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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MOBILE PHONE USAGE ADDICTION – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

***Moieson Thairiyam, D., Lisa, E. and Dr. Clayton Michael Fonseca**

Department of Social Work, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur- 635601, India

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ABSTRACT

Communication plays a vital role in the life of human beings. It is easy to live even without food and water but a man cannot live without interacting with another person. Communication has now become a basic need for human beings. Communication between one person and another is disseminated in different forms. The past two centuries were known for the development of communication technology. In acclaiming to the inception of this novel form, the first place is the advent of telephones and now the application of smart phones. Let it be anyone, young or old, rich or poor, all own a mobile phone. It has now become a basic need to have it along as a necessity. The usage of mobile phones has now become an addiction among young people, particularly students. This study is therefore undertaken with an aim in comprehending the usage & addiction of mobile phones and the impact of such dependences among students. The study was carried out among the Post Graduate Students of Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur. The researcher adopted the probability sampling method using the stratified disproportionate random sampling technique. This resulted in the selection of 130 samples. The collected data was systematically analyzed and the findings logically interpreted. The upshot of this study was to find out the level of addiction among students using mobile phones and how this factor impacts their health and studies.

Key words: Communication, addiction, impacts, health and education

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INTRODUCTION

In the world today, mobile phones play a vital role in communication and its growth play a major role in redefining each individual's life. The existing scenario in the society is the inclination towards the versatile development of communication technology. Mobile phones are now become an integral part of the society; it is not only a communication device but a device of status, brand image and a social accessory. People are increasingly using mobile phones rather than the fixed telephones (Landline). Recent surveys which were conducted on the youth worldwide denoted that, cell phones have become an integral part of life and some have even gone to the extent of saying that they would rather go without food for a day than without their cell phones. With constant texting, calling, listening to music, playing games and a tool for social networking, the mobile phone has reengineered the lifestyle of the common man. It has turned from a technological tool to a social gizmo. It has become an essential commodity that not having it around strikes its user with Nomophobia (Irrational fear of being without ones mobile phone). This paper thus further aims to highlight the use of mobile phones among youngsters.

Review of Literature

A recent study on mobile phone usage worldwide carried out by the telecommunication department stated an increase in the rate of mobile phone users year by year. It further stated that around 4.93 billion people use cell phones worldwide. It is further estimated that 62.9 percent of the population worldwide already own a mobile phone. Based on the aforesaid statement, it comes as no surprise that 73 percent mobile users were the youth and all of them use smart phones. India ranks second in world in the usage of mobile devices after China. It is estimated that by the year 2019 in India would register a whopping 1.1 billion mobile users. The usage of mobile phones among the youth can be denoted based on two factors; the positive impact and the negative impact. While understanding the positives in the usage of mobiles it can be inferred that these devices enable them to organize and maintain their social network but in considering the same the ill aspect is that this also makes them nomophobic. According to PEW Research Center, 67% of smart phone owners have admitted to checking their phone for calls or messages when their phones have not vibrated or rang. This is one major sign of cell phone dependence and should serve as a warning to cell phone owners. There are some signs and Symptoms of Cell Phone Addiction, Physical Effects of Addiction and Psychological Effects of Cell Phone Addiction. The following signs and symptoms are thought to comprise criteria for cell

*Corresponding author: Moieson Thairiyam, D.,
Department of Social Work, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur- 635601, India.

phone addiction, and the problematic cell phone overuse must cause significant harm in the individual's life

- A need to use the cell phone more and more often in order to achieve the same desired effect.
- Persistent failed attempts to use cell phone less often.
- Preoccupation with smart phone use.
- Turns to cell phone when experiencing unwanted feelings such as anxiety or depression.
- Excessive use characterized by loss of sense of time.
- Has put a relationship or job at risk due to excessive cell phone use.
- Tolerance.
- Need for newest cell phone, more applications, or increased use.

Physical Effects of Addiction: Overuse of ones'cell phone or smartphone can result in a number of different physical problems that may cause permanent damage or be difficult to treat, including: Digital eye strain, Neck problems, Car accidents, Male infertility

Psychological Effects of Cell Phone Addiction: Sleep disturbance, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Relationship problems, and anxiety. Hyun Young Koo and Hyun Sook Park (2010) in their study among adolescents, in which 548 students were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their cell phone use. The results of the questionnaires were that just under 89% believed they were average cell phone users, while 8.4% believed they were heavy users and only 2.9% percent believed they were addicted to their cell phone. This study found that gender, texting, monthly charges, impulsiveness, recreational reasons and cultural reasons were all influential to cell phone addiction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher adopted the descriptive research design for this study. The Probability Sampling method was inculcated since the population was known. In specific the stratified disproportionate random sampling technique was adopted to select 113 respondents. The college has 13 Post Graduate Departments from which the researcher adhered to the simple random technique and selected the samples. Stratified random sampling divides a population into subgroups or strata, and random samples are taken, in proportion to the population, from each of the strata created. The members in each of the stratum formed have similar attributes and characteristics. A simple random sample should be taken from each stratum. Disproportional sampling is a probability sampling technique used to address the difficulty researchers' encounter with stratified samples of unequal sizes. The Data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science and further test was used to find relationship between variables

Tool Used: Mobile Usage addiction among Post Graduate Students (Self Structured)

Scale Used: Likert Scale with multiple choice questions

Validity used: Face validity

Analysis: From the below data it was clear that the a little more than half (53.1) of the respondents used mobile less than four hours in a day. It can be inferred that students spend nearly half of the working hours of a day which may affect the respondents in future.

