212

Chapter 11
Smartphone Use, Addiction, Narcissism, and Personality:
A Mixed Methods Investigation

Claire Pearson
University of Derby, UK

Zaheer Hussain
University of Derby, UK

ABSTRACT

There are increasing numbers of people who are now using smartphones. Consequently, there is a risk of addiction to certain web applications such as social networking sites (SNSs) which are easily accessible via smartphones. There is also the risk of an increase in narcissism amongst users of SNSs. The present study set out to investigate the relationship between smartphone use, narcissistic tendencies and personality as predictors of smartphone addiction. The study also aimed to investigate the distinction between addiction specificity and co-occurrence in smartphone addiction via qualitative data and discover why people continue to use smartphones in banned areas. A self-selected sample of 256 smartphone users (Mean age = 29.2, SD = 9.49) completed an online survey. The results revealed that 13.3% of the sample was classified as addicted to smartphones. Higher narcissism scores and neuroticism levels were linked to addiction. Three themes of social relations, smartphone dependence and self-serving personalities emerged from the qualitative data. Interpretation of qualitative data supports addiction specificity of the smartphone. It is suggested smartphones encourage narcissism, even in non-narcissistic users. In turn, this increased use in banned areas. Future research needs to gather more in-depth qualitative data, addiction scale comparisons and comparison of use with and without SNS access. It is advised that prospective buyers of smartphones be pre-warned of the potential addictive properties of new technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the huge rise in demand for interpersonal, mass communication technology has boosted smartphone evolution. From 2010 to 2011, sales increased by 58% and accounted for 31% of mobile phone sales (Silva, 2012). By 2013, 51% of adults owned smartphones in the UK (Ofcom, 2013). Thanks to WI-FI smartphone functions are endless and easily accessible. Devices boast browser

access, multiple downloadable applications (apps), camera's and organisation systems. They are a mandatory device within industrialised cultures (Kwon, Lee & Won et al., 2013). However, there is evidence to suggest that there is an over-dependence on smartphones which can lead to destructive public health inferences (Monk, Carroll, Parker & Blythe, 2004; Palen, Salzman & Youngs, 2001; Paragras, 2005; Sarwar, 2013). Including antisocial feelings of rejection within families (Rosman, 2006) and negative clinical health implications (Shin & Dey, 2013) such as addiction (Lopez-Fernandez & Honrubia-Serrano et al., 2013).

Rosen, Cheever and Carrier (2012) defined negative relationships between psychological health and technology overuse as an 'iDisorder.'; which smartphone addiction could be classed as. Roos (2001) defines three factors to mobile phone addiction; phones are always switched on, will be used regardless of landline telephone availability and use causes social or financial difficulties. Smartphones provide us with an unparalleled level of connectedness; but the psychological cost is unknown. The depth of such relationships may not be equal to real-life communications; and they may be engaged in to raise self-esteem by feeling popular – an indicator of narcissism (Campbell & Miller, 2011). Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), an Axis II disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: fifth edition (DSM-V), is defined by self-promotion, vanity, grandiose sense of self-importance, power fantasies and superficial relationships. Twenge and Campbell (2013) warn of 'The Narcissism Epidemic' and report narcissism in America has risen as much as obesity. Smartphones may influence the development of NPD and could potentially influence a dependence to online gaming or gambling. Smartphones allow access to gambling and gaming sites (Young, 2000). These are easily accessible via a smartphone and ease of access is a key factor in developing dependence (Griffiths & Barnes, 2008).

Many studies have investigated addictive internet use which evidence psychosocial implications (Whang, Lee & Chang, 2003; Siomos et al., 2012). Yao and Zhong (2014) conducted a cross-lagged panel survey with 361 students investigating causal priority between psychological health and internet addiction. It was reported that loneliness was increased by excessive internet use and online relationships are not a healthy substitute for real life interactions. Whilst real life interaction may reduce internet addiction, increased online interactions due to excessive internet use can neutralise the effect. The study offers a perturbing view of a cruel circle of internet addiction and loneliness. Although, the different platforms for internet use were not investigated and no significant effect was found for depression. Yen, Yen, Wu, Huang and Ko (2011) investigated differences between real life and online hostility and whether these differences were mediated by online activities, depression and internet use. They reported that internet addiction and depression increases both real life and online hostility. However, depressed participants showed lower hostility behaviours when online; suggesting the internet as a positive pathway for depression interventions. Although, the percentage of depressed participants who suffered internet addiction was not reported.

Compulsive usage of a device which is constantly at hand is hard to resist. Even in situations where they are banned; for example whilst driving (Mccartt, Hellings & Bratiman, 2006; Patten, Kircher, Ostlund & Nilsson, 2004). Research suggests this causes 25% of road traffic accidents (Stutts, Reinfurt, Staplin & Rodgman, 2001). Overuse of mobile phones can have negative effects on psychological health including depression and chronic stress (Augner & Hacker, 2010) and increased suicidal ideation (Katsumata, Matsumoto, Kitani and Takeshima, 2008). Research supports the link between depression and excessive texting, social networking, gaming, viewing video clips, emailing, listening to music which can all be accessed via a smartphone (Allam, 2010; de Wit, Straten, Lamers, Cuijpers&Penninx, 2011; Huang, 2010; Kalpidou, Costin& Morris, 2011). Lee, Chang, Lin and Cheng (2014) investigated

Related Content

Healthcare Education: Integrating Simulation Technologies
Eva M. Frank (2018). *Handbook of Research on Human Development in the Digital Age (pp. 163-182).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/healthcare-education/186215

Identifying and Responding to Customer Needs on Facebook Fan Pages
Aikaterini Manthiou, Lanlung Chiangand Liang (Rebecca) Tang (2013). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 36-52).*
www.irma-international.org/article/identifying-and-responding-to-customer-needs-on-facebook-fan-pages/80409

The Politics of Digital Citizenship Education
Vicki A. Hosek (2023). *Critical Roles of Digital Citizenship and Digital Ethics (pp. 235-248).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-politics-of-digital-citizenship-education/331942

The Emerging Story of the Machine
Philip D. Carter (2010). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 1-12).*
www.irma-international.org/article/emerging-story-machine/42153

Swedish Students Online: An Inquiry into Differing Cultures on the Internet
Håkan Selg (2011). *Youth Culture and Net Culture: Online Social Practices (pp. 41-62).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/swedish-students-online/50692