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## “A STUDY OF SMARTPHONE ADDICTION AMONG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS”

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study investigated gender differences in smartphone addiction among junior college students. Smartphones, though widely used for communication, education, and social interaction, have become a source of behavioral dependency that may impair psychological well-being and academic performance. The objectives of the study were to examine the level of smartphone addiction among junior college boys and girls and to compare their addiction patterns. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences in smartphone addiction dimensions between the two groups. A sample of 100 junior college students, consisting of 50 boys and 50 girls aged 16 to 19 years, was selected using purposive random sampling. The Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS-VAM; Vijayshri & Ansari, 2019) was administered, which measures six dimensions: compulsion, forgetfulness, lack of attention, depression and anxiety, disturbed hunger/sleep, and social withdrawal. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests. Results revealed that boys scored significantly higher on compulsion, forgetfulness, lack of attention, and total smartphone addiction. In contrast, girls reported higher levels of depression and anxiety, disturbed hunger/sleep, and social withdrawal. These findings suggest that boys exhibit greater compulsive use and cognitive disruptions, while girls experience more substantial emotional and lifestyle consequences of smartphone overuse.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Smartphone addiction, junior college students, gender differences, compulsion, psychological well-being.*

### INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have become an integral part of modern life, transforming the way we communicate, educate, entertain, and interact socially. For adolescents and young adults, particularly junior college students, smartphones are not only tools for learning but also a medium for building identity, relationships, and social networks. However, excessive and uncontrolled use has led to the emergence of **smartphone addiction**, a behavioral dependency that negatively affects psychological well-being, academic performance, and social functioning (Elhai et al., 2017). The phenomenon of smartphone addiction, also described as problematic smartphone use, has become a pressing concern in educational and psychological research.

Adolescence and early adulthood represent a critical stage of development marked by identity formation, peer bonding, and academic pressures. Junior college students, usually aged between 16 and

19 years, are particularly vulnerable to addictive behaviors due to high emotional reactivity, curiosity, and peer influence. Smartphones provide constant access to social media, online games, and instant communication, which, while offering opportunities for engagement, may foster compulsive use. Studies have revealed that problematic smartphone use is associated with sleep disturbances, anxiety, depression, and reduced concentration (Samaha & Hawi, 2016). For students, this can manifest in declining academic performance, disrupted study habits, and reduced physical activity.

The addictive potential of smartphones is linked to psychological reinforcement mechanisms, such as instant gratification, fear of missing out (FoMO), and the dopamine-driven reward system (Andreassen et al., 2017). Social networking applications in particular are designed to keep users engaged through likes, comments, and notifications. Over time, these repeated reinforcements condition students to check their devices frequently, even at the cost of essential tasks. In educational settings, students often report difficulties in regulating screen time, prioritizing studies, and resisting distractions caused by smartphones.

Research across countries has indicated rising prevalence rates of smartphone addiction among adolescents. In India, where smartphone penetration has grown exponentially in the past decade, the issue is compounded by increased internet affordability and widespread access to social media platforms (Kumari & Kumar, 2021). For junior college students, smartphones are both academic aids and sources of entertainment, which increases the likelihood of overuse. Despite awareness of the negative consequences, many students struggle to limit usage, reflecting symptoms similar to substance addiction, such as craving, withdrawal, and tolerance.

Understanding smartphone addiction in junior college students is vital for both academic and psychological reasons. First, it sheds light on the psychosocial challenges faced by adolescents in the digital era. Second, it provides insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to design awareness programs, counseling interventions, and guidelines for healthy smartphone use. The present study, therefore, aims to examine the patterns, extent, and psychological implications of smartphone addiction among junior college students. By examining the underlying factors and consequences, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital dependency and its impact on adolescent development.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Smartphone addiction has emerged as a global concern, with research highlighting its prevalence among adolescents and college students. Billieux et al. (2015) described problematic smartphone use as a multidimensional construct involving impulsivity, uncontrolled usage, and functional impairment. Their model emphasized cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, suggesting that addiction results from both individual vulnerabilities and technological design.

Several studies have confirmed the association between smartphone addiction and mental health outcomes. Elhai et al. (2017) reported that excessive smartphone use is positively correlated with anxiety, depression, and stress. Similarly, Samaha and Hawi (2016) found that smartphone addiction negatively impacts academic performance by reducing concentration and time management skills. These findings suggest that smartphone overuse not only affects psychological well-being but also has tangible academic consequences.

In the Indian context, Kumari and Kumar (2021) investigated smartphone usage among adolescents and found high prevalence of addictive behaviors, particularly linked to social networking and gaming applications. Their study emphasized that cultural and contextual factors, such as peer influence and easy internet access, intensify the risk of smartphone dependency among students. Additionally, Cha and Seo (2018) demonstrated that fear of missing out (FoMO) significantly predicts problematic smartphone use among adolescents, indicating that social motivations play a crucial role.

