CELL PHONE IN THE HANDS OF STUDENTS- BOON OR TO BAN

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1. Abstract
Mobile Phone Culture is the most widely used term in the present era. Mobile phone has affected almost every field of life. 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 college level. The paper also seeks out the usage patterns of mobile phones as an information access device with respect to these features. The study hopes to address a variety of questions: What are the most common uses of mobile phones amongst the students, its impact on their career and general guidelines and policy to the students, parents and teachers on cell phone use.

Key Words: Mobile Phone, Role, Usage and Impact

2. 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. It is used for many purposes like text messaging (SMS), multimedia messaging (MMS), photo display and recording, video playback and recording, calendaring, etc. College students use cell phones in class, despite knowing that it adversely affects their concentration, according to a study
conducted at the University of New Hampshire. In a university-wide study, student researchers at the UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics found that student cell phone users check their phones an average of one to five times during class. About half of students (51 percent) say that cell phone use in class affects their ability to concentrate and the amount of information they receive during class (52 percent).

3. Review of Literature
Aoki and Downes (2004) noted that mobile phone usage in social contexts has been a less studied area when compared to the research on the engineering and policy aspects of mobile technologies. McGuigan (2005) pointed out that it is quite difficult to find critical research which looks into the cultural value and social purpose of mobile phones. Only recently, research has been published on how people use mobile phones in their daily life. However, a majority of these studies have focused on studying populations within a relatively homogeneous culture. Weilenmann, A., & Larsson, C. (2001) conducted field studies of public use of mobile phones among teenagers in Sweden. Their study shed light on how the mobile phone has come to be used as a tool for local social interaction, rather than merely as a device for communication with dislocated others. Their observations pointed towards the collaborative nature of mobile phone use. The researchers examined how phones were shared and how their field data could be of use when designing new mobile technology and services for the youth.

Katz (1997) explored the possible effects of wireless communication on people’s lives. He identified several levels of effects of such a technology. The “first-order effects” are direct effects that are immediately perceived by users, they include uncertainty reduction, personal security, and personal efficiency. The “second-order effects” are indirect effects which represent the experiences or feelings that people have or may observe in others, they include tighter coupling of domestic production, information immediacy, and contact ability.

The “third-order effects” are the least direct effects that are observed not by users of the technology but by outside observers who study the effects of the technology on the society in general, they include social interaction, social control, and innovative uses or unanticipated usage. Mobile phones are redefining and blurring the line between public and private spaces. Cooper (2002) mentioned that people in public space may be unexpectedly exposed to one side of a two-party private interaction, which can be frustrating with speculations about the missing side of the interaction.

Fortunati (2002) noted that mobile phones favored the progressive encroachment of intimacy in the public sphere.

Aoki and Downes (2004) focused on the behavioral and psychological aspects of cell phone usage among college students. They tried to find the reasons behind why a technology is adopted in a particular way. They identified several attitudinal factors based on the exploratory study including, necessity in modern times, cost efficiency when compared to landline, safety, security and dependency. The study also endeavored to look at the motivational and behavioral characteristics of mobile phone usage. The authors tried to combine their results and the result of previous research to find the trends in usage by the youth.

4. Objectives of the Study
i) To known the reasons for using cell phone by the students.
ii) To analyse the impact of possession of cell phone by the students.
iii) To analyse the interrelationship between level of education with usage rate, restriction by parents, internet access and reason for using the cell phone.
iv) To provide some suggestions to the students, parents and teachers.

5. Methodology
In the fast moving world of today cell phone in the hands of students has given diversions to many of us to think over this topic. Many of the writers have studied this topic in many angles. To give a clear definition to
this problem the paper has been studied by taking an interview randomly with 150 students studying in schools and colleges, who are undergoing their Under Graduation and Post Graduation in various streams. The study covers the month of January to May 2013 in Thanjavur town in Tamilnadu.

5.1 Sources of Data
The study is based on primary and secondary data. For this a questionnaire comprising open and closed ended questions was designed with convenience sampling method and the responses collected was analysed to give a clear meaning to this topic. Apart from this many journals, websites and conversation over telephone with parents and with some teachers was also incorporated. Students were very eager and spurious in giving their response without any hesitation. Like wise full support was extended by their parents and teachers.

