



# SMARTPHONE ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN CONTEXT OF ALIENATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

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**Abstract:** The objective of research study was to explore Smartphone Addiction among Adolescents in context of Alienation and Social Support. For this, 400 adolescents were selected as the sample in the age group of 14-23 years. Incidental sampling technique was used in the study. Smartphone Addiction Scale by Vijayshri & Masaud Ansari, Student Alienation Scale by R. R. Sharma and Social Support Scale by Indira Dhull & Sangeeta Godara have been used in the study. Statistical technique such as Mean, SD and t-test were used for data analysis. Results revealed that adolescents of high alienated groups have more smartphone addiction than adolescents of low alienated groups and adolescents belonging to low social support groups are more vulnerable to smartphone addiction.

**Keywords:** Smartphone Addiction, Alienation, Social Support, Adolescent

## Introduction

The present era is the era of technology and information & communication is such a technology of this era, due to which no aspect of human life has remained untouched. If communication is the need of today's era, then it is definitely the right of every person to have information. In other words, communication of information is becoming the basis of socio-economic development.

Mobile technology is the most accessible and ubiquitous medium of both information & communication in the world. Mobile phone is no longer just a device for talking and sending messages, but the smartphone which is reaching the hands of the people in a new form has also replaced the desktop. With the help of smartphones, now all those works can be easily done anywhere and anytime, for which one has to work for hours sitting in front of the desktop at home.

Smartphones are emerging as the most powerful alternative to desktops in the field of internet usage. It provides 24 hours uninterrupted internet facility to the users at affordable rates. This is why people from different walks of life prefer to do all their online work through smartphones. Presently a large number of teachers and students use various online features of smartphones for various academic and non-scholastic tasks.

Any new technology brings with it both good and bad sides. Smartphones are no exception to this. In fact, smartphones are such a versatile device that it is natural for students to use them for non-academic purposes. Apart from being an educational tool, the smartphone is a powerful medium of entertainment and social media platform, especially for teenage students.

In the present situation, the way the smartphones are being used excessively and multifaceted by the adolescent students, it is natural to have positive and negative effects on their various personal and academic aspects.

**Smartphone:** Smartphones are those mobiles whose hardware and connectivity capabilities are many times higher than that of a normal mobile phone (keypad phone). It is a type of mobile computing. The modern hardware, software capabilities and mobile operating system present in the smartphone makes it different from the feature phone. Initially keypad mobiles were launched, with the help of which we could only use the facilities of calling, messaging, calculator etc. But over time, multimedia keypad phones were developed so that users could perform songs, watch movies, play video games, etc. along with calling.

Then along with PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant), features like Media Player, GPS etc. were made available. But in the present time with the change in technology, these PDAs have been replaced by smartphones, in which features include touch screen, Wi-Fi, web browsing etc. Smartphones are becoming a complement to the computer today, due to which every work is being done through smartphone instead of computer.

**Smartphone Addiction:** Smartphone addiction is also known as smartphone dependency, problematic use of smartphone and mobile phone overuse. It is a physical and psychological state of mind where a person has strong and uncontrollable desire to use their smartphone, neglecting the harmful effects of their phone and daily activities.

The person who has a smartphone spends most of his time using smartphone for social media, texting, browsing or playing games. Smartphone overuse can lead to other problematic behaviours and psychological problems such as lack of concentration, increased stress, depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, feeling of isolation, impair academic ability and disturbed daily routines. Particularly, it can be a risk to physical health such as blurred vision, pain in back or the neck.

**Alienation:** When a person becomes separated from their environment or society and from other people, then it is called alienation. Such individuals often reject their loved ones or society and show the signs of alienation. They show a sense of estrangement, and distance themselves from their own feelings.

Alienation is complex, yet a common condition. In the condition of alienation, the person becomes in the grip of sociological and psychological problems. In such a situation the person may become ill, that is, health may be affected. The Person can be treated by finding out the reason for the alienation.

**Symptoms of Alienation:** A common symptom of alienation is believed to be that a person starts feeling distance from his acquaintances and work. There are other symptoms such as

- Feeling uncomfortable in contact and conversation with parents and others.
- One feels so helpless that the world is empty or meaningless.
- Avoids other people's conversations or events because of feeling isolated from everyone else.
- The person is unable to follow the social rules.
- Symptoms of depression in such a person may also include sleeplessness, appetite problems, fatigue, feeling more hopeless.

#### Type of Alienation

1. **Cultural estrangement:** Lack of feeling in established values.
2. **Isolation:** Feeling lonely, as if isolated from a group.
3. **Meaninglessness:** Having no purpose in life and seeing the world as empty or meaningless.
4. **Normlessness:** Not obeying social rules by engaging in deviant behaviour.
5. **Powerlessness:** Believing that one has no control over one's own life and therefore cannot influence the results of one's actions.
6. **Self-estrangement:** Not being able to identify themselves because of not being able to communicate with themselves.

