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Mobile Phone Culture and its Psychological Impacts on Students' Learning at the University Level

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Abstract

Mobile Phone Culture is the most widely used term in the present era. Mobile phone has affected almost every field of life but its effects on students' learning especially at university level are deep and in multidimensional and multifarious. Our youngsters have been completely mesmerized and hypnotized by this magical device. Now it has become an essential part of modern life and is playing a vital role in decreasing distance and increasing communication among people. This small device has done that work which was not even accomplished by great leaders and even wonderful inventions. It has made the people closer and closer day by day.

The study was conducted in order to determine the effects of mobile phone on the performance of students at university level. A small sample consisting 390 students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar Campus, Pakistan was taken by giving representation to all the students of all the programs offered in the campus. A 25 item questionnaire on five stages scale was administered to the students. Data was analyzed by using SPSS XIV. Most of the students claimed that they can contact with their teachers and class mates to discuss the educational matters. They also utilize the mobile phone to share the useful information with their class fellows, to consult dictionary and thesaurus for educational purposes. On contrary to this they are agreed that the mobile phone is wasting the students' precious time and money. Moreover it

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has increased the rate of telling lie among students. It has also put everlasting impacts on our culture.

Key Words: Mobile Phone Culture, Role and Impacts, Students' Learning Achievements

Introduction

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2004), mobile phone is a telephone that does not have wires and works by radio that can be carried with to use every where.

According to Rich Ling (2003), the mobile phone has fundamentally affected our society, accessibility, safety, and security, co-ordination of social and business activities and use of public places. It has just become the part of culture of every region in the world.

The craze of mobile phone started after 1980's in the world, but it has now touched the level of esteem. First it was just for a status symbol but now it has become a dire need of the day and is in the reach of everyone, even a person whose per month income is 2000 rupees.

According to a famous writer and researcher on mobile phone, Jon Agar (2005), until not very long ago, the mobile phone was expensive and the preserve of a rich few. Today the cell phone is everywhere and so common that it goes unnoticed.

Mobile phone culture stepped in the land of Pakistan after 1990s but mobile phone got its fame after 1994 after the establishment of some cellular networks. Now, every one person out of two in the world and every one person out of three in Pakistan has a mobile phone.

According to the figures from Eurostate, the European Union's in-house statistical office (2006) the total number of mobile phone subscribers in the world was estimated at 2.14 billion in 2005. The subscriber count reached 2.7 billion by end of 2006, and 3.3 billion by November 2007, thus reaching an equivalent of over half the planet's population. Around 80% of the world's population has access to mobile phone coverage, as of 2006. This figure is expected to increase to 90% by the year 2010.

The Effects on University Students

The effects on university students' learning are both positive and negative. Most of the students are in adulthood and this is a very significant and crucial period of age. As Fredrick Tracy (2006) wrote, history is full of records of reckless and daring exploits of young man, some of which have resulted in great good and others in great evil.

Some positive and healthy impacts and effects of mobile phone on students' performance at the university level include:

- a. To contact easily with the teachers, classmates and parents.
- b. To trace easily the teachers, classmates for the solution of educational problems.
- c. To use internet to search out the useful information.
- d. To use the mobile as minicomputer:

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- e. To use dictionary and thesaurus:
- f. To read news:
- g. To listen F.M radio for entertainment
- h. To find out the translation of verses of Holy Quran
- i. To make photos and movies
- j. To use blue tooth infrared technology to transfer the data from mobile phone to mobile phone or to computer and computer to mobile without any cost in few seconds. In it, data can be transferred even from other mobile or computer which is 15 to 20 feet away.
- k. To handle and move easily because it is light weight and so on...

According to Ansari (2007) it has a number of negative and unhealthy impacts and effects on students' performances at the university level, including the wastage of time and money. Its vibration and use may be harmful for health.

According to Awaz (2008), Sir William Stewart in his book "Mobile Phones and Base Stations" narrated that exposure of radio frequency causes great absorption of energy in the tissues of head which is harmful for nervous system. Vibration of mobile phone also has effects on the pumping of blood. Heat of mobile phone also causes skin problem, rays from tower are also harmful and it is suggested that towers should be 16 KM away from population.

