

EFFECT OF SMARTPHONE USE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

In the recent past, the use of smartphones has become an integral part of everybody's life. Smartphones have affected almost every sphere of our lives, but their effects on college students are deep and multidimensional. The present generation has been mesmerised by this wonderful device. Now, smartphones have become an essential part of students' lives and play a vital role in the process of communication. Proper use of smartphones may bring many positive changes, but it may also bring problems to the lives of students. The college students must be sensible and careful to get maximum benefit from this wonderful device. If students use it properly, they can improve their academic careers and prepare for a better life in the future. This present paper deals with the effects of Smartphone use on the academic performance of college students in Imphal West District, Manipur. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced by the Government of India, marks a significant transformation in the country's educational framework, with a strong emphasis on flexibility, skill development, digital learning, and technology integration. In the digital era, smartphones have become an integral part of student life, offering access to online classes, study materials, educational apps, and peer communication. As NEP 2020 encourages the use of technology in education, the role of smartphones in academic settings has expanded rapidly. However, while smartphones provide many learning opportunities, their excessive or unregulated use may negatively impact students' focus, academic engagement, and mental health. This essay explores how NEP 2020's focus on digital learning has influenced smartphone usage among college students and examines its resulting effects on their academic performance.

Keywords: NEP (National Education Policy), Smartphone, Effects, Academic performance, College students.

Introduction

In the present era, science and technology have brought tremendous changes and development in every sphere of human life. Advancements in science and technology have brought drastic changes to the social and economic sectors. ICT is one of the most influential types of technology that has become a need of the hour for every activity of human life. In modern times, for a man, it has become unthinkable to begin his work. ICT is an extended term for information technology, which is a technological source that makes information available at the right time, in the right place, and in the right form to the right user. Smartphones, as one of the forms of ICT, have become an important device that has made human beings' lives easier. The use of smartphones has become one of the most dominant influences on society. The usage of smartphones has been increasing in recent years in India. Nowadays, with the increase in the capabilities and skills of smartphones, their consumption has become too high. People always want to be connected to the internet at any time and from anywhere. Smartphones are becoming pocket computers that replace laptop computers. Using a smartphone can create opportunities for students to increase their social skills. It may become a dangerous weapon for students to direct their communication skills and social life.

NEP 2020 promotes the use of digital tools and online platforms to enhance the quality and accessibility of education. Key reforms include the establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the development of high-quality e-content, and the encouragement of blended learning methods. The policy envisions a tech-integrated education system where students can access study materials through mobile devices, including smartphones. For college students, this

means learning is no longer confined to the classroom; with a smartphone and internet connection, students can attend lectures, download materials, take quizzes, and collaborate with peers from anywhere. As a result, smartphones have increasingly become vital educational tools aligned with the NEP's digital vision.

Smartphone use under NEP 2020 has brought several positive changes to college education. First, it has increased access to educational resources, particularly for students in remote areas or those who cannot afford computers. Educational apps, online lectures, digital libraries, and exam preparation tools are now accessible at students' fingertips. Additionally, smartphones support self-paced learning, allowing students to revisit recorded lectures, review concepts, and engage in independent study at their convenience. This flexibility aligns well with NEP 2020's focus on personalised and experiential learning. Furthermore, smartphones enable collaboration through online discussion groups, virtual classrooms, and interactive platforms, promoting peer learning and engagement.

Smartphone users like students today habitually engage in browsing the web, checking e-mail, poking social networking sites, sending text messages, etc. However, the excessive usage of smartphones causes adverse effects on users who gradually become addicted to them. It has been observed that addiction to smartphones is more severe than addiction to mobile phones, computers, and even the internet. Smartphones are used by young students who study in college and university. Students seem to be vulnerable to technology overuse because of their developmental dynamics, freedom, and lack of responsibility to society and family. (KANDELL, 1998)

Despite the benefits, smartphone use also poses challenges to academic performance, especially when not used mindfully. One of the major concerns is digital distraction. With constant access to social media, games, and entertainment apps, students may find it difficult to concentrate on academic tasks. This distraction often leads to reduced study time, poor time management, and lower retention of learning materials. Several studies have shown that excessive smartphone use is linked to poor academic outcomes, increased anxiety, and reduced sleep quality, all of which negatively impact performance. NEP 2020's push for digital learning can unintentionally increase screen time and smartphone dependence if not balanced with digital discipline.

