

Mobile Phone Addiction among college going students in Shillong

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Abstract:

Mobile phones are known to be hugely popular among the youth. The youth are the most susceptible to developing mobile phone addiction because they are considered to be the heaviest users of information and technology. The present study aimed to find out the mobile phone addiction based on gender and the stream of study. The data was collected from a sample of 159 college students by using the Mobile Phone Addiction Scale (MPAS) developed by A. Velayudhan and S. Srividya. Mean, SD, t-test and Pearson's Product-moment Correlations were the statistical techniques used. It was found that the college going students of Shillong are moderately addicted to mobile phone and gender and stream has no impact on the mobile phone addiction of the college going students of Shillong. Another finding of this study is that there is no significant relationship between availability of pocket money and mobile phone addiction.

Keywords: Mobile Phone addiction, college going students, addiction, stream

I. INTRODUCTION

The world that we live in today is a world full of technological marvels. Everywhere we look and every aspect of our lives has been influenced and moulded by the plethora of gadgets and applications that have come up at an astounding pace to overwhelm and overhaul the economic, political, social and psychological fabric of our everyday lives. There is hardly an aspect of our lives and environment that technology has not touched and transformed. It is there in almost everything that we do in our daily life, the way we work and how we communicate with each other. For many of us it would be unfathomable to function without the conveniences that technology has brought about into our everyday lives.

It is observed that the youth especially the college going students are the predominant users of mobile phones. They are usually the ones who are always curious and inquisitive about the latest developments in communication technology. They try to find out the different applications and features of a new technical invention. College students are at that age where they feel that they need to keep in touch with their friends every second, every minute and every hour. They want to know about the latest happening in their friends' life as well as share theirs. Mobile phones allow for easy, fast and convenient way to keep in touch with their friends and family. It enables them to keep in touch with their family and friends anywhere and anytime of the day.

II. MOBILE PHONE ADDICTION

Psychiatrists proclaim that in the 21st century mobile phone addiction has become one of the major non-drug addictions and is widely seen among people of different age groups. A mobile phone addict can be defined as a person who constantly checks his/her phone every now and then, and the urge to check their mobile phones becomes so strong that they can't stop themselves even if they wish to, they become extremely attached with their mobile phone that they even

starts hallucinating that their phone is ringing even when it is not. A mobile phone addict carries their phone wherever they go and use it while doing other things like studying, eating, driving and also using it in inappropriate places like church, class, lavatory and danger zone areas like petrol pumps.

A mobile phone addict use the cell phone for an increasing amount of time in order to achieve satisfaction; repeat unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop cell phone use; feel lost, restless, anxious, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down cell phone use; stay on the cell phone longer than originally intended; hide from family and friends or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the cell phone; and use the cell phone as a way of escape from problems or to relieve a dysphoric mood e.g., feeling of isolation, anxiety, loneliness, and depression (Leung, 2013)

For a mobile phone addict the device becomes a part of them, an extension of themselves which they literally cannot do without. In a study from the UK, researchers found that mobile phone users felt that they were physically attached to the mobile phone. Many of the subjects reported that they felt they could not leave home without the mobile phone (Srivastava, 2005).

Peele (1985) argues that addictive behaviour stems from three primary motives: escape (a perceived means of diminishing awareness, tension and pain); ritual (association with an experience that has immediacy, simplicity and predictability); and compensation (elevated sense of control, power and self). Mobile phone users tend to focus on the mobile phone interface when communicating, shutting out the surrounding environment to varying degrees (escape); they control the time, place and content of the texting (compensation); and engage in frequent daily SMS sessions (ritual) (Perry, S. D. and Lee, K. C, 2007).

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III. CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE PHONE ADDICTION

The youth are the most susceptible to developing mobile phone addiction because they are considered to be the heaviest users of information and technology with an increased usage of smart phones throughout the day. They use their mobile phones not only to make phone calls but also to send text messages, to take photos, to listen to music, to watch video, to feel safe and secure, to interact, to connect with family and friends, to browse, to manage their everyday life and to learn.

