



Effects of Social Media on Social Relationships: A Descriptive Study on the Impact of Mobile Phones among Youth Population

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Available online at: www.isca.in, www.isca.me

Received 8th October 2014, revised 25th December 2014, accepted 7th January 2015

Abstract

Society is influenced by social media in myriad ways. It is the media that help them to get information to form opinions and make judgments regarding various issues. It is the media which keeps the people updated and informed about what is happening around them and the world. Here the researcher studied the various impacts of mobile phone among the youth in social relationships. The very specific objectives of the study are (1) to study the influence of other social networking sites or contributing factors on the usage of mobile phones among the respondents (2) to study the extent use of that mobile phones are used the respondents (3) to analyze the positive and negative impacts of mobile phones among the respondents. The study uses the simple random sampling method. The samples were collected from the boys and girls of selected classes. The sample size of the study is 50 respondents. The finding and recommendations of the study highlights the vast scope of social media in the development aspects, meanwhile, the negative impact of mobile phones and other associated supplies are very high. The sensitization and intervention programmes are the real need of the hour to control the ill effects of social net working sites among the teenagers.

Keywords: Media, social relationships, simple random sampling, teenagers.

Introduction

Today's youth are being influenced massively by new and powerful resources. Social Media have flourished in the age of the Internet. It offers a way to keep in touch with new and old friends, network, follow brands and companies, and offers a mini biography of each user's life. The adoption of the mobile phone by young people has been a global phenomenon in recent years. It is now an integral part of adolescents' daily lives and is for the majority, the most popular form of electronic communication. In fact, the mobile phone has turned from a technological tool to a social tool¹. Young people use the mobile phone in positive ways to organise and maintain their social networks. However, there are also negative impacts on young peoples' peer relationships. These can include ostracism and cyber bullying. Similarly, the mobile phone has led to changed dynamics in the family, with issues of safety and surveillance from a parental perspective leading to negotiated changing freedoms for young people. While functional coordination can be beneficial for the family, other problems can arise such as financial difficulties, non-custodial parent access, as well as too much reliance on mobile phone for safety issues and intrusion into young peoples' lives.

The impact of the mobile phone on school as an institution has not however, received as much research. Disruptions to lessons, incidences of cheating and bullying are some of the negative impacts, while texting parents of truants seems to be the only positive for the school. Further research is needed into the consequences of mobile phone use in schools. All these facts led

the researcher to carry out a study on the impact of mobile phones on social relationships.

The impact of the mobile phone on young people's peer groups has been extensive. Adolescence is a time of change and increasing influence of the peer group and thus communication amongst peer group members is central to the identity of the individual². The impact of mobile phone on peer relationships has transformed the peer group into a truly networked society³. So the current study is intended to understand the various impacts of the mobile phone among the youth and social relationships.

Review of Literature: While mobile phones date back to the 1950s, the technology came of age in the 1990s with development of the GSM network in Europe, the appearance of several transmission systems in the U.S., launching of NTT DoCoMo in Japan, and simultaneous growth in the Middle East, the rest of Asia, and Africa⁴. As of 2009, there were almost 4.7 billion mobile phone subscriptions out of a world population of about 6.8 billion⁵.

Today's mobile phones range widely in price and functions. Besides texting and voice capabilities, most phones offer tools such as an address book, a variety of ring tones, a camera, an alarm clock, a calendar, and perhaps an MP3 player or radio. Smart (3G or 4G) phones have Internet access and video capabilities. Mobile telephony has permeated across cultural groups, economic strata, and age cohorts⁶. However, since they

were first introduced, mobiles have enjoyed an especially high uptake among teenagers and young adults.

Young people and mobile phones: Lenhart, *et al.*⁷ surveyed 800 American young people between ages 12 and 17 regarding their use of mobile phones. The researchers report that half of the teens were sending 50 or more messages a day, with older teenage girls sending an average of 100 messages daily. Clearly, text messaging on mobile phones is a vital element of the lives of many American teenagers, though voice calls remain part of their communication patterns as well⁸. Even before the explosion of mobile phone use in the U.S., international research has documented the pervasive use of mobile phones by teenagers and young adults in other parts of the world⁹.

