

MOBILE PHONE USAGE IN RELATION TO SELF-ESTEEM AND LONELINESS AMONG GIRL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Now days, the mobile phone has become the most indispensable part of peoples' life without which they are not able to mediate through numerous circumstances of daily life activities. It is not only a means of communication but also navigates and serves the other needs, especially of younger users. The purpose of the present study is to see the relationship of mobile phone usage pattern with self-esteem and loneliness of students. For the purpose of data collection, The Problematic Use of Mobile Phone (PUMP) Scale developed by Lisa J. Merlo, Amanda M. Stone, and Alex Bibbey (2013), The Revised UCLA Scale (Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona; 1980), and Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) were used. The scales were administered to 80 girl students and the obtained data were analyzed through using t-test and correlation analysis. The obtained result indicated that the girls with high mobile usage pattern reported less self-esteem and faced high loneliness while the girls with low mobile usage reported more self-esteem and low loneliness.

Keywords: Mobile Phone Usage, self-esteem and Loneliness.

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Introduction

“The mobile phone has come quite a long way from its beginning in the early 1980s when it was the size of a small briefcase” (Lipscomb, et al., 2005). Now a day, the mobile phone is viewed as the most commonly used interactional device and has become an indispensable tool of each and every students across the globe. Earlier, when the mobile phone first appeared it was built with a feature of voice calling but now it can serve the other functions as well that are beyond imagination. It has been found that the students use mobiles to have an access to internet in order to make their life easy as there is ongoing trend of using mobile phones for everything like shopping, social interaction, business etc.

As talking about its utility, the mobile phone devices bridge the gap of relationship between the people through maintaining communication and it also gradually erodes the direct individual contact (Wale and Gillard, 1994). One of the major influences of the over use of the mobile phones has been found on the adolescents as they are most fascinated by these types of gadgets. According to Igarashi, Takai and Yoshida (2005), the young people have been found to spread their communicational frequencies especially on the social media and found it as a medium of optimizing social relationships due to which mobile phones are becoming renowned among them. And on the other hand, mobile phone gadgets are causing unaware and destructive problems. According to Ehrenberg, Jukes, White and Walsh (2008), the excessive use of mobile phones may lead to a significant problem of mobile phone addiction among the heavy users.

As far as the researches are concerned in this field, show some important link between the mobile phone use and the time spent on it. When the mobile phone addiction occurs then this tend to facilitates the time spent on talking on the phone and therefore calling and texting messages goes high (Billieux, Van der Linden, D’Acremont, Ceschi, and Zermatten, 2007). And according to Ozcan and Kocak (2003) and Walsh, White, Cox, and Young (2011), mainly investigated about how many calls are made and the messages done in order to find out the behavioral cause for the mobile phone usage. This type of mobile phone behavior shows greater use of the mobile phone that is beyond the limit and uses the mobile phone for much greater number of hours in doing calls, sending messages, surfing internet through mobile phones etc.

High Mobile Usage refers to extensive use of the mobile phone whether required or not. So this type of behavior is found to be associated with self-esteem and loneliness. In the recent work done by Smith (2012), he found that the young people especially between the age group from 18 to 24 years old communicate through exchanging text messages by using Wireless Mobile device (WMD), and about 109.5 text messages on an average were exchanged in a single day. The main reason for the higher mobile phone usage among students could be a need to remain connected 24 hours with each other. It was also found through interviews that a most appealing opinions of every student was to remain available everywhere at all times (Thomé, Dellve, Härenstam, and Hagberg (2010). One of the facts that increase the risk of greater mobile phone use is the expectations of the young adult to remain constantly connected with each other. And low mobile usage generally depicts the appropriate use of the mobile phone not in an extensive way. It describes the use of the mobile phones only when it is necessary.

