



Smartphone Addiction and Work-Life Balance among Women

College Teachers

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Abstract

In recent times, addiction refers to more than just drug or substance abuse, including even gambling, the internet, games, or smartphones; all of these come under the category of behavioral addiction. With an alarming increase in the use and accessibility of the internet in recent years through smartphones, addiction to these activities has increased too, leading to concerns regarding smartphone usage. This new kind of addiction is a result of fast-developing media and the use of the internet and smartphones everywhere, including educational Institutions like Schools & Colleges. The excessive use of smartphones has wreaked havoc on both family life and work life. Several studies have shown that women are more affected than their counterparts.

An attempt has been made to find out the relationship between Smartphone Addiction (SAS) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) among the Women College Teachers from selected Colleges in Madurai, South India. Data were collected through Google Form from one hundred and sixty-four women college teachers who were selected randomly. The study used the 10-item Smartphone Addiction Scale by Kwon M, Kim D-J, Cho H, Yang S (2013), and the 36-item Work-Life (W-L) Balance Scale by Udai Pareek (2010) to measure the above-mentioned constructs. Both scales have higher reliability & Validity scores. Karl Pearson's correlation value suggests that there exists a significant negative association between SAS & WLB ($r = -0.76$, $p < .001$, Sig). Further, women teachers who are handling Arts subjects do differ significantly from those of Science Teachers in terms of SAS & WLB, as the Independent Sample 't' Test values are significant at the 0.01 level. The authors have provided some workable suggestions to reduce the level of Smartphone Addiction and improve the level of Work-Life Balance for women teachers in this paper.

Keywords: Smartphone Addiction, Work-Life Balance, Women College Teachers.

1. Introduction:

The past several decades have brought about a tremendous use of technology in almost every aspect of our everyday lives, and the level of technology available at our disposal has increased tremendously. Today, we have technology in our palms, bringing the world into our hands. Regardless of age differentiation, smartphones have crept into our lives at lightning speed. Because of their ease, sophistication, and convenience, smartphones have almost begun to dominate our lifestyles.

The use of smartphones in the past few years has changed the way people live the world over. While smartphones bring in many advantages such as quick connectivity and communication, like any other powerful tool, it has several unforeseen consequences as well. The excessive use of smartphones has wreaked havoc on both family life and work life.

In recent times, addiction refers to more than just drug or substance abuse, including even gambling, the internet, games, or smartphones; all of these come under the category of behavioral addiction. Scholars generally conceptualize smartphone addiction as a behavioral problem or addiction that includes mood tolerance, withdrawal, salience, conflict, and relapse (Van Rooji & Prause, 2014).

In today's global society, smartphone addiction is becoming a serious concern among different age and professional groups, and women college teachers are no exception. Several studies have proved that women are more affected than their counterparts. With an alarming increase in the use and accessibility of the internet in recent years through smartphones, addiction to these activities has increased too, leading to concerns regarding smartphone usage.

This new kind of addiction is a result of fast-developing media and the use of the internet and smartphones everywhere, including educational Institutions like Schools & Colleges. The excessive use of smartphones has wreaked havoc on both family life and work life.

Teachers use smartphones for various reasons such as for work-related tasks, checking e-mails, entertainment purposes, and social media. Smartphones play a key role in teachers' lives, but they do have several challenges as well. Several problems have been associated with smartphone addiction. Some of these include distraction during work hours, difficulty in disconnecting from work, impact on personal relationships, and lack of focus and productivity. Moreover, they cause emotional, psychological, and physical problems too, which are backed by research.

For example, it is suggested that smartphone addiction causes mental health problems (Petry et al, 2018) such as anxiety, depression, mood swings, and decreased self-esteem, and physical health problems (Al-Hadidi et al., 2019) such as eye strain, neck and back pain, insomnia, and increased stress levels. It also causes neurological problems (Horvath et al., 2020).

