

“A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDE OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR SMART PHONES WITH RESPECT TO DEPENDENCY: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH”

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Abstract : Smart phone is considered as a must have device among the female college students. A focus group study was done on 50 female respondents to study their attitude towards their smart phone. The study revealed that majority of the respondents feels they do not have an existence or survival without the device. Their response showed how much dependent they are on their smart phone to coordinate their day to day activities. A few respondents felt it's up to the usage of an individual that determines whether it is significant for them or not. There were few respondents who said they have a control over the device and they are not dependent too much on the device.

Key words: Smart Phones, female students, dependency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Smart phone is considered as a must-have device among the college students. They feel they do not have a survival without the device. Today's college students feel the smart phone they possess is an extension of their body. Right from the moment they get up, till they sleep the device is seen to be in use among the students. Intentionally or unintentionally, knowingly or unknowingly, the smart phone device controls their day to day activities. It was well said by Marshall McLuhan years ago that technology determines society. In today's scenario, it is the smart phone that determines how an individual should coordinate their day today activities. The college students use it for various purposes right from calling to enriching their knowledge. When interviewed, most of them said smart phone has made their life simpler and convenient.

It is so difficult to see a college student without a smart phone in today's context. The social networking platform has made most of the college students glued to the device. Even in the class room setting, while the teacher is taking class, they find it difficult not to use their device. They can focus on the class room sessions only after external regulations are imposed on their smart phone use.

The moment they think about a friend, they call them or text them. The moment they think about entertainment, they listen to music or watch videos or movies through their smart phone. The moment they think of getting updated about the world around, they visit online news portals. The moment they think about while away the time, they text in group. Each and every moment of their life is occupied by the smart phone device.

It is high time to have some interference in the mobile usage of college students. Some kind of regulations should be imposed by the parents and caretakers in the family side and college authorities on the academic front. If proper interventions are not done, the consequences that the smart device is bringing on the college students will not be that much appealing.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mobile phone is the new digital culture (Ling, 2007). A series of studies based on mobile communication has been put forth by Rich Ling in his book "The Mobile Connection" and he is considered as the pioneer in Mobile Communication (Ling, 2004). Various studies by Leslie Haddon (Youth & Children), Leopoldina Fortunati (Theoretical inquiry into mobiles), Katz & Aakhus, 2002 (Perpetual Contact), all these studies have made youth a central category for understanding the area mobile communication technology. The mobile phone was found to be integrated into its users everyday life (Haddon, 2004, Katz, Hakhus, 2002; Ling 2004). Mobile Communication has grabbed attention among the present researchers. Lot more researches have been done on international scenario, with respect to mobile communication. It has become an upcoming arena in the Indian Context. Mobile Communications and its implications for society are very much seen on Scott Campbell and Rich Ling's works. Both of them have come up with a book "Does Mobile Communication tear us apart, or bring us together?" (Ling & Campbell, 2011; Ling 2008).

In his book, "The Mobile Connection: The cell phone's impact on society", Rich Ling comments on the importance of mobile phone on the real time coordination and the use of texting among the adolescents. His book consists of thousands of interviews and contextual observations based on impact of mobile phone on the day today lives. In an another article by Rich Ling, "We will be

reached”: The use of mobile telephony among Norwegian youth”, examines the use of mobile telephones by teenagers in Norway. The data for this study are based on two sources; first they draw on qualitative interviews with a sample of 12 families with teenagers in the greater Oslo area. In addition, they use a quantitative study of a national sample of 1,000 randomly selected teenagers. The data show that it is boys, most often those who work, that own mobile telephones.

Youth is considered to be a highly targeted group when it comes to the field of communication, Media and Research (Green & Haddon, 2009). Youth and Mobiles (Lorente 2002), is an interesting area for researchers who are much interested to learn and understand the nature of mobile communication (Green, 2003; Katz and Sugiyama, 2006; Yoon, 2003).

