**Phone Addiction**

Lasira Nicholson

Department of Psychology, University of Mount Olive

Professor Kemp

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Phone addiction is known as a process addiction, which refers to behavioral addictions that do not involve substance use but still can lead to compulsive & repetitive actions regardless of the negative consequences. Mobile phones have become an important part of everyday life, phone addiction is becoming as a common worldwide issue. This addiction shows in excessive phone use, which include social media, messaging, gaming, and internet surfing. This is affecting personal relationships, mental health, and productivity. With the global increase of smartphones, phone addiction has gained recognition as a critical concern in the digital age, with detrimental effects on mental and physical well-being (Feng et al., 2022).

The use of mobile devices is growing every day, and it has brought an increase of dependency towards mobile devices. This is specifically seen within younger generations, they often depend on their phones for social interactions, entertainment, and academic purposes. Research sates that the rise of mobile applications and social networking platforms has supported these compulsive behaviors, which makes it harder for individuals to keep track of their phone usage. The persistent accessibility of smartphones exacerbates the problem, encouraging frequent checking and an inability to disconnect from the digital world (Ong et al., 2023). The addictive behavior of phones can be linked to psychological elements and application designs. This makes it a complicated issue to confront.

Just like substance addictions, phone addiction is a path of increased tolerance. At first, individuals may spend a decent amount of time on their devices, but over time they will begin to use their phones for a longer amount of time to feel an equal amount of satisfaction. This tolerance develops gradually, leading to excessive phone usage, where individuals feel compelled to stay constantly connected, even in inappropriate situations, such as during work or social gatherings (Long et al., 2024). As the tolerance make and increase, individuals might feel a sense of discomfort or anxiety when they do not have their phones. This rise of phone usage coexists with feelings of frustration when their access to the phone may be limited. Commonly people become reliant on their phones as it is seen for emotional support, using them as a coping mechanism to relieve stress, loneliness, or boredom. This is intense reliance establishes the addictive behavior making it hard to lessen their screen time or stop using the device as a whole.

Withdrawal symptoms are an important factor of addictions and phone addictions isn’t an exception. When trying to reduce and stop phone usage, one might experience a different range if symptoms from withdrawal which are both physiological and psychological. Some common physiological symptoms may be an increased heart rate or feelings of discomfort when your phone is not within arm’s reach, while psychological symptoms may be restlessness, difficulty of concentration, and irritability. (Yang et al., n.d.).

In more severe cases, individuals may experience anxiety or even panic attacks when they are separated from their phones for extended periods. These symptoms are indicative of the brain's dependency on constant stimulation from mobile devices. The absence of notifications, updates, or interactions can lead to a significant emotional response, making the process of reducing phone usage especially challenging. For many, this withdrawal mirrors the cravings seen in substance addictions.
 There are many barriers preventing individuals from successfully quitting or reducing excessive phone usage. One of the most important barriers is the constant availability of smartphones and mobile apps that are designed to maximize user engagement. These apps often share techniques such as push notifications, personalized content, and funware, which encourages excessive use. Social media platforms specifically foster a sense of community and belonging, making it difficult for users to disengage (Ong et al., 2023).

Social and emotional factor also have a part in phone addiction. Many individuals suffer FOMO which means the fear the possible chance of missing out on social events, connections, or important information if the lessen the use of their phone. In addition, phone have become a necessary tool to maintain relationships. This creates an expectation that one must constantly be available and responsive. Some may feel pressure to stay connected even if they feel as though they want to disconnect for the time being.
 There consequences of phone addiction are beyond just mental health it impacts emotional, social, and one’s financial well-being. Emotionally, having phone addiction may lead to feeling loneliness and isolation. As one prioritizes a virtual interaction instead of face-to-face relationship. While socially, the excessive phone use may cause tension in relationships with your family and friends. They may feel neglects or irritable by a person’s constant use of their phone. (Feng et al., 2022). Phone addiction could also bring about financial losses as well, individuals may spend and large amount on data plans and certain apps and accessories for their phones. Furthermore, Phone addiction can interfere with one’s job performance and or academic success. Excessive phone use during work and study hours can lead to a decrease in productivity and focus. Phone addiction not only effects the person but their outside life as well which leads to conflict and misunderstandings.
 There are treatments and interventions that are offered but addressing phone addiction has many aspects when approaching it. This includes both technological solutions and behavioral interventions. A common treatment is a digital detox this is when individuals take a break from their devices for a select period. This can help changed the brains reward system and reduce the dependency on their phone. Another treatment is where one can set limits on phone usage using apps that track your screen time, and supporting mindful use of technology (Yang et al., n.d.).

Some interventions could simply be uninstalling apps or turning off your notifications, but this may not be effective long-term. Individuals with addiction will often revert to their previous behavior. Having a more sustainable approach involves addressing the underlying psychological factors contributing to the addiction, such as low-self-esteem or anxiety. Cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness training have shown hope in helping individuals manage their phone use by encouraging awareness of their habits and encouraging healthier coping mechanisms (Long et al., 2024).

In conclusion phone addiction is a huge issue in today’s world, with serious implications for mental health, social relationships, and productivity. As the tolerance increases and withdrawal symptoms appear, individuals will face barriers in attempting to reduce their phone usage. However, with the correct treatments and interventions, it is possible to manage phone addiction and promote healthier relationships with technology.

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