

Smartphone Addiction and the Consequential Decline in Library Use and Reading Habits Among Youngsters in Bangladesh: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade or so, the use of smartphones has grown exponentially, affecting not only communication and information access, but also contributing to excessive use which has become a major challenge, especially for the younger generation, who are reading less, using libraries less, and reducing their academic engagement. This study investigates the impact of smartphone addiction on the usage behavior and reading practices of adolescents and youth in Bangladeshi libraries and identifies possible strategies to address these problems. It was a cross-sectional study using a mixed-method research design and a purposive sampling technique, with a total sample of 310 respondents comprising 200 students (ranging from 14-25 years, median age 19 years) and their corresponding teachers (60) and parents (50). Structured questionnaires were used to collect data, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that 68% of the students were addicted to smartphones, and 74% of students experienced issues in their daily functioning because of using smartphones. Smartphone addiction was associated with anxiety, depression, insomnia, poor concentration, cyberbullying, irritability, and academic decline, among other adverse outcomes. Students themselves reported that overall, 62% were unwilling to use the library, while 38% used it, mainly university students. All teachers 100% agreed that student reading and library usage were impacted by the overuse of mobile phones. It also revealed that 80% of the institutions surveyed had libraries, and many of these institutions were deficient in basic facilities, particularly in secondary institutions. Even so, 68% of parents reported that their children were more interested in smartphones, and 32% reported that they preferred to read or play. Students' excessive interest in smartphones is highly detrimental to their academic performance. It has proposed a few provisions regarding the proper use of smartphones, the improvement of library infrastructure, the integration of libraries, regular activities into the academic curriculum, and making the digital literacy programs more effective in revitalizing the reading culture and accelerating the overall intellectual development of the country's youth.

Keywords: Smartphone Addiction, Library Use, Reading Habits, Youngsters, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have transformed modern life and become an indispensable part of everyday activities worldwide but are driving the young generation into the black hole of its addiction. The novelties of smartphone features fascinate the young students. In recent years, the rapid proliferation of smartphones has significantly transformed the behavioral patterns of the youth across the globe. Bangladesh is no exception to this, as of 2026, Bangladesh has approximately 188.63 million mobile internet subscribers, which speaks to the widespread adoption of the smartphone usage among the young demographic in the country (AMTOB, 2026). This massive

usage has made the smartphone a very important part of their daily lives very effectively. Although this technological advancement enables instant access to information and it socializes people, it also raises valid questions related to overuse of smartphones and digital addiction especially among teens and young adults.

At the beginning, young students use smartphones for the purpose of studying but use them more for unnecessary work. Youths browse their phone in different forms of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snap chat, Twitter, etc. which allows them to connect with all around the world. In the same way, the lifestyle of the young generation is, as of today, heavily dependent on digital devices, internet service availability and innovative digital products for entertainment, interpersonal relationships, social networking, economic transactions (Hoque, 2018). Their education, entertainment, sports, medicine and all areas of life have become dependent on smartphones. They spend considerable time browsing websites and social media platforms, which often leads to compulsive and problematic smartphone use. Their uncontrolled and excessive use can trigger smartphone addiction that interferes with their daily life has been increasingly documented as a psychological and social issue. It wastes their precious time, creates various physical and mental problems which are evident in their behavior. Among them anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, sexting, depression, weight change, change in diet, change in sleep patterns, fatigue, irritable mood, difficulties paying attention, withdrawal from social interaction or activities. Low self-esteem and neglecting other activities are also seen constantly in their behavior.

The most significant impact is found to have them away from reading books and use of reading materials and as such they are found away from going to and using the library. Although a library is a collection of books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading materials made available for people to borrow or use for reference. The library does not just offer book reading as it also brings about access to computers, community events, and education. It is crucial in promoting literacy, intellectual freedom, cultural diversity and vital resources for individual communities and society.

Libraries redouble the skills and talents of the employees of an organization to become efficient in coping with all the challenges ranging from skills shortages, shifting demographics, technological development, and managing diversity (Khan, 2015). Library which is one of the key human resource development agencies adoring to nurturing human capital through capturing learning and revolution (Islam, 2023).

