Consumption patterns of mobile phone and its impact on interpersonal relationships of youth

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ABSTRACT

Since modern society changes rapidly, styles of interpersonal communication changes as well. Of all, mobile phone plays a significant role in everyone's daily life, becoming as the most popular communication tool. This study explored the use of mobile phones and its impact on interpersonal relationship among youth in Lahore. The study used the theoretical frameworks of "uses and gratifications" approach from media studies. The main objective of the study was to examine the overall impact of mobile phone and determine the role mobile phones are playing in effecting interpersonal relationship and gender differences. Data was collected through survey comprised 50 young adults (ageing 16 to 30 years) in Lahore. Quantitative analysis of the data revealed that there is strong relationship between mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationship. Continuous use of mobile phone negatively effect on youth and distort the relationship with their families and close friends. Study found that there were gender differences in the use of cell phones by young people. Further, males use more cell phone rather than the females.

Introduction

In this world of technological advancement, communication barriers have significantly been reduced with the invention of mobile phones. No matter how far people are from one another, they are just a call away. The usage of mobile phones has not only resulted in increased communication among people but also in the reduction of cost that would incur if people have to travel to convey the messages. It consequently saves time as well. The benefits of using mobile phone are evident from the rapid growth of mobile phone demand and consumption.

The world first official mobile phone was introduced by Swedish Mobile in 1946 and in 1983 "Motorola" created the first calling "portable cell phone"(www.tech-faq.com). Afterwards, many mobile phone companies came in to being and it is till in continuation.

Like every coin has two faces, mobile phone usage also possesses certain pros and cons. Although the role of mobile phone being facilitating communication among masses is unquestionable. However, there are certain negative connotations as well. People are now becoming addictive of it as if it is bread and butter of their life. They consider it as a necessity rather than accessory of life. Now youngsters feel very excited and keen about their acceptance in peer groups. They often think of using mobile phone as a medium to get recognized among their peer groups (Shannon, 2012).

The urge for up to date brand, network, models and mobile phone related accessories is moving on extreme side. Psychiatrists claim that among mobile phone obsession and addiction is becoming a major non-drug addiction of this millennium (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011). As per Yang, fixated use of cell phone leads the users towards a mental disease known as "mobile phone dependency syndrome". The social networking and equilibrium is severely jostled when people are without their mobile phone i.e. symptom of severe dependency.

The usage of mobile phones has also a varying degree of impact on interpersonal relationships among human beings. This impact is also two folded. Positive impact includes increased learning as far as students are concerned. Short messaging service (SMS) enhances interaction among students and thus results in improved learning (Markett, 2006). As per Ling and Yttri (2002), increased communication helps to establish new relationships along with sustaining the precious older relationship that is otherwise difficult to achieve in this era of extreme business. Quick access, mobility and convenience are the amenities offered by mobile phones (Tjong et al. 2003).

In spite of these potential positive impacts of mobile phone usage, studies have pointed out negative impacts as well. These include social isolation, increased monetary cost, health obsession, physical & emotional stress (Bianchi and Phillips, 2005; Paragras, 2003; Monk et al 2004; Palen et al. 2001; James and Drennan, 2005). People use mobile phones while driving and thus put their and other life at stake (Mcevoy et al. 2005). This study is aimed at determining the consumption pattern of mobile phone in youth of Lahore. Further it is intended to explore the overall impact of mobile phone usage on interpersonal relationships.

Rationale

No one can deny the role mobile phones are playing in mobilizing social networking and interpersonal communication. Not only mobile phone is facilitating communication among masses but it is also imposing a positive impact through enhancement of knowledge among youngsters (Kleijnen et al, 2008).

Due to multiple functioning such as texting, browsing, gaming, calling and emailing, it is working as a minicomputer and so is replacing computers drastically (Hakoama and Hakoyama, 2011).

Massive research studies have been conducted to determine the impact of mobile phone on various groups of people such as youth, children, old citizens, etc. However, this study is aimed at

exploring the impact of cellular phones on youngsters of Lahore along with its impact on interpersonal relationships which is not yet studied by the researchers.

Although previous researches signify positive impact that mobile phones usage have on masses including increased communication, safety, knowledge and social networking. However, many negative impacts have also been identified such as cyber bullying, monetary costs, safety concerns, etc (Campbell, 2005). This study is intended to study the overall impact of mobile phone usage on youngsters. Further, it is also aimed in determining how usage of mobile phones affects interpersonal relationships.

