

# Counselling in Education: A Case Study of a Female Undergraduate's Student Recovery from Smartphone Addiction

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## Abstract

Smartphone addiction is a pervasive concern among children and youth, particularly among university and college students, leading to a myriad of issues encompassing psychological, social, physical health, and academic performance problems. This exploratory case study examines the narrative of a female undergraduate's self-storytelling journey of smartphone addiction phase and her subsequent recovery phase, facilitated by a female educator who assumed the role of a counselor. Population involved a single female undergraduate university student who volunteered was selected through purposive sampling technique. In-depth semi-structured interview served as a data collection instrument. Further adopting a phenomenological approach, the researcher integrated narrative-thematic method for data analysis and interpretation. The study findings indicated that serving as a counselor a female educator utilizing simple counseling techniques and understanding with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) effectively facilitated a female undergraduate's recovery from a smartphone-addiction and thus enabling her to lead a life free from smartphone addiction. It is recommended that a little understanding with counselling techniques and theories is required for educators in helping students to recover from smartphone addiction in their daily classroom settings.

**Key Words:** Smartphone addiction Phase, Counselling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Undergraduates, Recovery Phase, Educators.

## Introduction

The purpose of presenting this study is to underscore the alarming rise and challenge of smartphone addiction among our youth and children. As educators, who similarly are considered leaders, we must confront pressing questions: (i) Are we equipped to support the vast number of students entangled in smartphone addiction and experiencing detrimental effects from excessive usage? (ii) Are we ready to provide the necessary resources to employ a substantial number of counselors dedicated to treating students struggling with smartphone addiction? (iii) Are we prepared to offer guidance and support to students navigating the challenges of smartphone addiction, including its impact on their mental health, social relationships, and academic performance? (v) Are we ready for the adoption of interventions and strategies to mitigate the tsunami of smartphone addiction among screenagers? By exploring these questions, we can better understand the scope of the issue and develop effective strategies to mitigate the negative consequences of smartphone addiction on our students. Strictly, to effectively address the escalating problem of smartphone addiction among children and adolescents, now commonly referred to as "screenagers", it is essential to identify and implement evidence-based strategies and interventions.

Honestly, the physical, social, and mental well-being of our youth and children is compromised due to excessive smartphone use, commonly referred to as addiction, resulting in heightened stress levels. (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2018; Hinkley, & Taylor, 2012; Kardas, & Šimko, 2018; Mahaprata, 2019; Méndez-López et al. 2023; PBS News, 2016; Ruston, 2016; Tamayo et al. 2024). Undoubtedly, the term "Addiction" is defined in the lexicon as: (Know et al., 2013; Sim & Kim, 2011) a physiological dysfunction precipitated by the ingestion of toxic substances, including food and pharmaceuticals; (Porter, 2010) a pathological condition characterized by the inability to abstain from the continuous use of alcohol or drugs, thereby inducing tolerance and withdrawal symptoms; and (Shaw & Black, 2008) a state of cognitive impairment, wherein an individual's capacity for rational discernment is compromised by the influence of certain ideas or objects. Notwithstanding its multifaceted definition, "addiction" is predominantly addressed within the realm of neuropsychiatry, manifesting as a complex phenomenon characterized by tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and dependence, often accompanied by ancillary social problems (Holden, 2001; O'Brien, 2010). Historically, the term "addiction" was primarily associated with substance abuse; however, its application has expanded to encompass behavioural addictions, including gambling, internet usage, gaming, and mobile phone dependency (Kim, 2006). Supportively, extensive research exists in psychology on the addiction (Rathinasigammani & Devi, 2023; Bong, Won, & Choi, 2021; Khalily, Masud, Irshad, Tamkeen, Brian, Zainab, Ali, & Basharat, 2021) and recovery phases of individuals (Bong, et al. 2021; Rathinasigammani & Devi, 2023; Wacks & Weinstein, 2021; Khalily, et al. 2021). Plainly, this case study aims to inform educators about their crucial role in identifying and supporting student's recovery from smartphone addiction in their daily classroom settings. By sharing this narrative, the researcher seeks to raise awareness among educators about the