But students' superfluous use of smartphones has negative effects on their academic performance (Ishii, 2011) and imposes negative impact on psychosomatic problems on well-being, and subjective happiness or gladness (Lepp, 2015). The student group of youngsters do not notice their valuable time and tend to ignore the important tasks, such as reading or learning. Their studies are becoming reliant on smartphones in our country. They consider smartphones as the main source of knowledge leaving a side book. As a result, they are reducing reading books by physically going to the library. Thus, smartphone addiction does create a very strong impact on academic performance of youth. It is unearthed that 92.54 % of the admission seekers at Dhaka University's overall pass rate was unsuccessful in admission test (2025-26) academic year (University Correspondent, 2026).

The way our young generation moves away from books and libraries, then the education of the country will lag far behind, and the development of the country will be disrupted. Students are using the smartphone for more than 10 hours on an average for different purposes in a day where they use it for 65 minutes on an average for study purposes (Mondal, 2020).

There is a dearth of empirical research about smartphone and its impacts on young adults, particularly in developing countries, like Bangladesh. This cross-sectional study will be an attempt to fill this gap and identify the intensity of smartphone addiction of the young generation of Bangladesh, particularly Ashulia, Savar area. Their average time spent on print media and stay at library. Also to measure the overuse of phones by young students and explore the ways and means to keep them in the library and with printed materials. Thus, the study will bring positive results for society as a whole and for the policy makers, guardians, teachers and particularly for the youngsters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Smartphones are one of the most powerful means of digital communication used by almost all social groups in the world, and regardless of the conventional view by scientists, Smartphones are utilized worldwide as well in the modern century. Mobile phones have been primarily a means of making phone calls and sending text messages to each other but have now expanded our communication and daily lifestyle. The change has impacted people, particularly youth, on their day-to-day lives as habits and interactions have changed significantly (Bianchi, 2005).

More young people are developing psychological issues such as a fear of being without a mobile phone (nomophobia). This is considered as a behavioral issue of mobile phone addiction and the potential impacts span social, psychological, physical (Anshari, 2019). Smartphones connect people with more people than ever before and are also said to be responsible for social isolation and micro-cultures of isolation, none of which is a desirable trait today. Meanwhile, there is evidence in the literature that smartphone addiction is quickly emerging in various groups (Sarwar, 2013).

Supporting evidence came from a University of Southern California study that determined that the smartphone-using teens were more likely to engage in unprotected sex than were non-users. The negative impact of smartphone use on adolescents' social and psychological development in India has also been a concern. A mobile communication is more of an added conversation and discussion; young users have also become easier victims of smartphone misuse and dependence (Davey, 2014). Most adolescents aged 12-19 have their own mobile phone and most of them use a smartphone. While mobile applications have been shown to be useful in managing chronic sleep problems such as diabetes, insomnia (Arsand et al., 2015), and alcoholism (Gustafson et al., 2014), too much use of these applications leads to various negative effects on health (Haug et al., 2015).

In fact, addiction to the use of mobile phones has been compared to addiction related behavior of drugs. The over usage has been linked with sleep problems, anxiety, tension and depression (Zhang et al., 2022). The quality of sleep, energy, activity time and other lifestyles are not as good due to overuse of smartphones. They might put on weight in this period (Alosaimi et al., 2016). Students' use of smartphones is widespread at university. However, research on the relationship between the use of cellphones and school results is still scarce (Boumosleh, 2018). Cell phone addiction has been characterized by some as "Perhaps worst non-substance addiction of our Z Age, with up to 9 hours a day on their phones for students only" (Parasuraman, 2017)". The compulsive nature of the behavior has been described as "communication addiction disorder" (Ahmed, 2017). There are also some drawbacks to smartphone usage that are mentioned by 24 Critics. Smartphone addiction, distraction, cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content are among the drawbacks highlighted by 24 Critics.