Worldwide, digital addiction has become common, and the habitual usage of technology has started to dominate a person's life, leading to an imbalance in work-life routine. It needs to be stated that the benefits of using smartphones for work convenience have adverse effects on the work-life balance of women college teachers today. Both students and teachers are attached to smartphones, making addiction to smartphones irresistible. The continuous use of smartphones for work-related tasks as well as for personal activities has led to challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

No doubt, smartphones have changed the way people think, behave, act, and have enhanced work productivity. However, they also affect the work-life balance of people. Experts opine that if digital addiction is left unchecked, it has the potential to affect work-life balance and consequently the work effectiveness of the individuals. Social isolation,

family conflict, insomnia, depression, and anxiety are some of the severe cons of work-life imbalance.

Hence, it is reasoned that the overuse of smartphones among women college teachers not only affects their physical health but also takes a toll on their mental well-being. Finding a balance between work responsibilities and personal time is essential for overall well-being.

2. Review Of Literature:

Several studies have been carried out to examine the impact of smartphone addiction on the work-life balance among different target groups. A few of them are presented here.

In a study carried out by Whelan and Turel (2024) to examine the personal use of smartphones and work-life conflict, it was reported that the relationship between smartphone usage at the workplace and work-life conflict was mediated by sensed stress. It was inferred that work-life conflict reduces when employees are banned from using smartphones for non-work purposes. It was also seen that work performance was not affected when smartphone use was withdrawn.

Masalimova et al. (2022) explored smartphone addiction among 242 teachers, of which 180 were female teachers, and 62 were male teachers. The authors inferred that overuse of smartphones and addiction resulted in severe social issues and also led to several problems such as fixation, loss of control, and withdrawal symptoms.

Hessari & Nategh (2022) examined smartphone addiction and its impact on job performance and its role in life invasion. The results showed that smartphone addiction increased life invasion and techno exhaustion, thereby affecting the job performance of employees; that is, job performance was reduced due to life invasion and techno exhaustion.

Pphch & Ponduri (2021) explored the impact of organizational attitude on the usage of smartphones on work-life balance and job stress among 160 private sector employees in Chennai. It was inferred that there was a negative association between organizational attitude towards smartphone usage and work-life balance, while there was a positive association between smartphone communication and job stress.

Catherine (2018) undertook a study among 100 prospective teachers in Chennai to assess their smartphone addiction and its association with their life satisfaction. The results showed that there is a significant negative association between smartphone addiction and life satisfaction levels among the target group. This implies that as smartphone addiction increases, life satisfaction decreases.

Sarkar et al. (2012) examined the use of mobile technologies and their impact on work-life balance among employees. The authors inferred that as much as mobile technologies facilitated flexibility and helped people to be free from restricted work hours and physical locations, they blurred the boundaries of work and personal time. Furthermore, the flexibility in mobile usage caused complications in co-workers' coordination, thereby resulting in the stretching of work-life boundaries.

Agger (2011) examined the concept of iTime and Labor and life in the smartphone era and opined that smartphones, which were considered essential for work-life balance, were, in fact, a challenge to the traditional boundaries for paid time and personal time. He

inferred that since smartphones caused constant connectivity to the office, employees were unable to be disconnected from their work life or responsibilities.

Waligum (2010) examined the impact of smartphones on the work-life balance of employees. The study results showed that employees were willing to work for longer hours, even without a pay hike, due to smartphone usage for work-related tasks. It was seen that 81 percent of the iworkers used smartphones for work from their home, 62 percent while traveling, and 29 percent of them spent about three or four hours every day on their phones.

3. Research Questions:

Based on the previous literature, the following research questions have been formulated to get answers.

1. What will be the socio-demographic conditions for the Women teachers?
2. Do they have Smartphone addiction? If so, what would be the level of Smartphone addiction?
3. Do they have a Work-Life balance? If so, what would be the level of work-life balance?
4. Are there any associations or differences among the selected Socio-Demographic Conditions, Smartphone Addiction, and Work-Life Balance?