Self-esteem:

Self-esteem generally refers to how we value or evaluate ourselves. “Self-esteem can be defined as a personal worth or worthiness” (Rosenberg, 1965). It affects our overall perception about ourselves and others, relationship, work etc almost every part of our lives. There are mainly two types of self-esteem, one is positive self-esteem and other is negative self-esteem. The Positive self-esteem makes our potential stronger and provides strength to take responsibility and ability to learn through the mistakes made by us. It helps in developing confidence, self-direction, non-blaming behavior, optimism, independent, cooperative nature, comfortable in handling different variations in emotions, taking care of the self, and capability to voice opinions, especially “no”. While the negative self-esteem causes negativity in perception of life, not able to trust and blame others for mistake, incapable in managing challenges and feeling of perfection prevails, and more over feels unloved and unlovable etc.

The young people tend to opt for the higher mobile phone use might be associated with improved self-identity and status comparing with peers, feel assured through connectivity and social interaction with other people and find it as medium for entertainment as well (Ozcan and Kocak, 2003; Plant, 2000;and Srivastava, 2005). It has been found that, mobile technology provides an association that can affect the self-esteem negatively which influences mobile use pattern. It is

clear from the several research findings, higher usage of the mobile phone decreases self-esteem of an individual.

Some of the research findings showed that mobile phone use among males is higher as compared to females. According to Billieux, Van der Linden, and Rochat (2008), they found that the female are more dependent on their mobile phone for many purposes and its usage is higher among them (Walsh, White, Cox, & Young, 2011). There is no clear cut evidence of the mobile use on the dimension of self-esteem among gender difference. In Bianchi and Phillips (2005) study, conducted on females university students obtained that they are highly engage in mobile phones most probably due to long distance problem in order to maintain social interaction. Females do so to maintain connectivity with the persons they are intimate with (Lemish and Cohen, 2005), and also for having indirect means of communications, they do calls especially in the evening (Toda, Monden, Kubo, and Morimoto, 2004), and female university students also prefer to do texting to eliminate communication gap (Billieux, Van der Linden, and Rochat, 2008). This sort of mobile usage behavior is observed in the females may be because of the contact that they want to make with their family and friends so at least they may remain in touch with them in spite of having long distance.

Another outcomes of the overuse of the mobile phone is that the adolescents feel aloof when remain apart from mobile phones and they feel a strong urge to use it to do communication and using e-mail or doing online chatting. In a research investigation Kubey, Lavin and Barrows (2001) found an interesting result that the person who depend on the internet usually do online interaction instead of face to face communication through email or other source due to which they spent several hours on it. And sometimes for getting social support, they also look forward for the online internet means of communication (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000).

The greater use of mobile phones has been found to be related with low levels of self-esteem, anxiety, depression as well as loneliness. In a study conducted by Jee Hyun et al. (2007) on about 595 Korean students obtained a result which suggests that over mobile usage might lead to cause depression, increased interpersonal anxiety, and decreased rate of self-esteem. Some researchers have found that the extreme use of the mobile phone negatively affects the self-esteem (Ha,

Chin, Park, Ryu, and Yu, 2008), and excessive involvement with the mobile device can lower the self-esteem (Walsh, White, Cox, and Young, 2011).

Loneliness:

Loneliness is a kind of a feeling that makes an individual alone and apart from the general day to day experiences. According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), “Loneliness is a negative emotion that comes about through a discrepancy between desired and achieved levels of social contact”. And according to Lopata (1969), “loneliness is an emotion experienced by an individual who wishes for a level of contact unlike from the one currently encountered”.

The influence of the mobile phone usage has also been found on the loneliness through numerous studies. In a study by Arslan (2013), shows a clear cut picture of increased risk of the problematic mobile device usage when duration for phone calling enhances, but it is also somehow decreases the feeling of loneliness among adolescents. So some of the researches claim that when the usage of the mobile increases then, the risk of becoming lonely also increases as there is a decline in face to face communication and the person is not emotionally involved, while in some cases this communication pattern decreases loneliness may be because of the insignificantly large number of the people are available to do interaction, although it is an indirect support.

