



THE EFFECT OF CELL PHONE DEPENDENCY ON SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG GRADUATES

Suyog G.

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Jain University, Bangalore.

ABSTRACT

Mobile phones are among the technological tools with the greatest presence in the market. Excessive use of mobile phones interferes with daily life, interaction with parents, alter interpersonal relationships and the user's health and well-being is also affected. Phone addiction is a compulsive disorder that negatively affects the individual and his or her environment for common adverse psychological health signs and symptoms attributed to cell phone over usage are headache, irritability, insomnia, anxiety and lack of concentration. Nomophobia is a condition of being without a phone which leads to dependence syndrome. Social anxiety is a fear of social situations as the person feels negatively evaluated by others with leads to self-consciousness. People avoid face to face interactions and prefer conversations over the phone and pretend to use their phones to avoid eye contact with others. Social anxiety can differ from one person to another. Their anxiety reduces by using their phones as they don't have to face the person personally. This paper investigates whether cell phone dependency has an effect on social anxiety on graduates. The sample size of the study is 30 and simple random sampling technique was used with questionnaire method. It was hypothesized that social anxiety and cell phone dependency is positively related. The findings show that the graduates are dependent on their cell phones but not to the extent where they have social anxiety.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, Cell Phone, Dependency, Graduates, Technology .

INTRODUCTION

Cell phones are an important part of our daily lives. The need for the usage and its dependency increases with every passing generation. With every positive response we get from our social networking apps, dopamine gets released in our body which makes us feel good and this increases the probability for an individual to become addictive and increase this dependency on cell phones.

Cell phone dependency is also considered as obsessive compulsive disorder. It is associated with anti-social behavior with uncontrolled use and withdrawal symptoms. The dependence causes reduction in work, social nuisance, efficiency, and psychological addictions. This behavior may affect cognitive functions and reduce thinking capabilities. Excessive use of cell phones forms a habit which affects the person's ability to pay attention, regulate emotions and to remember things. The individuals who are dependent on their cell phones show signs of restlessness without the phone. These individuals tend to procrastinate and get distracted with the usage of smart phone applications. Over usage of cell phones causes social anxiety. It is a fear of interaction with other people that brings on self-consciousness, feelings of being negatively judged and evaluated and as result leads to avoidance.



People get anxious and feel uncomfortable to speak to people face to face. People have a notion that they won't be able to perform in social situations. Over time accessing the mobile phones due to an uncomfortable situation or feeling leads to an escapist pattern of behavior. Development of coping skills get affected as the user relies on

the cell phone to relieve anxiety. It makes people to fear the scrutiny of those around them which in turn affects the person's self-esteem. Social anxiety causes symptoms of trembling, perspiration, nausea and blushing. People try avoiding situations that cause these symptoms which has an impact on their social capabilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Aljohara A. Alhassan, Ethar M. Alqadhib, Nada W. Taha, Raneem A. Alahmari, Mahmoud Salam and Adel F. Almutairi (2018) studied on "The relationship between addiction to smartphone usage and depression among adults: a cross sectional study". According to this study addiction to smartphone usage was a common worldwide problem among adults, which might negatively affect their wellbeing. This study investigated the prevalence and factors associated with smartphone addiction and depression among a Middle Eastern population. This cross-sectional study was conducted using a web-based questionnaire distributed via social media. The results showed positive correlation between smartphone addiction and depression is alarming. Reasonable usage of smart phones is advised, especially among younger adults and less educated users who could be at higher risk of depression.

