

“The silent epidemic: the rising addiction to smartphones”

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Abstract:

Our research team initiated this research following a keen observation of students failing to maintain concentration during lectures. The casual observations evolved into a methodical research of how smartphones evolved from useful gadgets to dependencies. We cataloged numerous individual accounts showing the same trends in interviews with college students, working adults, and families: individuals experiencing anxiety when away from their devices, constantly checking for notifications, and having difficulty concentrating for extended periods of time without being interrupted by digital devices. Most of the participants were annoyed with their dependence on cell phones, calling their behavior "impossible to resist." Our study showed that technology companies employ psychological cues to design digital experiences that capture individuals' attention. Neuroimaging tests confirmed the dopamine response participants experienced when they received alerts, which is why it is hard to change these habits.

Parents complained that 49.6% of their children were growing a smartphone habit, and 29.8% of students and working professionals reported they could not focus on their work or engage in proper interactions. Due to the excessive use of smartphones, the most common findings among participants, i.e., 49.6%, were health complaints like headaches, eye strain, and disrupted sleep.

Key words:

Smartphone addiction, Digital mindfulness, Social media addiction, Generation Z (Gen Z).

1.Introduction

Remember when phones were only for making calls? Those days seem like distant memories. Smartphones have evolved from simple communication tools to necessary companions that manage almost every part of our lives—waking us up, guiding our commutes, connecting us with loved ones, entertaining us, and even lulling us to sleep with podcasts. This revolution was so fast that most of us did not realize how our relationship with these devices had changed. The smartphone revolution began just over 15 years ago, and still, these devices have achieved incredible integration with our daily lives. As scholars who have been watching this transformation happen, we have witnessed how technology has re-wired social norms and individual behaviors in quiet generation after generation. Smartphone addiction has been most accurately described as a "silent epidemic" since it does not manifest with clear signs. Rather, it manifests in inconspicuous changes in behavior that society tolerates and even encourages: the working professional who works late into the night responding to emails, the social media guru who never misses a trend, and the teenager who has multiple chats over multiple platforms.

Look at these statistics: Over 6.8 billion individuals globally own smartphones, representing 86% of the world's population, as of 2024. The typical user spends over 3 hours and 15 minutes per day on their smartphone, with heavy users using 5-6 hours—or about one-quarter of their waking time gazing at these tiny screens.

Our research team initiated this study upon observing that our own students were having a difficult time remaining attentive during lectures. What was initially casual observations became formal studies of how smartphones evolved from hardware to habits. In interviews with college students, business professionals, and families, we captured many personal stories exhibiting the same patterns: people getting anxious when separated from their devices, constantly checking messages, and unable to think a sustained thought unbroken by technology.

This research examines the psychological reasons for smartphone addiction, monitors its occurrence among different groups, and measures its impact on mental health, intellectual ability, and social relationships.

Above all, we provide evidence-based means of building healthy relationships with these powerful tools—not to dismiss the value of technology, but to ensure they support and do not subvert human well-being.

2. Review of literature

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7. **In 2019, Twenge, J.M., Rogers, M.L., Martin, G.N., and Joiner, T.E.** Since 2010, the United States has seen an increase in youth suicide rates, suicide outcomes, and depressive symptoms, all of which are linked to digital media use.
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11. **Ester, E.R., and G.S. Arturo (2021).** Do smartphones and the internet actually lead to addiction in students? A reflection on theory. 2(1), 12–25; *Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. (Mexico)
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14. **A. B. Bacu (2020).** social and medical repercussions of digital addiction. *Romanian Academy Proceedings*, 21(3), 203-214. (Romania)

3.Statement of the problem

The increased use of cellphones has led to an unseen epidemic of digital addiction that reaches many individuals. As these cellphones become a necessary tool in communications, business, and entertainment, we create dangerous habits of using them without even noticing it. This increasing habit is damaging the way we think, feel, and relate to others, not only screen time.

