

Gender Differences in the Prediction of Smartphone Use While Driving: Personal and Social Factors

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Abstract : This study examines gender as a boundary condition for the relationship between the psychological variable of mindfulness and the social variable of income with regards to the use of smartphones by young drivers. The use of smartphones while driving increases the likelihood of a car accident, endangering young drivers and other road users. The study sample included 186 young drivers who were legally permitted to drive without supervision. The subjects were first asked to complete questionnaires on mindfulness and income. Next, their smartphone use while driving was monitored over a one-month period. This study is unique as it used an objective smartphone monitoring application (rather than self-reporting) to count the number of times the young participants actually touched their smartphones while driving. The findings show that gender moderates the effects of social and personal factors (i.e., income and mindfulness) on the use of smartphones while driving. The pattern of moderation was similar for both social and personal factors. For men, mindfulness and income are negatively associated with the use of smartphones while driving. These factors are not related to the use of smartphones by women drivers. Mindfulness and income can be used to identify male populations that are at risk of using smartphones while driving. Interventions that improve mindfulness can be used to reduce the use of smartphones by male drivers.

Keywords : mindfulness, using smartphones while driving, income, gender, young drivers

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