Junlan Xu (2017) studied on "Research on the Relationship among Phone Addiction, Social Anxiety and Loneliness in High School Students". According to this study Phone addiction causes significant social and psychological damage to people who excessively use mobile phones. Rapid social rhythm, busy daily life, and complex interpersonal relationships make people, especially the student groups, increasingly dependent on mobile phones, and also gradually change their communication behaviors. This paper used the way of psychological empirical study to investigate 220 students in a Beijing high school through the Mobile Phone Addiction Index, Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale and UCLA Loneliness Scale. The results showed that: (1) the ratio of phone addiction among phone users of high school students is about 17.95%, and it varies significantly from different school department; (2) there is no correlation between phone addiction and social anxiety; (3) there is a higher sense of loneliness in classmates who have phone addiction. It can be seen that in modern society, mobile phone has become the main tool of social communication, and that it has little effect on social anxiety. Loneliness is one of the main reasons for phone addiction of high school students. Therefore, this paper suggested that in order to prevent high school students from excessively relying on the phone, the school need to take measures to limit the time of students using mobile phones; and strengthening the intimate relationship among school, family and students can help to reduce phone addiction by lowering the loneliness of students.

Demirci et.al., (2015) conducted a research to check if there is a relationship between severity of smart phone usage and sleep quality, depression and anxiety in university students. 319 university students were divided into smartphone non user groups, low smartphone user group and high smartphone user group. Results showed that in the smartphone addiction scale, females scored higher than males. Depression, anxiety and daytime dysfunction were higher in high smartphone user group than low smartphone user group. Darcin et.al., (2015) in their study "Smartphone Addiction in Relation with Social Anxiety and Loneliness among University Students in Turkey" took a sample of 367 had to answer a set of questions about their style of smartphone use, Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short version (SAS-SV), UCLA Loneliness Scale and Brief Social Phobia Scale. Results revealed that smartphone users who had their first mobile phone in an early age and who use their smartphone primarily to access social network sites have an addictive use of smartphone. Also social phobia in both sexes and loneliness in females make Smartphone users more prone to addictive usage of smart phones.

Lee et.al., (2014) examines the association of social anxiety, personality factors and loneliness with mobile phone usage preference on the basis of text messaging and voice calling. Results revealed that loneliness and social anxiety predicted preferences of calling and text messaging. Further analysis examined the time spent on voice calls and text messages and the number people called or exchanged text messages also revealed openness to experience. Kang et.al.,(2014) examines the relationship between psychological traits and compulsive behaviors of smartphone users. The results suggest that compulsive usage of

smartphone and techno stress are positively related to psychological traits including locus of control, social interaction anxiety, materialism and the need for touch. Gender differences are also found.

Adams and Killer (2013) in their study “Sleep Quality as a Mediator Between Technology-Related Sleep Quality, Depression and Anxiety” examines how sleep time, sleep quality, depression and anxiety are affected by technology with a sample of 236 participants who have kept a record of sleep diaries and completed self-report questionnaires. 47 percent of students reported waking up to text messages and 40 percent of students reported waking up to phone calls. Regression analyses reported that when the technology use is high after the onset of sleep it led to poorer sleep quality which predicted symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Pierce (2009) examines how teens utilize socially interactive technologies like mobile phones and internet and the role of social anxiety they face while communicating either face to face or technologically. Results showed that males were less anxious talking to people face to face than females. Females were reported more comfortable using socially interactive technologies rather than talking face to face.

Overuse of mobile phones led to stress and disturbed sleep patterns for women and symptoms of depression was associated for both men and women.

Reid and Reid (2007) examined whether loneliness and social anxiety led to preferences of cell phone users towards texting or talking on their cell phone. Results from an internet questionnaire with a sample of 158 showed that lonely participants showed greater preference in voice calls rather than texting as it was less intimate and anxious participants showed preferences to texting rather than voice call. Madell and Muncer (2007) examined why people use either internet or mobile phones to control their interactions. Focus group methodology was used and they found out that young people preferred using mobile phones for interactions because they could have a control over them unlike face to face interactions. Hyun et.al., (2007) evaluated the psychological problems due to excessive cell phone use in adolescents. Results from 595 participants expressed depressive symptoms, interpersonal anxiety and lower self-esteem and were also not able to control their usage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