importance of analyzing and addressing smartphone addiction among university undergraduates, and further, encouraging students by incorporating recovery stories into their daily routines for promoting good physical and mental health in them. Literally, if educators remain vigilant in identifying early warning signs of smartphone addiction among students, they may intervene effectively, thus potentially saving students' lives and time by preventing their prolonged involvement in addictive behaviors. Simply, the primary objective of sharing this study, particularly with educators, is to elucidate the efficacy of incorporating simple counseling techniques into daily classroom routines, thereby empowering educators to foster students' understanding of the significance of a healthy, smartphone addiction-free lifestyle. This qualitative case study explores the lived experiences of a female undergraduate's student grappling with smartphone addiction, tracing her journey through the distinct phases of addiction (Phase I) and recovery (Phase II). The investigation emphasizes the instrumental role of a female educator in fostering the student's recovery, utilizing simple counseling techniques, and understanding with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to promote a successful transition towards a healthier relationship with smartphone technology. Undoubtedly, by integrating these techniques into their teaching practices, educators may apply a profound influence on promoting student's well-being, empowering them to acknowledge the significance of striking a balance between technology engagement and holistic health.

Smartphones have now become an integral part of everyone's daily life, as their benefits in digital communication are undeniable. However, its excessive use, particularly among youth is leading towards addiction, resulting in mental health issues and negative academic impacts (Achangwa et al. 2022; Curcio et al. 2006; Favini, 2024; Luqman et al. 2020; Kashif et al. 2020; Lee et al. (2018); Tamayo et al., 2024; Wang et al. 2014; Wu-Ouyang, 2022). Noticeably, studies have linked smartphone addiction to depression, anxiety, poor sleep, and physical health problems among individuals (AlAbdulwahab, 2017; Babadi Akashe et al., 2014; Fernandez-Guerrero, 2014; Hong et al., 2014; Hou et al., 2019; Ijaz et al., 2017; James et al., 2023; Kashif et al., 2019; Kee et al., 2016; Lemola et al., 2011; Lemola et al., 2012; Lemola et al., 2013; Lemola et al., 2015; Lepp et al., 2014; Sohn et al., 2021). Indeed, accidents and severe injuries have also been attributed to excessive smartphone use (Kim, 2013; Kim et al. 2017; Kuss et al., 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frame of this study is based on understanding with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) basically is a combination of cognitive theory and behavioral theory, and it stands for that our thoughts, feelings, and emotions are interconnected. Further according to Cognitive Behavioural Theory our thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected. If we think negative or wrong thoughts, it can lead to bad feelings and behaviours. But, if we change our thoughts, we can change our feelings and behaviours too! Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a treatment approach that helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors. It is effective for conditions like pain, anxiety, insomnia, and depression across all age groups. Besides that, CBT is now used vastly for dealing with smartphone addiction individuals' treatment (Rathinasigamani & Devi, 2023; Bong, Won, and Choi, 2021; Khalily, Masud, Irshad, Tamkeen, Brian, Zainab, Ali, and Basharat, 2021). Further, CBT can be utilized in self-help, online, and face-to-face formats, emphasizing that human thinking influences behavior and emotions, impacting learning in classroom settings. CBT is known for short-term treatment plans, often lasting a few months, providing behavioral interventions for emotional disorders such as eating disorders, depression, and anxiety (Rathinasigamani & Devi, 2023).

Bong, Won, and Choi (2021) integrated Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with other theoretical frameworks to address smartphone addiction in a sample of 155 individuals. The findings of the research indicated a significant reduction in smartphone addiction levels among the participants.

Khalily, Masud, Irshad, Tamkeen, Brian, Zainab, Ali, and Basharat (2021) conducted a study in which Cognitive Behavioural Therapy was implemented to alleviate symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress associated with smartphone addiction in adolescent students aged between 12 to 19 years. The findings of the research demonstrated favourable outcomes in mitigating excessive smartphone dependency within this demographic.