According to Awaz (2008), mobile phone affects the social life and health of all society members as well as university students. Some effects are as follows:

- a. It is a cause of disturbance to university students when they are busy in their lecture or projects in class rooms or libraries.
- b. It seems that it may cause increase in decline of moral values. With the use of mobile phone, now students feel no shy to tell a lie. When they are sitting in hotel or park, they tell to their parents or teachers that they are sitting in the library.
- c. Loss and misplacement of mobile phone is very common. The student who loses his/her mobile phone also undergoes tension and this affects studies.
- d. Mobile phone is a source to introduce new culture of co-education in Islamic educational institutions. It is going to become the great tool of free relationship in the young generation. Long conversations on mobile phone lead them to that attitude which is not according to our religious and social acceptability. Their attitude affects their studies greatly. Sometimes they become the victim of emotional, physical and psychological problems.

Sadia Quraishi (2008) has pointed out another negative impact of mobile phone on students' learning by saying that most of the students write the abbreviations while messaging to others. The same habit has been developed, and they use the same abbreviation in solving the papers in the examination hall. They write 'U' '2' 'Btw' 'Becoz' 'R' and 'BV' instead of 'You' 'two/to' 'Between' 'because' 'or/are' and 'wife' respectively, which is a wrong way of writing.

Objectives of This Study

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The aim of present study is to discuss the effects of mobile phone culture on students' learning at university level. The objectives are:

1. To evaluate the advantages and effects of mobile phone on university students' leanings
2. To identify the problems due to use of cell phone facing by university students.
3. To suggest possible solutions to the problems caused by cell phone.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted by using the procedure of survey method which is a type of descriptive research. Out of 865 students enrolled in the university campus, 390 students from all the classes were selected. Following is the sample for this study.

Sr. No.	Level of Students	Number of Students
1	Master of Education(M. Ed)	45
2	Bachelor of Education (B. Ed)	45
3	Masters of Business in Administration (MBA)	45
4	Bachelor of Business in Administration. (BBA)	45
5	Masters of Computer Science (MCS)	45
6	Bachelor of Computer Science (BCS)	30
7	Master of Education (M.A Edu)	45
8	Masters in Commerce (M.Com)	45
9	Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)	45
Total		390

A questionnaire of a five point rating scale was developed to collect the data about the effects of mobile phone on students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur at Bahawalnagar Campus as research tool. Twenty five items were carefully included in this rating scale. Students were required to respond on a five point Likert scale. The reliability of the instrument was calculated by using SPSS XIV. The instrument was personally administered to the sample.

To analyze the data, students' responses were converted into numerical scale according to the following description: Strongly Agree 5, Agree 4, Undecided 3, Disagree 2, and Strongly Disagree 1.

The data was analyzed in two steps. Firstly, the average score for each statement was calculated. As it was a five point scale, the maximum average score would be 5 and minimum possible score would be 1.

The effects of mobile phone on students' performance were considered positive or negative depending on how much the average score lied near or far from 5, secondly analyzing each class / level separately the average scores of all the statements were added up and divided by total number of statements. In such a way, an over all average score for a

class/level was calculated which gave a general picture of effects of mobile phone on students' performance and learning of the students of each class/level.

Findings

The findings, drawn out from the data collected through the questionnaire and analyzed in terms of mean score, are given below.