4. Primary & Secondary Objectives:

4.1. Primary Objective:

To get the answers to the above-mentioned research questions, the following Primary and Secondary objectives have been formulated. The primary objective of the present study is to find out the relationship between Smartphone Addiction (SAS) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) among the Women College Teachers in Madurai, with the following secondary objectives:

4.2. Secondary Objectives:

1. To understand the selected socio-demographic profile of Women College Teachers.
2. To measure the level of Social Media Addiction (SAS) among the Women College Teachers.
3. To measure the level of Work-Life Balance (WLB) among the Women College Teachers.
4. To find out the association between the SAS & WLB among the Women College Teachers.

5. Research Design:

For the present study, the researcher has adopted a descriptive research design. Since an attempt has been made to describe the socio-demographic profile, Smartphone Addiction, Work-Life Balance, and the relationship between the above-mentioned variables, it is felt that this design will be the most suitable one.

6. Research Hypotheses:

After having reviewed various relevant literature, the following Research Hypotheses have been formulated:

1. The higher the Smartphone Addiction, the lesser will be the Work-Life Balance for the Women College Teachers.

2. Women Teachers from different socio-demographic conditions do differ significantly concerning their levels of Smartphone Addiction and Work-Life Balance.

7. Universe:

All the Women Teachers from selected Colleges in Madurai city constitute the Universe. The researcher visited four women's colleges located nearby and met the Principals of the Colleges to obtain permission to conduct the study. Official permission was obtained from two women's colleges, and it was found that 323 women teachers were working in the two colleges. These 323 women teachers were the universe for the study.

8. Inclusion Exclusion Conditions:

8.1. Inclusion:

1. Any aided or Self-Financed Women Teachers.
2. From two colleges where the permission was obtained.
3. From any discipline.

8.2. Exclusion:

1. Those who are not cooperating for the study
2. Those who have not filled in all the questions in the data collection tool.

9. Sampling:

The researcher had been to the two colleges where permission was obtained and met the Principals, explained the purpose, and obtained the formal permission to collect data. The Google Form link was sent to all the Women teachers who satisfied the Inclusion and Exclusion conditions, with proper instructions. Finally, data from 268 teachers were obtained. It was noticed that 31 spouses (Males) filled in the Google format and those male samples were removed from the study. The researcher could collect all the required data from 237 women teachers only. Thus, the Simple Random Sampling method was adopted for the present study.

10. Tools For Data Collection:

For the present study, the following tools have been used.

1. To understand the selected socio-demographic conditions of the women teachers, a Semi-structured interview schedule was prepared by the researcher. This tool has open and closed-ended questions.
2. The 10 items, the Smartphone Addiction Scale by Kwon M, Kim D-J, Cho H, Yang S (2013) was used, and this scale has high reliability (0.911) and validity (0.954).
3. The 36-item Work-Life (W-L) Balance Scale by Udai Pareek (2010) was administered. It has six sub-dimensions, namely Social Needs, Personal Needs, Time Management, Team Work, Compensation & Benefits, Work, and the Total Work Life Balance. The scale has high reliability (0.991) and validity (0.995).

11. Data Analysis:

The Data were obtained through the Google Form method. The collected data were edited, and tests of Normality were done for the study variables and found to be Normal. The data were analyzed using the trial version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. To verify the hypotheses, Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation and One-Way ANOVA were used, and accordingly, conclusions have been drawn.

12. Major Findings:

TABLE : 1 :
Socio-Demographic conditions.