### **Counselling**

Counselling is defined as by Alderidge (2014, p.2) "Counselling takes place when one person accepts responsibility for helping another to decide upon a course of action or to understand or change patterns of behaviour which distress, disturb or affect his social behaviour." The definition further elucidates that counselling occurs in a variety of contexts and circumstances, and it may be 'incidental to the other functions of the professional' for example a teacher and pupil. It may be 'educational and vocational guidance, provided by a specialist service for particular problems or within voluntary agencies' (Standing Conference for the Advancement of Counselling 1978). Further, Corey (2017) defined counselling as "a collaborative, goal-oriented, and evidence-based process that empowers individuals, groups, or families to explore and understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and to develop coping strategies and solutions to address various mental health concerns, relationship issues, or other challenges, promoting personal growth, well-being, and self-actualization (p. 15). Again, according to Corey (2020), counselling is "a dynamic and collaborative process that empowers individuals to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and to develop coping strategies and solutions to address various challenges" (p. 12). Considering the aforementioned counselling definitions, it is imperative to address the issue of smartphone addiction among youth, as contemporary young people are navigating a unique lifestyle shaped by their birth into a digitalized era. Indeed, this generation has been dubbed "Screenagers," a term coined to describe youngsters who have grown up with ubiquitous screens and technology, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets, and are thus profoundly familiar with and influenced by digital media. Extant research has already investigated smartphone addiction among students across various educational levels, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2018; Hinkley, & Taylor, 2012; Kardas, & Šimko, 2018; Mahaprata, 2019; PBS News, 2016; Ruston, 2016).

Consequently, students are encountering novel challenges, unparalleled by their predecessors, due to the pervasive influence of digitization. A lack of adequate training in digital media utilization among students can lead to addiction, causing them to deviate from their academic trajectories (Natarajan, 2023). Behrani (2021) suggests that institutions facing counselor shortages should prioritize teacher training in counseling to augment student learning capacities and holistic development. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated teachers' swift adaptation to digital media, enabling them to anticipate and address the emerging challenges that students will face in an increasingly digitized environment. The rapid acceleration of digitization is precipitating a multitude of problems among the young generation, with institutions struggling to address addiction issues stemming from excessive digital engagement. A viable solution lies in training educators to provide immediate support, empowerment, and guidance in navigating digital device-related problems, particularly smartphone addiction, which has become a prevalent concern among youth (Sundar & Mesalia, 2023; Beharani, 2021; Mehmood & Bhatti, 2020).

When students encounter difficulties in their educational pursuits, they are susceptible to experiencing distress and frustration. Consequently, it is essential that educators provide students with training in problem-solving skills, thereby empowering them to navigate their challenges effectively. Research conducted by Georgiana (2015) underscores the significance of teacher support and training in problem-solving, as it enables students to arrive at optimal solutions, ultimately enhancing their academic outcomes. Similarly, Natarajn (2023) emphasizes the crucial role teachers play in guiding students, empowering them to assume agency over their life trajectories and develop strategies to overcome obstacles. Moreover, educators are instrumental in invigorating counseling programs at the school, college, and university levels, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment.

### Simple Counselling Techniques: A Guide for Educators, Helpers, and Counselors

The subsequent simple techniques and steps provide a quick reference for educators, helpers, and counselors to aid students in mitigating smartphone addiction.

- 1. Active Listening:** Engage in focused attention, maintaining consistent eye contact and utilizing paraphrasing techniques to ensure comprehension of the client's narrative. This facilitates a deeper understanding of their concerns and fosters a sense of safety (Egan, 2010; Gelso & Carter, 2014).
- 2. Empathy:** Demonstrate a genuine understanding and compassion towards the client's emotional experiences and perspectives, acknowledging the validity of their feelings. This empathetic stance helps establish trust and rapport (Egan, 2010; Gelso & Carter, 2014).
- 3. Open-Ended Questions:** Employ open-ended inquiries to encourage clients to elaborate on their thoughts and emotions, facilitating a more in-depth exploration of their concerns (Egan, 2010; Gelso & Carter, 2014).
- 4. Reflection:** Reflect the client's verbal and emotional expressions to ensure accurate understanding, demonstrate engagement, and promote a sense of being heard (Egan, 2010; Gelso & Carter, 2014).
- 5. Non-Judgmental Attitude:** Maintain a neutral and non-judgmental stance, creating a safe and supportive environment where clients feel comfortable exploring their concerns without fear of criticism or evaluation. (Egan, 2010; Hill, 2010).
- 6. Goal Setting:** Collaborate with clients to establish realistic objectives and develop a tailored plan to achieve them, promoting autonomy and self-efficacy. (Egan, 2010; Hill, 2010)
- 7. Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and reinforce positive behaviors and thoughts, encouraging clients to build upon their strengths and develop a more optimistic outlook (Bandura, 1977; Skinner, 1953).
- 8. Mindfulness Techniques:** Teach clients mindfulness exercises to manage stress and anxiety, promoting relaxation and self-awareness (Hayes, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2003).
- 9. Cognitive Restructuring:** The educator, helper or counselors need to assist in identifying and challenging negative thought patterns, replacing them with more constructive and adaptive ones, facilitating cognitive and emotional growth (Beck, 1977; Beck, 1991; Beck, 2024; Ellis, 1962).
- 10. Summarization:** The helper, educator or counsellor need to provide a concise summary of key points discussed during the session, ensuring comprehension, and offering a clear direction for future growth and exploration (Egan, 2010; Hill, 2010). The educators, helpers, and counselors need to use these techniques as a helper (Egan, 2010) and should be employed in a supportive and non-directive manner, empowering students to take an active role in their personal growth and self-discovery (Egan, 2010; Gelso & Carter, 2014; Hill, 2010;).

### Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the insight of a female undergraduate (university student) on her smartphone addiction (Phase I).
2. To investigate the experience of a female undergraduate university student after recovery from smartphone addiction (Phase II).
3. To highlight the role of a female educator as a counselor in the recovery of a female undergraduate from smartphone addiction.

### Research Questions

1. What is the insight of a female undergraduate university student about her smartphone addiction (Phase I) and smartphone addiction-free or recovery (Phase II)?
2. How does a female undergraduate university student share her experiences about the role of a female educator in helping her recover from smartphone addiction (Phase II) and lead a healthy smartphone addiction free life?

## Methodology

This qualitative and exploratory case study employed a phenomenological approach with narrative-thematic analysis for interpretation of data to preserve the authenticity, originality, and richness of the respondent's shared data (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, & Poth, 2016). The qualitative and phenomenological nature of the study enabled the researcher to combine two approaches, narrative-thematic analysis to this study (Braun, & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008) as such kind of approaches enabled the researcher exploring complex, subjective experiences, such as personal growth, identity formation, or emotional journeys (Moustakas, 1994). It provides a rich, in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and meanings. Further, this case study involved a single female undergraduate university student, who was recruited through purposive sampling. The participant, aged 23, was a student in the 2019-2023 session at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University. Further, the research participant, who volunteered to share her experiences through an in-depth, semi-structured interview. Data was collected using an in-depth semi-structured interview schedule and analyzed thematically. The interview was conducted in Urdu and recorded digitally, subsequently transcribed verbatim into English. Following coding, the data was organized in sequence in the form of themes. The themes were further organized into two big themes to achieve the study's objectives and further arranging themes in sequence to narrate the whole phenomena in the form of a recovery story. The approach of narrative-thematic analysis helped the researchers in storying by reconstructing the themes into a narrative that reflects the participants' experiences. Further, to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher conducted member checking with the participant to confirm the accuracy and validity of the findings. Furthermore, peer debriefing was employed to recognize and mitigate any potential biases and assumptions inherent in the researcher's perspective.

## Results and Discussion

The results highlight the role of a female educator in helping a smartphone-addicted female undergraduate recover. Data collected through face-to-face interviews were interpreted and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal how the educator, acting as a counselor, used simple counselling techniques and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to assist in the student's recovery.

### Theme I: Smartphone Addiction (Phase: I)

The participant who served as a volunteer, was 23-year-old from a middle-class family, began using a smartphone in the 9th grade. Initially using it for YouTube, WhatsApp, games, and music, she became deeply addicted to it. Her addiction led to isolation from family and friends, lack of interest in studies, disturbed sleep patterns, and physical health issues. The interpretation of data is organized into two primary themes, maintaining the integrity of the respondent's narrative. The researcher effectively narrated the participant's experiences of smartphone addiction and recovery phases in a sequential manner, utilizing a storytelling approach, thereby illuminating the insidious development of smartphone addiction, which can occur without the individual's conscious awareness. This approach aims to educate the audience about the subtle yet pervasive nature of smartphone addiction. The researcher under this theme is reporting the story of respondent about her addiction Phase I, (Theme I: Phase I: Smartphone Addiction) as narrated by the respondent herself below:

*"My name is 'Anonymous.' I am 23 years old, and I belong to a middle-class family. I have one brother and one sister, and I am the youngest of my siblings. I completed my B.Ed. (Hons) in Elementary Education in November 2023."* (Respondent)

