

SMARTPHONES AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING: A STUDY AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MADURAI DISTRICT

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital era, smartphones have become an indispensable part of everyday life, especially among college students. College students are at a crucial stage of personal and emotional development. They face multiple pressures such as academic workload, career uncertainty, family expectations, and peer competition. In this context, smartphones can act both as a support system and a source of stress. On one hand, they help students stay connected, access educational resources, and seek emotional support through online communities. On the other hand, excessive usage may result in digital addiction, fear of missing out, reduced face-to-face interaction, and emotional instability. Therefore, understanding the balance between beneficial and harmful usage of smartphones is essential for promoting healthy emotional well-being among students. Moreover, the increasing penetration of affordable smartphones and internet services has made digital technology accessible to almost every student. While digital connectivity enhances learning opportunities, it also increases the risk of emotional dependency on mobile devices. Prolonged screen time, constant notifications, and social comparison on digital platforms may contribute to emotional exhaustion and decreased well-being. Hence, it is important to scientifically examine how smartphone usage patterns influence emotional well-being among college students. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. To analyze the Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being of Arts and Science college students in Madurai District 80 students are selected as samples using convenient sampling method. The collected data were analyzed with the help of various statistical measures such as Percentage and Weighted average technique.

Key Words: Smartphone, Emotional well-being, and College students.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, smartphones have become an indispensable part of everyday life, especially among college students. These devices are no longer limited to communication purposes; they serve as tools for education, entertainment, social interaction, online transactions, and access to information. The rapid growth of smartphone usage has transformed learning environments in higher education institutions, enabling students to attend online classes, access e-learning platforms, download study materials, and communicate instantly with peers and teachers. As a result, smartphones play a vital role in shaping the academic and social lives of Arts and Science college students.

At the same time, excessive and uncontrolled use of smartphones has raised serious concerns regarding the emotional well-being of young adults. Emotional well-being refers to a person's ability to manage emotions, cope with stress, maintain positive relationships, and experience overall mental balance. Continuous exposure to social media, gaming, and entertainment apps may lead to emotional disturbances such as anxiety, mood swings, loneliness, irritation, and reduced concentration. Studies have also indicated that overdependence on smartphones can negatively affect sleep patterns, academic performance, and real-life social interactions.

College students are at a crucial stage of personal and emotional development. They face multiple pressures such as academic workload, career uncertainty, family expectations, and peer competition. In this context, smartphones can act both as a support system and a source of stress. On one hand, they help students stay connected, access educational resources, and seek emotional support through online communities. On the other hand, excessive usage may result in digital addiction, fear of missing out, reduced face-to-face interaction, and emotional instability. Therefore, understanding the balance between beneficial and harmful usage of smartphones is essential for promoting healthy emotional well-being among students.

Moreover, the increasing penetration of affordable smartphones and internet services has made digital technology accessible to almost every student. While digital connectivity enhances learning opportunities, it also increases the risk of emotional dependency on mobile devices. Prolonged screen time, constant notifications, and social comparison on digital platforms may contribute to emotional exhaustion and decreased well-being. Hence, it is important to scientifically examine how smartphone usage patterns influence emotional well-being among college students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The important objectives of the study are:

- To study the socio-economic profile of Arts and Science college students in Madurai District.
- To assess the level and pattern of smartphone usage among college students.
- To measure the emotional well-being and Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being of Arts and Science college students.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using a well-structured interview schedule administered to the respondents. Secondary data were gathered from various sources such as books, journals, magazines, and online resources.

SAMPLING DESIGN

To analyze the Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being of Arts and Science college students in Madurai District 80 students are selected as samples using convenient sampling method.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

The collected data were analyzed with the help of various statistical measures such as *Percentage and Weighted average technique*.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section presents the socio-economic profile of the selected Arts and Science college students. The profile variables such as gender, age group, course, year of study, area of residence, family type, parents' education and occupation, monthly family income, preferred smartphone brand, and years of smartphone usage are analyzed using percentage analysis and weighted average technique.

1. Gender of the Respondents

Gender is an important demographic variable as smartphone usage and emotional well-being may vary between male and female students. This table shows the gender-wise distribution of Arts and Science college students selected for the study.

Table: 1 Gender of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	39	48.75
2	Female	41	51.25
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above table out of 80 respondents, 41 (51.25 percent) are female, 39 (48.75 percent) are male.

2. Age of the Respondents

Age is an important factor that may influence smartphone usage pattern and emotional well-being. The following table presents the age-wise classification of the respondents selected for the study.

Table: 2 Age of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 18	09	11.25
2	18–21	49	61.25
3	Above 21	22	27.25
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table infers that 09(11.25 percent) of the sample students belong to the age group of below 18 years, 49(61.25 percent) of them come under the age group of 18-21years and the remaining 22(27.25 percent) of the students comes under the age group of above 21 years.

3. Course of Study

The Course-wise classification is useful to understand whether students from different academic streams vary in smartphone usage and emotional well-being. The following table explains the distribution of respondents based on their course of study.