Moreover, young people have been instrumental in developing the potential of the mobile phone. For example, they have been at the forefront of initiating or popularizing lexical shortcuts in text messaging such as the abbreviation “u” for “you” or the acronym “LOL” for “laughing out loud”. They are skilled at screening calls (*e.g.*, using caller ID to ignore calls from Mom; downloading applications that automatically tell certain people “This number is no longer in service” — when, in fact, it is). And they are often masters at economizing on phone bills by beeping a friend — that is, calling but hanging up after a prearranged number of rings — to save the price of a completed call¹⁰.

Mobiles have also helped aid the social emancipation of young people from parental authority¹¹. If teenagers have mobile phones, their parents often feel more security when children travel independently outside the home. Teenagers are also freed from having to talk from a family landline, which is often in quasi-public space (Ling and Baron, *in press*). For young adults living away from home, these freedoms are magnified.

When looking at young people’s use of mobile phones, it is important to consider the social development teenagers and young adults are experiencing. Friendships are being initiated, developed, and broken; membership in a social clique may become significant; romantic ties may emerge; and relationships with family members may shift. These social connections, which used to be negotiated in person (and later on landline phones as well), are now commonly played out via mobile phones. Thus, for young people, the mobile phone is not simply an instrument for conveying information but a lifeline for managing social interaction.

Growing concerns about mobile phones: As mobile phone use has expanded, so have concerns about overuse of the technology. A major issue has been multitasking: texting while attending a class lecture or business meeting; talking on the phone while sitting at a restaurant with a friend; texting while crossing the street; talking or texting while driving. Some situations violate traditional norms of social behavior, while others become safety issues.

In a clever experiment¹² had a clown ride a unicycle across the main square of a university campus in the U.S. Student passersby who were on their mobile phones were less than half as likely to notice the clown as those who were not using personal electronics (such as a mobile phone or iPod). Moreover, those on mobile phones took nearly 83 seconds to cross the square, compared with 75 seconds for those without electronic devices.

Use of mobile phones can also become physically dangerous. The American College of Emergency Physicians Foundation (n.d.) has expressed concern over rising numbers of emergency room cases involving mobile phone users who walked into lampposts, tripped on sidewalks, or entered the street into oncoming traffic. In November 2009, the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that one-quarter of American teenagers of driving age admitted they had texted while driving¹³. In a study six months later, adults acknowledged the same rate of texting¹⁴.

Some researchers have begun to explore how use of mobiles affects people emotionally or socially. Beranuy *et al.* report a correlation between mobile phone use and mental distress, as seen, for example, in deterioration of family and social relationships¹⁵. Hubbard, *et al.*, studied dating partners whose face-to-face conversations were interrupted by a phone call. The researchers found that partners receiving the calls felt negatively about imposing on their waiting partner, while those kept waiting believed their partners had harmed their image by accepting the call. Similarly, Humphreys describes the awkwardness felt by the second member of a face-to-face pair when the first member is using a mobile phone.

Mobile phones have many positive features: convenience, functionality, even the fashion component. But users also dislike some aspects. Beyond obvious issues such as dead batteries, dropped calls, costs, and possible effects from radiation, we need to consider effects on social interaction and personal well-being. All of these concerns constitute what we might call the “dark side” of mobile phones.

Mobile phones are not just communication devices but also used for news and information. It functions as personal media devices for entertainment. It is a part of their identity and is used as a means to express their individuality. It used to negotiate independence from parents in certain areas of life. It is used as a means to establish new friendships and maintain old ones. It is used to support intimate relations. It is used for eve-teasing and viewing pornographic material in public places which the participants think was socially inappropriate and unethical¹⁶.

The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention: The current research is highly influenced by the theoretical frame work of Social- Ecological Model¹⁷ which addresses stop violence before it begins. Prevention requires understanding the factors that influence violence. CDC uses a four-level social-

ecological model to better understand violence and the effect of potential prevention strategies. This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to address the factors that put people at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence.



Figure- 1
The Social-Ecological Model

Prevention strategies should include a continuum of activities that address multiple levels of the model. These activities should be developmentally appropriate and conducted across the lifespan. This approach is more likely to sustain prevention efforts over time than any single intervention.

Individual: The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Some of these factors are age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse. Prevention strategies at this level are often designed to promote attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that ultimately prevent violence. Specific approaches may include education and life skills training.

Relationship: The second level examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. A person's closest social circle-peers, partners and family members-influences their behavior and contributes to their range of experience. Prevention strategies at this level may include mentoring and peer programs designed to reduce conflict, foster problem solving skills, and promote healthy relationships.