Socio Demographic Conditions	Response Categories	N (237)	%
Age	1 (Below 30)	27	11.4
	2 (31 TO 40)	130	54.9
	3 (41 & Above)	80	33.8
Religion	1 Hindu	169	71.3
	2 Muslim	18	7.6
	3 Christian	50	21.1
Educational Qualification	1 Only PG	51	21.5
	2 M.PHIL	50	21.1
	3 Doing PHD	40	16.9
	4 PHD	96	40.5
Marital Status	1 Single	41	17.3
	2 Married	196	82.7
Department	1 Science	81	34.2
	2 Humanities	49	20.7
	3 Linguistics	27	11.4
	4 Commerce	60	25.3
	5 Management	20	8.4
Nature of Employment	1 Permanent SF	166	70.0
	2 Temporary SF	71	30.0
Years of Experience	1 (Below 5 Yrs)	65	27.4
	2 (5 TO 10 Yrs)	68	28.7
	3 (10 TO 15 YRS)	59	24.9
	4 (15 & ABOVE)	45	19.0
Type of Family	1 Nuclear	152	64.1
	2 Joint	85	35.9

(Source: Primary Data)

Major Findings on the distribution of the women teachers:

Just above half of the women teachers (54.9%) are in the age group of (31 to 40) years. A majority (71.3%) of them belong to the Hindu religion. Just above two-fifths of them (40.5%) are Ph.D. holders.

A majority (82.7%) of the respondents are married. Above one-third (34.2%) of them are from the Science department. A majority (70.0%) of the teachers are permanent faculty members from the self-financed stream. Nearly one-fifth (19.0%) of them have more than 15 years of experience. A majority (64.1%) of the teachers belong to nuclear families.

Table : 2 :

**N, Mean, SD, and Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Values for the Study Variables.
(N=237).**

Study Variables	n	M	SD	SPA	WLB
Smartphone	237	66.35	12.31	—	—

Addiction(SPA)					
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	237	43.33	12.24	-0.497(**)	—

(Source: Primary Data) ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

By applying Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation test, it has been found that there exists a significant negative association between the level of Smartphone Addiction (SAS) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) ($r = -0.497$, $p < .001$, Sig). The higher the level of Smartphone Addiction lesser the level of work-life balance. The formulated hypothesis is verified. Similar results were shown by Gonçalves and Santos (2022) and Catherine (2018) that compulsive smartphone usage was associated with burnout and had a negative influence on work-family interaction and loneliness. The authors suggest the use of smartphones with caution.

TABLE: 3 :
Correlation values for the Subdomains and study variable

S.No	Factors of Work-Life Balance	Smartphone Addiction
1	WLB1:Social Needs	-0.491(**)
2	WLB2:Personal Needs	-0.389(**)
3	WLB3:Time Management	-0.346(**)
4	WLB4:Team Work	-0.450(**)
5	WLB5:Compensation & Benefits	-0.368(**)
6	WLB6:Work	-0.548(**)
7	WLB: TOTAL SCORE	-0.497(**)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The above table clearly explains the intercorrelation between all the sub-domains of Work-Life Balance and the level of Smartphone Addiction. By using Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation test, it is found that there exists a negative and significant association among all the subdomains and the total of Work-Life Balance and the level of Smartphone Addiction. All the r values are negative & significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, the formulated Hypotheses have been verified.

This finding is in line with the findings reported by Son & Chen (2018) among Taiwanese workers that smartphone usage was associated with higher levels of stress. The authors reported that increased smartphone usage due to work overload caused a negative association with life satisfaction and caused work-leisure conflict.

TABLE : 4 :
Correlation values for the subdomains of WLB

S.NO	Factors of Work Life Balance	WLB1:	WLB2:	WLB3:	WLB4:	WLB5:	WLB6:	WLB:
1	WLB1: Social Needs	—						
2	WLB2: Personal Needs	0.638(**)	—					
3	WLB3: Time Management	0.248(**)	0.276(**)	—				
4	WLB4: Team Work	0.427(**)	0.251(**)	0.300(**)	—			
5	WLB5: Compensation & Benefits	0.594(**)	0.574(**)	0.305(**)	0.415(**)	—		
6	WLB6: Work	0.689(**)	0.409(**)	0.294(**)	0.486(**)	0.517(**)	—	
7	WLB: Total Score	0.357(**)	0.238(**)	0.297(**)	0.422(**)	0.438(**)	0.461(**)	—

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The above table clearly explains the intercorrelation between all the sub-domains of Work-Life Balance. By using Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation test, it is found that there exists a positive and significant association among the Sub-domains as well as Total Work-Life Balance (WLB) Score.