#### Causes of Alienation

1. **Health-related causes:** Mental or physical problems that are expected to lead to alienation, including possible health-related causes of alienation, such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, self-stigma, chronic pain etc. and any such circumstances that may cause a person to feel isolated.
2. **Social causes:** Social causes can be defined as how you feel detached from your loved ones and environment or from a particular situation such as a change of school, shifting to another home, separation from family members or friends, etc. lead to alienation.
3. **Job-related causes:** Feelings of dissatisfaction can arise when a person feels something different from their workplace or the product of their work, due to which a person can feel work alienation from his own work that is, the person may also have alienation from his work, co-workers, environment and himself.
4. **Causes in adolescents:** It is common for teenagers to have a state of alienation. As children grow up they may no longer believe in the values raised by their elders i.e. parents. That's why teens can feel alienated from their own people i.e. parents, teachers and friends. Teenagers may feel anxious about their social skills as they look to their identity and future.
5. **Parental causes:** Parental alienation can be defined as when children feel negative, alienating behaviours displayed by their parents such as the absence of a parent's presence. Children can refuse to meet parents specially in case of parental divorce. There can be many factors for not adopting children properly, such as mutual interaction between parents and feelings of alienation from children.

**Social Support:** Social support is part of a supportive social network that provides support or care from other people who have faith. There may also be personal advice, financial support, information, a sense of belonging and nurturing. A person integrates into social networks like family, friends, neighbours etc.

Social support is very important for both physical and mental health. Social support is therefore studied in a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, communication, medicine, health, nursing, education, rehabilitation and social work. Social support theories and models were prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. Two main models have been proposed, the buffering hypothesis and the direct effect hypothesis. Both these models describe the link between social support and health. Gender and cultural differences have been found in social support and learning in areas such as education. There are some important factors which cannot be controlled, such as age, disability, income, social status ethnic and racial etc.

#### Type of social support

1. **Emotional support:** Emotional support includes empathy, concern, affection, intimacy, love, trust, acceptance, encouragement, or care etc. Provided by these sources nourishment and warmth are found in the person. Emotional support in the form of social support can help a person know that they are important. That is, the person starts to feel that people give importance to me too.
2. **Tangible support:** Tangible support is social support provided to an individual in the form of financial support, material goods or services. In this, people help others in a concrete and direct way, so this type of social support is also called instrumental support.
3. **Informational support:** In this informational support, someone provides advice, guidance, suggestions or useful information to help the other person in their ability to solve problems. With this type of social support, the person's problem gets solved a good way.
4. **Companionship support:** Under this companionship support, one makes a person feel sense of social belonging, hence it is also called Belonging. Companions can be seen to be present during any social activities or to share each other by participating in that social activities.

**Sources of social support:** There are many sources of social support such as family, friends, romantic partners, co-workers, community organizations, mental health experts and pets, etc. Family social support has been shown to be very important for developing children's social competencies. Support from a romantic partner has been shown to lead to better health, especially of husbands. Study shows husband-wife support doesn't have negative effects of work stress.

**Online social support:** Social support is also available through social media. As technology advances, so does the availability of online social support. For example, individuals get social support from social media websites like blogs, Facebook, health forums etc. Social support is available in the work of getting any information, taking suggestions etc. through online social media.

Online support can provide anonymity and non-judgmental interactions as well as face-to-face social support. Social support from online sources can be very important for individuals with limited offline support. May be as important as online social support resources related to physical and psychological well-being. A socially isolated person may also be more attracted to in-person interactions via social media and engaging in online social activities can also ward off isolation or depression. Emotional comfort can also be found through social media. For example, social support through online social media can be found in connecting with each other to create awareness about specific health issues. Anyone with internet access through social media gets support in building relationships in rare circumstances or for a

variety of issues. Thus online social support can enhance one's ability to cope with stress and can also get encouragement to promote their work.

Coulson (2007), claims that the health department's people get a better opportunity to learn about the experiences and thoughts of individuals through online support. People receiving this type of social support can benefit from a lot of information. Informative Social support allows people to take care of themselves by getting tips, advice and information about physical and psychological problems and well-being. Some people need social support, then such people can get help from online sources because all types of social support are widely available on online social media. Coulson indicated that increased use of online social media websites has fuelled the growth of perceived social support.

### Review of Literature

Lei, Ismail, Mohammad and Yosoff (2020) studied the relationship of smartphone addiction with psychological distress and neuroticism among students. Data was collected using neuroticism-subscale of USMaP-1 and Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version (SAS-SV) to measure psychological distress, neuroticism and smartphone addiction of medical students. Correlation analysis and simple linear regression was used to investigate the related factors of smartphone addiction. The results show that significant relationship between smartphone addiction, psychological health and neuroticism. The results show that smartphone addiction can lead to psychological problems and the most vulnerable group is the medical students with a neurotic personality trait.