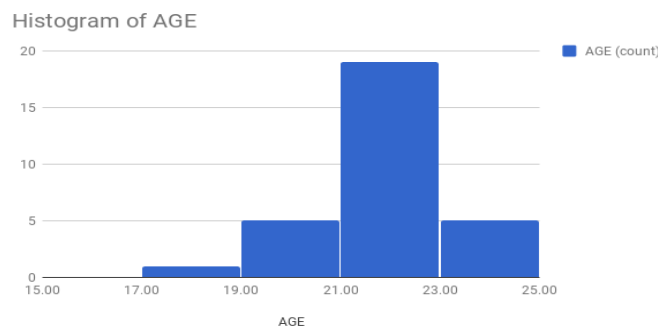
- To understand the level of cell phone dependency among graduates.
- To find whether cell phone dependency leads to social anxiety.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on primary data and secondary data. The samples are selected using non-random purposive sampling method. The sample size is 30. The research is quantitative in nature. Questionnaire method is been used for collection of data. Closed ended questions were used with a 5 pointer scale. The responses were analyzed using simple statistical method.

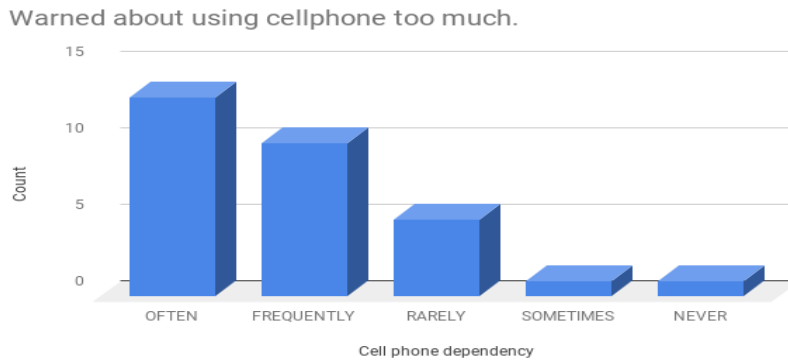
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Figure 1: Age Group of the Respondents



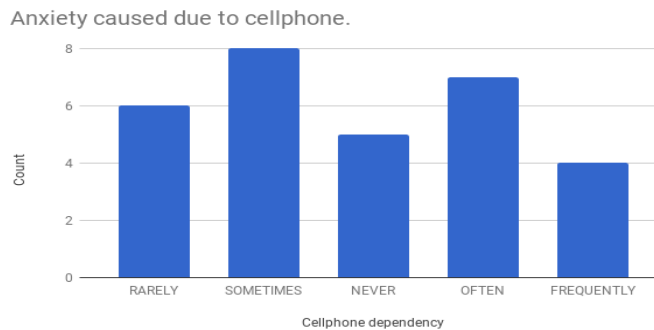
In the above bar diagram, it can be observed that the age group of the sample lays between 18 to 24. The majority of the subjects fall in the age group of 20 to 22. 40 percent of the samples are females and 60 percent of the samples are male. Most the data is collected from undergraduate students i.e. 80 percent and the remaining 20 percent is collected from post-graduate students. 93.1 percent of the sample is from urban areas and the remaining 6.9 percent of the sample are from rural areas. 73.3 percent use android type of cell phone and the remaining 26.7 percent use IOS type of cell phone.

