Affrontare il sovra-utilizzo dello smartphone attraverso la media education. Un esperimento controllato

Engl. transl.: How to tackle smartphone Overuse through media Education. A randomized Controlled trial

# Keywords

* smartphone overuse
* problematic smartphone use
* smartphone addiction
* digital media education
* randomized control trial
* boosting
* high school

# Details

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## Authors

Gui M.;Fasoli M.;Gerosa T.

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## Sample

The project involved more than 3,600 students at grade 10 from 18 upper
secondary schools in the Milano and Brianza area.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

In the last decade, digital media have increasingly become part of adolescents’ daily lives, broadening their opportunities to access the internet in complete independence. However, the diffusion of these always-on devices has led to the emergence of unexpected side effects, related to media overuse and information and communication overflow. This article describes how the «Digital Wellbeing-Schools» project, a media education initiative promoted by the University of Milano-Bicocca in collaboration with Fastweb S.p.A., tackled this issue. The project involved more than 3,600 students at grade 10 from 18 upper secondary schools in the Milano and Brianza area. Indeed, one of four modules of the project training package focused on «time and attention management» in smartphone usage. Students were asked to reflect on their habits on the basis of quantitative data obtained using a self-monitoring app (RescueTime). The paper discusses the cognitive and educational techniques used in this module in the light of the literature. The effectiveness of the whole intervention was then tested through a randomized controlled trial. The results experimentally confirm that the activities carried out in this part of the project significantly contributed to a reduction in smartphone over-consumption and problematic use among treated participants compared with controls.

# Outcome

"At the beginning of the experiment year, students of the complete sample
showed a highly pervasive use of smartphones. More than 25% of them admitted
to often using their device at night, 35% as soon as they woke up, 50% while
doing their homework and 60% while involved in leisure activities and sports.
[...] After the intervention, we found a fall in both the pervasiveness of smartphones
and their perceived problematic use among treated students. Moreover,
these average reductions were significantly higher than those measured on students
in the control classes. That means that the training project significantly
contributed to a decrease in our outcomes of interest net of any kind of spontaneous
dynamic external to the experiment.
More specifically, while control students showed almost the same level of
smartphone pervasiveness before and after the intervention, treated students saw
their average score decrease from the initial mean score of 49 to around 45 (the
scores of the normalized index of Smartphone Pervasiveness ranged from 0 to
100). In female students the project had an even greater effect on such outcomes.
[...] Based on these results, we can conclude that the  Digital Well-being –
Schools  training course — and specifically the above-described module — led
students to significantly moderate their smartphone usage in socially and physiologically
key moments of the day, also reducing their risk of problematic use." (Gui et al., 2019, pp. 64-65).