Objectives
It is intended to:
• Explore an overall impact of mobile phone usage (positive and negative impacts) gender wise
• Study the change in the behavior of the cell phone users
• Determine the role mobile phones are playing in affecting interpersonal relationships

Scope/Significance
Youngsters comprise the major proportion of population of any economy. They form the basis on which the future of any country is based. Therefore, determining the impact mobile phones have on youngsters is of vital importance. This is also important so that precautionary measures can be taken against the adverse activities mobile phones are aligned/associated with. This can only be done after proper identification of these adverse impact factors.

This study will assist in determining the negative impact mobile phones are playing directly or indirectly on youth, students and peer fellows. Also it will explore whether mobile phones are affecting interpersonal relationships positively or negatively and so further line of action can be taken by the users in order to avoid from its adverse affect.

Limitations of the Study
This study is limited to determine the impact of mobile phones on youngsters of Lahore. Youngsters comprise youth up to 16 to 30 years of age.

Literature Review
Before conducting a research it's suitable to have a look upon the literature which is related to present study. Literature review is done to avoid repetition and duplication of the study and also helps to do research in different dimensions.

The need for technological advancement arose with the changing patterns of social life and political framework. However, there are still variations in the consumption pattern and behavior pattern of users for cell phones across countries based on the usage and developments made therein. In a study conducted by Lacohee et al (2006) to determine the social history of mobile phones and the pace it is taking in future, it was concluded that the history of mobile phone is associated with the history of technological advancement.

Pettigrew (2009) studied the relationship of mobile phone connectedness and texting on interpersonal relationships of human beings. Findings suggested that users prefer to use mobile phone and that too for texting than to have face to face conversation. It also indicated that people use mobile phones to maintain connectedness and autonomy with their relational partners.

Thulin and Vilhelmson (2007) conducted a two wave panel study about the increased usage of mobile phones. Instantaneous exchange and continuous updating functions of mobile phones lead to increased social interaction and communication among users as suggested by the findings of the study. Also people are not concerned with managing and saving time due to readily availability of mobile phones and that has resulted in increased usage of mobile phones in the society.

Many studies have been conducted about the usage of cell phone and its impact on different age groups and genders and also its impact on interpersonal relationships. Hakoama and Hakoyama (2011) conducted a survey on the usage of cell phone in youngsters. Study was conducted during 2009 and 2010 on Midwestern University's students. Purpose of the study was manifold but mainly comprised cell phone dependency among youngsters. 99% of the participants reported that they own their mobile phones and 90% of them claimed that mobile phone is held with them since the last three years. Gender discrimination was also observed as is evident from the findings that females are more inclined for mobile phone as compared to males. Only 1.1% of the participants reported that they would try to live without mobile phone in case if their existing mobile phone get broke. This shows the dependency college students have on mobile phone.

College students constitute a major proportion of youth in major economies. Campbell (2005) conducted a study to explore the challenges college students face associated with the usage of mobile phones. Faculty members and college students were surveyed for the purpose of data gathering. Purpose of the study comprised of determination of positive and negative impacts of mobile phones usage of college students on class room teaching practices. Results of the study showed that majority of the people under study were of the tolerance for mobile phone usage along with the distracting or disturbing factors. (Campbell, 2006).

KIM and MITOMO (2006) studied the impact of mobile phone and their usage on interpersonal relationships in Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo. Findings of the study indicated that in spite of interdependency affecting relationships, communication via mobile phones tend to have a low impact on interpersonal relationships among friends, peers group follows and relatives. Mobile phones play a little role in influencing interpersonal relationships i.e. on widening or narrowing these relationships.

The impact of mobile phones on young people social life was studied by Campbell (2005). Aim of the study was to explore the influence the usage of mobile phone has on interpersonal relationships among family, peer and their school fellows. While positive impact includes organizing and sustaining social networking, there were certain negative impacts identified by the study. On one hand ostracism and cyber bullying are the long lasting outcomes. On the other hand there are issues of financial burden/cost, safety concerns and change in perceptions and dynamics of users. Also at school level, youngsters are found to use mobile phones for cheating and bullying activities. Safety related issues also contribute towards negative impact of cell phone usage.

Another study on cellular phones was conducted by Corbett (2009). Purpose of the study was to determine the influence and impact of mobile phones on social and interpersonal relationships. The impact of mobile phones on social and interpersonal relationships was found to be negative. Findings of the study indicated that increased usage of mobile phones results in weaker grammar of the users. Social anxiety is another outcome associated with mobile phone usage.

An empirical study was conducted by Wilska (2003) in order to determine the relationship between mobile phone usage and its consumption pattern. Findings of the study indicated that trendy and impulsive behavior/consumption style results in addiction towards mobiles phones and that too majorly in

females. Enthusiasm related to technology and trend-consciousness was linked to spontaneous consumption of mobile usage. Also there is no major gender discrimination as per the findings of the study.