Smartphones are one of the most significant items of a hundred or even millions of young people and have become a symbol of their independence from their family, their teachers and their social reasons. This notion will make children more driven to their phones (Ahad, 2017). New research from Oxford University Press suggests Bangladeshi teens are more prone to psychological distress if they spend less time doing physical activity and a lot of time engaging in screen-based activities (bdnews24, 2018). Likewise, university students' academic performance is also adversely affected by their heavy use of smartphones, that has led to low CGPA and poor learning outcomes (Mubassira, 2019). In other environments, classrooms, the use of smartphones is sometimes a source of distraction, decreases concentration, and affects physical and mental health (Mahsud et al., 2020). One way to tackle these problems is to motivate students to participate in sports and extracurricular activities out of school (NIE News, 2023), which will help them reduce smartphone addiction altogether throughout Bangladesh (Sayeed et al., 2021). In addition, as smartphones and digital engagement continue to grow, privacy awareness concerns have emerged that may lead to relational challenges between parents and teens (Rony, 2022).

They also observe students using texting during the lecture when they struggle to remember or understand more of the conversation. Besides, the excessive use of smartphones also affects face-to-face interaction between students, teachers and other peers, the most effective way for communicating (Ratan et al., 2022). This can be followed by reduced social identity and a flawed sense of self, as Addictions to SUP become patterns such as:

Emotional instability, Pleasure-seeking behavior, Virtual orientation, Facebook, YouTube, Messenger and others (Mahmud, 2023).

The literature is always clear on the negative consequences of excessive smartphone use on behavioral, psychological and academic functioning. However, no studies focused on the usage of the library and reading habits seem to have been undertaken. Based on this, the present study aims to fill this gap by studying how boys and girls in Bangladesh's suburban areas allocate their time between reading the book and reading using a smartphone.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to identify the intensity of the use of smartphones by the youngsters of Ashulia Union, Savar area, their aloofness from library, impacts on their study, skill gap and suggest remedies.

However, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the volume of time spent on smartphones by youngsters;
- To explore the psycho-physical abnormalities of the users;
- To assess the time spent reading books, using print media, and visiting libraries.
- To identify the skills gap in the youngsters' fields of study; and
- To suggest measures to overcome the existing stalemate.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted through a mixed-methods research design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches with the aim to finding out whether smartphone addiction is beneficial or harmful to library use and reading habits in the youth of Bangladesh. This method was preferred as a way of collecting quantitative data as well as participants' perspectives and perspectives gave a broader understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Research Design

- Research design is mixed methods;
- A descriptive survey of insights;
- The results of the quantitative data obtained from systematic questionnaires;
- Qualitative: free response data from open-ended questionnaires.

Study Population and Sampling

The analysis was done with three groups of respondents:

- Students (14–25 years)
- Teachers
- Parents/Guardians

The purpose of the sampling method was employed since the participants had relevant information and experience with smartphones and their academic behavior. Sample Size (N = 310)

- Students = 200
- Teachers = 60
- Parents/Guardians = 50

The study area and participants have been selected from educational institutions of Ashulia Union of Savar, under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Savar in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Data Collection

Structured face-to-face questionnaires were used in data collection. Questionnaires were designed separately for students, teachers and parents. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

A. Demographic Information

- Age
- Gender
- Educational level
- Possessing a smartphone.

B. Respondents' Perspectives

- Usage patterns from smartphones;
- Academic record;
- Reading habits and use of the library;
- Physical and psychological consequences;
- Policies about the institution;
- Lastly, strategies to reduce addiction to smartphones.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The following descriptive statistical techniques were used:

- Percentage Analysis;
- Tables and graphs were used to present the findings;
- Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative responses;
- It is important to keep valid and credible data, as well as to consider ethical issues.