The following are the major findings based on selected socio-demographic conditions and study variables:

- There exists a negative and significant correlation between Age and level of Smartphone addiction ($r = -0.72$, $p < .01$, Sig) and a positive and significant association between Age and Work-Life Balance ($r = +0.81$, $p < .01$, Sig).
- There exists no significant difference among different religious people and their level of Smartphone Addiction (F-Ratio = 1.34, $p < .647$, Not Significant) and Work-Life Balance (F-Ratio = 2.99, $p < .159$, Not Significant).
- Women Teachers who have PG Degrees only scored more on Smartphone Addiction (F-Ratio = 11.65, $p < .001$, Significant) and less on Work-Life Balance (F-Ratio = 8.13, $p < .001$, Significant when compared to other groups).
- Unmarried women teachers have significantly scored more in Smartphone Addiction (Independent Samples 't' test value = 7.16, $p < .001$, significant) and scored less in Work-Life Balance when compared to Married teachers (Independent Samples 't' test value = 9.17, $p < .001$, significant).
- There exists a negative and significant correlation between the Years of experience and level of Smartphone addiction ($r = -0.77$, $p < .01$, Sig) and a positive and significant association between Years of Experience and Work-Life Balance ($r = +0.89$, $p < .01$, Sig).
- Women teachers from nuclear families have significantly scored more in Smartphone Addiction (independent-samples 't' test value = 6.88 $p < .001$, significant) and scored less in Work-Life Balance (independent-samples 't' test value = 5.78, $p < .001$, significant) when compared to Women teachers from Joint Families.
- Thus, the formulated hypotheses have been verified.

13. Suggestions:

13.1. Based on the above findings, the researcher would suggest the following to reduce the level of Smartphone Addiction...

Setting aside dedicated time for relaxation and self-care (for example, one day/week) would be helpful to enhance overall work-life balance. One might opt for a 30-Day Experiment to reset your usage. Other suggestions include using apps to bolster self-control; avoiding charging the phone near the bedside will help reduce phone usage, and putting your phone away when you walk in the door.

Likewise, changing the phone settings will help in reducing phone usage. For example, turning off notifications, setting the screen to black-and-white, removing distraction-based apps from your home screen, setting a longer passcode, using airplane mode, turning on the do not disturb option, and putting a hairband around your phone.

13.2. Based on the above findings, the researcher would suggest the following to improve Work-Life Balance...

Plan, and embrace the way your brain works, set blocks of time for different tasks, end work at a certain time, enlist technology to help you unplug, go out for lunch, or enjoy lunch with coworkers/ Family, take time off, practice mindfulness, find something you love outside of work to engage in, reconsider work that makes you yearn for balance, communicate with your manager/ Family member, and work with a coach or therapist.

14. Conclusion:

Smartphone addiction among women college teachers is a widespread and concerning issue that affects work-life balance. Furthermore, smartphone addiction acts as a barrier to productivity and focus, affecting the quality of teaching. The boundary between work and personal life is blurred, leading to increased stress and burnout. Women college teachers must be aware of the impact of smartphone addiction on their work-life balance and take steps to address it for their overall well-being. In conclusion, by recognizing the challenges and benefits of balancing smartphone use, teachers need to adapt different strategies to achieve a healthier relationship with their devices. Teachers must learn to prioritize self-care, and setting boundaries with smartphones can certainly lead to improved mental health, productivity, and overall well-being.

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