

The Usage Pattern of Mobile Phone among University Students: A Study on Dhaka City

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Abstract: *The mobile phone is an intrinsic part of civilized society. This study investigates the usage pattern of mobile phone among university students of Dhaka City. Four indicators were used to examine the students' behavior towards mobile phone. These are: total daily usage of mobile phone, daily usage for personal communication, daily usage for academic purpose and daily usage for recreational activities. Data were collected by self-report questionnaire from 328 participants and analyzed by SPSS 16. This study attempted to unearth the attitude of the university students toward mobile phone use in a developing country like Bangladesh. The findings indicate that female students are frequent users of mobile phone in terms of personal communication and daily usage compare to male students. But in academic and recreational activities, both genders showed less interest in using their mobile phones.*

Keywords: *Mobile phone, personal communication, academic purpose, recreational activities.*

Introduction

The mobile phone is one of the greatest gifts to mankind. With the plethora of mobile phones flooding the market, they are not just catering to the needs but are acting as status symbols for many. Starting from bulky size to ultra thin handsets, mobile phones have covered a long-way so far. In 1876, Alexander Graham bell invented the telephone which was known as the first revolution in communication system (Britannica.com). After passing several evolutionary stages, in the year 1973, Martin & Cooper made the first mobile phone (Encyclopedia.com). With the passage of time and technological advancements, the mobile phone has become a smart and handy gadget for everyone. The ability to talk without wires was one of the main reasons for using mobile phones at large. But now, the mobile phone is a platform to explore the digital world.

The mobile phone has revolutionized our day-to-day life. People do not need to wait for days or weeks for getting response. Nokia, Sony, Samsung, BlackBerry, BenQ Siemens, HTC are some of the most popular brands made this task easier. Along with the growing demand for connectivity, the number of mobile phone network operators is also increasing. Airtel, MTN Group, Telenor, China Mobile, Vodaphone and other renowned operators are serving around the world for providing better services. At present, almost 4.61 billion people are using mobile phone around the world (Statista, 2016).

The mobile phone or cell phone is used for mobile voice or data communication over a network of specialized based station known as cell sites (Dange, 2012). At the early stage, mobile phone was

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used only for connectivity with near and dear ones. But, current mobile phones support many additional features. It has become a substitute of digital camera, video recorder, television, laptop and many other technological devices. Youth segments are especially taking all the advantages of this device with huge enthusiasm. That's why young generation is the main target for the mobile phone companies as well as for the operators.

Compared with the elders, younger mobile phone users are especially attuned to both the positive and negative impacts of mobile connectivity. Low and high income mobile phone owners also have divergent attitudes towards the benefits and challenges posed by ubiquitous mobility (Aaron Smith, 2012). Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, conducted a tracking survey (from March 15, 2012 to 3 April, 2012) where $n=340$ from 18 years to 29 years, 90% stated that mobile phone made it easier to stay in touch regularly with the people, 64% agreed that mobile phone made it easier to be productive when doing other things, 63% said that mobile phone made it easier to plan and schedule the daily routine. On the other hand, 33% told that mobile phone made it harder to focus on a single task without being distracted, 25% thought that mobile phone made it harder to forget about work at home and on the weekends, 30% expressed that mobile phone made it harder to give people an undivided attention.

The mobile phone has become a mainstream product for young generation to maintain the communication. They are using it for socialization with their friends, families and peer groups. Although no one could deny the benefits of mobile phone, it has some negative impacts on youth society. In a study conducted on participants (between 20 to 24 years) by the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, researchers found that high mobile phone use was associated with sleep and stress disturbances for women, whereas high mobile phone use was associated with sleep disturbances and symptoms of depression in men (indiatimes.com, 2013). According to The Vision Council, more than 70% of Americans don't know or are in denial that they are susceptible to digital eye strain (Medical Daily, 2013). Because exposure to the radio frequency (RF) fields emitted by mobile phones is generally more than a 1000 times higher than from base stations, it increases the risk of cancer or any other disease (World Health Organization, 2013). According to the statistics from the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 12.5% of children and adolescents 6 and 19 years old and 17% of adults between 20 and 69 years of age have suffered permanent damage to their hearing from excessive exposure to noise (ABC News Medical Unit, 2009).