Community: The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Prevention strategies at this level are typically designed to impact the climate, processes, and policies in a given system. Social norm and social marketing campaigns are often used to foster community climates that promote healthy relationships.

Societal: The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms. Other

large societal factors include the health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

Methodology

Aims and Objectives of the Study: To study the impact of mobile phones on social relationships among the youth.

General Objective: To study the impact of mobile phones on social relationships among the youth

Specific objectives: i. To study the socio- demographic profile of the respondents. ii. To study the influence of other social networking sites or contributing factors on the usage of mobile phones among the respondents. iii. To study the extent use of mobile phones among the respondents. iv. To analyze the positive and negative impact of mobile phones among the respondents.

Research design: Descriptive research design was used for conducting this study.

Universe of the study: Undergraduate College Students of Arts and Science, Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus, Kerala, Kollam.

Unit of the study: Students of B.B.M and B.Com batches.

Sampling method: The study uses the Simple Random Sampling Method. In this type of Sampling, the respondents are selected without making any particular criteria. The samples were collected from the boys and girls of selected classes. The sample size of the study is 50 respondents.

Inclusion criteria: The respondents should be the undergraduate students of B.B.M and B.Com.

Exclusion criteria: i. Boys and Girls below the age of 17 and above the age of 23. ii. A student not a member of Amritapuri Campus.

Tools of the study: The tool used in the study is questionnaire. A questionnaire is a structured set of questions, the answer to which are to be provided personally by the respondents.

Pilot study: The pilot study was conducted with the questionnaire with the help of 5 student respondents from the three selected batches in the Amritapuri Campus. They were provided a questionnaire and asked to fill up. The co-operation of students was good indeed. They felt a slight difficulty in understanding the scale for some questions. This made the researcher to understand the quality and usefulness of the questions.

Ethical issues: Strict confidentiality was maintained with respect to the data collected for the study.

Results and Discussion

Results: The various findings derived from this study are as follows;

Findings on the socio demographic profile of the respondents:

i. The researcher found that the majority of the respondents are between the age of 20 to 21 ii. The majorities of the respondents are male and (ii) the majority of the respondents belong to Hindu religion iii. In the samples respondents, the majority of the respondents are studying in B.B.M students iv. Majority of the respondents belong to nuclear families and the v. majority of the respondents belong to middle economic status families vi. And the majority of the respondents live in semi-urban areas.

Findings on the influence of other social networking sites or contributing factors on the usage of mobile phones among the respondents:

i. multiple usage of internet, face book, twitter, blogs, goggle sites etc directly affect the respondents in performing their tasks, responsibilities, academic performance and social skills ii. in terms of benefits the respondents engaged in social media have increased social confidence, more social support and heightened media literacy iii. social media diversifies teens' social skills, which will help them navigate through a technologically astute society iv. this study clearly pointed out the positive ways of usage of various social networking sites which help a person gain more knowledge and social skills but the usage needs to be timely and appropriate and effective.

Findings on the extend use of mobile phone among the respondents are, i. the majority of the respondents watch television every day ii. the majority of the respondents watch

television for up to 1 hr. iii. majority of the respondent's favorite channels are entertainment channels iv. the majority of the respondents use internet every day v. the study found that the majority of the respondents use internet for 3 to 5 hrs vi. the majority of the respondent's favorite sites are entertainment vii. majority of the respondent read newspapers every day viii. the majority of the respondents spent only 1 to 5 hours for media in a week.

The table below clearly exhibits the extent of mobile phone usage among the respondents in the study.

The above table shows the daily internet usage of the respondents. It is seen that 82 % of the respondents are daily users of internet, while, 18 % of the respondents do not use internet every day. It reveals that majority of the respondents daily use internet.

Findings on the impact of mobile phones on social relationships of the respondents:

i. the majority of the respondents have a high degree of hospitality ii. majority of the respondents try to maintain a good and healthy relationship with their siblings iii. majority of the respondents have got helping mentality towards their friends and iv. majority of the respondents do not try to maintain a good relationship with their parents v. majority of the respondents are not having a healthy relationship or interaction with their neighbours vi. the high number of the respondents are not interested to do charity by using their pocket money vii. the very high number of the respondents have trust in authority and are ready to reveal truth.

