes individuals to have dependence which causes interpersonal problems such as negative emotions such as depression and anxiety.

Individuals who have addictive behavior will spend a long time playing mobile phones and have disturbances in their physical and psychological conditions. Sanjay Dixit et al. (2010) have also conducted research on students of a university in India which resulted in 18.5% of students experiencing dependence or addiction to cell phones. As many as 73% of students always carry cell phones while sleeping for twenty-four hours, 18.5% use cell phones during lectures, 20% of students lose concentration when cell phones are not nearby, 25% admit to updating cell phone software at least once a year, 38.5% admit to always checking cell phones even though there are no notifications, and 56% of students keep cell phones in shirt or pants pockets so they can still freely access cell phones. Another study in the United States (Smith, 2012) showed that nearly two-thirds of 18-34 year old Americans sleep next to their cell phones so they feel they are not missing anything or find it easy to get up at night to answer text messages, and more than three-quarters of them frequently check for missed messages or calls even when the cell phone is not ringing.

The latest study also showed that more than half of the participants (59.1%) had severe mental illness due to cell phone addiction. The research results in this article show that there is a high prevalence of smartphone addiction and psychological disorders among university students in Jordan. Of the 2337 participants, more than half (56.7%) showed cell phone addiction, and 59.1% experienced severe levels of psychological stress. Factors that predicted cell phone addiction and psychological distress included gender (females were more susceptible), feelings that cell phone use affected mental abilities, sleep disturbances,

and fatigue. Students with higher income or who are over 30 years old are less likely to be affected by cell phone addiction and psychological distress (Abuhamdah & Naser, 2023).

Li Chen et al (2015) explained that the increasing number of smartphone users causes individuals to have dependence which causes interpersonal problems such as negative emotions, namely depression and anxiety. In this kind of negative emotional thought disorder, the role and task of the counselor can help individuals to understand the process that leads to anxiety symptoms by focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining certain beliefs. The counselor interacts with the counselee to change his thoughts and understanding of deviant behavior. Shertzer and Stone (1980, 16) explain that counseling aims to enable counselees to produce behavioral change, which allows them to live more productively and adjust to their environment.

Cell phone addiction is significantly associated with poor mental health, where college students with cell phone addiction have a higher chance of experiencing mental health disorders than those without addiction. On the other hand, high social support plays a protective role, reducing the risk of poor mental health. Therefore, comprehensive interventions, such as education and counseling programs, are needed to help college students understand the risks of excessive mobile phone use and improve their mental well-being through adequate social support (Malek Mohammadi et al., 2024).

Although other research data showed the results that not all students studied experienced addiction to excessive cell phone use, other indicators were found that excessive cell phone use was positively related to students' sleep quality, which indirectly affected sleep quality, which affected students' mental health (L. L. Yang et al., 2023).

Based on the results of the above studies, smartphone addiction has a negative impact on students' psychological well-being. Most college students who experience smartphone addiction tend to show higher levels of anxiety and depression as well as lower sleep quality, which overall decreases their psychological well-being. Smartphone addiction increases the risk of social isolation, stress, as well as feelings of fatigue and loss of motivation in daily activities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is a type of literature review that aims to find and analyze theories and results of previous research that are relevant to the research problem. Creswell (2023) defines literature review as a written summary that includes various sources such as journal

articles, books, and other documents, which describe theories and information from the past to the present. The literature review not only aims to organize the literature based on relevant topics but also to identify research gaps and provide a strong theoretical foundation as a basis for further research.

In this study, the authors used secondary data collected through literature study, which is a method of collecting information from various sources related to the research topic. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis method, which is the process of systematically describing and interpreting relevant facts. This analysis not only focuses on the exposure of facts, but also aims to identify the relationship between psychological well-being and smartphone addiction behavior in college students. Thus, this study is expected to provide comprehensive insight and understanding of the role of psychological well-being in preventing or reducing smartphone addiction among university students. In addition, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of intervention programs or policies that support the improvement of students' psychological well-being as an effort to mitigate smartphone addiction.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Excessive mobile phone use is conceptualized as an addictive behavior that may affect the psychological well-being of individuals. Not only in the psychological area, cell phone addiction can also affect academic performance and self-confidence in students (Chu, 2023). Therefore, maintaining mental health is very important, because the more individuals maintain their psychological well-being, they will be able to avoid or manage addictive behavior tendencies.