With youth population constituting almost half of the population, Bangladesh has become a potential ground for using mobile phones. After the introduction of mobile phone in 1993, people of this country prefer mobile phone in all kinds of situations (Yusuf and Alom, 2007). It has changed our social behavior and pattern of living. Currently, six nation-wide mobile phone companies are operating in Bangladesh. They are: Citycell, Grameen Phone, Banglalink, Robi-Axiata, Airtel and Teletalk. At the end of January 2015, the total number of mobile phone subscribers has reached to 121.860 million (www.btrc.gov.bd). This population includes our youth segment who use the cell phone for education, communication and recreation.

Literature Review

The pattern of usage of mobile phone is different between male and female users. Boys spend more time on using mobile than girls do. Also, adolescents consume more time on using mobile phones on weekend than on casual week days. It reflects that various factors contribute towards the extent of mobile phone usage (Devis, 2009).

The mobile phone usage behaviors are differently linked with user's personality and individual attributes such as age, gender etc (Turner M, 2008). Mobile phone usage is also associated with income, work status and marital status of the potential users (Rice and Katz, 2003), but few studies showed a non-significant relationship among gender and the usage pattern of mobile phones. Mobile phone usage among adolescents was almost independent of group (computer science or not), gender and socio-economic status (Prezza M, 2004).

The features of the cell phone are significantly important to tweens and teens than the brand of the device. A research showed that 65% of tweens and 70% of teens care about the cell phone's applications. Moreover, 65% of tweens and 84% of teens use their mobile phone daily. Among them, 3% and 1% respectively never use the mobile phone at all. Normally, 76% female users have a tendency to use their mobile phones on a daily basis. It is quiet higher than the male users of this technological device. Generally, 61% boys are habituated to use their mobile phone daily. (Youth Beat Survey from Chicago-based C & R Research).

Females were also more likely to make and receive more family-oriented as well as social-oriented calls than men (Wei and Lo, 2006). In addition, females consistently displayed higher levels of attachment to their mobile phones (Geser, 2006). Females spent more time talking on the mobile phones than men (Junco, Merson and Salter, 2010). But previous findings on gender differences in the use of mobile phone were mixed. No significant relationship with gender have been identified regarding the overall time spent on the mobile phone (Bianchi and Phillips, 2005).

The most common reason for owning a mobile phone by university students in Australia and Malaysia was to contact others through calls and messaging (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012; Walsh, White and Young, 2008). Apart from being a communication device, the mobile phone is used by university students in the United Kingdom for many functions, such as alarm clock, camera, music player, diary and phonebook (Ogunyemi, 2010; Walsh et al, 2008). University students in the USA said that owning a mobile phone is essential for keeping in contact with their parents, to ask for advice or get emotional support (Chen and Katz, 2009). Although, mobile phone is a powerful tool for learning, it is not entirely accepted as a part of school and university culture in Canada (Walsh and Kelly, 2012). In countries such as China, Germany and Japan, students are using their mobile phone to learn English (Roberson and Hagevik, 2008).

Safety was found to be a major reason why females use mobile phones in Malaysia, New Zealand (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012; Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008). Female students in Malaysia and Australia use their mobile phones as a security device, to contact others when they are in

danger (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012, Walsh et al., 2010). Swedish female students use mobile phones in order to keep themselves safe (Baron and Compbell, 2010). Parents of university students in the USA are more worried about their daughters' safety, therefore parents insist their daughters to carry a mobile phone at all times (Beaver et al., 2010).

The male students in the USA and Malaysia generally make calls to make arrangements (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012; Grellhesl and Punyanunt-Carter, 2012). African male students living in the United Kingdom prefer to text in order to show affection (Ogunyemi, 2010). Male students in the USA and Malaysia are more likely contact their parents "to keep them happy" (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012, Chen and Katz, 2009). Male students in New Zealand were more likely to use text messaging to make new contacts (Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008).