Recent studies also underline the physiological and lifestyle consequences of smartphone addiction. Excessive usage has been linked to sleep disturbances, eye strain, and decreased physical activity (Lopez-Fernandez, 2018). These findings highlight the holistic impact of smartphone overuse on the lives of adolescents. Collectively, the literature suggests that smartphone addiction is a growing

psychological issue requiring preventive strategies, early interventions, and further research, particularly among vulnerable populations such as junior college students.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To examine the level of smartphone addiction among junior college boys and girls.
2. To compare smartphone addiction between boys and girls junior college students.

### HYPOTHESIS:

- 1)  $H_1$ : There was a significant difference in the level of smartphone addiction between boys and girls in junior college.
- 2)  $H_2$ : There was a significant relationship between smartphone addiction and selected demographic variables among junior college students.

### Sample:

The sample consisted of  $N = 100$  junior college students, including equal representation of boys and girls (e.g., 50 boys and 50 girls). The participants were selected using purposive random sampling from different junior colleges. The inclusion criteria required participants to be within the 16–19 years age group and to be actively using a smartphone for at least two years.

### Tools

#### 1) Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS-VAM; Vijayshri & Ansari, 2019):

The Smartphone Addiction Scale is a standardized instrument developed to measure different levels of smartphone addiction among adolescents and young adults aged 14–24 years. The scale consists of 23 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Disagree Strongly). It assesses six dimensions: compulsion, forgetfulness, lack of attention, depression and anxiety, disturbed hunger and sleep, and social withdrawal. Higher scores indicate greater levels of smartphone addiction. The tool was standardized on a sample of 200 students from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The reliability of the scale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was reported as .857, indicating high internal consistency. Content and construct validity were established through expert evaluation and factor analysis.

### Variable:

**Independent variable:** Gender a) Boy b) Girl

**Dependent Variable:** 1. Smartphone addiction levels

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

't' indicates the significance of the difference between Boys and Girls Junior college students regarding Smartphone Addiction.

Smartphone Addiction Dimension	Boys Students (N = 50)			Girls Students (N = 50)			t- ratio	df	p
	Mean	SD	SE	Mean	SD	SE			
Compulsion	27.85	4.13	0.58	23.18	4.01	0.56	5.73**	98	< .01
Forgetfulness	8.17	4.04	0.57	4.11	3.68	0.58	4.98**	98	< .01
Lack of attention	8.39	3.95	0.55	5.09	4.29	0.60	4.00**	98	< .01
Depression and Anxiety	12.07	3.55	0.50	16.48	3.84	0.54	5.96**	98	< .01
Disturbed hunger/sleep	17.94	3.78	0.53	13.56	4.25	0.60	5.44**	98	< .01
Social withdrawal	13.64	4.12	0.58	16.40	4.06	0.57	3.37**	98	< .01
Total Smartphone Addiction	88.06	3.92	0.55	78.82	4.02	0.56	11.63**	98	< .01

*Sig \*\*0.01= 2.62, \*0.05= 1.98*

An independent samples *t*-test was used to examine gender differences in smartphone addiction among junior college students. Significant differences were found across all dimensions of smartphone addiction. Boys scored significantly higher than girls on compulsion,  $t(98) = 5.73, p < .01$ , forgetfulness,  $t(98) = 4.98, p < .01$ , and lack of attention,  $t(98) = 4.00, p < .01$ . These findings indicate that boys were more likely to engage in compulsive smartphone use, experience lapses in memory, and report greater distraction in academic and personal tasks.

Girls reported significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety,  $t(98) = 5.96, p < .01$ , as well as more disturbance in hunger and sleep,  $t(98) = 5.44, p < .01$ . Girls also showed greater social withdrawal compared to boys,  $t(98) = 3.37, p < .01$ . These results suggest that female students experienced stronger psychological and lifestyle consequences of smartphone overuse, likely linked to emotional factors such as social comparison and fear of missing out.

Smartphone addiction score was significantly higher for boys,  $t(98) = 11.63, p < .01$ . This indicates that although boys demonstrated more compulsive and distraction-related use, girls were more vulnerable to emotional and lifestyle disruptions associated with excessive smartphone use.

### CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) Boys demonstrated significantly higher levels of compulsion than girls.
- 2) Boys reported significantly greater forgetfulness compared to girls.
- 3) Boys obtained significantly higher scores on lack of attention than girls.
- 4) Girls reported significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety than boys.
- 5) Girls scored significantly higher on disturbed hunger and sleep compared to boys.
- 6) Girls reported significantly greater social withdrawal than boys.
- 7) Boys demonstrated significantly higher total smartphone addiction than girls.

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