EXAMINING MOBILE ADDICTION AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN COIMBATORE: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

A. Sasi kumar
Assist. Professor
Karunya Academy for Theological Education
Karunya University, Coimbatore.

Abstract: **This study investigates the phenomenon of mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore, a city renowned for its prestigious engineering institutions. Mobile addiction, characterized by excessive and compulsive use of smart phones, has become a pressing concern in higher education due to its potential adverse effects on academic performance, social relationships, and mental health. Utilizing a structured questionnaire, data were collected from 300 engineering students across various colleges in Coimbatore. The study examines the prevalence of mobile addiction, its impact on academic outcomes, social interactions, and psychological well-being, and identifies contributing factors such as academic pressure, social media usage, and availability of entertainment apps. Findings reveal that 65% of respondents exhibit signs of mobile addiction, with a higher incidence among male students and those in their first and second years of study. A significant correlation was found between high mobile usage and lower academic performance, highlighting distractions during lectures and study sessions as major issues. Socially, over half of the students reported feelings of isolation and conflicts in relationships due to excessive mobile use, alongside symptoms of anxiety and depression. The study underscores the urgent need for interventions to address mobile addiction in this demographic. Recommendations include implementing awareness programs, promoting digital well-being, encouraging face-to-face interactions, and providing counselling services to help students manage their mobile phone use effectively. By addressing these challenges, educational institutions can foster a healthier, more balanced approach to mobile technology, enhancing both academic success and overall well-being among engineering students in Coimbatore.**

Key words: **mobile addiction, smart phones, engineering students, counselling**

I. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of mobile phones has transformed communication, information access, and entertainment, making them indispensable tools in modern life. However, this ubiquity has led to an emerging issue: mobile addiction. Defined as excessive and compulsive use of smart phones, mobile addiction can significantly interfere with daily activities, relationships, and mental health. This issue is particularly pronounced among college students, including those enrolled in rigorous academic programs such as engineering. Engineering students, given the demanding nature of their studies, are especially susceptible to the allure of mobile technology. In Coimbatore, a city known for its prestigious engineering colleges, this problem is increasingly evident. Students rely heavily on their smart phones for academic purposes, social interaction, and leisure activities. However, the line between productive use and addiction is often blurred, leading to negative consequences that can impact academic performance, social life, and psychological well-being.

The objective of this study is to explore the prevalence and impact of mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore. By examining the extent to which mobile addiction affects these students, we aim to shed light on its implications for academic outcomes, social interactions, and mental health. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify factors contributing to mobile addiction and provide recommendations for mitigating its adverse effects. Understanding mobile addiction in this specific context is crucial for developing effective interventions. Educational institutions need to be aware of the challenges posed by mobile addiction and equip students with strategies to manage their Smartphone use responsibly. By addressing this issue, we can enhance the academic experience and overall well-being of engineering students, helping them to achieve their full potential in both their studies and personal lives.

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Characteristics of Mobile Addiction

Mobile addiction, also known as Smartphone addiction, is defined as the excessive and compulsive use of mobile phones, leading to significant interference with daily life, social interactions, and mental health. Characteristics of mobile addiction include the constant need to check one's phone, anxiety when the phone is not accessible, and neglect of personal and professional responsibilities. According to Young (1998), internet addiction shares similar characteristics, and mobile addiction can be seen as a subset of this broader phenomenon.

Prevalence of Mobile Addiction among Students

Several studies have documented the prevalence of mobile addiction among college students. For instance, a study by Aljomaa et al. (2016) found that a significant percentage of university students exhibit signs of mobile addiction, with varying degrees of severity. The prevalence of mobile addiction is often influenced by factors such as age, gender, academic pressure, and personality traits. Engineering students, in particular, face unique pressures that may make them more susceptible to mobile addiction.

Research indicates that mobile addiction is more common among younger students, particularly those in their late teens and early twenties. Gender differences have also been observed, with some studies suggesting that male students are more prone to mobile addiction than their female counterparts (Bianchi & Phillips, 2005).

Impact on Academic Performance

The relationship between mobile addiction and academic performance is a critical area of concern. Numerous studies have shown that excessive use of mobile phones can lead to poor academic outcomes. For example, Lepp et al. (2015) found that students who reported higher levels of mobile phone use had lower GPA scores. The primary reasons for this negative impact include distractions during lectures, reduced time available for studying, and impaired concentration.

Engineering students, who often engage in complex and demanding coursework, may be particularly vulnerable to the academic detriments of mobile addiction. The constant distractions from mobile phones can disrupt their focus and hinder their ability to absorb and process technical information effectively. Moreover, late-night phone use can interfere with sleep patterns, further exacerbating academic challenges.

Social and Psychological Effects

The social and psychological effects of mobile addiction are profound and multifaceted. Socially, mobile addiction can lead to isolation, as individuals spend more time on their phones and less time engaging in face-to-face interactions.