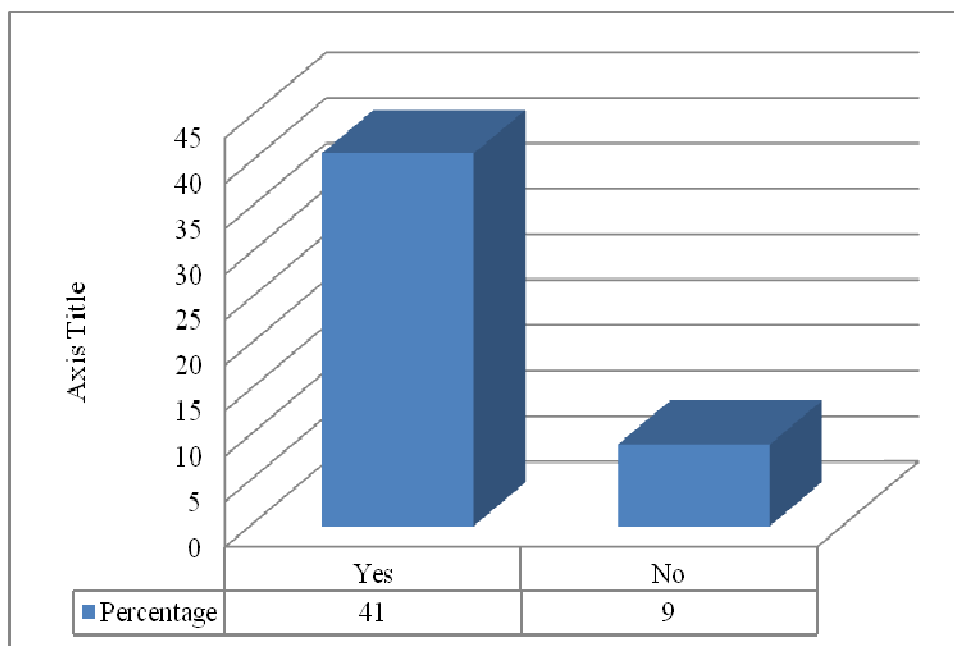


Figure- 2
Daily Internet Usage of the Respondents

Findings on the Negative Impact of mobile phones on the respondents: In considering the disadvantages, respondents identified a number of negative aspects of online social networking including: i. the time-consuming nature of online social networking sites, Indian youth admitting that they waste a lot of time on these sites ii. concern about access to personal information by others, with almost half of the youth worried that 'non friends may see their personal information' iii. another concern among the respondents presented in the finding's are the information posted in the social networking sites may be used against them.

Findings on the Negative Impact of mobile phones on the respondents: The rise of mobile phones helped connecting people in a new way. The major findings i. our time is being stretched thinner and thinner by work and family commitments, but social networking sites offer a chance to communicate in speedy and efficient manner ii. social networking sites like mobile phones allow one person to live a life unhindered by small talk iii. in touch with the world: It isn't just your inner circle of close friends and even closer family members that social networking sites allow one person to communicate easily and effectively.

Discussion: Since their introduction, social networking sites have attracted millions of users, many of whom who have integrated these sites into their daily lives. College students have especially embraced this new way of communicating with classmates and keeping in touch with friends. Though there may be benefits to keeping connected with others by use of these sites, there is also the danger that they may negatively affect students' academic achievement.

From the study it can be inferred that the social networking sites usage influence the academic performance and a large percentage of respondents (88 %) gave moderate level of academic performance. The mobile phones can be used as weapon or as a stepping stone depending on how one views it. As we know our teenagers are our assets and if they have a good academic performance and various social skills, then that would make those assets more valuable and useful.

Recommendations: Future research related to social networking site usage may provide a more in-depth understanding of social networking sites in several ways. Researchers could build upon this study with a larger participant group to either confirm or repudiate the results. Furthermore, replication of this study with multiple interviews per participant may establish a more consistent and reliable data set. Researchers can utilize the results of this study to develop a grounded theory study to create a theory surrounding the effects of social networking sites and reason for use. It would be better to analyze deeply the negative impacts of mobile phones on academic performance in the near future.

Conclusion

The mobile phone has influenced on young people's peer groups enabling a truly networked society. It has also impacted the evolving relationships within the family; especially by the increased negotiating power the mobile phone gives to young people in regard to curfews and safety issues. Schools and educational settings report that student's mobile phone use disrupts teaching and reduces student's attention in class, resulting in negative educational outcomes. However, the impact of the mobile phone on the social institution of the school has not been widely researched and is one which has the potential to cause many problems in the future.

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