Validity, Credibility, and Ethical Considerations

- The questionnaire was developed after reading, collating and reviewing the relevant literature by academic experts;
- Before the final data collection, a pilot survey was conducted;
- The study was voluntary and the respondents were informed about the study;
- Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained throughout the study.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Among users, young people constitute the largest group of smartphones all around the world. This is equally evident in Bangladesh. However, it is observed that youth often use smartphones more for unnecessary purposes than for essential ones, and gradually they are becoming addicted to it and consequently their academic performance is found to be declined. They show a complete lack of interest in gaining knowledge by reading books in libraries, preferring instead to have smartphones as their constant companion throughout the day. As a result, they are becoming physically and mentally distressed. It is also evident that the existing libraries of different schools, colleges and universities are not in any opposition to attracting the young students to devote themselves to studying in the library. Although there are governmental directives that every educational institution from secondary to higher secondary levels must have a library room and conduct mandatory library classes, the reality is far from satisfactory. In most secondary schools in Bangladesh, libraries exist only in name, and in many higher secondary institutions, the condition of libraries is also poor. To address this issue, it is essential to explore the real causes and find remedies. As there is dearth of research in this area, particularly on

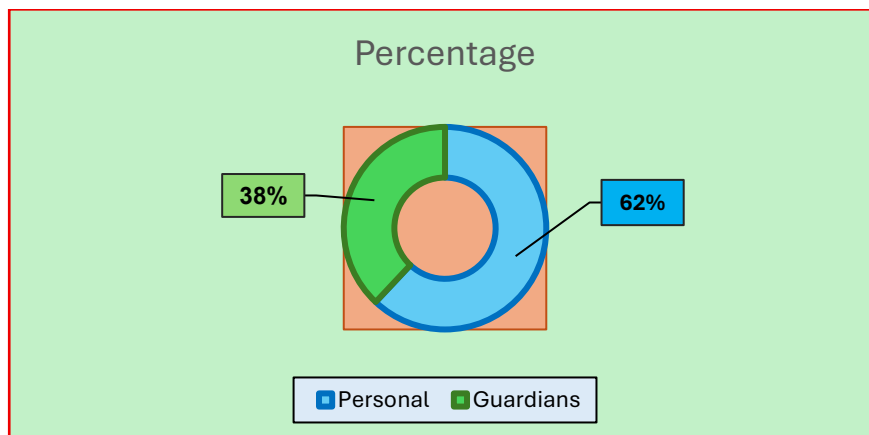
the library used by smartphone addicted students and the condition of the existing libraries, the present study is quite relevant and justified.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The primary data collected were presented in all the tables and figures of this study, which was conducted through face-to-face interviews with all respondents from three groups.

Students (Respondents)

Figure 1: Ownership of the Phone



The above figure shows that 62% of the students own a personal smartphone. On the other hand, the rest of the 38% of students use their guardian's phone.

Table 1: Detrimental effects of smartphone use on academic performance

Answer	(14–18) years	(19–25) years	Total	Total Percentage
Yes	52	88	140	70%
No	48	12	60	30%
Total	100	100	200	100

The above table highlights opinions regarding the impact of smartphone usage on study difficulty. Among them 70% (140) opine that, their studies are being affected using smartphone. The rest of the 30% (60) respond negatively.

Table 2: Overuse of smartphones is harmful to students' health.

Answer	(14–18) years	(19–25) years	Total	Total Percentage
Yes	78	70	148	74%
No	22	30	52	26%
Total	100	100	200	100

Table 2 indicates that 74% (148) of students believe excessive smartphone use negatively impacts health. The rest of the 26% (52) disagree with the statement.

Figure 2: Kinds of Harms

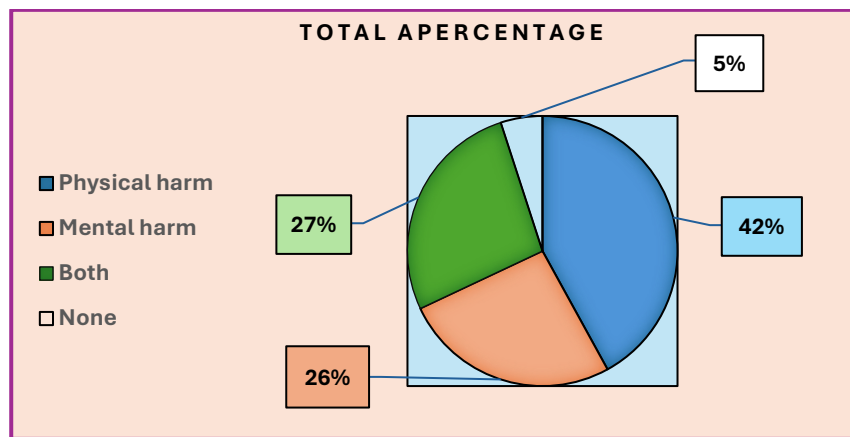


Figure 2 shows that 42% (84) of respondents suffered from physical harm, 27% (54) suffered from both physical and mental harm from smartphone use, while 26% (52) suffered from mental harm due to smartphone use. 5% (10) responded that there was no effect at all, which means that the majority reported negative effects due to smartphone use.