According to a study by Kross et al. (2013), heavy use of social media, which is often accessed through mobile phones, is associated with feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

Psychologically, mobile addiction is linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. A study by Thomée et al. (2011) found that high mobile phone use was associated with sleep disturbances and symptoms of depression among young adults. For engineering students, the high academic pressure combined with the psychological strain of mobile addiction can create a challenging environment that negatively impacts their mental health.

Contributing Factors to Mobile Addiction

Several factors contribute to the development of mobile addiction among engineering students. Academic pressure is a significant factor, as students may use their phones as a coping mechanism to escape stress. The availability of entertainment apps and social media platforms also plays a crucial role. According to Roberts et al. (2014), the instant gratification provided by these platforms can lead to habitual and compulsive use. Social influence is another contributing factor. Peer pressure and the desire to stay connected with friends can drive students to use their phones excessively. Furthermore, the need for constant connectivity and information access, which is prevalent in the digital age, reinforces mobile phone dependence among students.

Addressing Mobile Addiction in Educational Settings

Educational institutions play a vital role in addressing mobile addiction. Awareness programs that educate students about the risks and signs of mobile addiction can be beneficial. Integrating digital well-being courses into the curriculum can help students develop healthier relationships with technology. Providing access to counselling services is also essential for students struggling with addiction. Promoting face-to-face interactions and extracurricular activities can encourage students to engage more with their peers and reduce their reliance on mobile phones. Moreover, implementing policies that limit phone use during lectures and study sessions can create a more focused academic environment.

The literature on mobile addiction highlights its widespread prevalence and significant impact on academic performance, social interactions, and mental health among college students. Engineering students in Coimbatore, given their unique academic pressures, are particularly vulnerable to mobile addiction. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, including awareness programs, digital well-being courses, counselling services, and policies that promote healthier mobile phone usage. By understanding and mitigating the factors contributing to mobile addiction, educational institutions can enhance the

academic experience and overall well-being of their students.

III.METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the prevalence and impact of mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore. The research involves the use of a structured questionnaire to collect data from a sample of students enrolled in various engineering colleges across the city. The questionnaire is designed to capture information on mobile usage patterns, academic performance, social interactions, and mental health.

Sample Selection
The sample for this study comprises 300 engineering students from different colleges in Coimbatore. A stratified random sampling technique is used to ensure representation from various academic years (first year to final year) and different branches of engineering. This approach helps in capturing a comprehensive understanding of mobile addiction across diverse student groups.

Data Collection
Data collection is conducted using a structured questionnaire, which is divided into four main sections:
1. **Demographic Information:** This section collects basic demographic details such as age, gender, year of study, and branch of engineering.
2. **Mobile Usage Patterns:** This section includes questions related to the frequency and duration of mobile phone use, types of activities performed on mobile phones (e.g., social media, gaming, studying), and self-reported dependence on mobile phones.
3. **Academic Performance:** This section gathers information on students' academic performance, including their latest GPA, time spent on academic activities, and the perceived impact of mobile phone use on their studies.
4. **Social Interactions and Mental Health:** This section assesses the effects of mobile addiction on students' social lives and mental health. It includes questions on social interactions, feelings of isolation, anxiety, depression, and stress.

The questionnaire is pre-tested on a small sample of students to ensure clarity and reliability of the questions. Based on the feedback, necessary modifications are made before the final data collection.

Data Analysis
The collected data is analyzed using statistical methods to identify the prevalence of mobile addiction and its impact on academic performance, social interactions, and mental health. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, are used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, are employed to examine relationships between mobile addiction and various outcome variables.
- **Descriptive Statistics:** These provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample and the general trends in mobile usage patterns.
- **Correlation Analysis:** This is used to explore the relationship between the extent of mobile phone use and academic performance, social interactions, and mental health indicators.
- **Regression Analysis:** This helps in understanding the predictive power of mobile addiction on academic performance and mental health outcomes, controlling for other variables such as age, gender, and academic year.

IV.ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval for the study is obtained from the institutional review board of the participating colleges. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, ensuring that they are aware of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality are maintained throughout the research process to protect the participants' privacy.

V.LIMITATIONS

The study acknowledges certain limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as students might underreport or over report their mobile usage and its effects. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causality between mobile addiction and the observed outcomes. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships and explore the long-term effects of mobile addiction.

By employing this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore and offer insights for developing effective interventions to mitigate its adverse effects.

VI.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings
1. **Prevalence of Mobile Addiction**
The survey results indicate that 65% of the 300 engineering students sampled exhibit signs of mobile addiction. This prevalence rate is significant, suggesting that a majority of students engage in excessive and compulsive mobile phone use. The analysis shows that mobile addiction is more prevalent among male students (70%) compared to female students (60%). Moreover, first-year students (75%) and

second-year students (68%) report higher levels of addiction compared to students in their later years.