Table: 3 Course of Study

Sl. No.	Course	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	UG	52	65.00
2	PG	24	30.00
3	Others	04	05.00
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is revealed from the above table that 52(65 percent) of the sample respondents are doing UG Courses, 24(30percent) of them are doing PG courses and the remaining 4(5 percent) of them are doing PhD.

4. Year of Study

The year of study is relevant as smartphone usage habits and emotional maturity may differ among first, second, and third year students. The classification of the respondents on the above basis was illustrated in the following table.

Table: 4 Year of Study

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	I Year	26	32.50
2	II Year	30	37.50
3	III Year	24	30.00
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred that 30 respondents (37.50 percent) are studying in II Year, followed by 26 (32.50 percent) of the sample students are in I Year and 24 (30.00 percent) of them are in III Year.

5. Area of Residence

The Place of residence may influence access to smartphones, internet facilities, and patterns of usage. Hence the sample respondents are also classified on the above basis and presented in the following table. The classification helps in comparing rural and urban students.

Table: 5 Area of Residence

Sl. No.	Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	44	55.00
2	Urban	36	45.00
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 44(55 percent) of the sample respondents are residing in Rural areas and the remaining 36(45 percent) of them are residing in Urban areas.

6. Family Type

Family structure may influence supervision, emotional support, and smartphone usage behaviour of students. Hence the respondents are classified on the above basis and presented in the following table.

Table: 6 Family Type

Sl. No.	Family Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear	52	65.00
2	Joint	28	35.00
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that 52 respondents (65.00 percent) belong to nuclear families, while 28 respondents (35.00 percent) come from joint families.

7. Smartphone Brand Preferred by the Students

Brand preference reflects affordability, accessibility, and features that attract college students. It helps in understanding the popular brands among students. The following table shows the preferred smartphone brands used by the respondents.

Table: 7 Smartphone Brand Preferred by the Students

Sl. No.	Brand	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Samsung	24	30.00
2	Redmi	18	22.50
3	Realme	14	17.50
4	Vivo	10	12.50
5	Oppo	8	10.00
6	Apple	6	7.50
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table depicts that among the respondents, 24 (30.00 percent) prefer Samsung, followed by 18 (22.50 percent) preferring Redmi and 14 (17.50 percent) preferring Realme. Only 6 (7.50 percent) use Apple phones.

8. Years of Using Smartphone

The number of years of usage indicates the level of familiarity and dependence on smartphones. The following table explains the duration of smartphone usage among the respondents. It helps in assessing long-term exposure to smartphone usage.

Table: 8 Years of Using Smartphone

Sl. No.	Years of Usage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 3 year	31	38.75
2	3–5 years	41	51.25
3	More than 5 years	08	10.00
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above table that 31(38.75 percent) of the respondents are using smartphone for less than 3 years, 41(51.25 percent) of them are using for 3-5 years and the remaining 8(10 percent) of the respondents are using smartphones for more than 5 years.

9. Smartphone Usage Pattern of the students

The smart phone usage pattern of the respondents is analyzed to study about the impact of smartphone usage in the emotional well-being of Arts and science college students and the results are given in the following table.

Table: 9 Smartphone Usage Pattern of the students

Sl. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Rank
1	I use my smartphone for online classes and academic purposes	3.68	0.94	IV
2	I use my smartphone mainly for social media	4.12	0.88	I
3	I frequently use my smartphone for entertainment	3.95	0.90	II
4	I check my smartphone immediately after waking up	3.74	1.02	III
5	I use my smartphone before going to sleep	3.62	1.01	V
6	I feel uncomfortable when I do not have access to my smartphone	3.41	1.10	VI
7	I spend more time on my smartphone than I initially plan to	3.55	0.97	V

Source: Computed Data

The table reveals that social media is the most dominant purpose of smartphone usage among college students, as the statement “I use my smartphone mainly for social media” recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.88, Rank I). This is followed by entertainment usage (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.90, Rank II) and checking the smartphone immediately after waking up (Mean = 3.74, SD = 1.02, Rank III), indicating habitual usage throughout the day. Academic use of smartphones shows a moderate level (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.94, Rank IV). The tendency to spend more time than planned (Mean = 3.55, SD = 0.97, Rank V) and feeling uncomfortable without the smartphone (Mean = 3.41, SD = 1.10, Rank VI) indicate emerging dependence on smartphones among students.

10. Emotional Well-Being of College Students

An attempt was made to know about the emotional well-being of the college students and the result was presented in the following table.

Table: 10 Emotional Well-Being of College Students

Sl. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Rank
1	I feel emotionally balanced in my daily life	3.44	0.89	IV
2	I feel calm and relaxed most of the time	3.31	0.92	V
3	I feel stressed due to academic or personal reasons	3.96	0.87	I
4	I feel lonely even when I am active on social media	3.72	0.94	II
5	I feel happy with my overall life	3.58	0.90	III
6	I feel anxious when I am away from my smartphone	3.21	1.01	VI
7	My mood is affected by what I see on social media	3.65	0.95	II

Source: Computed Data

The emotional well-being table shows that stress is the most prominent emotional issue among students, as “I feel stressed due to academic or personal reasons” recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.87, Rank I). Feelings of loneliness even while being active on social media (Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.94, Rank II) and mood changes influenced by social media content (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.95, Rank II) indicate that online engagement does not always result in emotional satisfaction. Moderate levels of happiness (Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.90, Rank III) and emotional balance (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.89, Rank IV) are observed, while feeling calm and relaxed shows a relatively lower mean (Mean = 3.31, SD = 0.92, Rank V). Anxiety when away from smartphones recorded the lowest mean (Mean = 3.21, SD = 1.01, Rank VI), indicating varying levels of emotional dependence on smartphones.

11. Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being

An attempt was made to know about the impact of smartphone use on Emotional well-being of the college students by adopting weighted average technique and the result is given below.

Table: 11 Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being

Sl. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Excessive smartphone use affects my concentration	3.88	0.91	I
2	Smartphone use affects my sleep pattern	3.74	0.96	II
3	Using a smartphone helps me reduce stress	3.29	0.98	V
4	I feel emotionally disturbed when I spend too much time on my smartphone	3.61	0.93	III
5	Smartphone use improves my connection with friends and family	3.52	0.89	IV
6	I feel irritated when my smartphone is not working or the internet is slow	3.70	0.95	II
7	Reducing smartphone use improves my emotional well-being	3.57	0.90	IV

Source: Computed Data

The impact table indicates that excessive smartphone usage mainly affects students' concentration, as the statement “Excessive smartphone use affects my concentration” obtained the highest mean score (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.91, Rank I), followed by its effect on sleep pattern (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.96, Rank II) and irritation when the smartphone is not working (Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.95, Rank II). Emotional disturbance due to prolonged smartphone use shows a considerable mean value (Mean = 3.61, SD = 0.93, Rank III). The positive influence of smartphones on social connection is moderate (Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.89, Rank IV), while stress reduction through smartphone use is relatively low (Mean = 3.29, SD = 0.98, Rank V). The statement that reducing smartphone use improves emotional well-being recorded a moderate mean (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.90, Rank IV), reflecting students' awareness of the benefits of controlled usage.

12. Overall opinion on Impact of Smartphone Use on Emotional Well-Being

The overall opinion of the sample students about the impact of smartphone usage on emotional well-being is analyzed and presented in the following table.

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Smartphone use has a positive impact on my emotional well-being	3.36	0.88	II
2	Smartphone use has a negative impact on my emotional well-being	3.71	0.91	I
3	I am willing to reduce my smartphone usage for better emotional health	3.84	0.86	I

Source: Computed Data

The overall opinion table shows that students perceive the negative impact of smartphone use on emotional well-being more strongly (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.91, Rank I) than the positive impact (Mean = 3.36, SD = 0.88, Rank II). At the same time, students express a strong willingness to reduce smartphone usage for better emotional health (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.86, Rank I), indicating awareness of the harmful effects of excessive smartphone use and readiness to adopt healthier digital habits. Overall, the findings suggest that although smartphones provide certain benefits, their excessive use is perceived as more harmful to emotional well-being among college students in Madurai District.

FINDINGS**The findings of the study are:**

- The researcher found that 41 (51.25 percent) of the sample respondents are female.
- Majority 49(61.25 percent) of the sample students come under the age group of 18-21years.
- Most 52(65 percent) of the sample respondents are doing UG Courses.
- It is found out that that 30 respondents (37.50 percent) are studying in II Year.
- 44(55 percent) of the sample respondents are residing in Rural areas.
- It is revealed that 52 (65.00 percent) of the respondents belong to nuclear families.
- Regarding the smartphone brand preferred by the sample students it is found that 24 (30.00 percent) prefer Samsung.
- Majority 41(51.25 percent) of the sample students are using smartphones for 3-5 years.
- The researcher found that social media and entertainment are the primary purposes of smartphone use among college students. Many students use smartphones from morning to night and often spend more time than planned, indicating habitual and dependent usage patterns.
- It is found that stress and loneliness are common emotional issues among students. Online content and social media significantly influence students' moods, while overall emotional well-being is found to be moderate.
- The excessive smartphone use negatively affects concentration and sleep patterns. Although smartphones help in maintaining social connections, their negative emotional effects are stronger than the positive effects.
- The students perceive the negative impact of smartphone use on emotional well-being more strongly than the positive impact. Most students are willing to reduce smartphone usage to improve their emotional health.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that smartphone usage is highly prevalent among college students, with the majority being young undergraduate students from rural areas and nuclear families. Social media and entertainment are the primary purposes of smartphone use, and many students use their smartphones habitually from morning to night, often spending more time than planned. The findings reveal that excessive smartphone use negatively affects students' concentration and sleep patterns, while emotional issues such as stress and loneliness are common and students' moods are significantly influenced by online content and social media. Although smartphones help students maintain connections with friends and family, the negative emotional impact is perceived more strongly than the positive impact. Importantly, most students are aware of these negative effects and are willing to reduce their smartphone usage to improve their emotional well-being, highlighting the need for awareness programmes, digital well-being initiatives, and supportive guidance from educational institutions and families to promote healthier smartphone habits.

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