Table 3: Usage of smartphone in bed at night

Answer	(14–18) years	(19–25) years	Total	Total Percentage
Yes	36	92	128	64%
No	68	08	72	36%
Total	100	100	200	100%

Table 3 shows that 64% (128) of students opine that they use smartphones in bed at night which is alarming to the students. The rest of the 36% (72) opine negatively.

Table 4: Most Favorite activities

Answer	(14–18) years	(19–25) years	Total	Total Percentage
Reading books	34	30	64	32%
Using a smartphone	66	70	136	68%
Total	100	100	200	100%

The above table indicates that smartphone use is the favorite activity of 68% (136) of students out of 200. The rest of the 32% (64) are fond of reading books.

Table 5: Students' Library Use

Answer	(14–18) years	(19–25) years	Total	Total Percentage
Yes	10	66	76	38%
No	90	34	124	62%
Total	100	100	200	100%

The above table shows that 38% (76) of students go to the library. The remaining 62% (124) of students do not go to the library. These depict a dismal picture of library used by the students.

Teachers (Respondents)

Table 06: Smartphone is harmful for young students.

Answer	School	College	University	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	18	17	55	91.67%
No	0	02	03	05	8.33%
Total	20	20	20	60	100%

The above table shows that almost all teachers, 91.67% (55) believe that smartphones are harmful for students. The remaining 8.33% (05) commented defiantly.

Table 7: Encouraged to study in the library.

Answer	School	College	University	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	20	20	60	100%
No	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	20	20	20	60	100%

All teachers encourage students to study in the library. Rather than using smartphones.

Table 8: Students' Interest in Reading in the Library

Answer	School	College	University	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	20	20	60	100%
No	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	20	20	20	60	100%

All educators commented that students would benefit more from studying in the library than using smartphones.

Table 9: Decrease library use due to overuse of smartphones.

Answer	School	College	University	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	20	20	60	100%
No	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	20	20	20	60	100%

Table 10 shows that all teachers unanimously agree that the interest of young people in libraries has significantly declined due to the excessive use of smartphones.

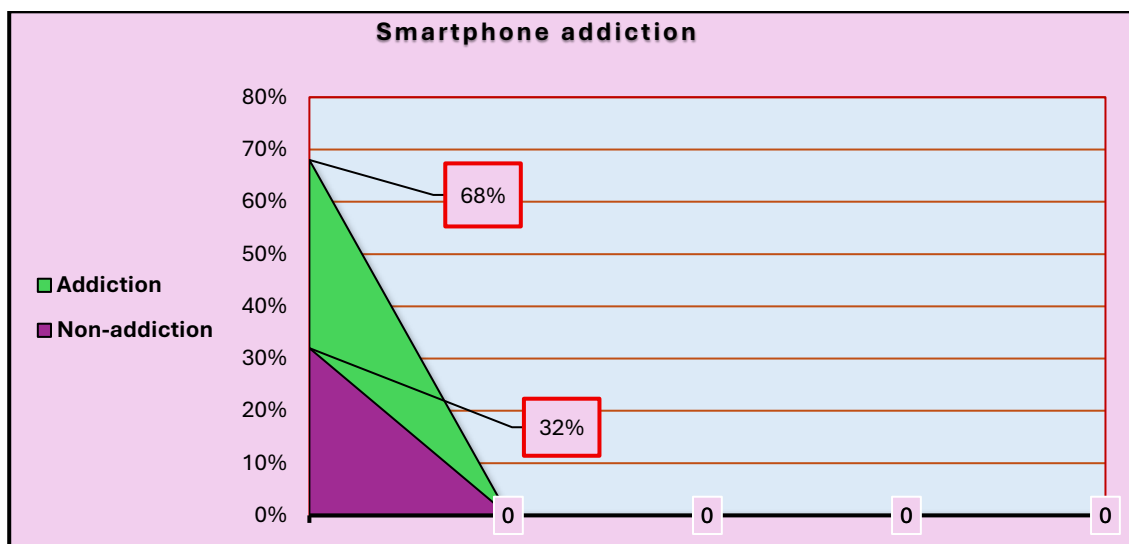
Guardians (Respondents)