NEP 2020 has indirectly influenced how students use smartphones by promoting online learning and virtual assessments. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift to online and hybrid education accelerated, and smartphones became the primary learning devices for many college students. This shift has made smartphone use almost essential, even for routine academic activities. However, the policy does not yet provide clear guidelines or frameworks for responsible smartphone use, leaving students to manage their own digital habits. The result is a mixed impact: while some students use smartphones effectively for academic enhancement, others struggle with overuse and its negative effects.

However, the use of smartphones has enabled people to communicate more easily and quickly. An individual can chat with friends and family overseas through WhatsApp without having to incur global SMS charges. Even in rural areas of colleges in Imphal West District of Manipur, most of the students are seen having smartphones and using them for both academic and other purposes. Every day, students are spending countless hours immersed in social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Messenger, at home as well as on college campuses. Many parents and teachers are worried that their college students are spending too much time on Facebook and other social media sites and not enough time studying. So it is high time to find out the effects of Smartphone use on the academic performance of college students.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the effects of Smartphone use on the academic performance of students in Imphal West District.
2. To find out the positive and negative effects of Smartphone use on the academic performance of college students.
3. To examine the impact of smartphones on the study habits of students.

Methodology

For the present study, the Descriptive Survey method was adopted. A descriptive survey method was used to analyse and interpret data.

The descriptive survey method is a non-experimental, quantitative research design used to systematically collect data from a sample of a target population to describe the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or behaviours of that population as they exist at a single point in time. It typically involves using structured instruments, most commonly questionnaires or formal interviews, to gather standardised, quantifiable data, which is then statistically analysed (using frequencies, percentages, and means) to provide a factual and accurate snapshot of the current status of the phenomenon being studied, without attempting to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Sample of the study

For the present study, a simple random technique was applied. The investigator selected 4 (Four) Colleges of Imphal West District and 200 students, out of which 50 students from each college were taken for the study sample.

Table I: The table shows the sample of the study-

SL. No.	Name of the college	Sample of the Students
1	DM COLLEGE OF SCIENCE	50
2	DM COLLEGE OF ARTS	50
3	IMPHAL COLLEGE	50
4	MANIPUR COLLEGE	50

Tools of the study

In this study, the investigator used questionnaires that he had prepared. The investigator developed 14 items of questionnaires, out of which seven were for positive and 7 for negative, to collect data about the effects of mobile internet use on the academic performance of college students.

Delimitation of the study

1. The study was delimited only to college students of Imphal West District.
2. It is restricted to only four colleges of Imphal West District.
3. It is restricted to a sample of 200 (out of these, 50 students from each college).

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The present study was conducted to determine the effects of mobile internet use on the academic performance of college students. For the convenience of the study, these items were divided into positive and negative to analyse the effect of mobile internet use on academic performance. The data were tabulated and interpreted in terms of percentages.

Table-II

N=200

Sl. No.	Positive Items	Response			
		Yes	%	No	%
1	Do you contact the teacher for study purposes with your smartphone?	180	90%	20	10%
2	Can you contact classmates to get help in your studies through this device?	175	87%	25	13%
3	Do you think that your academic performance has improved by using a smartphone?	185	92%	15	8%
4	Do you think the use of mobile internet helps to keep updated with the latest knowledge and information?	190	95%	10	5%
5	Do social media and smartphones help you share materials with your friends?	180	90%	20	10%

6	Do you use a dictionary, a calculator, etc., in your study time from a smartphone device?	175	87%	25	13%
7	Do you feel secure using smartphones and social media, as it helps you to contact your parents whenever necessary?	195	97%	5	3%