When we check our phones hundreds of times every day, we are not just creating habits; we are also compromising our mental health. Others describe themselves as feeling more anxious, struggling to concentrate, sleeping ill and attempting to maintain meaningful face-to-face relationships. The endless pulling of notifications, alongside infinite scrolling, forms a hard to shatter cycle.

While society has started to acknowledge the issue, we have yet to realize the entire extent of what drives this addictive clinging with our devices, or the long-term consequences. Current solutions, whether individual efforts to abstain or larger regulatory efforts, have not sufficiently solved the complete character of our digital addictions.

This study aims to determine how smartphone addiction affects us, what factors contribute to it, and what strategies can help us develop healthier connections with technology. Discovering the answers is not only relevant for personal health, but also for maintaining healthy social relationships within a more digital world.

4.Objectives of the study:

- a. To analyze how many individuals are affected by smartphone addiction in all jobs, both men and women, and across different age groups.
- b. **To examine** the emotional, social, and technological causes of smartphone addiction, including the ways in which app and social media design might be fueling the issue.
- c. **To understand** how phone overuse impacts mental health, relationships, face-to-face interactions, and physical well-being.
- d. **To get Rid of It** We will examine existing control strategies for the phone and offer new ways that people can have a healthy relationship with their phone.
- e. **To change** we will finally look at ethical considerations in app and smartphone design, upcoming app protection policies, and smartphone usage estimates.

5.Scope of the study

The research provides an overall description of smartphone addiction, from its psychological impact, social relationships, health, and technology. Cellphones are part of everyday life, but excessive usage is worrying, unhappy, stressful, and low in self-esteem, with some experiencing "nomophobia"—dread of phone loss. Addiction also influences social behavior, decreasing face-to-face contact, friendships, and work and school performance. Physically, it leads to eye strain, bad posture, sleep disturbance, and even long-term mental effects like reduced attention span. Different people get addicted to telephones in different ways—teens wrestle with pressures of social media, whereas professionals tend to have an uncompromising urge to be on the phone at all times. One of the considerations is how digital businesses design apps to involve people at the expense of profit to well-being. In order to address this increasing issue, we will consider solutions like digital detox camps, screen time-limiting applications, and law changes, and also the part played by families, schools, and companies in promoting better digital practices. Finally, individuals, mental health professionals, educators, policy makers, and technology creators must all come together to end the cycle of smartphone addiction.

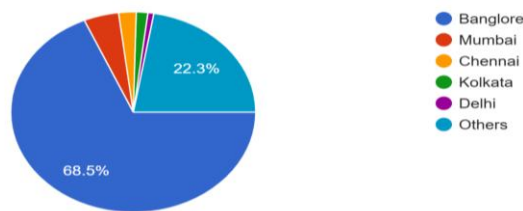
6.Methodology

Our approach combines data with real-life observations to depict a holistic picture of smartphone addiction. Surveys are used to identify general patterns, such as how many times people check their phones, affective reactions, and physical implications of abuse. But numbers never tell the whole story, and we conducted intensive interviews with mental health professionals, educators, and tech designers in order to know more about the psychological and social aspects of habitual phone use. Our primary focus is individuals aged 20 to 24 years, with one of the highest usage rates of smartphones, but we also look at how addiction behavior changes with age across different groups. To test actual behavior, we track social media, sleep, and phone usage to connect screen time with body and brain outcomes. We break down our data in searching for repeating patterns, defining correlations between telephone habits and welfare, and examining between generations. This helps not only make what people are doing on their phone more understandable, but also the reason they cannot seem to abstain. By layering facts and personal stories, we can create a fuller portrait of smartphone addiction—one that is more than mere screen time metrics and examines more deeply the larger effects in everyday life. Our goal is to take these findings and turn them into solutions that could have a real-world impact on the lives of teachers and individuals.