5.2 Tool Applied
The collected data was analysed by using Pearson Chi-Square tool.

6. Reasons for Using Cell Phone by Students
- To communicate easily with the teachers, classmates and parents.
- To trace easily the teachers, classmates for the solution of educational doubts.
- To access internet to search out the useful information.
- To use the mobile as minicomputer.
- To use dictionary and thesaurus to know the meaning of some difficult terms.
- To update oneself by reading news.
- To listen F.M radio for entertainment and watch T.V.
- To find out the translation of versus of various religious and regional books like Geetha, Bible, Quran and Thirukkural etc.
- To make photos and movies.
- 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.
- Cell phones are useful to both parents and students when scheduling after-school activities and changes in family plans (such as afternoon pick-up times).
- Older students can conduct phone interviews during class time with teacher supervision.
- Many cell phones now have Internet capability, built-in calculators, and memories able to hold entire books. For schools with limited technologies available to students, cell phones mimic the computers that the classroom may lack.
- To handle and move easily with fast moving world.

7. Impact on Students
The impact on college going students can be 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.

7.1 Positive and healthy impacts and effects of mobile phone on students
- The student can easily contact with the teacher for study purposes.
- The student can easily contact with class fellows to get help in studies.
- The student’s academic performance has been increased due to this technology.
- The Mobile Phone has helped to improve the level of the quality of education.
- The parents of female students feel more satisfaction due to Mobile Phone because their daughters can contact them easily.
- Student uses dictionary/thesaurus/calculator of mobile.
- They like to use the device to for upgrading their knowledge.
- Internet facility has made easy to reach education at any part of the world.
- Research related information can be
accessed instantly.
- They are connected always with their family.
- Alarm usage and calendar references.
- Enjoys music on phones for relaxation.

7.2 Negative and Unhealthy Impacts and Effects on Students

According to Awaz (2008), mobile phone affects the social life and health of all society members as well as students.
- The primary concern is that cell phones distract students.
- It is a cause of disturbance to students when they are busy in their lecture or projects in class rooms or libraries.
- It seems that it may cause increase in decline of moral values.
- 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.
  - Mobile phone may make the students victim of emotional, physical and psychological problems.
- 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.
- Exposure of radio frequency causes great absorption of energy in the tissues of head which is harmful for nervous system.
- The wastage of time and money by students in spending useless SMS to friends.
- Cheating and inappropriate photos are also concerns associated with cell phones.
- Purchasing costly phones without the permission of parents.
- Loss and misplacement of mobile phone is very common. The student who loses his/her mobile phone also undergoes tension and this affects studies.
- Puts negative impact on student’s moral values.
- Students use cell phone in the examination hall as a means of unfair practices.
- Creates a sign of prestige among classmates.

8. General Guidelines to be followed by Institutions in Case of allowing the use of Cell Phone

- Mobile phones should not be used in any manner that may be destructive to the normal class hours
- Students should turn off their Phones during college/school hours.
- Students should be encouraged to use the phone only before or after college hours.
- There are times when it is genuinely appropriate and beneficial for students to have access to a mobile phone; in such situation for example, where there is a need to contact parents or guardians urgently the institution can supply students with donated phones that can call only emergency numbers.
- The policy should apply to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.
- It is important that students display courtesy, consideration and respect for others whenever they are using a mobile phone.
- Mobile phone cameras (still and video) are not to be used anywhere.
- Appropriate action should be taken against any student who photographs or films other individuals without their consent or who sends harassing or threatening messages.
- Disciplinary action should be taken against any student/s who is/are caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments.
- Students should ensure that their
phones are always stored in a safe and secure place.

- The Department does not hold insurance for personal property brought to schools and it will generally not pay for any loss or damage to such property.

- Staff and students should be discouraged from bringing any unnecessary or particularly valuable items to school.

9. Research Hypotheses

**H01:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and number of users.

**H02:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and frequency of using cell.

**H03:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and reasons for using.

**H04:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and internet access.

**H05:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and restriction by parents.

### TABLE-1 CLASSIFICATION BY NO OF USERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE-2 CLASSIFICATION BY USAGE RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>98</td>
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</table>

### TABLE-3 CLASSIFICATION BY REASON FOR USING MOBILE PHONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>SMS</th>
<th>TALKING</th>
<th>CLARIFICATION OF DOUBTS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE-4 CLASSIFICATION BY INTERNET ACCESS BY STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>PG</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>98</td>
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</table>