*"..... I started using a mobile phone when I was in the 8th grade, but it was not a smartphone. I used my father's mobile phone mostly for SMS or text messages. I got my first smartphone as a gift from my father when I was in the 9th grade, and that is when I started using it a lot. I used my smartphone for various activities, like watching YouTube videos, using WhatsApp to stay connected with friends and family, listening to music, browsing social media, playing games, and more."* (Respondent)

*"..... On YouTube, I mostly watched family daily vlogs because they interested me. I did not realize I was getting addicted to my smartphone until my family mentioned it. They saw that I was using my phone too much, even when it was charging. That's when I knew I had a problem."* (Respondent)

*"..... During this time, I completely lost interest in my studies. For months, I ignored my education and did not take anything seriously. I isolated myself from my family and friends, feeling that my smartphone was enough to entertain me. I avoided family affairs and preferred to distract myself from any family issues. However, my father would often try to talk to me about it, but I would avoid him, not wanting to hear the truth - that I was spending more time with my phone than with my loved ones. I would ignore his concerns and continue scrolling, even when he pointed out that I never sat with my family anymore, preferring the company of my screen to theirs."* (Respondent)

*"..... I then stated facing physical issues due to my smartphone addiction, such as lack of sleep and a disrupted daily routine. I would stay up until 3 or 4 in the morning watching my phone, and even then, I struggled to sleep. My sleep pattern was severely affected, and my eyesight started to deteriorate. Additionally, I began to gain weight, experience joint pain, and develop various health issues."* (Respondent)

*"..... Further, during the peak of my smartphone addiction, I isolated myself in my room and felt completely alone. I believed that no one was interested in me and that everyone disliked me."* (Respondent)

*"..... Eventually, I decided after realizing to cut down on my smartphone usage. A significant turning point was when one of my teachers investigated my smartphone addiction. I shared with her that I used my phone to avoid my family's constant backbiting. She advised me to change my family's habits instead of isolating myself from them. This conversation made me realize that my teacher genuinely wanted to help me."* (Respondent)

The respondent is sharing her experience of inadvertently falling into the trap of smartphone addiction. Her story illustrates the negative impact it had on her social, psychological, physical, and educational aspects. The addiction was leading her towards isolation even from her loved ones. She lost interest in her surroundings as her mind immersed itself in the virtual world, neglecting the physical reality. Wacks and Weinstein (2021) too positively investigated the correlation between heightened smartphone usage and health issues among adolescents and young adults. The current research has provided evidence and placed a stronger emphasis on the link connecting smartphone utilization with challenges in cognitive-emotional regulation,



impulsivity, diminished cognitive capabilities, social networking addiction, introversion, and poor self-image. Additionally, various health concerns such as decreased physical fitness, sleep disturbances, discomfort, and migraines, as well as unhealthy dietary patterns were also addressed. Moreover, Coupland (2019) posits that addiction to electronic devices may have more severe consequences than dependence on substances such as opioids, underscoring the need for effective interventions. Simply, a systematic review of the psychological effects of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on internet addiction in adolescents provides further support for the efficacy of CBT in addressing this issue.

### **Theme II: Recovery from Smartphone Addiction (Phase: II)**

The study shows that the Respondent recovery from Smartphone addiction began in university when one of the educators noticed her absence and lack of interest in studies. The educator's consistent inquiry and counseling helped the student realize her addiction. The educator used simple counselling techniques to help the student cut down on smartphone use, socialize more, and engage in physical activities. As after realizing that addiction can be treated and further recovery from it enabled the research participant who reported that she is feeling more active, social, and connected to her family and religion. The researcher under this Theme II: Phase II: Recovery from Smartphone Addiction further quoted the story through the respondent self-narration for keeping the originality of the story intact as below:

*"My recovery phase began at university during my 5th and 6th semesters. It was a time when one of my teachers noticed my continuous absence from class and inquired about my activities and lack of interest in studies. She never gave up on me and consistently checked on my progress. Her persistence developed my trust in her, and I started sharing that I spent most of my time on my smartphone."* (Respondent)

*"She began counseling me, making me realize that I was addicted to my smartphone. She encouraged me to think about my daily activities and how my unsociability was affecting my life. Her guidance motivated me to reduce my smartphone usage and work on my behavior".* (Respondent)