Table 10: Smartphone use for study by the young students.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	40	80%
No	10	20%
Total	50	100%

A total of 80% (40) of the guardians said that their children use smartphones for study purposes. The rest of the 20% (10) opine negatively.

Figure 3: Addiction to smartphones.



A total of 68% (34) of guardians reported that their children were addicted to smartphones, while 32% (16) do not. This is a horrible statement.

Table 11: Authorities should make library usage mandatory for students.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	50	100%
No	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 11 shows that all parents agreed the library usage should be made mandatory for students by their educational institutions.

Table 12: Smartphones significantly reduce the interest of young people in libraries.

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	50	100%

No	0	0%
Total	50	100%

All respondents (parents) opine that smartphones have significantly reduced the interest of youths in libraries.

DISCUSSION

The present study indicates that, smartphone addiction is an increasing problem among adolescents and young adults in Bangladesh, and the study shows that it has important implications for their academic performance, library usage, reading habits and physical and psychological health. While there are several educational uses for smartphones, the results indicate that for many students, they are becoming a prime source of distraction.

The research identified that 70% (140) of the students feel that the use of a smartphone has a negative impact on their studies while 30% (60) did not find any negative academic impact. This means that learning is hindered by excessive use of smartphones. Spending time on social media, games, and online entertainment can diminish the amount of time spent studying, focusing, and motivating to learn, which can have a negative impact on education. The results of this study are also like the results of previous studies which reported the negative relationship between smartphone dependency and academic performance.

The health-related findings are also worrying. Overall, 148 of the student respondents (74%) felt that too much mobile phone use has a negative impact on the health of students. 42% (84) reported physical problems, 26% (52) psychological problems and 27% (54) both physical and psychological problems, with only 5% (10) reporting no harmful effects. The findings suggest that there are several aspects of students' well-being that are impacted by long-term use of smartphones. Students may experience physical complaints (e.g., eye strain, headaches, neck pain) and/or psychological problems (e.g., anxiety, irritability, poor concentration) which can affect their school performance and daily functioning.

It was also found that 64% (128) of the students use their smart phones in bed at night. Using a smartphone at night has been linked to poor sleep quality, insomnia, tiredness during the day and impaired cognitive functioning. This unhealthy digital behavior could also further impact the productivity and engagement in the classroom. So, it is important to education and families to encourage healthy smartphone use practices.

The study also found that the students' reading habits and library use were decreasing. 68% (136) preferred using their smartphone in leisure time, whereas 32% (64) preferred to read books. Similarly, 38% (76) said that they visited libraries while 62% (124) indicated that they did not use library facilities. The findings indicate that the use of smartphones is gradually taking the place of traditional reading practices. Limited participation in books and libraries can have an adverse impact on reading comprehension, critical thinking, creativity and independent learning. It seems, then, that there is a strong link between reducing the use of libraries and increasing the reliance on smartphones.

These findings were corroborated by teachers' responses. Almost all teachers (55 of 60, 91.67%) felt that the use of smartphones has an adverse effect on the academic achievement of the students, and all teachers 100% recommended that the students spend more time at the library than using their smartphones a lot. In addition, all teachers acknowledged the reduction in students' interest in libraries due to the growing use of smartphones. The answers are representative of the general sentiment of concerns about changing learning habits and their importance for libraries in promoting academic achievement and life-long learning.

