



## Prevalence and Patterns of Problematic Mobile Phone Use: An Online Survey

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### Abstract

**Background:** Concerns over problematic mobile phone use, particularly among young individuals, have grown as a result of the sharp rise in smartphone usage. Overuse can have a detrimental effect on sleep, mental health, and academic achievement.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional online survey was conducted among 200 participants using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and the Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis.

**Results:** The study found that 28% of participants had high problematic mobile phone use, 49% had moderate use, and 23% had low use. Common patterns included excessive social media use (78%), late-night usage (65%), and frequent checking behavior (72%).

**Conclusion:** The necessity for awareness and intervention programs is highlighted by the fact that a sizable percentage of participants displayed problematic mobile phone use.

**Keywords:** Mobile phone use, Smartphone addiction, Prevalence, Online survey, Behavioral patterns

### INTRODUCTION

Mobile phones have become an essential part of daily life, providing communication, entertainment, and information access<sup>1</sup>. However, excessive use has led to concerns regarding problematic mobile phone use.

Problematic mobile phone use refers to unnecessary or uncontrolled use that interferes with daily life activities<sup>2</sup>. It has been associated with anxiety, sleep disturbances, reduced academic performance, and social isolation<sup>3</sup>.

Young adults are particularly vulnerable due to increased dependence on smartphones for

social interaction and academic purposes<sup>4</sup>.

Understanding the prevalence and usage patterns is essential for developing preventive strategies<sup>5</sup>.

The causation and directionality of the relationship between problematic mobile phone use (PMPU) and bad feelings in college students are poorly understood<sup>6</sup>.

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In certain situations and in certain jurisdictions, using a mobile phone is prohibited or unlawful. However, despite laws, unofficial prohibitions, and acknowledged safety issues, some people continue to use their phones. This study aimed to predict consumption, and specifically problematic mobile phone use, using extraversion, self-esteem, neuroticism, gender, and age as viable predictors from the addiction literature. The Mobile Phone Problem Use Scale was developed and verified as a viable self-report tool to assess problem use in relation to the Addiction Potential Scale and total mobile phone usage levels. Neuroticism did not correlate with problem use, although age, extraversion, and low self-esteem did. Given that teenage drivers are frequently involved in car accidents and extraverts are more willing to take risks<sup>7</sup>.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To assess the prevalence of problematic mobile phone use
2. To identify patterns of mobile phone usage
3. To find association between problematic mobile phone use and selected demographic variables

**HYPOTHESES**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant association between problematic mobile phone use and selected demographic variables

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant association between problematic mobile phone use and selected demographic variables

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Approach**

Quantitative research approach

**Research Design**

Descriptive cross-sectional online survey

**Setting**

Online platform (Google Forms / Survey tool)

**Population**

General population / students using smartphones

**Sample**

Participants responding to online survey

**Sample Size**

200 participants

**Sampling Technique**

Non-probability purposive sampling

**Inclusion Criteria**

- Individuals using smartphones
- Willing to participate
- Able to understand questionnaire

**Exclusion Criteria**

- Incomplete responses
- Non-smartphone users

**Tool for Data Collection**

**Section A:** Demographic variables (age, gender, education, etc.)

**Section B:** Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS)

**Section C:** Usage Pattern Questionnaire

**Data Collection Procedure**

- Online survey link shared
- Consent obtained digitally
- Data collected anonymously

**Data Analysis**

- Descriptive: Frequency, percentage, mean, SD
- Inferential: Chi-square test

**RESULTS**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to assess and arrange the gathered data in accordance with the goals. The results are shown below.

**Table 1: Prevalence of Problematic Mobile Phone Use (N = 200)**

Level of Use	Frequency	Percentage
Low	46	23%
Moderate	98	49%
High	56	28%

**Interpretation:** Nearly half of the participants (49%) had moderate problematic mobile phone use.

**Table 2: Patterns of Mobile Phone Usage**

Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
Social media use	156	78%
Late-night usage	130	65%
Frequent checking	144	72%
Gaming	90	45%
Online streaming	110	55%

**Interpretation:** Social media usage was the most common pattern among participants

**Table 3: Association Between Mobile Phone Use and Age Group**

Age Group	Low	Moderate	High	-	p-value
18–20 yrs	12	40	28	5.89	<0.05
21–23 yrs	20	38	18		
24+ yrs	14	20	10		

**Interpretation:** There is a significant association between age and problematic mobile phone use.

**DISCUSSION**

A significant percentage of participants showed moderate to high levels of problematic cell phone use, according to the study.

The most prevalent usage habits were social media and late-night use, which is consistent with earlier research showing a greater reliance on smartphones.

Younger participants showed higher levels of problematic use, possibly due to greater engagement with digital platforms.

**CONCLUSION**

The most prevalent patterns of problematic mobile phone use among participants include social media and frequent checking, according to the study's findings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Digital well-being awareness campaigns
- Encourage sensible cellphone usage practices
- Promote screen-time control
- Additional studies using bigger and more varied samples

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP:** Nil

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** None

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