3-30-2016

Mobile Phone Addiction Among Young Adults: Recognition and Behavior Change

Elisa Hernandez  
*Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne*

Audrey James  
*Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne*

Jedidiah Davis  
*Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu_symp2016](http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu_symp2016)

Recommended Citation  
Hernandez, Elisa; James, Audrey; and Davis, Jedidiah, "Mobile Phone Addiction Among Young Adults: Recognition and Behavior Change" (2016). 2016 IPFW Student Research and Creative Endeavor Symposium. Book 40.  
[http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu_symp2016/40](http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu_symp2016/40)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the IPFW Student Research and Creative Endeavor Symposium at Opus: Research & Creativity at IPFW. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2016 IPFW Student Research and Creative Endeavor Symposium by an authorized administrator of Opus: Research & Creativity at IPFW. For more information, please contact admin@lib.ipfw.edu.
Mobile phone dependency is a growing societal concern. According to recent reports, many sleep with their phones and refuse to travel to areas without service. Moreover, the media has reported on a growing populace of ‘nomophobes’—people who actually fear being without technology. Therefore, recent research has centered on problematic mobile phone use, or mobile phone use that causes problems (e.g., sleeping, financial, or dependence) in a user’s life. Often considered a subcategory of technology (or cyber) addiction, it has become so prevalent that some have suggested that mobile phone addiction be included as a diagnostic category in the DSM (e.g., Chóliz, 2010), as it shares some properties of other types of behavioral addiction (Billieux, 2012).

Recent surveys have measured individuals’ recognition and understanding of their own addictive mobile phone behaviors. For example, Smith (2012) found that a fair number of Americans (11%) worried that they spend too much time on their mobile device, and this number was higher among those with iPhones (15%) and young adults 18-24 (21%). In this study, we extended these investigations to examine the extent to which young adults are actually taking steps to change their addictive behaviors as well as what characteristics predict recognition of the problem and change behaviors.

**RESULTS**

RQ1: Although 23% of young adults indicated that they were taking steps to curb their cell phone behaviors, and 20% exhibited problematic behaviors, only 13% recognized their dependency.

RQ2: As shown in table 2, recognition, ambivalence, and taking steps were significantly higher among women. Most importantly, although problematic behaviors predicted taking steps to curb behaviors, this was mediated by recognition of the problem (see Figure 1).

Table 2. Mean scores for gender for mobile phone addiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male M (SD)</th>
<th>Female M (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking Steps</td>
<td>1.90(.82)</td>
<td>2.47(.88)</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>1.89(.79)</td>
<td>2.20(.81)</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>2.04(.90)</td>
<td>2.45(.92)</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

Approximately one fifth of young adults reported problematic mobile phone behaviors and were taking steps to curb problematic mobile phone behaviors. However, fewer recognized that they had mobile phone dependency problems. As recognition seems a critical factor in taking steps toward curbing behavior, interventions for mobile phone addiction should focus on recognizing dependency.

Additional research is needed to further our understanding of problematic mobile phone behaviors and recognition of dependency problems. Future research could continue to examine intervention methods as well as other forms of computer mediated communication (e.g., internet use and social media use).