Parents' perceptions tended to be like those of the teachers. While 80% (40) of the guardians admitted their children use their smartphones for educational purposes, every parent agreed that the use of smartphones in educational institutions should be mandatory and that the use of smartphones has led to a reduction in young people's interest in libraries. This shows that parents are aware of the learning potential of the smartphone and its negative effects, and they agree that institutional efforts should be enhanced to promote reading and library use.

This study also found some institutional factors that led to the decrease in the use of the library. The presence of libraries in about 80% of the educational institutions surveyed was noted, but in many, there was insufficient library infrastructure and an insufficient number of reading materials and suitable learning environments, especially at secondary-school level. Hence, it is not smartphone addiction alone that is the cause of decreased library usage. The enhancement of library equipment, the increase of book stock, the implementation of digital library services and the incorporation of regular learning activity in the library into the curriculum can help to rejuvenate interest in reading among students and encourage responsible use of smartphones.

Overall, the results show that a balance in the use of technology is needed. Smartphones, if used effectively and responsibly, provide educational benefits but can have a negative impact on academic engagement, reading habits, library use and physical and mental health if used too much and without control. Schools should adopt policies for responsible use of smartphones, enhance digital literacy curricula, enhance library facilities and conduct regular reading promotion events. It is also important for parents and teachers to keep collaborating and keep an eye on students' use of smartphones to promote healthier learning habits.

There are some limitations in this study. It was carried out only in the educational institutions of Ashulia Union, Savar, by purposive sampling. Considering these findings, future studies should aim to use larger and representative samples of students, as well as standardized scales for measuring smartphone addiction, and longitudinal or mixed method approaches to better understand the long-term relationship between smartphone addiction, academic performance, reading habits, and library use.

Finally, the results suggest that smartphone addiction is becoming an important educational and public health issue for the Bangladeshi youth. Solving this problem necessitates a joint push by educational institutions, families, policy makers and library professionals to encourage responsible smartphone usage and rehabilitate the culture of libraries and sustainable reading behaviors among young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon completion of data collection and analysis, the authors have forwarded the following set of recommendations:

- The government should create policies and regulations regarding the use of smartphones for young learners;
- There should be a well-organized library in all educational institutions from secondary Schools to Universities;
- The library should have enough books, not only textbooks but also a variety of creative and informative books;
- It must offer a good environment and proper facilities for reading and studying;
- Institutes can make rules to encourage or make it mandatory for students to use the library;
- The library should also provide facilities to read daily newspapers and magazines;
- Educational Institutions can arrange weekly library sessions;
- Arrangements should be made in schools, colleges and universities for proper counseling by the psychologists/health professionals and

- Library literacy programs, like workshops and seminars can be arranged to explain the benefits of library use.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that excessive dependence on a smartphone is now a serious problem for intellectual, academic and social exploration among youths of Bangladesh. Despite their easy access to information and educational materials, unrestricted use has resulted in fewer books being read, reduced library usage, and many physical and psychological disorders such as anxiety and sleep disruption, attention deficits and less academic motivation. Signs also reveal that teachers and parents share similar concerns about growing reliance on smart phones with students, and reduced use of conventional learning materials such as print.

The problem also cannot just be blamed solely on smartphone use, the study says. Poor library facilities, limited access to interesting learning materials, and a lack of stable institutional policies against reading perpetuate the poor sustainability of students for a better reading habit as well. Hence, a holistic approach is needed in dealing with smartphone addiction rather than solely guidelines regarding the use of devices.

Schools need guidelines in place for responsible use of phones and need to create modern, well-resourced and student-friendly libraries. Incorporation of compulsory library sessions, promotion programs in reading, digital literacy education and awareness campaigns, involving teachers, parents and the members of community organizations, can help to re-ignite interest in reading and self-learning. Policymakers need to not only bolster support for new libraries but also establish a balance between the use of technology in schools.

The study is limited because of its cross-sectional design and because of the limited geographic area that was sampled in Ashulia, however, it provides valuable findings. In future, a cause-and-effect study between academic achievement and library use or between smartphone addiction and academic achievement can be done using the above-mentioned research design (longitudinal research or national research) and advanced statistical techniques. It will provide more solid evidence to develop effective learning and digital well-being policy in Bangladesh.

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