There is a positive relationship between university students anxiety, mobile phone addiction and mobile phone behavior, mobile phone usage behavior, reinforcing that there is a relationship between students' character and their mobile phone use (Hong et al., 2012). Given the reasons to use a mobile phone (ease of contact, privacy, safety etc) it is not surprising that students become very attached to their mobile phones (Balakrishnan and Raj, 2012). Majority of students checking their phones regularly for missed calls, leaving their phones on at all times and feeling distressed without their phone (Chung, 2011; Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008, Walsh et al., 2008; Walsh et al, 2010). African students living in the United Kingdom over used some of the mobile phone features, such as extensive text messaging, mobile games and the use of missed calls in order to be called back by the recipient (Ogunyemi, 2010). Extensive use of text messaging was also found on students in Norway (Ling et al., 2011).

Over half of the university students in New Zealand admitted to constantly checking their mobile phone for missed calls and messages, the majority of which were female students (Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008). Female students showed a greater sign of addiction towards their mobile phone (Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008). The majority students (84%) turned off their phones or turned them onto silent in situations where mobile phone use was forbidden; again female students were more likely to do so than males (Dresler-Hawke and Mansvelt, 2008). Male students in the USA were found not interested to follow the "rules of communication" eg. responding to text messages immediately, possibly because they were less troubled by reachability, while female students were possibly more troubled by reachability (Baron and Compbell, 2010).

The literature review showed that the usage of mobile phone technology has a significant societal influence. The ubiquitous and always-connected nature of the technology is shaping attitudinal changes of mobile phone users. Most of the previous studies were conducted on youth segment in developed countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.S. etc. Very few studies were found on this topic in developing countries like Bangladesh. So, this paper focuses on the usage behavior of young generation regarding mobile phone in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

The study addressed to find out the answer of the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between male and female students of Bangladesh in the use of mobile phone?
2. The purpose for which mobile phone is widely used by the two categories of students?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to understand the usage pattern towards mobile phone among young generation in Bangladesh. Under this broad objective, there are some specific objectives. These are:

1. To investigate the difference between male and female mobile phone users.
2. To measure the duration of daily usage of mobile phone by young generation.
3. To explore the communicative practice of young mobile phone users.
4. To examine the extent of mobile phone use for academic purpose by youth society.
5. To assess the utilization of mobile phone for recreational activity by young users.

Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature, where a survey was done to gather necessary data. The target population of this study was students from universities of Dhaka city; aged from 20 to 24 years old. Two public and two private universities were selected to prepare this study. They were: Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Stamford University Bangladesh and United International University. A closed-ended questionnaire was developed and used for the purpose of conducting a pilot study. Sample size was $(n) = 328$, where 50% male and 50% female students were chosen through purposive sampling technique to make an unbiased survey (Lakatos and Lan, 1992). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test and Crosstabulation of SPSS 16 were used to analyze the data.

Hypothesis

On the basis of existing literature, the following hypotheses were formed:

- H₁: Male and female students are indifferent regarding the daily usage of mobile phone.
- H₂: Male and female students are same in using the mobile phone for communicative purpose.
- H₃: Male and female students are identical for the usage of mobile phone for academic activities.
- H₄: Male and female students are equal in terms of using their mobile phones for recreation.

Analysis and Findings

Testing H_1 and the result of crosstabulation

After conducting the ANOVA test (Appendix Table-1) on dependent variable (daily total usage) and independent variable (gender), it is indicating that there is no significant relationship between gender and daily usage pattern of mobile phone. As the p value is .821 which is more than .05, thus, the test result doesn't support the H_1 . It proves that male and female students have different attitudes regarding their daily usage of mobile phone.

The crosstabulation (Table-2) indicates that 35.1% students use mobile phone for more than 4 hours daily. The reasons might be connecting with friends and families, educational assistance, entertainment or other activities. Among these students, 16.2% are male and 18.9% are female. That means, female students show greater tendency to use mobile phone than male students. It might occurred because female users keep mobile phone for safety purpose. They often update their parents when they remain outside their residence. On the other side, only 13.7% students use their mobile phone for less than 1 hour daily. The remaining 51.2% students use their mobile phone from 1-4 hours everyday. It can be said that young generation are addicted to this technology.