While studying the positive effect of smartphone use on academic performance from the above table number 1, it is found that 180 (90%) reported that they can keep in contact with the teacher for study purposes with their smartphone. 175 (87%) students agreed that they would use this device to contact classmates to get help in their studies. It is found that 185 (92%) students agreed with the improvement in academic performance by using a smartphone. 190 (95%) college students responded that the use of the internet on smartphones helps them to stay updated with the latest knowledge and information. It is found that regarding the sharing of learning materials among themselves, 180 (90%) use smartphones. 175 (87%) college students agreed that they use a dictionary, a calculator, etc., in their study time on a smartphone device. 195 (97%) responded that they felt secure and contacted their parents whenever necessary.

Table-III
N=200

Sl. No.	Negative Items	Response			
		Yes	%	No	%
1	The students waste their time sending useless or unnecessary messages, miscalls, etc., to their friends.	170	85%	30	15%
2	Smartphones have increased the rate of lying among students.	190	95%	10	5%
3	The students use smartphones in the examination hall as a source of unfair means.	80	30%	120	70%
4	Social media and smartphones have a negative impact on students' moral and ethical values.	170	85%	30	15%
5	Students misuse their time by watching and enjoying illegal movies and music during college hours.	180	90%	20	10%
6	The boy students tease the girl students by sending SMS, picture messages and unnecessary calls.	160	80%	40	20%
7	Students spend a huge amount of money purchasing costly smartphones without taking permission from their parents.	165	82%	35	18%

While studying the negative effects of smartphone use on the academic performance of college students, 170 (85%) students reported that they waste their time sending useless or unnecessary messages, miscalls, etc., to their friends. 190 (95%) students agreed that after having a smartphone, the rate of telling lies among the students has increased. It is seen that 80 (30%) students use smartphones in the examination hall as a source of unfair means. 170 (85%) agreed that smartphones have a negative impact on students' academic, moral and ethical values. It is found that 180 (90%) students misuse their time by watching and enjoying illegal movies and music during college hours. 160 (80%) students responded that they use smartphones to tease female students by sending SMS messages, picture messages, and unnecessary calls. 165 (82%) responded that students spend a huge amount of money purchasing costly smartphones without getting permission from their parents.

Table-IV
N=200

Sl. No.	Items	Response			
		Yes	%	No	%
1	Students keep their mobile phones far away while reading	52	26%	148	74%
2	Mobile phones will delay them from achieving their aim of learning	136	68%	64	32%
3	Students' learning will be impossible without a mobile phone	112	56%	88	44%
4	Students feel anxious when they are studying if they have not received messages in time	144	72%	56	38%
5	Students frequently break their daily study routine due to the use of a mobile phone	130	65%	70	35%
6	The ringing of their mobile phones during study time disturbs them	92	46%	108	54%
7	Mobile phone reduce their intention to go to the library	160	80 %	40	20%

From the above table, the first point shows that only 52, i.e. 26% of the students agreed with the statement, but 148, i.e. 74% of the students disagreed that students do not keep their mobile phone far away while reading. In the second point, it shows that 136, i.e. 68% of the students, agreed that using their mobile phones will delay them from achieving their aim of learning. In the third point, it shows that 112, i.e. 56% of the students, responded positively that their learning would be impossible without a mobile phone. Meanwhile, 88, i.e. 44% of the students, responded negatively. In the fourth point, it shows that 144, i.e. 72% of the students agreed that they feel anxious when they are studying if they have not received messages in time, but 56, i.e. 38% of the students disagreed with the statement. In the fifth point, it shows that 130, i.e. 65% of the students, agreed that they frequently break their daily study routine due to the use of a mobile phone. While 70, i.e. 35% of the students disagreed. In the sixth point, it shows that only 92, i.e. 46% of the students agreed with the statement, but 108, i.e. 54% of the students disagreed that the ringing of their mobile phone during study time does not disturb them. In the seventh point, it shows that 160, i.e. 80% of the students agreed that their mobile phone reduces the intention to go to the library, but only 40, i.e. 20% of the students disagreed with the statement. Thus, it can be concluded that most students think that their mobile phone reduces their intention to go to the library.

