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Personality, loneliness and subjective well-being as predictors of problematic mobile phone usage

REMIYA MAHAJAN, RICHA GUPTA* AND ARTI BAKHSHI
Department of Psychology, University of Jammu, Jammu (J&K) India

ABSTRACT

The use of mobile phones has become so much integrated in our lives that they seem to be indispensable and problematic at times. This study sought to explore how well personality, loneliness and subjective well-being (SWB) could potentially predict the problematic use of mobile phones among 150 mobile phone users (females=90 and males=60) in the age group of 18-24 years. Also differences in problematic use of mobile phones were studied with respect to gender and age. Regression analysis revealed that some personality domains (openness to experience, extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism), social loneliness and SWB predicted problematic use of mobile phones. Gender but not age brought significant differences in mobile phone users on the scores of PUMP scale. It can be concluded that these predictors would enable the screening of and intervening in the potentially problematic behaviours of mobile phone users. The findings support the current perspective of understanding the problematic use of mobile phone which could lead to substance abuse addiction.

Key Words : Personality, Loneliness, Subjective well-being, Problematic use, Mobile phones

INTRODUCTION

With the surging technological advancements many people have become tech-savvy. One of the reflections of technological savviness is evident from the enhanced penetration of mobile phone usage in our day-to-day lives, that they seem inseparable. In today's time, mobile phone is not just a fashion accessory or a style statement for a rich man only. Across the world, people from all ages, economical and cultural backgrounds are adopting mobile phones for various purposes. But just like any other technological invention, there are negative aspects associated with its use which are considered as problematic.

The problematic use of mobile phone could be defined as "person's perceived tendency to chronically use mobile phone services in excess of his needs and resources" (James, 2012). This problematic use is associated with its absolute dependence on the gadget and when it starts distracting the user from executing daily life activities, be it work or studies. Even health related symptoms like sleeplessness, headaches, fatigue, impaired concentration, problems in hearing, etc. in users who use mobile phones in excess. Given the fact that

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