

A cross-generational comparison of smartphone addiction among Gen X and Gen Y smartphone users in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study reported the prevalence of smartphone addiction among Gen X and Gen Y in Sarawak, Malaysia. This study compared the two generations, X and Y, on smartphone addictive behaviour. It is important to understand their addiction to smartphones. Two hundred thirty-six participants were recruited using a Facebook advertisement, consisting of 122 males and 114 females aged 16 to 55. The smartphone addiction scale-malay (SAS-M) was used to assess smartphone addiction. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS. The result shows that Gen Y is more addicted to a smartphone than Gen X for all components of SAS-M, but there is no significant difference between female and male users for both generations in smartphone usage. In addition, there is a significant difference in the cyberspace-oriented relationship between Gen X and Gen Y. Furthermore, Gen Y had lost control of the use of smartphones compared to Gen X, which reflects the overuse and primacy components that lead to daily life disturbances. Positive anticipation and withdrawal were also observed between the two generations. In conclusion, there is a significant difference between Gen X and Gen Y in smartphone addictive behaviour, implying that Gen Y is a more compulsive user than Gen X. It is important to understand this addictive behaviour and provide an intervention measure to ensure that this will not become a psychological issue. The intervention measure is important to improve mental health and psychological wellbeing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Smartphone technologies have revolutionised how people interact with technology as well as with other people. A smartphone is made up of technologies that combine personal computer features with mobile technologies. These different features consist of a personal digital assistant (PDA), a media player, global positioning system (GPS), a touchscreen user interface, internet access, and a camera [1]. As individuals depend more on their mobile technology to do jobs and seek information or entertainment, smartphones have become an important tool in their daily lives, whether they are digital natives (Gen Y) or digital immigrants (Gen X). Gen X is born between 1965 and 1979, after baby boomers with birth dates ranging from 1965 to 1979, while Gen Y, also known as millennials, was born between 1980 and 1994.

Researchers suggested that the smartphone app usage between Gen X and Y is considerably different and related to the technology environment [2]. Digital media has given Gen Y the convenience of connecting to others and the world and becoming more knowledgeable [3]. Therefore, it can be implied that Gen Y is more techno-savvy than Gen X. It is suggested that Gen Y has a certain level of knowledge and skills in operating digital devices as a result of their upbringing in a technological environment and