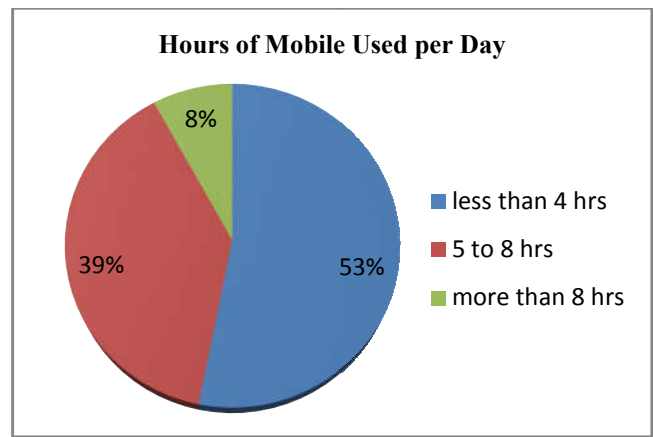


Figure 1. Mobile Used for per day

Table 1. Purpose mobile used

Purpose mobile used	Frequency	Percent
To have contact with family	43	38.1
To have contact with friends	27	23.9
To use social networks	21	18.6
For study purpose	14	12.4
Since others have, I too have	8	7.1
Total	113	100.0

Table 2. If not using mobile

If not using mobile	Frequency	Percent
I will be free from tension	42	37.2
I will feel that i am missing something important in my life	36	31.9
I will feel i am outdated	16	14.2
I will get frustrated	12	10.6
I will feel lost	7	6.2
Total	113	100.0

Table 3. Correlation between Gender of the Respondents and the Mobile Usage

Correlations		
Variable	Correlation	Statistical Inference
Mobile Usage	Pearson Correlation	.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.323
	N	113

Table 4. 'z' test for Gender of Respondents and Mobile Usage

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z Value	Sig
Mobile Usage	Male	68	1.50	.611	.993	.233 (P>.05)

The above table clearly states the purpose of students using mobile. It shows that the purpose of the students using mobile were to have contact with their family members, this was proposed by nearly half (38.1) of the respondents. A little less than two fifth (23.9) of the respondents said that they use mobile only to use social networks, this shows the addiction of social networks of the students. It was also found out from the data collected that majority (83.2) of the students use social networks. It can be inferred that students of the present generation are addicted towards the social networks and for that purpose they use mobile frequently. The researcher used a variable to find out what the respondents think if they were asked not to use mobile phones. The response which the respondents gave was unexpected that nearly half (37.2) of the respondents said that they will feel free from tension if they don't use mobile and a little less than one third (31.9) of the

respondents said that they may feel lost as if they had lost something very important in their life. It can be inferred that though students are addicted to mobile phones they feel that it is just a gadget used for communication and it affect their day to day life and health. According to the present table it is clear that there is no correlation with regard to the gender by the mobile usage, since the level of significance is more than 0.05 ($p=.323$). This shows that the assumption that boys are addicted to mobile phones than girls is proved false. Here apart from boys and girls addiction towards mobile phones is common among both the Genders.

H0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no relationship between Gender and Mobile Usage

H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is relationship between Gender and Mobile Usage

Thus Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is rejected and Null Hypothesis (H0) is accepted.

The 'z' test presented above says that there is no significant relationship between the gender and the mobile usage since the level of significance is more than 0.05 ($p=.233$). Thus the Null Hypothesis is accepted and Alternative Hypothesis is rejected. So it can be inferred that let it be boy or girl they use mobile often and there is common reasons from both the genders for being addicted to mobile phones.

Findings

The study done by Times of India reveals that the biggest spike of Mobile Phone Usage is in the youngest age group. This says that the present generation children spend their leisure time mostly over phone instead of having any physical activities. This may lead to many physical and mental illness of the children. The radiofrequency energy emitted by the cell phone which is non ionizing electromagnetic radiation can be easily absorbed by the tissues near by the mobile phones. The distance always the youth have their mobile phone is very near to their body, in such case the energy emitted from the mobile phones directly affects their brain and other organs of the body. It also advised by the doctors that this energy causes hormonal imbalance in both boys and girls. So it is best that mobile phones can be used only for communication that too for lesser time. In this research the researcher has found out that a little more than half (53.1) of the respondents used mobile less than four hours in a day. It can be inferred that students spend nearly half of the working hours of a day which may affect the respondents in future. Nearly half (38.1) of the respondents said that they use mobile phones to communicate with their family members. A little less than two fifth (23.9) of the respondents said that they use mobile only to use social networks, this shows the addiction of social networks of the students. It was also found out from the data collected that majority (83.2) of the students use social networks.

It can be inferred that students of the present generation are addicted towards the social networks and for that purpose they use mobile frequently. But to the researchers surprise it was found that nearly half (37.2) of the respondents said that they will feel free from tension if they don't use mobile and a little less than one third (31.9) of the respondents said that they may feel lost as if they had lost something very important in their life. It can be inferred that though students are addicted to mobile phones they feel that it is just a gadget used for communication and it affect their day to day life and health. It was clear that there is no correlation with regard to the gender by the mobile usage, since the level of significance is more than 0.05 ($p=.323$). This shows that the assumption that boys are addicted to mobile phones than girls is proved false. Here apart from boys and girls addiction towards mobile phones is common among both the Genders.

Suggestions and Conclusion

From the late twentieth century technology and advancement in each field has a rapid growth. In that telecommunication has its vital role. The researcher would like to suggest that in this world of technology there are more positive and negative impacts in using all the technologies, so making use of the good out of each technology may help each one to live a healthy life. The path which we show will be followed by the next generation so it is good that parents and teachers take extra care in guiding the children in a right way. The findings indicate that educational needs for diagnosis and management of cell phone addiction ranked as most important in adolescents. Therefore, awareness programs related to the prevention and management of cell phone addiction based on the educational needs of adolescents can be provided.

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