7. Analysis & Interpretation

Chart - 1

Shows the location of the respondents

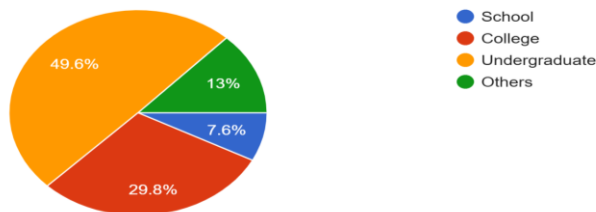


Analysis Interpretation:

The pie chart shows Bangalore with the largest proportion (68.5%), followed by "Others" at 22.3%. Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Delhi have small involvement. This shows a very skewed distribution, with Bangalore being the dominant one. The large "Others" category shows many small contributors. The figures indicate a significant centralisation in Bangalore, with minimal contribution from surrounding cities.

Chart - 2

Shows the Education



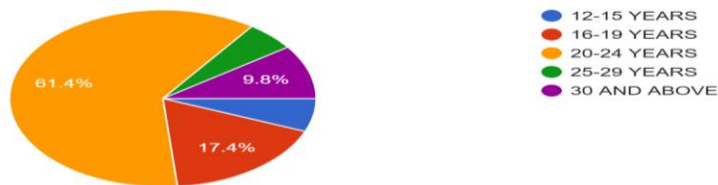
Analysis & Interpretation:

The majority of respondents (49.6%) are undergraduates, indicating a strong presence of higher education students, while 29.8% are in college, suggesting many are pursuing advanced studies. Only 7.6% are school students, implying limited participation from younger individuals, whereas the "Others" category (13%) represents diverse

educational backgrounds. This distribution highlights a focus on higher education rather than primary or secondary schooling. The high number of undergraduates and college students suggests a trend toward continued education, while the lower school percentage indicates limited outreach to younger individuals. These insights can help tailor educational programs or policies to better fit the surveyed group.

Chart -3

Shows Age Bracket



Analysis & Interpretation:

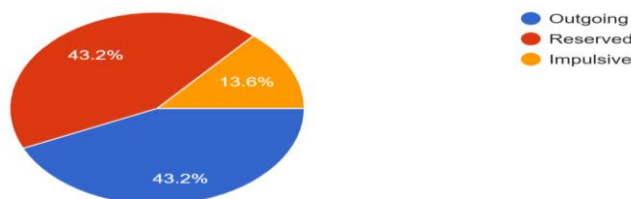
Most interviewers (49.6%) are students who form a majority of students in higher education, followed by 29.8% students at the college, and show that most people are looking for students.

Only 7.6% are students who show that teenagers have been weakened; However, "others" (13%) include individuals with a diverse academic background.

This group is more important for higher education than primary schools and secondary schools. The high relationship between students and university students is a sign of a permanent tendency for education, while the low relationship between schools means that there was no young search. Such data can be used to create educational programs or guidelines that complete the selection population.

Chart - 4

Shows the Personality



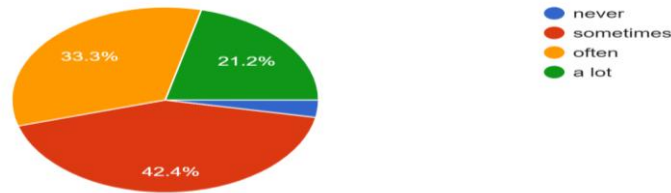
Analysis & Interpretation:

The split in personality is almost exactly even between extrovert (43.2%) and introvert (43.2%) types, and this shows respondents are approximately equally split between extrovert and introvert personalities. Fewer (13.6%) of them identify themselves as impulsive, suggesting that fewer individuals label themselves as spontaneous decision-makers. The roughly even split of extroverted and introverted types suggests that respondents possess a range of

social tastes. The lower proportion of individuals who are impulsive could suggest preferring careful or thoughtful decision-making. This difference means that the group consists of individuals who enjoy social interactions or those who are shy and experience fewer urges.

Chart -5

Shows how often smartphones are checked.