### TABLE-5 CLASSIFICATION BY RESTRICTION BY PARENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### NULL HYPOTHESIS TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Calculated Value</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Alternative Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There exist no significant relationship between level of education and number of users</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There exist no significant relationship between level of education and frequency of using cell phone.</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>28.67</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There exist no significant relationship between level of education and reasons for using.</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>26.99</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There exist no significant relationship between level of education and internet access.</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>26.71</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There exist no significant relationship between level of education and restriction by parents.</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis of the hypotheses

**There exist no significant relationship between level of education and number of users.**
- **Table Value**: 9.21
- **Calculated Value**: 31.6
- **Significance Level**: .01
- **DF**: 2
- **Alternative Hypothesis**: ACCEPTED

**There exist no significant relationship between level of education and frequency of using cell phone.**
- **Table Value**: 9.21
- **Calculated Value**: 28.67
- **Significance Level**: .01
- **DF**: 2
- **Alternative Hypothesis**: ACCEPTED

**There exist no significant relationship between level of education and reasons for using.**
- **Table Value**: 13.28
- **Calculated Value**: 26.99
- **Significance Level**: .01
- **DF**: 4
- **Alternative Hypothesis**: ACCEPTED

**There exist no significant relationship between level of education and internet access.**
- **Table Value**: 9.21
- **Calculated Value**: 26.71
- **Significance Level**: .01
- **DF**: 2
- **Alternative Hypothesis**: ACCEPTED

**There exist no significant relationship between level of education and restriction by parents.**
- **Table Value**: 13.28
- **Calculated Value**: 2.04
- **Significance Level**: .01
- **DF**: 4
- **Alternative Hypothesis**: REJECTED

### Findings of the Hypotheses

**H1:** There exist a significant relationship between level of education and number of users, i.e., the number of users are more in graduation level than in post graduation and least in school level. Therefore our alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**H2:** There exist a significant relationship between level of education and frequency of using cell. At school level student’s usage rate is low when compared to graduation and post graduation level. Maximum frequency is found at graduation.

**H3:** There exist a significant relationship between level of education and reasons for using. The main reasons for using cell phone is for SMS in graduation level followed by talking and maximum for talking in school level. Contact with teachers for clarification is least in all the cases.

**H4:** There exist a significant relationship between level of education and internet access. The students at graduation level use internet more than at school level for getting material for their syllabus.

**H5:** There exist no significant relationship between level of education and restriction by parents. This alternative hypothesis has been rejected. This shows that parents at all level expose equal restrictions.

### Suggestion to Teachers in Schools/Colleges

Detractors say that drawbacks to student cell phones outweigh the benefits.

- Education institutions like schools and colleges and private institutes should ban the use of cell phone in the premises entirely.
Cell phones should not be used by the teachers during class hours.

The negative impact of using cell phone must be discussed by the staff to the students often.

Students caught with cell phones during testing must be given automatic failing grades.

Teachers should post school and classroom policies regarding cell phones, and the class should discuss these policies at the beginning of the school year.

Students can be taught with other extracurricular activities to make their free time useful by their staff.

Teachers should be a role model for their students, since students respect and imitate more their staff than their own parents.

10.1. Suggestions to Parents

- Parents should never encourage their kid in using the cell phone.
- They should not force the institution to grant permission for usage of phone to their child.
- The should always keep a watch on the activities of children.
- They should try to engage them whenever they find time, so that children never feel loneliness with themselves since it one of the reason for the students to use cell phone.
- They should also discuss them with the harmful effects and its negative consequences.

10.2. Suggestions to Students

- Everything when we deal pragmatically comes many negative consequences therefore students can be restricted by their parents, teachers and well wishers in using cell phone.
- Every student must have a self control and self determination in oneself.
- Students should engage themselves by reading books, Journal, novels or listening music.
- They can also go for other means of using cell phone like vocabulary development, dictionary reference etc apart from sending SMS or gossiping with friends.
- They should use only at the time emergency only.

11. Findings

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 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 is misused by the students. 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. It is the responsibility of students to use this marvelous magic device in a better way and never misuse it. Institutions 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 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.

12. Conclusions
The results of this study reveal that the students at the school and college 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 students. If the students use it wisely and properly then they can improve their education and construct a better future. Mobile phones today go beyond just voice communication and provide a platform for development of student’s society. The fact lies all in the hands of the students only through their self control and self determination. They should realize the impact and also teach others. The World Lies in the hand’s of Students.

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