Another research was conducted Matanhelia (2010) which was the use of mobile phone adults in India. The theoretical frame work used in this study was uses and gratification, social cognitive theory and social construction technology. The main objective of this study was to examine the use of cell phones to fulfill communication, media and age-related needs by young people in India and to investigate regional and gender differences. Mixed method approach was used in this survey in first phase: in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 college-going young adults (18 – 24 years) in Mumbai and Kanpur in December 2007 and January 2008. In the second phase, a survey was conducted with 400 college-going young adults (18 – 24 years) in Mumbai and Kanpur. According to the mixed method approach finally the study concluded that young people in India mainly use cell phones for private communication and needs.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical perspective used in this study is "Uses and Gratifications". It is used to explore the usage of mobile phones and their consumption patterns by young people.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The uses and gratifications approach has been used by media researchers to examine the gratifications associated with the use of different types of media such as television newspapers, electronic mail, telephones and internet. The uses and gratifications approach have also been used in studies investigating the use of mobile phones. Leung and Wei (2000) conducted one of the first studies examining the gratifications associated with the use of cell phones. Ozcan and Kocak (2003) investigated the gratifications associated with the use of cell phones in Turkey. The study explore that status/relaxation was the most important reason followed rather than the security and business. Thus the studies on mobile phone use applying uses and gratifications perspective suggest that individuals use cell phones for interpersonal communication purpose such as affection and sociability and also for projecting a social image by using them as status symbols.

Methodology

In this study, the survey method of quantitative approach has been used.

Universe

Our universe comprised of youth of Lahore.

Population

Our population consists of the age group of 16 to 30 years and we have collected the data from university students.

Sample Technique

We have used Random sample technique and our sample size is 50 students out of which 25 students belong to superior university and 25 to Punjab University.

Research Questions

Q # 1: Is there any connection between the Mobile Phone usage and Interpersonal Relationships?

Q # 2: What are the gender differences in the use of mobile phones by young people in Lahore?

Hypothesis of the Study

H_0: There is no connection between mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationship there is no varying impact gender wise.

H_1: There is connection between mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationship and there is varying impact gender wise.

Data Collection

Questions were asked to gain background information on the participants to access in terms of their basic demographic information, since this may have an impact on their cell phone usage behavior. All the participants in the survey were between 16 to 30 years of age. The survey asked participants information about their education, student status, occupation and mobile phone status that how many mobile phones they have? This part analyses the results of the quantitative component of the survey. Background Information and how the data were collected and entered were detailed. There are three sections in the questionnaires, one is Mobile Phone usage of the respondents which are considered as independent variables which contain 21 questions asked about the respondent frequently use mobile phone and second is the Interpersonal Relationship which was considered to be dependent variable which contain 13 questions asked about how mobile phone effect the behavior of youth and because of mobile phone how interpersonal relationship effect. Results of regression or Independent T-tests showed significant relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Empirical Findings

Findings **(refer to table 01)** for the analysis of impact between mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationship indicate that almost 42% variation in mobile phone usage is explained by interpersonal relationships and the rest 58% of the variation is due to others factors not considered under the study.

Table 01: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.421(a)	.177	.160	.65328

a Predictors: (Constant), MPU

P-value **(refer to table 02)** as per the output of regression analysis is 0.02 which is less than 0.05 i.e. the level of significance. It means we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which is that there is connection between mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationships. Coefficient of mobile phone usage show that with one unit changes in mobile phone usage, interpersonal relationships changes to 0.397 units.

Table 02: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.410	1	4.410	10.333	.002(a)
	Residual	20.485	48	.427		
	Total	24.895	49			

a Predictors: (Constant), MPU
b Dependent Variable: IP

Table 03: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.678	.455		5.887	.000
	MPU	.397	.123	.421	3.214	.002

a Dependent Variable: IPR

Independent sample T.test for gender wise varying impact was applied to find out the effect of gender on mobile phone usage **(refer to table #03).** The result show that there exist a statistical significant difference (p = 0.010 less than 0.05) therefore we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is difference in the use of mobile phone of male and female. Further, Males use mobile phone more than females as indicated by mean score of males.

Table 03: Gender Wise Result

	Respondent Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Mobile phone	Male	26	2.9670	.58628	2.687	43.511	.010
	Female	24	2.4524	.75043			

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of mobile phones among youth in Lahore. The study also examined the connection between the mobile phone usage and interpersonal relation and gender differences in the use of mobile phones by young people in Lahore. The research survey methodology showed that young people, who participated in the study, used their cell phones in a variety of different ways to fulfill their communication, news and entertainment needs.