Results and Discussion

From the above analysis and interpretation, it is found that the use of smartphones is helpful to the students for their study purposes. Students' academic performances have increased due to these technologies, as they can share useful information with their classmates and teachers. They also benefit from using the dictionary and calculator available on their mobile devices. Social media and cell phones have helped to improve the level of quality education because these devices help them to keep abreast with the latest knowledge and information. Students feel secure because they can contact their parents easily whenever necessary. On the other hand, it has also been found that academic performance and the moral values of students are badly affected by smartphone use, as most of the students remain busy writing, sending, and watching useless messages. They tease others by sending meaningless and useless SMS, etc. Most students spoil their academic career by listening to and watching immoral and illegal videos, pictures and music. In this way, many students waste their valuable time and money gossiping about meaningless matters.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

The implementation of NEP 2020 has encouraged the integration of technology into higher education, significantly increasing the reliance on smartphones as learning tools. This shift has educational implications in terms of access, flexibility, and personalised learning. Smartphones allow students to access digital libraries, attend online classes, participate in virtual discussions, and utilise learning apps anytime and anywhere. These functions support NEP 2020's emphasis on blended learning, multiple modes of engagement, and self-directed learning, enabling students to take control of their educational journey. For students in remote or underserved areas, smartphones can bridge the gap in access to quality education—provided they have proper connectivity and digital literacy. As a result, smartphones have the potential to democratize learning, making higher education more inclusive and learner-centric.

However, the increased use of smartphones also presents several challenges that must be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of NEP 2020's goals. The educational environment must now focus on developing students' digital discipline, as constant exposure to non-academic content on smartphones can lead to distractions, reduced focus, and poor academic performance. Moreover, the digital divide remains a concern, as not all students have equal access to high-quality smartphones or internet connectivity, potentially widening educational inequalities. Institutions must take proactive steps such as integrating digital assistance into the curriculum, training teachers to use mobile technology effectively, and setting clear guidelines for smartphone usage in academic settings. Without these supports, the educational benefits promoted by NEP 2020 may not be fully realised, and smartphones could become more of a barrier than a bridge to academic success.

Suggestion

1. Students should be made aware that the excessive use of smartphones is harmful to their bodies and minds.
2. College students should be motivated to use smartphones for their academic purposes.
3. Students should be made aware of the consequences of using for illegal affairs.
4. College teachers, as well as parents, should observe the activities of the students.
5. Teachers and parents should imbibe moral and ethical values in the minds of the students so that they can understand right and wrong.
6. College authorities should not allow students to use mobile phones during class hours.
7. The college authority should organise an awareness programme on the positive and negative effects of smartphone use on academic life.

Conclusion

We can conclude by saying that smartphones have affected almost every sphere of our lives, but their effects on college students are deep and multidimensional. No one can deny that our present generation has been mesmerised fully by this wonderful device. Now, smartphones have become an essential part of everybody's life and are playing a vital role in decreasing distance and increasing communication with each other.

NEP 2020 has significantly reshaped the educational landscape by embracing technology and promoting digital learning, thereby increasing the reliance on smartphones among college students. While smartphones offer convenience, flexibility, and enhanced access to academic resources, they also present risks such as distraction, overuse, and inequality in access. The overall effect of smartphone use on academic performance under NEP 2020 depends on how responsibly students, educators, and institutions integrate and manage this technology. By addressing the challenges and promoting mindful usage, smartphones can become powerful tools that support the policy's vision of holistic, inclusive, and learner-centred education.

Mobile phones and social media have made people closer day by day. On the other hand, it is also seen that so many college students misuse their mobile phones and spoil their priceless lives. The college students must be sensible and careful to get maximum benefit from this wonderful device. If teachers and parents make students use it properly, they can improve their academic performance and prepare for a better future.

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