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Research Paper

Smartphone Addiction, Happiness and Life Satisfaction among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Smartphones have become a natural part of adolescents' everyday lives, but excessive or problematic use can negatively affect their subjective well-being. The present study examined the relationships between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction among school-going adolescents. A cross-sectional correlational design was employed with a sample of 394 adolescents aged 11–18 years drawn from schools in Saran and Siwan districts of Bihar, India. Participants completed the Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS), the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Pearson's product-moment correlations showed that smartphone addiction was significantly and negatively associated with happiness ($r = -.605$, $p < .001$) and life satisfaction ($r = -.504$, $p < .001$). Happiness and life satisfaction were positively correlated ($r = .355$, $p < .001$). Simple linear regression analyses further indicated that smartphone addiction significantly predicted happiness, accounting for 36.6% of the variance ($R^2 = .366$, $p < .001$), and life satisfaction, accounting for 25.4% of the variance ($R^2 = .254$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that higher levels of smartphone addiction are linked to reduced subjective well-being among adolescents. These results highlight the need for awareness programmes and interventions promoting balanced smartphone use to support adolescent mental health in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Smartphone Addiction, Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Adolescents, Subjective Well-Being*

Smartphones have become deeply embedded in adolescents' everyday lives, supporting communication, education, entertainment, social interaction, and access to information. For many young people, smartphone use is a routine part of school and social life. However, increasing access does not necessarily imply problematic use. Concern arises when smartphone engagement becomes excessive, difficult to control, or disruptive to sleep, study, relationships, and other everyday activities. Recent reviews indicate that the psychological consequences of smartphone use depend considerably on the intensity, purpose, and pattern of use rather than simply on the presence of a smartphone (Girela-Serrano et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2023).

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Adolescence is particularly important in this context because it is a period of rapid emotional, social, and cognitive development. Peer relationships become increasingly important, while adolescents are also developing autonomy and self-regulation. Smartphones can support these developmental needs by providing immediate access to friends, social networks, information, and entertainment. At the same time, excessive engagement may compete with activities that are important for healthy development. A systematic review of adolescent smartphone research found that problematic smartphone use has been associated with psychological, emotional, social, sleep-related, and academic difficulties, although the strength of these relationships varies across studies and contexts (Karabey et al., 2024).

Smartphone addiction is therefore better understood as a pattern of problematic engagement rather than simply a measure of screen time. The Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS) used in the present study captures several dimensions of this pattern, including daily life disturbance, positive anticipation, withdrawal, cyberspace-oriented relationship, overuse, and tolerance. This multidimensional approach is useful because adolescents with similar amounts of daily smartphone use may experience very different consequences depending on their level of control, emotional dependence, and interference with everyday activities.

Growing evidence has raised particular concern about the relationship between problematic smartphone use and psychological well-being. Well-being includes both emotional experiences and broader evaluations of one's life. In the present study, these aspects are represented by happiness and life satisfaction. Happiness reflects a person's general experience of positive psychological functioning, whereas life satisfaction represents a more cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole. These two indicators are related but provide different perspectives on adolescent well-being.

Recent evidence suggests that problematic smartphone use is associated with poorer psychological functioning among young people. A systematic review by Girela-Serrano et al. (2024) found suggestive evidence that greater mobile-phone and wireless-device use may be associated with poorer mental health among children and adolescents, although substantial differences in study designs and measures prevented simple conclusions. Similarly, Santos et al. (2023), in a systematic review of adolescent screen use, reported that many studies found associations between greater screen exposure and poorer mental health and well-being, with smartphone use being the most commonly examined form of screen exposure.

More specifically, recent research has linked smartphone addiction with broader aspects of adolescent well-being. Rajpurohit and Yadav (2024), in a systematic review of studies involving students, reported that higher smartphone addiction was generally associated with poorer quality of life, particularly in psychological and social domains. Importantly, some studies also suggested a possible reciprocal relationship, whereby poorer quality of life may contribute to greater smartphone addiction. This observation reinforces the need to interpret associations between smartphone use and well-being cautiously rather than assuming a simple one-way effect.

The relationship is also evident in the Indian context. Yogesh et al. (2024), in a study of 560 school-going adolescents aged 15–19 years in Gujarat, found a high prevalence of smartphone addiction and significant associations with mental health difficulties. The study also identified differences according to factors such as residence, socioeconomic status,

parental education, and duration of smartphone use, highlighting the importance of family and social context when examining problematic smartphone behaviour among Indian adolescents.