*"I started socializing more, taking an interest in family affairs, and focusing on my religion. I felt closer to Allah and much more relieved. My parents noticed the positive changes in me, but I initially struggled with anxiety about going outside and facing people. Physically, I was inactive and preferred staying in my room, which affected my health and energy levels".* (Respondent)

*".... now, I feel much more active and social. I go for daily walks, involve myself in home activities, and have developed an interest in socializing. I have almost cut down all unnecessary smartphone activities and learned to balance my life better."* (Respondent)

*"....my teacher played a crucial role in helping me overcome my smartphone addiction. Teachers should be attentive to their students' behavior and work with parents to address any issues. If my teacher had not noticed my problem, I would not have been able to overcome it. Teachers are vital in identifying and addressing abnormal behavior in students, both inside and outside the classroom."* (Respondent)

*"....one of the best things my teacher did was follow up with me regularly. She kept reminding me of my progress and encouraged me to continue improving my behavior."* (Respondent)

The Respondent's narrative revealed a transformative experience, wherein continuous counseling from her teacher facilitated a paradigm shift in her perception, enabling her to acknowledge and confront her smartphone addiction. Through storytelling, the respondent recounted the myriad of mental, social, physical, and other multiple health issues that significantly impacted her lifestyle, making it challenging for her to recognize the severity of her smartphone dependence. Notably, she emphasized the pivotal role of her teacher, whose persistent support and guidance served as a beacon of hope, motivating her to strive towards a life free from smartphone addiction. Supportively, Khalily et al. (2021) conducted a study investigating the efficacy of an indigenously adapted cognitive-behavioral therapy for excessive smartphone use (IACBT-ESU) comprising 12 sessions. A single-blind randomized controlled trial was designed to examine the impact of IACBT-ESU on adolescent students (aged 12-19 years) exhibiting symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Additionally, the study compared peer relationships between the treatment and control groups. The results showed a significant reduction in excessive smartphone use following the IACBT-ESU intervention (IACBT-ESU stands for Indigenously Adapted Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Excessive Smartphone Use). Further, according to Liu, Nie, & Wang, (2017) Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be efficacious in inducing positive changes in symptoms of depression, anxiousness, aggressiveness, somatization, social insecurity, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. Equally, sports interventions have been found to be effective in mitigating withdrawal symptoms associated with smartphone addiction. Furthermore, research by Seo et al. (2020) suggested that smartphone and internet addiction in youth is accompanied by alterations in neurotransmitter levels.

### **Conclusion**

The comprehensive information gleaned from this case study indicates that educators are vital in recognising and resolving student smartphone addiction. The participant's recovery highlights how crucial it is for teachers to pay attention to their students' behaviour and how successful simple basic counselling techniques are in helping students who are struggling with smartphone addiction.

### **Implications**

The interview highlights the profound impact of early smartphone exposure without proper guidance, leading to addiction that affects academic performance, social relationships, physical and mental health. It underscores the critical role of educators in identifying and addressing such issues, emphasizing the importance of consistent teacher involvement and counseling. Families also play a crucial role, where open communication and creating a supportive environment can mitigate negative effects. Exclusively, the purpose of sharing this research study is to encourage educators to develop their skills in simple counseling techniques and acquire knowledge of basic counseling theories, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), that serves as part of their professional degrees courses (B.Ed/M.Ed/MS & PhD), in order to help and support students struggling with smartphone addiction in their educational settings.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that a multi-faceted approach be employed to mitigate smartphone addiction among youth and children. This approach should encompass parental surveillance of smartphone usage, educational initiatives promoting digital technology balance, teacher training programs to recognize signs of addiction, accessible counselling services, and the promotion of a balanced lifestyle incorporating physical and social activities. By addressing these key areas, it is possible to effectively manage smartphone addiction and foster healthier behavioural patterns in young individuals. Furthermore, this research study can serve as a valuable resource for all stakeholders especially educators and counsellors in guidance and counselling programs within educational institutions. It can be utilized as a reference tool to help students affected by smartphone addiction assess their own conditions and consider the steps outlined in the study as part of their recovery process. By doing so, students can draw inspiration and support from the research findings to aid in their recovery from smartphone addiction.

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