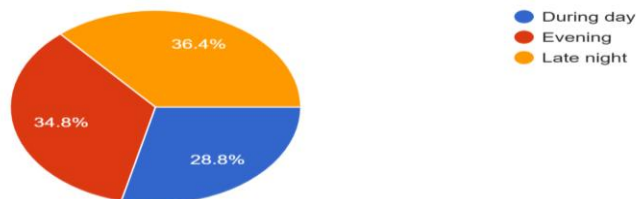


Analysis & Interpretation:

As a proof of a common pattern of frequent cell use, most people sometimes examine the phone (42.4%) or regularly (33.3%). Of the courses asked, only 21.2% reported that he examined his phone "very", which would represent a high level of addiction. A very small percentage of the subjects chose "never", which means that all people actually encourage to check their phone themselves in the absence of any notice. This trend suggests that either through the habit or an updated need to be, having a smartphone is an essential aspect of everyday life. The study also reflects the growing trend of individuals to use your phone in the absence of external stimuli.

Chart - 6

Shows when likely to use smartphones.



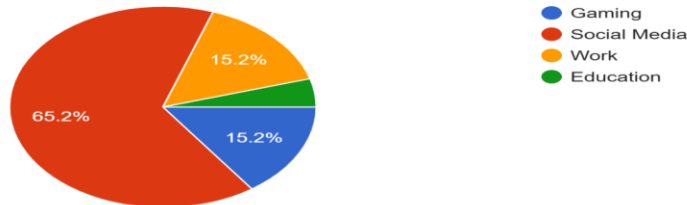
Analysis & Interpretation:

The highest percentage (36.4%) of the respondents most often uses the smartphone late at night, followed by careful use of evening use for 34.8%. Only 28.8% prefer to use the phone during the day, suggesting that the phone's engagement increases with today's progression. This trend indicates that many use their smartphones for vacation, entertainment or social interactions at night. High use of late evening can be associated with surfing, streaming or

before - -lining habits. Overall, data suggests that the smartphone is used by tops in personal or relaxation hours instead of work or school.

Chart - 7

Shows primary activities of smartphones.

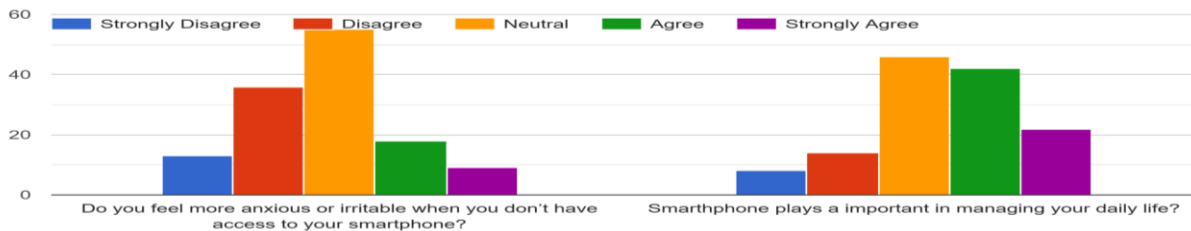


Analysis & Interpretation:

An important majority (65.2%) uses its smartphone mainly for social media, highlighting its dominance in digital involvement. Spilling and division of labor (15.2%), and shows that these activities are moderately popular, but not the primary focus. The lowest proportion of education is that the smartphone is usually used for educational purposes among respondents. High addiction to social media suggests strong digital connection, entertainment preferences and regular roll behavior. Overall, data reflects a trend where smartphones are mainly used for holiday and social interactions instead of productivity or learning.

Chart -8

Shows anxious or irritable without their smartphones.