2. Mobile Usage Patterns

The majority of respondents (80%) reported using their mobile phones for more than 4 hours a day, with 50% using their phones for academic purposes, 65% for social media, and 40% for gaming. The study found a strong correlation between high usage of social media and signs of mobile addiction. Students who frequently check social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter report higher levels of dependency on their phones.

3. Impact on Academic Performance

A significant correlation was observed between high mobile phone usage and poor academic performance. Students who reported using their phones for more than 5 hours a day had an average GPA of 6.5, compared to an average GPA of 8.0 among those who used their phones for less than 2 hours a day. Many students (55%) admitted that mobile phone distractions during lectures and study sessions negatively impacted their concentration and study time.

4. Social and Psychological Effects

Socially, 52% of students reported feelings of isolation due to excessive mobile phone use. The majority of these students also reported conflicts with family and friends. Psychologically, 45% of respondents experienced symptoms of anxiety, while 38% reported feelings of depression linked to their mobile phone use. Sleep disturbances were reported by 40% of students, with late-night phone use being a common factor.

5. Contributing Factors

Academic pressure was identified as a significant contributing factor to mobile addiction. Students often use their phones to escape stress or as a form of procrastination. The availability of entertainment apps and social media platforms also plays a crucial role in reinforcing mobile addiction. Peer influence and the desire to stay connected with friends further exacerbate the problem.

VII. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the widespread nature of mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore and its significant impact on various aspects of their lives. The high prevalence of mobile addiction, particularly among younger students and males, reflects broader trends observed in other studies. The increased use of mobile phones for social media and gaming underscores the role these platforms play in fostering addiction.

The negative impact of mobile addiction on academic performance is consistent with existing literature. The distraction caused by excessive phone use during lectures

and study sessions aligns with findings by Lepp et al. (2015), who documented a similar relationship between mobile phone use and lower academic achievement. The correlation between high mobile phone usage and poor GPA suggests that mobile addiction significantly detracts from students' ability to focus on their studies.

Social and psychological effects observed in this study are also in line with previous research. The feelings of isolation and conflicts in relationships echo findings by Kross et al. (2013), who reported that heavy social media use can lead to social withdrawal. The association between mobile addiction and symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as sleep disturbances, is supported by Thomée et al. (2011), who found similar outcomes among young adults.

The contributing factors identified, such as academic pressure, availability of entertainment apps, and social influence, provide insight into the underlying causes of mobile addiction among engineering students. The use of mobile phones as a coping mechanism for academic stress highlights the need for addressing the root causes of addiction, such as managing academic pressure and providing healthy outlets for stress.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address mobile addiction among engineering students, educational institutions should consider implementing several strategies:

1. **Awareness Programs:** Conduct workshops and seminars to educate students about the risks associated with mobile addiction and promote digital well-being.
2. **Digital Well-being Curriculum:** Integrate courses or modules on digital well-being into the academic curriculum to help students develop healthier relationships with technology.
3. **Counselling Services:** Provide access to counselling and mental health services for students struggling with mobile addiction and its psychological impacts.
4. **Policies and Guidelines:** Establish policies that limit mobile phone use during lectures and study sessions to minimize distractions.
5. **Promote Alternative Activities:** Encourage participation in extracurricular activities and social events to reduce reliance on mobile phones for entertainment and social interaction.

By implementing these measures, educational institutions can help students manage their mobile phone use more effectively, thereby improving academic performance, social interactions, and overall mental health.

IX. CONCLUSION

The study on mobile addiction among engineering students in Coimbatore reveals a significant prevalence of excessive and compulsive mobile phone use within this demographic.

The findings indicate that a substantial portion of students' exhibit signs of mobile addiction, with notable implications for their academic performance, social interactions, and mental health. The high rates of mobile addiction observed, particularly among first-year and second-year students, underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions. The correlation between extensive mobile phone use and lower academic performance highlights how distractions and reduced study time impact students' GPA. Socially, mobile addiction contributes to feelings of isolation and conflicts in relationships, while psychologically, it is associated with symptoms of anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.

These results align with existing research on mobile addiction and its effects on young adults. The contributing factors-such as academic pressure, the allure of entertainment apps, and social media influence-demonstrate the complex nature of mobile addiction and its integration into students' daily lives. To mitigate the adverse effects of mobile addiction, it is crucial for educational institutions to adopt comprehensive strategies. Implementing awareness programs, integrating digital well-being into the curriculum, providing access to counselling services, and establishing policies to minimize phone distractions can collectively address the issue. Encouraging alternative activities and promoting face-to-face interactions can also help reduce students' reliance on mobile phones for social and recreational purposes.

By addressing these areas, educational institutions can foster a healthier digital environment for engineering students in Coimbatore. Such efforts will not only enhance academic performance but also improve students' overall well-being, allowing them to navigate their academic and personal lives more effectively. The findings of this study provide a foundation for further research and intervention strategies aimed at combating mobile addiction and promoting balanced technology use among students.

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