Loneliness is a situation that can be experience even when we are not actually lonely. It depends from person to person. According to Masi, Chen, Hawkey, and Cacioppo (2011), “an individual may be lonely in a crowd or socially contented while alone”. According to Jin and Park (2012), when the amount of mobile phone calling increases then there are more chances of developing loneliness as the individuals gets engage in indirect communication which demonstrate that direct one to one communications are linked with low rates of loneliness. The result of the numerous studies shows that when a person feels lonely he or she has a tendency to make frequent calls and messages to overcome that feeling. Some findings have also revealed that lonely people have tendency to make the use of their mobiles extensively in order to fulfill the gap of their loneliness. Also in a research investigation by Takao, Takahashi, and Kitamura, (2009), it can be conveyed that a person who feels lonely is more curious to remain in contact

with different persons (like peers, significant others etc) frequently through calling or messaging to bridge the gap of their loneliness. Thus, the excessive or problematic mobile device usage could predict the some level of loneliness among students.

Objectives: The objectives of the present research objectives are:

- 1) To examine the difference on self-esteem between females with high and low mobile phone usage.
- 2) To examine the difference on loneliness between females with high and low mobile phone usage.
- 3) To examine the relationship between self-esteem and loneliness among females.

Hypothesis: The proposed hypotheses of the present study are:

- 1) There is no difference on self-esteem between females with high and low mobile phone usage.
- 2) There is no difference on loneliness between females with high and low mobile phone usage.
- 3) There is no relationship between self-esteem and loneliness among females.

METHOD

Sample: The sample consisted of 80 girls students (graduation and post-graduation) whose age group ranged from 18-25 years. All subjects were randomly selected from different departments of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

Tools: The following tools were used to achieve the objectives of the present study.

(1) The Problematic Use of Mobile Phone (PUMP) Scale:

The Problematic Use of Mobile Phone Scale (PUMP) was created by Lisa J. Merlo, Amanda M. Stone, and Alex Bibbey (2013) is a 20-item five point likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “somewhat agree”, to “strongly agree” giving the scores from 1 to 5 respectively. The PUMP Scale demonstrates excellent internal consistency .94.

(2) Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale:

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965. It is a scale of total 10 items out of which five items are reversed scored. It is a four point likert scale format ranging

from “strongly agree”, “agree”, “Disagree” to “strongly disagree”, scores are coded from 3 to 0 and the reversed items are scored from 0 to 3.

(3)The Revised UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale:

The Revised UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale was developed by Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona in 1980. It consists of total 20 numbers of items out of which 10 items are reversed scored, it is a four point scale ranging from “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes” to “often” which is coded from 1 to 4 and the reverse items are given the score from 4 to 1. The internal consistency was found to be ranged from .83 to .92 and Test-retest reliability of the test is .65. The validity of the test is .60.

Data analysis

In this study, statistical analysis included calculation of t-test, Pearson Product Moment of Correlation and quartile deviation was calculated to obtain the high mobile usage (Q3) and low mobile usage group (Q1).

Result

Table1: Showing mean, standard deviation and t- value of self-esteem and loneliness with high and low mobile phone usage among girl students.

	N	Mean	Std	t-value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Self-esteem High Mobil Usage	40	15.88	2.911	-3.584	.001
Low Mobile Usage	40	18.75	4.156		
Loneliness High Mobile Usage	40	46.28	7.390	3.080	.003
Low Mobile Usage	40	41.22	7.277		

From table 1, the obtained result showed that the mean and standard deviation values on self-esteem with high and low mobile phone usage were found to be 15.88 and 18.75; and 2.911 and 4.156 respectively and the t-value of self-esteem was found to be -3.584 which is significant at .001 level of significance. And, the obtained values of mean and standard deviation on the feeling of loneliness with high and low mobile phone usage were found to be 46.28 and 41.22; and 7.390 and 7.277 respectively and the t-value of loneliness was found to be 3.080 which is significant at .003 level of significance.