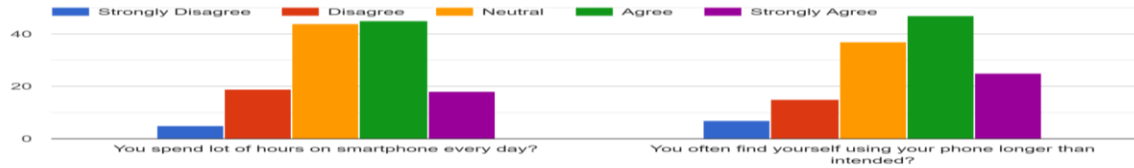


Analysis & Interpretation:

A fairly series of respondents disagree or remain almost neutral to feel stressful or irritable with your smartphone, indicating that many no longer have strong addiction. However, a small component agrees or strongly agrees, suggesting that some people experience pain during disconnection. On the other hand, maximum respondents agree or strongly agree that smartphones play an important position in dealing with each day's life, which shows their dependence on things for business companies and communities. Smaller individuals strongly disagree with this claim, emphasizes the alleged requirement for the smartphone during the day. Overall, while mobile phone dependency for emotionally well striking is mixed, their significance is remembered in management every day.

Chart - 9

Shows Smartphone Usage Patterns and Screen Time Awareness

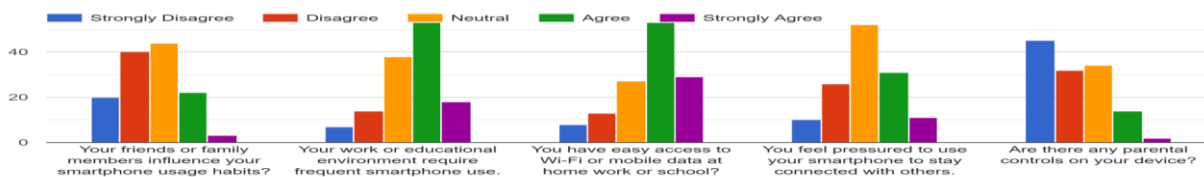


Analysis & Interpretation:

A giant part of respondents remain impartial or agree that they spend numerous hours on their smartphones daily, indicating combined perceptions about immoderate usage. While some members disagree, a great percentage strongly agree, suggesting that cellphone usage varies among individuals. When requested approximately the usage of their phones longer than supposed, most respondents both agree or strongly agree, showing an inclination closer to unintended overuse. The impartial responses in each cases highlight that many people might not consciously tune their smartphone usage. Overall, at the same time as some manipulate their smartphone behavior, a huge range warfare with limiting display screen time.

Chart -10

Shows Environmental and Social Factors Influencing Smartphone Use

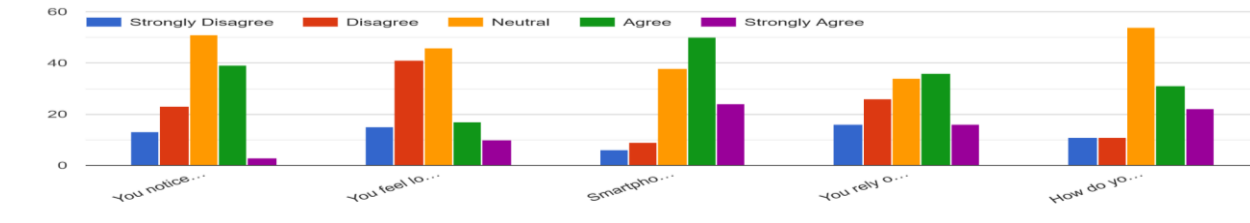


Analysis & Interpretation:

Data suggests that circle of relatives and friends have affected the conduct of smartphones, with many respondents who either agree or stay neutral. A massive percent agree that their work or educational environment requires common use of smartphones, making it an essential tool for each day activities. Most respondents have smooth get admission to to Wi-Fi or cellular information, indicating that the connection does no longer prevent the usage of smartphones. The feeling of stress to use smartphones for social compounds is likewise widespread, suggesting that virtual commitment is an crucial a part of contemporary social existence. Finally, reactions to outside surveys on using smartphones blend combined critiques, spotlight different tiers of regulation and self-manipulate.