Testing H_2 and the result of crosstabulation

The ANOVA test (Table-3) is reflecting that there is no significant relationship between gender (independent variable) and personal communication (dependent variable). As the p value is .390 which is more than .05, thus test result rejects H_2 . This has proved that male and female students are not similar in using their mobile phones for communicative purpose.

The crosstabulation (Table-4) shows that female students are more frequent in using their mobile phones for personal communication. It demonstrates that 61.5% female students use their mobile phones for more than 4 hours everyday, whereas only 38.5% male students use it for the mentioned time in this regard. It further indicates that 61.1% female students prefer mobile phone to communicate with others for 3-4 hours daily, whereas the amount of male students is only 38.9% in this case. The reason might include that female students keep contact with their parents for safety purpose when they go outside their home.

Testing H_3 and the result of crosstabulation

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) test (Table-5) on gender (independent variable) and academic purpose (dependent variable) indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and usage pattern of mobile phone for academic purpose daily. As the p value is .142 which is not less than .05, thus it doesn't support the H_3 . It proves that male and female students have divergent response in using their mobile phone for educational assistance everyday.

Educational purpose might involve group studies via video calls, calling friends for study related issues or activities associated with assignments. The crosstabulation (Table-6) is showing that

university students are less interested in using their cell phones for educational purpose. 50.6% participants showed the tendency to use mobile phone for less than 1 hour in academic activities everyday; in which 28.4% are male students and 22.3% are female students. The result also indicates that only 2.7% respondents use the mobile phone for more than 4 hours everyday in this regard.

Testing H_4 and the result of crosstabulation

The ANOVA test (Table-7) shows that there is no significant relationship between gender (independent variable) and recreational activity (dependent variable). As the p value is .711 which is not less than .05, thus it doesn't support H_4 . The result proves that male and female students are not equal in terms of using their mobile phones for recreation.

Recreational activities involve watching movies, reading story books, listening music etc. The crosstabulation (Table-8) indicates that young generation are not interested to do this sort of activities through their mobile phone. 35.4% respondents have tendency to use mobile phone for less than 1 hour; in which 16.8% are male and 18.6% are female students. Moreover, 28.0% shows to use mobile phone for 1-2 hours for this purpose. On the other hand, only 11.3% students do recreational activities through the mobile phone. The reason could be the students use tab, laptop, kindle, i-pod for entertaining purpose.

Conclusion

Mobile phone has a significant influence on the young generation which leads to create a networked society. This study was conducted in order to better interpret the usage pattern of mobile phone among university students of Dhaka city. The findings generated a thoughtful information about our youth segment; especially those living in Dhaka city. It has revealed that 100% male and female students are the users of mobile phone. But they showed different attitudes to use this technology in their day to day life for which the study attempted to find out.

There are some limitations in this study which couldn't be avoided. First, the sample size used in this study was very small. Second, this study used only four variables to find out the behavior of young generation towards mobile phone. These shortcomings should be considered in interpreting the results.

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Appendices

Table-1

ANOVA					
Daily_Total_Usage					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.110	1	.110	.051	.821
Within Groups	699.012	326	2.144		
Total	699.122	327			

Table-2

Gender * Daily_Total_Usage Crosstabulation								
			Daily_Total_Usage					Total
			Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	
Gender	Male	Count	17	36	35	23	53	164
		% within Gender	10.4%	22.0%	21.3%	14.0%	32.3%	100.0%
		% within Daily_Total_Usage	37.8%	59.0%	56.5%	51.1%	46.1%	50.0%
		% of Total	5.2%	11.0%	10.7%	7.0%	16.2%	50.0%
	Female	Count	28	25	27	22	62	164
		% within Gender	17.1%	15.2%	16.5%	13.4%	37.8%	100.0%
		% within Daily_Total_Usage	62.2%	41.0%	43.5%	48.9%	53.9%	50.0%
		% of Total	8.5%	7.6%	8.2%	6.7%	18.9%	50.0%
Total		Count	45	61	62	45	115	328
		% within Gender	13.7%	18.6%	18.9%	13.7%	35.1%	100.0%
		% within Daily_Total_Usage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	13.7%	18.6%	18.9%	13.7%	35.1%	100.0%