The association between smartphone addiction and well-being may be explained partly by the displacement of activities that contribute to healthy psychological functioning. Excessive smartphone engagement can reduce time available for sleep, physical activity, academic work, family interaction, and face-to-face relationships. It may also encourage repeated checking, online social comparison, and dependence on digital feedback. Over time, these patterns may affect how adolescents experience their daily lives and evaluate their overall circumstances. The recent literature therefore increasingly emphasizes the importance of examining problematic patterns of use rather than treating all smartphone use as equally harmful (Girela-Serrano et al., 2024; Karabey et al., 2024).

Happiness may be particularly sensitive to these patterns because it reflects everyday emotional experience. Adolescents who spend substantial amounts of time seeking stimulation, entertainment, or social validation through smartphones may have fewer opportunities for offline activities that provide sustained positive experiences. At the same time, smartphones can also support happiness by facilitating meaningful relationships and enjoyable activities. Consequently, the relationship between smartphone use and happiness is likely to depend on how the device is used and whether its use becomes disruptive.

Life satisfaction represents a broader evaluation of one's circumstances and may be affected when problematic smartphone use interferes with several areas of life simultaneously. Difficulties with study routines, sleep, family interaction, peer relationships, and personal activities may cumulatively influence adolescents' perceptions of how satisfactory their lives are. Previous systematic evidence has specifically reported negative associations between problematic smartphone use and life satisfaction and well-being among children and adolescents, while also noting differences across measurement approaches and populations.

Importantly, the direction of these relationships cannot be assumed. Adolescents experiencing low happiness or dissatisfaction with life may turn to smartphones for distraction, entertainment, social connection, or temporary emotional relief. Conversely, excessive smartphone use may interfere with activities that promote well-being. Recent reviews have therefore called for longitudinal and mechanistic research to clarify these possible reciprocal processes (Girela-Serrano et al., 2024; Rajpurohit & Yadav, 2024).

The Indian context makes this issue particularly relevant. Smartphones are increasingly used by school-going adolescents for online learning, messaging, social networking, gaming, entertainment, and information seeking. However, the experience of digital technology is not uniform. Family environment, parental supervision, socioeconomic circumstances, educational demands, residence, and patterns of use may all influence adolescents' relationship with smartphones. Evidence from Gujarat, for example, demonstrates that problematic smartphone use among Indian adolescents is associated with both demographic and family-related factors as well as poorer mental health (Yogesh et al., 2024).

Within this broader Indian context, adolescents in Saran and Siwan districts of Bihar provide an important population for investigation. Despite the increasing importance of smartphones in young people's educational and social lives, relatively little research has specifically examined the relationship between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction

among school-going adolescents in Bihar. Examining these variables together can provide a more focused understanding of how problematic smartphone use relates to both the emotional and cognitive dimensions of adolescent well-being.

Accordingly, the present study examines the relationship between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction among adolescents. It specifically investigates whether higher smartphone addiction is associated with lower happiness and life satisfaction and whether smartphone addiction significantly predicts these two indicators of subjective well-being. By focusing on adolescents from Saran and Siwan districts, the study seeks to add regionally relevant evidence to the growing Indian literature on problematic smartphone use and adolescent well-being.

Objectives

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between smartphone addiction and happiness among adolescents.
2. To examine the relationship between smartphone addiction and life satisfaction among adolescents.
3. To determine whether smartphone addiction significantly predicts happiness among adolescents.
4. To determine whether smartphone addiction significantly predicts life satisfaction among adolescents.

Hypothesis

1. Smartphone addiction would be significantly negatively associated with happiness among adolescents.
2. Smartphone addiction would be significantly negatively associated with life satisfaction among adolescents.
3. Smartphone addiction would significantly predict lower levels of happiness among adolescents.
4. Smartphone addiction would significantly predict lower levels of life satisfaction among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of 394 adolescents, comprising male and female students in the age range of 11–18 years. The participants were selected from schools located in Saran and Siwan districts of Bihar, India. The inclusion of adolescents across the 11–18-year age range was considered appropriate because this developmental period is characterized by important changes in emotional functioning, social relationships, self-evaluation, and patterns of technology use.

Research Design and Sampling

A cross-sectional correlational research design was employed for the present study. The design was considered appropriate because the primary purpose was to examine the direction and magnitude of relationships between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction. The study was primarily correlational and predictive in nature and did not involve manipulation of the independent variable. The sampling approach allowed the researcher to obtain participants who met the specified age and educational criteria and who were appropriate for the objectives of the investigation.

The study focused on smartphone addiction as the principal predictor variable, while happiness and life satisfaction were treated as the major indicators of subjective well-being. This arrangement enabled the study to examine both the association between problematic smartphone use and well-being and the extent to which smartphone addiction statistically predicted individual differences in happiness and life satisfaction.