Chart - 11

Shows Psychological Impact of Smartphone Usage

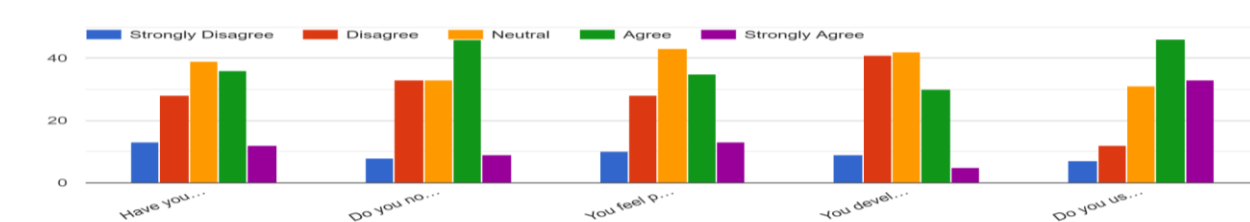


Analysis & Interpretation:

The information shows that a significant portion of respondents enjoy substantive psychological results associated with the usage of smartphones, with many snug or vital factors. The feelings of loneliness and addiction are extensive of smartphones, as a massive range of people either agree or consider these statements. A huge percent admits that smartphones play an vital position in their every day tasks and toughen the dependence on digital gadgets. While a few respondents disagree with the concept of excessive addiction, the overall fashion shows that the telephone has a strong psychological impact. This insight emphasizes the developing effect of smartphones on emotional welfare and each day lifestyles control.

Chart - 12

Shows Physical Health Impact of Smartphone Usage



Analysis & Interpretation:

Statistics suggest that the use of the phone has a significant effect on physical health, many respondents accepted the problems of attitude problems and eye pressure. A large part of the customers is of the same opinion or strongly the same belief that they experience physical pain due to the use of mobile phones for a long time. Many respondents are fair to certain health effects, showing that they will no longer be completely private for mobile phone -related training problems. However, fashion suggests that large amounts of people have negative physical consequences, which involves developing pain or anguish. It is concerned with limiting physical pressure due to excessive cognitive and excessive use of mobile phones.

Chart - 13

Shows Societal and Economic Impact of Smartphone Usage

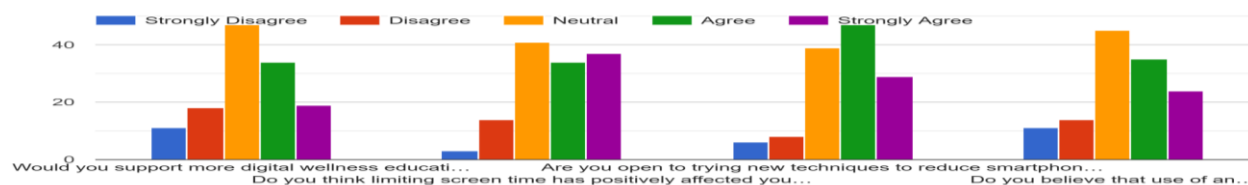


Analysis & Interpretation:

The facts well-known shows that phone addiction has exceptional societal and monetary outcomes, specially in relationships and spending conduct. A massive wide variety of respondents renowned that smartphone overuse affects their social interactions, with a huge element ultimate impartial, in all likelihood indicating uncertainty about its effect. Many individuals report spending extra money on apps and in-app purchases than initially anticipated, highlighting the economic have an effect on of smartphone utilization. Additionally, a huge percent of respondents accept as true with that smartphone agencies have to take extra responsibility in addressing dependancy-associated worries. This indicates a developing recognition of smartphone dependency and its wider implications on society and private budget.

Chart - 14

Shows Interventions and Solutions for Smartphone Overuse



Analysis & Interpretation:

The information suggest that maximum humans are aware about the need for intervention to shrink cellphone addiction. A greater percent of the respondents concur or fairly concur with encouraging digital well-being education, even though a large percentage is neutral, offering conflicting views on its usefulness. Most people are open to checking out opportunity procedures to restrict phone addiction, demonstrating willingness to deal with the problem immediately. Additionally, a majority of the members have also believed that decrease in screen time has improved their well-being. The responses advise that reputable interventions, such as consciousness campaigns and packages, can be contributing closer to stopping overuse of smartphones.