Figure 2: Warned About Using Cell Phone Too Much



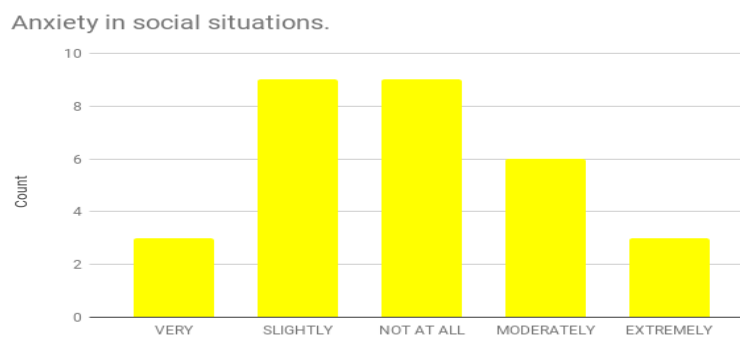
The above bar graph shows how regular people are warned about using their cell phone too much. It was found that 43.3 percent of the samples are sometimes warned about cell phone usage too much, 13.3 percent are never warned, 16.7 percent are rarely warned, 23.3 percent are often warned and 3.3 percent are frequently warned about using their cell phone. Samples often use their cell phone when they are bored that is 43.3 percent. The above chart explains about people have put limitations in using their phone and couldn't stick to it. It is found that 40 percent of the sample could never stick to their limitation, 10 percent could often stick to their limitation, 26.7 percent could sometimes stick to it and 23.3 percent could rarely stick to it. The chart explains about how people use their cell phones as soon as they get up in the morning. 43.3 percent of the cell phone often uses their phone in the morning. It also shows that 33.3 percent frequently use their cell phone, 16.7 rarely use their cell phone, 3.3 percent sometimes use their phone and 3.3 percent never use their phone in the morning. It also explains about how people have slept later or less due to cell phone usage. It is found that 33.3 percent have slept later or less due their phones, 23.3 percent have changes in their sleep patterns, 20 percent frequently sleep late, 20 percent rarely sleep late and 3.3 percent never had changes in their sleep patterns. Most of the respondents are warned about using their cell phone too much because they depend on it for everything which has caused changes in their sleep patterns. They have also tried setting a limit on their usage and couldn't stick to it.

Figure 3: Anxiety Caused Due To Cell Phone



In the above chart it is found that people get anxious when they don't have their phones. Majority of the sample rarely get anxious without their phones. It is also shown that 23.3 percent often get anxious, 16.7 percent rarely get anxious, 16.7 percent frequently get anxious and 13.3 percent never get anxious. The above chart explains about how people have an urge to use their cell phones when they haven't used it for sometime. It is found that 33.3 percent of the samples rarely have an urge to use their cell phone, 26.7 percent sometimes have an urge, 26.7 percent often have an urge, and 13.3 percent never have an urge to use their phone when they haven't used it for sometime. The above chart explains about how people cannot spend a week without a cell phone. It is shown that majority of the sample can sometimes spend a week without their cell phones. It is also shown that 20 percent can rarely spend a week, 13.3 percent can frequently spend a week, and 16.7 percent can never spend a week. Most of the subjects have a need to call or text someone if they haven't used their phone. Most of them get anxious they cannot find their phone or if they cannot use it.

Figure 4: Anxiety in Social Situations



The above chart explains how people get anxious performing in front of an audience. Majority of the people get slightly nervous performing, 16.7 percent get very nervous, 23.3 percent do not get nervous, 6.7 percent moderately get nervous performing in front of an audience. It is also found that people get tensed if they are alone with another person. Majority of the sample i.e. 50 percent do not get tensed if they are alone with another person. It is also shown that 33.3 percent slightly get tensed, 13.3 percent moderately get tensed and 3.3 percent get much tensed if they are alone with another person. Majority of the people do not worry about it i.e. 50 percent, 33 percent slightly worry, 16.7 percent worry a lot and 6.7 percent worry moderately. It also analyses how nervous people get mixing with others who they do not know. Majority of the sample i.e. 56.7 percent slightly feel nervous, 13.3 feel very nervous, 16.7 moderately feel nervous and 13.3 percent do not feel nervous at all.