Table-3

ANOVA					
Personal_Communication					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.345	1	1.345	.742	.390
Within Groups	590.750	326	1.812		
Total	592.095	327			

Table-4

Gender * Personal_Communication Crosstabulation								
			Personal_Communication					Total
			Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	
Gender	Male	Count	48	53	34	14	15	164
		% within Gender	29.3%	32.3%	20.7%	8.5%	9.1%	100.0%
		% within Personal_Communication	46.6%	54.6%	64.2%	38.9%	38.5%	50.0%
		% of Total	14.6%	16.2%	10.4%	4.3%	4.6%	50.0%
	Female	Count	55	44	19	22	24	164
		% within Gender	33.5%	26.8%	11.6%	13.4%	14.6%	100.0%
		% within Personal_Communication	53.4%	45.4%	35.8%	61.1%	61.5%	50.0%
		% of Total	16.8%	13.4%	5.8%	6.7%	7.3%	50.0%
Total		Count	103	97	53	36	39	328
		% within Gender	31.4%	29.6%	16.2%	11.0%	11.9%	100.0%
		% within Personal_Communication	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	31.4%	29.6%	16.2%	11.0%	11.9%	100.0%

Table-5

ANOVA					
Academic_Purpose					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.223	1	2.223	2.162	.142
Within Groups	335.091	326	1.028		
Total	337.314	327			

Table-6

Gender * Academic_Purpose Crosstabulation								
			Academic_Purpose					Total
			Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	
Gender	Male	Count	93	39	20	10	2	164
		% within Gender	56.7%	23.8%	12.2%	6.1%	1.2%	100.0%
		% within Academic_Purpose	56.0%	40.2%	50.0%	62.5%	22.2%	50.0%
		% of Total	28.4%	11.9%	6.1%	3.0%	.6%	50.0%
	Female	Count	73	58	20	6	7	164
		% within Gender	44.5%	35.4%	12.2%	3.7%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within Academic_Purpose	44.0%	59.8%	50.0%	37.5%	77.8%	50.0%
		% of Total	22.3%	17.7%	6.1%	1.8%	2.1%	50.0%
Total		Count	166	97	40	16	9	328
		% within Gender	50.6%	29.6%	12.2%	4.9%	2.7%	100.0%
		% within Academic_Purpose	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	50.6%	29.6%	12.2%	4.9%	2.7%	100.0%

Table-7

ANOVA					
Recreational_Activity					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.247	1	.247	.138	.711
Within Groups	583.848	326	1.791		
Total	584.095	327			

Table-8

Gender * Recreational_Activity Crosstabulation								
			Recreational_Activity					Total
			Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	
Gender	Male	Count	55	49	25	17	18	164
		% within Gender	33.5%	29.9%	15.2%	10.4%	11.0%	100.0%
		% within Recreational_Activity	47.4%	53.3%	46.3%	58.6%	48.6%	50.0%
		% of Total	16.8%	14.9%	7.6%	5.2%	5.5%	50.0%
	Female	Count	61	43	29	12	19	164
		% within Gender	37.2%	26.2%	17.7%	7.3%	11.6%	100.0%
		% within Recreational_Activity	52.6%	46.7%	53.7%	41.4%	51.4%	50.0%
		% of Total	18.6%	13.1%	8.8%	3.7%	5.8%	50.0%
Total		Count	116	92	54	29	37	328
		% within Gender	35.4%	28.0%	16.5%	8.8%	11.3%	100.0%
		% within Recreational_Activity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	35.4%	28.0%	16.5%	8.8%	11.3%	100.0%