### **1. Addictive behavior**

The concept of addiction was originally used for individuals who are dependent on and involve drugs (Walker, 1989). As a relatively new phenomenon, many experts have conducted research related to addiction that continues to evolve and view that addictive behavior is not only for individuals who consume drugs but also shifts to non-intoxicating behaviors such as gambling, gaming addiction, and social networking addiction (Griffiths, 2015), internet use (Jonathan J. Kandell, 1998) and mobile phone use (Billieux et al. 2015). Addiction is defined as addictive behavior that involves excessive interaction and problematic behavior in using something (Griffiths and Halley M. Pontes, 2015). Then

Griffiths et al. (2016) explained that addictive behavior is conceptualized as a pattern of repetitive habits that increase the risk of disease and/or personal and social problems. Thus, addiction or addiction can be interpreted as a condition where individuals feel dependent on something that is liked on various occasions due to a lack of control over behavior so that they feel punished if they do not fulfill their desires and habits.

The modern development of cell phones has not only made people use cell phones only for voice calls and text messages, but also social networking sites. Thus, as modern cellular technology and even websites (e.g. Facebook) become more multifunctional (Griffiths, 2012). Addiction to cell phones, laptops, social media, has become a modern type of addiction that occurs today (Scott Robers, 2013 p. 22). Seemingly harmless behaviors such as checking mobile phones frequently can become addictive behaviors (Edo Shonin, William Van Gordon and Griffiths, 2015).

The characteristics of addiction have various behaviors. According to Carnes in Griffiths (1996) there are ten signs of addiction, including; uncontrolled behavior patterns; inability to stop behavior despite adverse consequences; self-destructive despite high behavioral risks; spending a lot of time doing addiction-inducing activities and; lack of social awareness, due to spending too much time with addiction-inducing activities. The components of addictive behavior have the same categories in each behavior characterized by salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse (Griffiths and Halley M. Pontes, 2015). Salience shows the dominance of addictive behavior in behavior by continuing to think about cellphones continuously if away from their cellphones. Individuals continue to use cell phones to access anything and find it difficult to concentrate on their studies or work. Individuals will be indifferent and less concerned about the surrounding environment if they are accessing cell phones. Mood Modification is getting pleasure by accessing the cell phone, preoccupation with the cell phone and having a strong desire to always check the cell phone at any time. Cell phone use is the most dominant moment for individuals in carrying out their daily activities. Tolerance is the individual's activity in the use of cell phones has increased progressively over a certain period of time to get a satisfaction effect. Individuals will continue to play and access cell phones to be the best and famous among their environment. Then withdrawal is defined by withdrawing or stopping accessing the cell phone if the individual loses the cell phone, loses the signal and runs out of battery which causes feelings of anxiety, anxiety and unpleasantness. Conflict is ignoring harmful consequences and causing conflict between

him and the environment. Social relationships become tenuous, socializing is limited to fellow cell phone users, unwilling to interact or chat with friends, thus making individuals isolated from the real social environment. The individual's social skills also become diminished and find it difficult to relate to others. Relapse is said to be the tendency to repeat the initial patterns of cell phone addiction behavior even more severely even after years of disappearance and control. Individuals find it difficult to escape from mobile phone addiction, especially when hanging out with friends or chatting, so they will repeat addictive behavior to become more severe or relapse even though addictive behavior after years of disappearance and control. All of these components indicate that someone has addictive behavior towards mobile phones if they indicate some of the addictive behaviors. Grusser and Griffiths (2007) stated that an individual can be said to be addicted if they meet three or half of the six aspects stated by Griffiths.

## **2. Psychological Well-being**

Psychological well-being is an individual's healthy psychological condition, which is characterized by the functioning of positive psychological aspects in the process of achieving self-actualization. Psychological well-being is not only a condition of a person who is free from stress or mental problems, but more than that, it is a condition of a person who has the ability to accept themselves and their past life (self-acceptance), self-development or growth (personal growth), belief that their life is meaningful and has a purpose (purpose in life), has a positive relationship quality with others (positive relationship with others), the capacity to manage their life and environment effectively (environmental mastery), and the ability to determine their own actions (autonomy (Ryff, 1989) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995); (Ryff & Singer, 2008a).

Psychological well being (PWB) contributes to increasing a person's life expectancy (Vázquez et al., 2009a) and to measure an individual's good feelings (feel good) and life satisfaction (Ryff & Singer, 2008b). The implementation of Psychological well being (PWB) is also to determine psychological dysfunction, resilience, and is included as one of the indicators of positive life assessment for individual (Ryff & Singer, 1996). By knowing the condition of psychological well being, it allows us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves in psychological function with clinical implications (Giovanni A. Fava, 2014). Psychological well being (PWB) also contributes to increasing a person's life

expectancy (Vázquez et al., 2009b), then it can make individuals better for themselves and their environment (Huppert & So, 2013)