Lot of researches have been done on Mobile addiction (Young, 2004). The areas on which were done are Smart phone addiction (Bian & Leung, 2014; Kwon et al, 2013), Problematic Use (Chen & Kim 2013; Martinotti et.al; 2011) of internet and other technologies, and social networking sites (Kuss and Griffiths, 2011).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study was done on undergraduate college students in Coimbatore region. A Focus group study was done on a sample of 50 female undergraduate college students. The study aimed to investigate the attitude of female college students towards their smart phone. The respondents were asked to present their views on smart phone and the significance given by them towards their phone. The respondents were limited to students who possessed smart phone.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below given are the views put across during the focus group study by the female college students with respect to their attitude towards their smart phone.

Comments made in support of smart phone are listed below.

Nowadays smart phone is most important in the world for getting new information. It is good or bad in the way we use it. So mobile phone is important in one's life. (Supriya.P 2nd BA)

Smart phone is the best medium today to communicate with others and to collect information.

My Smart phone is useful for communicating, connecting people, useful to get information from various sites, easy to share information; we can communicate with people all around the world.

I use smart phone to keep contact with my parents in their absence. The mobile is good as well as bad.

I am a hostelite. So it's necessary for me to have mobile phone to communicate with my family.

Mainly it is used for communication purpose, to pass our time, for relaxation, getting news etc. It is useful for academic purposes too.

It is very useful for me to get educational information and it is also reducing my stress by hearing music, and my usage is very much limited.

I feel better more than words, when I possess my mobile phone.

It is useful for my academic purpose and also helps to communicate easily.

I think I will improve myself for communication and academic level when using mobile phone.

Mobile phones are really an essential one in the present world, especially in the academic side. Mobile phones are really useful and it gains more persons through its advantage. It has splendid values. We can use mobile phone for our pleasure also, but that should not cross the limit. According to me, if we use it properly the mobile phones are only for advantages.

Mobile phone is important for communication, information and sometimes also for entertainment. With the help of the mobile phone we can have our time to be saved and we gain more knowledge with in the less time. Different apps provided in the mobile phone helps us to develop in the way what we are using for- “Good Netizen, Good Citizen”.

I could search anything with my mobile. It makes things easy and I could read anything at any time. It manages my time; I could read books in the mobile when the hard copy is not available in the market. If I want to know the meaning of words, I search in Google. It provides me meanings with pictures. If we have control in the usage of mobile phone, we would be away from the disadvantages of mobile phones.

As I have to travel nearly 90 kms daily from home to college, mobile phone plays an important role in my life. Only through this I am able to communicate with my parents in order to keep them informed about my activities. Even during emergency times like accidents, bus problems etc., mobile phone has helped me get help from my family and friends. Next to library, mobile phone has helped me lot to score good marks in academics. Other than books related to my course, I started reading e-books of various genres. During my lonely times, it keeps me engaged. i.e., listening to songs, looking old albums etc. It helps us to capture memories through photos. And it also keeps me in touch with my loved ones 24/7 when ever and where ever we are. It had made possible to work from home and earn money even before completing my course. Through the mobile phone I have learned a lot of things online which would be very useful for my life. The positive or negative impacts of mobile phones depend upon our usage and not on technology development.

As a hostelite, mobile phone has helped me to communicate with my family members and friends who are at distance.

Mobile phone helps me to communicate with my friends and family. It also gives a great hand in getting information about current affairs, for enriching the knowledge etc. sometimes I feel addicted using mobile phone when playing games, texting etc. but I become aware of my addiction and control my usage. In that way, I feel happy about my usage.

I am feeling lucky to use my mobile phone which helps me to know more information, communicate with friends, family and relatives. I feel free to know more about nature , new things etc only due to mobile phone. Nowadays I feel so comfortable to read books through mobile phone

Mobile phone help me connect with my school friends, college friends on a regular basis and to keep in touch with my parents every day. E-learning has become possible to score more through referring a lot of research works on my syllabus which is a more easier way than searching for books in library. Instantly I could get more information on whatever wild imagination I get or anything I want to know about rather than asking people. The information will be more accurate and it makes me to search for more and more and I tend to look for more new things . connecting with my people in social media is more fun.

I use mobile phone to learn music, I just put the mobile phone on music playing for the whole day during holidays. I message only when somebody doesn't attend my call. When I was new to mobile phone I used to text messages in whatsapp, but now I am not interested to use any such apps. Now I use it only for sharing messages, videos and pictures.