Measures

- **Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS)**: Smartphone addiction was measured using the Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS) developed by Kwon et al. (2013). The scale contains 33 items rated on a six-point Likert scale and assesses problematic smartphone use across six dimensions: Daily Life Disturbance, Positive Anticipation, Withdrawal, Cyberspace-Oriented Relationship, Overuse, and Tolerance. Higher scores indicate greater smartphone-addiction tendencies. The original SAS demonstrated high internal consistency and evidence of concurrent validity, with Cronbach's alpha of .967 (Kwon et al., 2013).
- **Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)**: Happiness was measured using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) developed by Hills and Argyle (2002). It consists of 29 items rated on a six-point response scale and provides a brief measure of subjective happiness and psychological well-being. The total score was used in the present study, with higher scores indicating greater happiness. The OHQ has demonstrated good internal consistency, with reported reliability of approximately .91 (Hills & Argyle, 2002).
- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**: Life satisfaction was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985). It consists of five items measuring an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of life. The scale focuses on global life satisfaction rather than satisfaction with specific areas such as school, family, or finances. Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction. The SWLS has demonstrated strong reliability and validity and is widely used in research on subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1985).

Procedure

The participants were approached through the selected schools in Saran and Siwan districts of Bihar. Prior cooperation was obtained from the concerned school authorities before data collection. The purpose and general nature of the research were explained to the participants.

Participants were informed that their responses would be used exclusively for academic and research purposes and that the information provided by them would be treated confidentially. They were encouraged to respond honestly to each statement and were informed that there were no right or wrong answers for the psychological measures.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using jamovi statistical software. Pearson's product-moment correlation (r) was used to examine the relationships of smartphone addiction with happiness and life satisfaction. Separate linear regression analyses were then conducted to determine whether total smartphone addiction significantly predicted happiness and life satisfaction.

For each regression model, standardized beta (β), *t*-value, *p*-value, R^2, adjusted R^2, and *F*-value were examined. Statistical significance was assessed at conventional probability levels, and the findings were interpreted in relation to the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS

The present study examined the relationships between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction among adolescents. Pearson's product-moment correlations were computed to examine the associations among the study variables, followed by separate simple linear regression analyses to test whether smartphone addiction significantly predicted happiness and life satisfaction.

Relationship Between Smartphone Addiction, Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among smartphone addiction (SAS Total), happiness, and life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Correlation Among Smartphone Addiction, Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Smartphone Addiction	Happiness	Life Satisfaction
Smartphone Addiction	—		
Happiness	-.605**	—	
Life Satisfaction	−.504**	.355**	—

Note. **$p < .001$.

Smartphone addiction was significantly and negatively correlated with happiness, r(392) = −.605, p < .001, indicating that higher levels of smartphone addiction were associated with lower levels of happiness. Smartphone addiction was also significantly and negatively correlated with life satisfaction, $r(392) = -.504$, $p < .01$. In contrast, happiness and life satisfaction were positively correlated, $r(392) = .355$, $p < .001$. These findings support Hypotheses 1 and 2.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether smartphone addiction predicted happiness. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Happiness from Smartphone Addiction

Predictor	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	*F*(1,392)
Smartphone Addiction	-.379	0.025	−.605	−15.13**	.366	.364	229.00**

*Note. N = 394. β = standardized regression coefficient. **p < .001.*

Smartphone addiction significantly and negatively predicted happiness, $\beta = -.605$, $t(392) = -15.13$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 36.6% of the variance in happiness ($R^2 = .366$) and was statistically significant, F(1, 392) = 229.00, p < .001. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

A separate simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether smartphone addiction significantly predicted life satisfaction. Smartphone Addiction Total was entered as the predictor variable and life satisfaction as the criterion variable. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Life Satisfaction from Smartphone Addiction

Predictor	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	*F*(1,392)
Smartphone Addiction	-0.075	0.006	−.504	−11.64**	.254	.252	136.00**

*Note. N = 394. β = standardized regression coefficient. **p < .001.*

Smartphone addiction significantly and negatively predicted life satisfaction, $\beta = -.504$, $t(392) = -11.64$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 25.4% of the variance in life satisfaction ($R^2 = .254$) and was statistically significant, $F(1, 392) = 136.00$, $p < .001$. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Overall, smartphone addiction was significantly and negatively associated with both indicators of subjective well-being. It accounted for 36.6% of the variance in happiness and 25.4% of the variance in life satisfaction. Higher levels of smartphone addiction were consistently linked to lower happiness and lower life satisfaction among adolescents.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships between smartphone addiction, happiness, and life satisfaction among adolescents aged 11–18 years from Saran and Siwan districts of Bihar. Consistent with the study hypotheses, smartphone addiction was significantly and negatively associated with both happiness and life satisfaction. Moreover, smartphone addiction significantly predicted these outcomes and accounted for a meaningful proportion of their variance.