Table 3. Positive impacts of mobile phone on students learning achievements

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
1	The student can easily contact with the teacher for study purposes.	164	140	33	31	22	4.00
2	The student can easily contact with class fellows to get help in studies.	173	147	29	26	15	4.12
3	The student's academic performance has been increased due to this technology.	101	104	98	43	44	3.45
4	The student puts his/her Mobile Phone on vibration while attending classes.	160	103	39	33	55	3.72
5	The Mobile Phone has helped to improve the level of the quality of education.	63	124	21	122	60	3.02
6	The student puts his/her Mobile Phone on vibration before offering prayers.	165	114	47	39	25	3.91
7	The teacher puts his/her Mobile Phone on vibration while delivering lecture.	132	125	21	58	54	3.57
8	The Mobile Phone helps the students to share helping materials among students.	92	202	17	60	19	3.74
9	The student utilizes Mobile Phone to share important/useful information with class fellows.	174	76	42	57	41	3.73
10	The parents of female students feel more satisfaction due to Mobile Phone because their daughters can contact them easily	152	98	72	35	33	3.77
11	Student uses dictionary/thesaurus/calculate of mobile.	122	142	15	87	24	3.64

Table 4. Negative impacts of mobile phone on students learning achievements

S. No	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
1	The student misuses the Mobile Phone.	80	76	77	82	75	3.01
2	The student's Mobile Phone ring tone remains 'On' in the classroom while the teacher is delivering the lecture.	55	127	87	86	35	3.21

3	The student purchase Mobile Phone without the permission of their parents	63	108	77	83	59	3.08
4	The student wastes his/her time in writing/sending useless SMSs to friends/colleagues.	126	103	40	98	23	3.54
5	The student sends missed calls to class fellows to disturb during attending classes.	95	130	21	98	46	3.33
6	The student does not feel hesitation to sending interesting/funny SMSs to his/her teacher.	74	101	43	107	65	3.03
7	The Mobile Phone has put negative impact on student's moral values.	73	189	13	42	73	3.38
8	The Mobile Phone is the wastage of time for students.	151	99	12	65	63	3.54
9	The female student doesn't feel hesitation to give her Mobile Number to male classmates.	55	102	18	122	93	2.75
10	The Mobile Phone Culture has increased the rate of telling lie among students.	102	118	12	103	55	3.28
11	The student feels proud of having costly Mobile Phone.	175	75	43	56	41	3.74
12	The student uses Mobile Phone in the Examination Hall as a source of unfair means.	45	64	63	134	84	2.62
13	The student teases the class fellows by sending missed calls through unknown numbers.	124	101	68	74	23	3.59
14	Student enjoys music on Mobile Phone.	195	114	56	16	9	4.21

Discussion

Mobile phone is helpful for the students for study purposes. Students can use it for exchanging useful information with their classmates about their studies. Students use this fascinating magic device in a better way. It is also helpful for the students as they can contact their parents. The students' academic performance has increased due to this technology. The mobile phone has helped to improve the level of the quality of education. The students utilize Mobile Phone to share important and useful information with classmates. Students use dictionary, thesaurus and calculator available in the mobile phone. The parents of female students feel more satisfaction due to mobile phone because their daughters can contact them easily.

On the negative side of the issue, there are a number of drawbacks of this technology as the mobile phone has put negative impacts on students' moral values and the students misuse their mobile phones. They remain busy in writing and sending useless messages. They tease the students by sending missed calls and messages from unknown numbers. They listen to music and watch movies. In this way they waste their precious time and money in talking and gossiping on meaningless topics with their friends by availing the low rates and free packages offered by the mobile phone companies. The mobile phone culture has also increased the rate of telling a lie among students.

Students can use the mobile phone for exchanging useful information with their fellows about their studies. As we know that at the university level, students are in adulthood and wise enough to recognize their duties. It is the responsibility of students to use this marvelous magic device in

a better way and never misuse it. Universities should play a pivotal role in this regard and promote awareness to utilize this electronic device in a constructive manner. There is a great role of university teachers and especially parents as they should always have an eye on the activities of students and always try to foster the moral values among the students. It is the responsibility of media and mobile phone service provider companies to create this sense of responsibility in the students to use this device in a positive manner.

Conclusions

The results of this study reveal that the students at the university level utilize this wonderful technology in a better way by sharing useful information with their classmates and teachers. The female students belonging to remote areas feel secure and their parents can contact them any time. On the other hand, the mobile phone is also misused by the university students. The university students must be sensible and careful to get maximum advantages from this technology which was a dream 25 years ago, but a reality now. If the students use it wisely and properly then they can improve their education and construct a better future for them.

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