The researcher in the study of consumption pattern of mobile phone and its impact on interpersonal relationship has found that there is strong connection between the mobile phone usage and interpersonal relationship the result showed that because of mobile phone the relationships among with the family and friend become decrease. So in short mobile phone create negative effects on the interpersonal relationship of youth. Face to face interaction decrease. Youth spent most of their time with mobile and spent less time with their families. The study also investigated the impact of gender on mobile phone usage among young people. The result showed that there is significance difference to the mobile consumption between the male and female and our findings showed that the tendency to use the mobile phone in Males is more than the Females. Thus, the study satisfies all research questions and hypothesis and gives support to all of them with strong response of audience.

Conclusion

The use of Mobile phone will continue to become an important part of daily life, which will undoubtedly impact relationships. Face-to-face communication remains the gold standard of preferred communication. This research confirms that people like to spend time with their own mobile phones rather than the family. Due to time constraints and physical proximity, they rely on mobile phones to stay in touch. Email, text messages, and connecting on social media networks like Facebook and Twitter keep relationships going and create another way to communicate on a regular basis. While the loss of nonverbal behaviors can negatively impact the quality of communication through Mobile phone, it rarely caused permanent damage to close relationships. The research shows that there is strong relationship between the mobile phone usage and interpersonal relations because of mobile phone close relationship like families and close friends get affected. Ideally, mobile phone is be utilized as a supplement to face-to-face communication.

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Appendix
Questionnaire
  Consumption Patterns of Mobile Phone and its Impact on Interpersonal Relationship of Youth
  This survey asks about your experiences while using cellular phones, as well as a variety of questions related to your socialization pattern and behavioral change while using cell phone in your life today. All the information collected through this survey will be kept confidential.

Section-I   Basic Demographic
1. Gender :   □[1] Male   □[2]Female
2. Age: _____
3. Education: □[1] Matric   □[2] Intermediate   □[3] Graduation
               □[4] Masters
4. Institute: □[1] Superior University   □[2]Punjab University

5. Occupation status: □[1] Student   □[2] Part time job
                □[3] Full time job   □[4] Self-employed

6. Do you have your own Mobile phone?
        1. Yes
        2. No
7. How many mobile phones you have?
        1. 1
        2. 2
        3. 3
        4. Other if any _____

Section II   Mobile Phone Usage:
  The Following are some statements people may use to describe their mobile phone use. Read each of the statements and check the response that best reflects you .You can communicate your choice by inserting appropriate code in the given space. Please read the meaning associated with each code to be specific in your choice of code

1. Strongly Agree   2.Agree 3.Neutral   4.Disagree   5.Strongly Disagree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I spend most of my time with mobile phone.					
2.	I use my phone when I am bored					
3.	I spend much money to the mobile internet					
4.	I spend much money to the call packages					
5.	I spend much money on SMS Packages					
6.	I have been unable to reduce my mobile phone use.					
7.	The First thing I do in the morning is check my mobile for messages or missed calls					
8.	I use mobile phone to chat or gossip					
9.	I use mobile phone for entertainment					
10.	I use mobile phone to get news and information					
11.	I use mobile phone while driving					
12.	I use mobile phone for fun					
13.	I know I can always call somebody on my mobile phone when I am in trouble					
14.	I use mobile phone as fashion accessory					
15.	I use mobile phone because I enjoy being in contact with other people					
16.	I use mobile phone to send MMS					
17.	I use Mobile Phone to capture photos					
18.	I use Mobile to play games					
19.	I use mobile Phone to make videos					
20.	I use Mobile Phone to use internet facility					
21.	I use Mobile Phone to use Face book					

Section III: Interpersonal Relationship
  Read each of the statements and check the response that best reflects you .You can communicate your choice by inserting appropriate code in the given space. Please read the meaning associated with each code to be specific in your choice of code
            1. Never   2. Rarely   3. Sometime   3. Often   5.Always

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I personally visit all my friends and relatives on Eids					
2.	I greet all my friend and relatives through cell phone on Eids					
3.	I use text messages even while I am talking with family					
4.	I usually attend call while sitting with my family					

5.	I sometimes send text messages while engaging in a conversation with another person					
6.	I feel that because of mobile phone my family life disturbed alot					
7.	Most of the time I communicate with my friend through cell phone					
8.	My friends and family complain about my use of the mobile phone.					
9.	I discuss family matters with my family member daily					
10.	I use cell phone to interact with my brother and sister					
11.	I use cell phone while sitting on a dining table with my family					
12.	I think that face to face communication is going to be end because of mobile phone					
13.	I spend most of my time on social media on my mobile phone					

Thank you for being part of the research work.