8. Results & Findings

In response to our questionnaire, we are now extremely used to our smartphone, and it is particularly prominent among the younger generation in the age group between 20-24. Most of those surveyed identified that most of their screen time is taken by social media, and that they are constantly looking at their phones throughout the day despite not receiving information. Many people are also unaware that they are doing this because it is now another species.

The habit of surfing the late night is especially related. Our own opportunity for our own disability in gold is worsened because many of us use their phone just before bedtime or even awake to see if they have anything. ,,

It is also a truly emotional factor. Many respondents said that when they differ from their phones, they feel really anxiety or irritability, where these units have entered our emotional life. We simply do not choose the opportunity to use our phone; Many of us feel bound to be connected forever by friends, colleagues or educational responsibility.

Physical stress also begins to appear. Responsibility often referred to asana problems, neck stress, and exhaustion of the eyes from the rocking days on the screen. In addition, many were surprised by the economic factor - they download small apps and add membership quickly, and at many end they originally paid more than planned.

Although smartphones are now inevitable inevitable to navigate the complexities of contemporary life, there are important negative aspects to rely to this degree. It is convinced that many consumers want to use digital welfare products and strategies that allow them to create appropriate boundaries between the equipment and themselves.

These findings clearly indicate that individuals should be more aware of their online behaviors and receive helpful treatments to assist them in having a healthier connection with technology.

9. Suggestion & Recommendations

1. Personal Strategies for Managing Smartphone Use:

Restrict the display screen and switch off unnecessary notifications to reduce distraction and enhance virtual well-being. Refrain from the use of monitors before sleep, throughout meals, and in companies as part of a virtual cleanse. Engage in off-line activities consisting of interests and exercise. To preserve exact eyesight, follow the 20-20-20 tenet, which shows taking a spoil of 20 seconds each 20 minutes and looking at anything 20 feet away.

2. Family & Social Interventions Families have an impact on on-line conduct via having no-smartphone zones at some stage in dinner and bedtime for high-quality time. Parents want to police

display time, prioritizing instructional content over senseless scrolling. Social help groups, each on line and offline, can provide assist for the ones trying to reduce lower back on cellphone usage.

3. **Educational & Workplace Initiatives**

Two of the treatments that would be able to help people take control of entrenched addiction are cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness. Further studies must be conducted on the topic to determine the long term implications of smartphone addiction and provide practical solutions.

4. **Policy & Technological Recommendations**

Governments and companies need to promote ethical innovation and regulate the development of applications that are addictive. Public awareness campaigns and inbuilt features such as bed reminders and usage tracking reports can help enhance the health of phone users.

5. **Psychological & Medical Interventions**

Two such treatments that could assist individuals in bringing severe addiction under their control are cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness. More research needs to be done on the subject to understand the long term effects of smartphone addiction and offer feasible solutions.

10. Conclusion

An important issue that affects conditions, mental welfare and general health is a smartphone addiction. Our dependence on these devices increases as a result of a mixture of chemistry, psychological signals and the way apps are designed to keep us busy. Social media, alerts and the need to respond quickly have provided a behavioral pattern for other addictions. In addition, excessive use of smartphones has been paired with high -level anxiety, disappointment and poor focus functions. It affects our sleep as well as our face to face interaction. In order to meet this challenge, we should encourage an increase in awareness of self -control, good technology booths and digital addiction. Software developers must have a social responsibility for creating applications that prefer users' needs - on their interests. Schools and companies must educate digital welfare skills, and public policy should further encourage app designers to what they do. Although smartphones are simple tools in the modern world,

maintain mental and emotional health. We must continue to study the effect of technology as it develops so that we can allow responsible use and prevent ourselves from controlling it.

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