Individuals who have good psychological well being are characterized by self-acceptance, have a positive attitude towards themselves, have warm relationships with others, the ability to be independent, be able to adapt to all demands, have goals and enthusiasm in life, and have a good desire to continue to develop (Ryff and Singer, 1996). On the other hand, low psychological well-being can be characterized by feeling dissatisfied with oneself, low interpersonal relationship skills, depending on other people's decisions, having difficulty managing daily affairs, not having several goals but not being able to direct oneself to achieve them, and not having the desire to develop oneself (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

The low psychological well-being of students can affect their college life and become one of the triggers for other problems, including in first-year students at the University of Indonesia who have academic stress related to psychological well-being. The results of the study revealed that the lower the psychological well-being, the higher the academic stress value of students (Sarina, 2012).

### **3. The Need to Reduce Addictive Behavior as an Effort to Maintain Psychological Well-being**

Psychological well-being has a significant relationship with mobile phone addiction behavior. When psychological well-being is compromised, individuals may feel stressed, anxious, or lonely. Individuals may also seek escape or comfort through excessive smartphone use. As a result, students have low self-regulation of learning and learning achievement (Tavakolizadeh et al., 2012), low academic performance (Chu, 2023), do not have clear life goals (Krok, 2015), low optimism, religiosity problems (Burris et al., 2010), and (Junghyun Kim, Robert LaRose, 2009) (Li et al., 2022) depression in terms of demographics, economic conditions, and health, causing stress and low resilience (F. Yang & Smith, 2016), unhappiness and low life satisfaction (Khramtsova et al., 2007) (Goodmon et al., 2016) and low religiosity coping (Scandrett & Mitchell, 2009). The urgency of psychological well-being in awareness of excessive mobile phone use can be described as follows;

#### **1. The Influence of Psychological Well-being on Smartphone Use**



Low psychological well-being, such as high levels of stress, depression, or anxiety, can drive individuals to use smartphones excessively as an escape or a way to deal with negative emotions. Individuals can escape as a form of ignoring their negative feelings. For example, social media or entertainment applications can provide a temporary sense of "escape" from uncomfortable feelings. However, the temporary feeling of comfort that arises from playing with a cellphone will not last long because the individual does not solve their problems. This neglect can have an effect on low self-confidence (Chu, 2023), low resilience (F. Yang & Smith, 2016), unhappiness and low life satisfaction (Khramtsova et al., 2007) (Goodmon et al., 2016).

## 2. Smartphones as a Source of Emotional Support

When psychological well-being declines, individuals may feel isolated and in need of support. Smartphones become a facility to communicate and get social support through social media, instant messaging, or video calls, which over time can turn into excessive habits or dependencies. This statement is in line with the results of research that the use of social media with the mental and physical health of adolescents (Al Yasin et al., 2022)

## 3. Impact of Addiction Due to Excessive Use

Excessive cellphone use can worsen psychological well-being. For example, the tendency to keep checking notifications or getting caught up in "doomscrolling" (reading negative news continuously) can cause anxiety, feelings of low self-esteem, or sleep disturbances, which further reduce psychological well-being.

## 4. Lack of Self-Control and Influence on Life Balance: Good psychological well-being usually includes healthy self-control and life balance. However, if this well-being is disturbed, an individual's ability to regulate smartphone use also decreases, which increases the risk of addiction and disrupts other important routines.

## 5. Positive Effects of Psychological Well-Being on Healthy Use: On the other hand, if psychological well-being is maintained, individuals tend to be better able to manage smartphone usage time, be more critical of the content accessed, and be wiser in avoiding excessive use.

Good psychological well-being can help a person control the urge to use smartphones excessively, set priorities, and maintain a healthy balance in everyday technology use.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that addictive behavior towards mobile phones is closely related to decreased psychological well-being in college students. Excessive use of mobile phones triggers emotional disorders, such as anxiety and depression, and can damage interpersonal functions that result in social isolation and low quality of interpersonal relationships. College students with high levels of mobile phone addiction tend to experience academic stress, loss of focus, and sleep problems, which ultimately disrupt their overall mental health. Low psychological well-being is seen from the loss of students' ability to manage themselves and their environment effectively, difficulty maintaining meaningful life goals, and low capacity to be independent and develop optimally. To reduce these negative impacts, interventions that focus on developing psychological well-being, such as CBT-based group counseling programs, are needed. These interventions are expected to help college students develop self-control, reduce addictive behavior, and improve their quality of life. Given the broad impact of mobile phone addiction on psychological well-being, further research is needed to explore more targeted psychological interventions. Future studies can also consider additional variables, such as the role of social support and the quality of interpersonal relationships, which may affect the level of mobile phone addiction and college students' psychological well-being.

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