Anxiety is also caused if people have difficulty making eye contact with others. Majority of the sample can make eye contact easily i.e. 56.7 percent. The remaining 13.3 percent moderately feel difficult, 16.7 slightly feel difficult and 6.7 percent feel extremely and very difficult in making eye contact with others. People get anxious performing in front of an audience. Majority of the people get slightly nervous performing, 16.7 percent get very nervous, 23.3 percent do not get nervous, 6.7 percent moderately get nervous performing in front of an audience. The above chart explains how people can easily think of things to talk about. Majority of the sample find it very easy to think of things, 23.3 percent find it slightly easy, 26.7 find it moderately easy, 3.3 percent find it hard to think of things to about. Most of the respondents do not face anxiety in social situations except some situations like performing a task in front the audience or if they have to mingle with a person they don't know very well.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 20 to 22.
- 43.3 percent of the samples are sometimes warned about cell phone usage too much.

- 40 percent of the sample could never stick to their limitation they have set on their phone usage.
- 39 percent of the sample rarely gets anxious without their phones.
- 43.3 percent of the sample uses their phones when they are bored.
- 16.7 percent can never spend a week without a phone.
- 33.3 percent have slept later or less due their phones.
- 50 percent do not get tensed if they are alone with another person.
- 50 percent of the samples do not worry about not knowing what to say in social situations.
- Majority of the sample can make eye contact easily i.e. 56.7 percent.

CONCLUSION:

Young adults have an extensive accessibility of cell phones at a younger age now; they are likely to develop a dependency to their cell phones or social media. There are evidences that cell phone dependency has caused social anxiety. Findings in this study show that majority of the people is dependent on their cell phones; however they do not have social anxiety. When individuals are separated from their phone they experience intense anxiety and some of them even experience withdrawal symptoms if they can't check their device. When people check their apps and notification they find it rewarding and some of them become addicted to the positive feeling of compulsively checking their phones for updates. It is unlikely that cell phone causes any major mental health problems to most of the individuals.

REFERENCE:

- Adams, S. K., & Kisler, T. S. (2013). Sleep quality as a mediator between technology-related sleep quality, depression, and anxiety. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(1), 25-30.
- Alhassan, Aljohara. A., Alqadhib, Ethar. M., Taha, Nada. W., Alahmari, Raneem. A., Salam, Mahmoud., & Almutairi, Adel. F. (2018). The relationship between addiction to smartphone usage and depression among adults: a cross sectional study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 18:148
- Darcin, A. E., Noyan, C., Nurmedov, S., Yilmaz, O., & Dilbaz, N. (2015). Smartphone addiction in relation with social anxiety and loneliness among university students in Turkey. *European Psychiatry*, 30, 505.
- Ha, J. H., Chin, B., Park, D. H., Ryu, S. H., & Yu, J. (2008). Characteristics of excessive cellular phone use in Korean adolescents. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(6), 783-784.
- Ha, J. H., Chin, B., Park, D. H., Ryu, S. H., & Yu, J. (2008). Characteristics of excessive cellular phone use in Korean adolescents. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(6), 783-784.
- Lee, S., Tam, C. L., & Chie, Q. T. (2014). Mobile phone usage preferences: The contributing factors of personality, social anxiety and loneliness. *Social Indicators Research*, 118(3), 1205-1228.
- Pierce, T. (2009). Social anxiety and technology: Face-to-face communication versus technological communication among teens. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(6), 1367-1372
- Reid, D. J., & Reid, F. J. (2007). Text or talk? Social anxiety, loneliness, and divergent preferences for cell phone use. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10(3), 424-435.
- Thomée, S., Härenstam, A., & Hagberg, M. (2011). Mobile phone use and stress, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of depression among young adults-a prospective cohort study. *BMC public health*, 11(1), 66.
- Xu, Junlan. (2017). Research on the Relationship among Phone Addiction, Social Anxiety and Loneliness in High School Students. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5, 18-24. doi: 10.4236/jss.2017.56003.



Suyog G.

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Jain University, Bangalore.