The strong negative correlation between smartphone addiction and happiness ($r = -.605$) was further supported by the regression analysis, in which smartphone addiction explained 36.6% of the variance in happiness ($R^2 = .366$). This substantial proportion of explained variance indicates that problematic smartphone use is closely linked to lower levels of happiness among adolescents. The finding aligns with recent systematic reviews showing that problematic smartphone and screen use is associated with poorer emotional well-being and psychological functioning in young people (Girela-Serrano et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2023). Happiness reflects everyday positive emotional experience. Adolescents who display high levels of daily-life disturbance, withdrawal, overuse, and tolerance may have reduced opportunities for offline activities that generate sustained positive affect, such as face-to-face interaction, physical activity, or engagement in meaningful tasks.

A similarly robust pattern emerged for life satisfaction. Smartphone addiction was negatively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = -.504$) and explained 25.4% of its variance ($R^2 = .254$). Life satisfaction represents a broader cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole. When problematic smartphone use interferes with multiple domains—sleep, academic routines, family interaction, and peer relationships—it may cumulatively influence adolescents' global judgments of how satisfactory their lives are. These results are consistent with evidence linking smartphone addiction to poorer quality of life, particularly in psychological and social domains (Rajpurohit & Yadav, 2024), and with findings from Indian school-going adolescents showing associations between high smartphone addiction and mental-health difficulties (Yogesh et al., 2024).

The positive correlation between happiness and life satisfaction (r = .355) confirms that the two constructs are related yet distinct indicators of subjective well-being. The fact that smartphone addiction predicted both outcomes and explained a notable share of variance in each suggests that problematic use is linked to both the affective and cognitive dimensions of well-being in this sample.

Several mechanisms may help explain these associations. Excessive smartphone engagement can displace time and attention from activities that promote healthy development, including adequate sleep, physical activity, academic work, and in-person social relationships. It may also foster repeated checking behaviours, online social comparison, and dependence on digital validation, which can undermine emotional stability and life evaluations over time. At the same time, the cross-sectional nature of the study precludes causal conclusions. Adolescents experiencing low happiness or life dissatisfaction may increase smartphone use as a form of distraction, emotional regulation, or temporary relief, creating the possibility of reciprocal relationships (Girela-Serrano et al., 2024; Rajpurohit & Yadav, 2024).

The findings hold particular relevance in the Indian context. Smartphones are increasingly central to education, communication, and social life for school-going adolescents, yet patterns of use are shaped by family environment, parental supervision, socioeconomic circumstances, and educational demands. The present results, obtained from adolescents in Bihar, add regionally specific evidence to the growing Indian literature and suggest that problematic smartphone use is meaningfully related to subjective well-being even in this developmental and cultural setting.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design prevents conclusions about temporal or causal direction. Second, all variables were assessed through self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability or common-method variance. Third, although the sample included both male and female adolescents across a broad age range (11–18 years), the study did not examine potential moderating effects of gender, age, socioeconomic status, or patterns of parental supervision. Finally, the sample was drawn from schools in two districts of Bihar; generalisation to other regions of India or to non-school-going adolescents should be made cautiously.

Implications and Future Directions

The results have practical implications for parents, educators, and mental health professionals. Interventions aimed at reducing problematic smartphone use through digital literacy education, structured device free periods, promotion of offline activities, and parental guidance may support both emotional well-being and life satisfaction among adolescents. Schools in particular can play a role by integrating discussions of healthy technology use into the curriculum and by fostering environments that balance digital engagement with face to face interaction and physical activity.

Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs that track changes in smartphone addiction and well-being over time, thereby clarifying reciprocal processes. Studies incorporating objective usage data, qualitative accounts of adolescents' experiences, and examination of potential mediators (e.g., sleep quality, social comparison, academic stress) and moderators (e.g., gender, parental monitoring, purpose of use) would further refine understanding. Research in additional Indian regions and among diverse socioeconomic groups would also strengthen the generalisability of the findings.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the present study demonstrates that higher levels of smartphone addiction are significantly associated with lower happiness and lower life satisfaction among adolescents in Bihar. Smartphone addiction explained a substantial proportion of variance in both indicators of subjective well-being (36.6% in happiness and 25.4% in life satisfaction). These findings underscore the importance of addressing problematic patterns of smartphone use as part of broader efforts to support adolescent mental health and well-being in contemporary Indian society.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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