Mobile phone is very important because through that we can learn more good things. If we use our mobile phone in a good way, we can gain more. Mobile phone helps me in many ways like taking notes. Through phone I have learnt many things. And it shows me how to be a good person. In my mobile phone I have many important apps that help me to understand about the world. Through mobile phone I have brought many good changes in my life.

I get more help in the area of interaction and exposure.

It is easy for communication. I can communicate with my parents who are far away.

Social networks help to improve my knowledge academically. It helps me know daily events and it also helps to know many information.

Mobile phone has become a part and parcel of our lives.

Without mobile phones communication for emergency purpose is very difficult.

Mobile phones become mandatory. Without mobile phone we are not gathered up in this generation.

It helps in collecting information, entertainment and education.

I use mobile phone maximum for watching movies.

It is a good companion to communicate.

Comments made against smart phone

We should use mobile phone in need of communication only.

Mobile phone is only useful in the field of education.

The mobile phone has played a major role in my life. It had made me lazy and I have lost concentration in academics.

I don't often use mobile phone. But when my phone is not with me, I feel frustrated.

I am not in any social media. So I don't have that much bonding with my mobile phone.

Over usage of mobile phone can separate us from the human relationship and after using mobile, what I feel is I am more stressed and tensed. It doesn't fetch any happiness. And we should have control over it. For me mobile phone is a good servant, but bad master.

Mobile phone is just a simple gadget for communication.

I don't use the phone often unnecessarily. The role of mobile phone is to communicate with others. I use it only for this.

I know it is not a need in my life. But I can't avoid it. But surely I want to get out of it and I will.

Neutral Stand On Significance of Smart Phone On Their Life

Smart phones project both positive and negative effects over every one of us. Due to the wide range of information that is spread through internet media there are people who get benefitted and appreciated in their life at the same time there are people whose life are even spoilt. Smart phone play a major role in everyone's life. It is highly essential for the improvement in life but few hazardous activities can be controlled by the government by taking proper interventions to save many lives

It has become an unavoidable part in my life. It is like a knife that is dangerous when it is in the hands of a murderer. It is safe when it is in the hands of a surgeon. We should decide whether we should be a murderer or a surgeon.

Mobile phones are necessary to communicate and to pass on information. If we use it wisely, then we can make optimum use of it

Mobile phone has become an unavoidable part in my life. But we should know how to avoid it in such a way that it becomes favorable for an individual as well as for the society.

Mobile phone is important only for the necessary purposes and it depends on the hands of the user that it leads to good or bad.

Mobile phone is sometime useful for me sometime an enemy for me.

Mobile phones are mandatory for college students due to their academic orient. It should be used with certain limitations.

It helps me to keep in touch with my friends anytime. Meanwhile, I am too much addicted to it. It causes health issues.

We can use our mobile phone for academic purpose. We can use mobile phone for our personal purposes too but should be reasonable. We should not get addicted to that. That will affect our mind.

According to me, mobile phone has been both boon and bane. But I feel, it would be good if we use it in the right manner. (Kalaivani, 2nd BA English)

Mobile phone has merits and demerits.

Mobile phones have both merits and demerits. Nowadays, most of the important updates are uploaded in the social media. Everyone feels there is a need of mobile phone. Mobile phone acts as a tool for gathering information. At the same time, by using mobile phone, most of them are addicted to the device. Using mobile phone in limited basis would be the right one for each and every individual.

V. FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

From the focus group study, it is evident that a majority of 29 respondents expressed their comments which show their dependency on their smart phone to fulfill their needs.

12 out of 50 respondents were taking neutral stand on the significance of smart phone on their life.

9 out of 50 respondents were having comments which show less dependency on smart phone.

Hence the study has proven that today's female college students are having a dependency over their smart phone for coordinating their day to day life. Smart phones with their numerous features have made the college students to depend on the device on a greater extent.

Many studies have proven about the ill effects of mobile phones on its users. The students can be given some kind of awareness about the ill effects of over dependency on mobile phone from the government side. Or some kind of intervention, either from the family side or from the college side is required to have a control on such dependency. So, “the early, the better” strategy should be adopted from either with in or from external sources.

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