Table 2: Showing values of Pearson Product Moment of Correlation between the feeling of self-esteem and loneliness among girl students with high and low mobile phone usage.

	High Mobile Phone Usage	Low Mobile Phone Usage
Loneliness	-.269	.324*
Self-esteem	-.313*	-.178

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From table 2, the value obtained for the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation on the feeling of loneliness with high and low mobile phone usage was -.269 and .324 respectively. And, the obtained value of correlation on self-esteem with high and low mobile phone usage was found to be -.313 and -.178 respectively. And both the values of correlation are significant at .05 levels of significance.

Interpretation

From table 1, as it showed that the obtained values of mean for high and low mobile phone usage (15.88 and 18.75 respectively) differ from each other with the feeling of self-esteem and the obtained t-value shows that there is a significant difference between the two groups as the value of mean for high mobile phone usage group is lower than the low mobile phone usage group and

it may be predicted as the students who are the high mobile phone users show lower rates of self-esteem where as students with the low mobile phone usage does not possess lower level of self-esteem. This can be stated as, when some students does not have any one around themselves to communicate with them then usually their level of self-esteem goes low, but this feeling cannot be overcome by spending more time in using their mobile phones. It is found that the participants who possess lower self-esteem shows the tendency of making lots of calls and texting more frequently (Bianchi and Phillips, 2005). High mobile phone users does not find the courage within them to do direct communication so they in turn engages in more indirect means of communication to get support and affiliation. Another study depicts that the teenagers use to spend more time in social networking sites that have lower levels of self-esteem as compared to higher self-esteem adolescents (Steinfeld, Ellison and Lampe, 2008).

And, obtained values of mean (46.28 and 41.22 respectively) for high and low mobile phone usage with the feeling of loneliness and the obtained t-value shows that both the groups differ from each other and the value of mean for high mobile usage group is more than the low mobile usage group which means that the students who uses mobile phones for the greater time period faces the trouble of loneliness whereas the students which are lower users of the mobile phones does not found to have the feeling of loneliness may be because the students who are the higher user of the mobile phone does not encounter with face to face interaction and mostly busy in using their mobile phones to gain the sense of security which further increases their feeling of loneliness.

The high mobile phone usage predicts the loneliness among females; one of the reasons that can be estimated for this is that females mostly have an urge to remain connected with their near and dear ones due to which they uses mobiles phones for greater number of hours which helps in fostering their confidence but remain aloof and feel lonely. Study across females in university showed more mobile device usage for enhancing social communication or relationships which can diminish the long distance factor (Bianchi & Phillips, 2005).

Form table 2, the obtained values for the correlation between high mobile phone usage and the feeling of loneliness was found to be -.269 which shows negative correlation between high

mobile phone usage and loneliness which depicts that as use of the mobile phone goes high there is an increment in the level of loneliness and the value of correlation between low mobile usage and loneliness was .324 which shows positive relationship between the two, may be because of the higher mobile phone usage substitutes human contact and in search of connectedness and entertainment it inculcate lonely feeling within themselves. Reid and Reid's (2007) study came to a conclusion that the person who feel lonely prefers to makes more calls and messages such as SMS (Short Message Service) instead of having direct communication as they prefer to have less intimate contact method.

On the contrary, the correlation values between high and low mobile phone usage with the feeling of self-esteem was found to be -.313 and -.178 respectively which shows negative relationship exists between the two which means that as the use of the mobile phone increases, which further decreases the self-esteem and lower usage of mobile devices causes enhancement in the self-esteem which may be explained as a fact that the higher use makes the students feel less confident and develops non-directional blaming behavior, and makes them incapable to overcome the problems that decreases their self-esteem. Numerous empirical studies illustrated that the some psychosocial factors are also found to depict dependency on the internet such as self-esteem, loneliness, depression and social skills (Caplan, 2002, 2005; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000; and Wang, 2001).

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