Fischer-Grote, Kothgassner and Felnhofer (2019) had done a study on risk factors for problematic smartphone use in children and adolescents. The results show an increased level of smartphone addiction among adolescents. The usage of gaming and social networking is a high-risk factor. Adolescents with low self-esteem, low self-control, seem to have increased problematic use. Further, the study concludes on the conceptualization of problematic smartphone use and standardized measures are highly recommended to increase the comparability of upcoming studies for better understanding.

Kim, Han, Park, Yoo, Suh and Shin (2020) examined the relationship between smartphone overuse and sleep in younger children: a prospective cohort study. Smartphone screen time and sleep time were assessed using parental questionnaires, Children's sleep habit questionnaire (CSHQ) was used to assess the sleep problems of children. Analysis of Covariance was used to examine the association between smartphone overuse and sleep habit in children. The results indicated that children in the smartphone overuse group shows higher significant scores in Children's sleep habit questionnaire (CSHQ). Therefore, excessive smartphone usage results in short sleep time. The use of smartphones was also associated with a significant reduction in the quality of sleep especially among younger children.

Barman, S. & Bhuyan, G. (2017) studied the use of mobile phone by the adolescents. The paper attempted to study the prevalence use of mobile phones by the adolescents as well as to know the addiction of adolescents towards mobile phone. The study included 60 samples i.e. 30 boys and 30 girls which were selected with the help of Stratified Random Sampling technique. The study revealed that 100% of the boys use their phone for calling and texting messages. The result of the study indicated that majority of the students use their mobile basically for the purpose of entertainment like listening and downloading songs and videos, exchanging videos and so on.

### Objectives:

1. To examine the influence of alienation on smartphone addiction.
2. To examine the influence of social support on smartphone addiction.

### Hypothesis:

1. Alienation will have significant differential effect on smartphone addiction.
2. Social support will have significant differential effect on smartphone addiction.

### Research Methodology

**Sample:** The sample comprised of 400 university students from urban Patna. The sample consists of 200 male adolescents and 200 female adolescents. They were of the age group of 14-23 years. The basis of selection was incidental sampling technique.

### Tools:

1. A Personal data sheet was used to collect the personal information of university students.
2. Smartphone Addiction Scale developed by Vijayshri and Masaud Ansari was used to measure the extent smartphone addiction of the adolescents.
3. Student Alienation Scale developed by R. R. Sharma was used to measure the alienation of college students.
4. Social Support Scale developed by Prof. Indira Dhull and Sangeeta Godara was used to measure the social support of students of senior secondary classes.

**Research design:** Between group design was used.

**Statistical tools:** Independent sample t-test was used.

## Result and discussion

Table – 1

Table showing Mean, SD, and t-ratio of adolescents of high and low alienated groups on the measure of smartphone addiction.

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	Level of Sig.
Alienation	High	191	71.14	23.58	2.775	398	P< .01
	Low	209	65.15	19.48			

The mean value of adolescents of high alienated groups was found 71.14 and the mean value of adolescents of low alienated groups was 65.15. It can be concluded that adolescents of high alienated groups have more smartphone addiction than adolescents of low alienated groups and the value of t-ratio was found to be 2.775 which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is confirmed. Thus adolescents of high and low alienated groups are significantly differ on smartphone addiction. Such findings may be attributed to the characteristics and nature of the alienation. It is natural that highly alienated adolescents suffer from social alienation as well as social disorientation. In such a situation, the emotions and thoughts of the person are largely influenced by adverse circumstances due to various reasons including alienation which leads to a lot of negative emotions. As a result, adolescents become dependent on smartphones to avoid alienation and easily fall prey to smartphone addiction. So, smartphone addiction is more prevalent among adolescents from highly alienated groups.

Table – 2

Table showing Mean, SD and t-ratio of adolescents of high and low social support groups on the measure of smartphone addiction.

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	Level of Sig.
Social Support	High	193	61.50	18.79	6.059	398	P< .01
	Low	207	74.13	22.56			

The mean value of adolescents of high social support groups was found 61.50 and the mean value of adolescents of low social support groups was 74.13. It can be concluded that adolescents of low social support groups have more smartphone addiction than adolescents of high social support groups and the value of t-ratio was found to be 6.059 which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is confirmed. Thus adolescents of high and low social support groups are significantly differ on smartphone addiction. Social support from online sources can be very important for individuals with limited offline support. A socially isolated person may also be more attracted to in-person interactions via social media and engaging in online social activities can also ward off isolation or depression. Some adolescents need social support, then such adolescents can get help from online sources because all types of social support are widely available on online social media. All social media applications are easily available in smartphones and adolescents who use social media more become dependent on smartphones. Under such condition adolescents belonging to low social support groups are more exposed to smartphone addiction.

**Conclusion:** Smartphone addiction is more prevalent among adolescents from highly alienated groups. And also, adolescents of low social support groups have more smartphone addiction than adolescents of high social support groups.

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