Furthermore, apart from the amount of communication or time spent on the mobile phone, Benessere, M.T. hypothesized an existence of addiction to a mobile phone when a person shows some of the following symptoms:

- Dedicating large amounts of time to activities related to using the phone (phone calls, text messages, games, consultations, use of the camera for photos and videos, etcetera) carried out exclusively or in combination with other activities;
- The victim experiences a sense of dizziness, headache, vertigo eye or ear ache or other physical symptoms that can be related to abusing the mobile phone;
- Extreme affection shown towards the mobile phone which is mainly seen through not wanting to be far away from the phone, even for small amounts of time;
- The victim tends to get anxious, panics or experiences unpleasant emotions in general when the telephone's battery is dead or if the phone does not work;
- The victim is inclined to use the mobile phone as instrument of control in sentimental and affectionate relationships;
- Tendency to use the mobile phone to keep fears and insecurities under control (fear of solitude, particular phobias, anxiety attacks);
- Tendency to use more than one mobile phone, often using separate lines for different uses (work/friends);
- The victim is in the habit of keeping the phone on at night so as to wake up at night and check for messages or calls.
- The victim spend more money on accessories than the phone costs
- The victim runs out of power battery everyday
- The victim answer call and text while driving
- The victim is in the habit of answering cell phone while in an intimate embrace with a loved one.

IV. OVERVIEW OF SHILLONG

Shillong, which is popularly known as 'Scotland of the East', is one of the most beautiful hill stations in India. It derives its name from the manifestation of the creator called Shyllong. It is situated at 25.57°N 91.88°E at an average altitude of 4,908 feet (1,496 m) above sea level. Its total area is 64.36 km² (Government of Meghalaya). The city has a well-connected communication network. Fixed telephone lines are available. Internet services are available both wired and wireless broadband. It is also well covered in mobile networks with all

major cellular providers like Airtel, Aircel, Vodafone, IDEA, BSNL are available here.

V. COLLEGES IN SHILLONG

College education has its basic importance; it provides one of the suitable medium for keeping linkages with the post-graduate courses. It provides the students the outlets or approaches to various careers in civil services, law administration, commerce, industry, mass communication, electronic and social regeneration. It lays down the norms for making the students suitable to undertake work patterns, work culture and performances and for acquiring job's satisfaction for their due discharges. Almost everywhere in the world, this is precisely the scope that normally is offered to the enterprising students by the system of education in the colleges.

The first college established in Meghalaya was in Shillong that is St. Edmund's College, it was set up in 1924 by the Christian Brothers of Ireland and over the years several other quality colleges were established. Such as St. Anthony's College established in 1934, Lady Keane College (1935), St. Mary's College (1937), Shillong College (1956), Sankardev College (1965), Synod College (1965), Seng Khasi College (1973), Raid Laban College (1986), Shillong Commerce College (1987), Women's College (1987) and many more (Bareh, H. 1996). At present Shillong have 26 colleges out of which majority of them are affiliated to North Eastern Hill University, a central university.

VI. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Mobile phone addiction is seen to have increased alarmingly especially among the college going students around the world. It may be implied that even our small city of Shillong has not been spared from the negative effects and addiction resulting from mobile phone use. Many a times this kind of addiction is never taken seriously. It is simply considered to be a habit of the user and ignored. However, mobile phone addiction is something that the West has taken seriously, as many youth are facing many consequences- socially, physically and mentally when it comes to addiction. They are unable to concentrate on their studies or other productive work and excess use of a mobile phone often leads to feelings such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and sleeplessness. Excess use of mobile phone also effects human health as World Health Organization has stated that mobile phone use may possibly represent a long-term health risk, classifying mobile phone radiation as "possibly carcinogenic to humans" after a team of scientists reviewed studies on cell phone safety. Mobile phones are in category 2B, which ranks it alongside Coffee and other possibly carcinogenic substances.

Addiction of mobile phone is mainly observed among the college students as they have the urge to always stay connected with their friends and peers to know about the latest happening among their friends. This addiction has failed the user to actually stay connected in the real world and not in the virtual world. The concern parents and teachers often noticed the effects of excess use of mobile phone by their children and students and it have dramatically changed the behaviour of the user. The user is always seen busy with

his/her phone, playing games, sending text messages, listening to the music, browsing, and many more other activities and seem to be least bothered about the real world. A mobile phone has become an inseparable companion and extension of the user.

Understanding the impact of mobile phone addiction would help to create awareness about this behavioural addiction among the students and the society and thus can help suggest measures to control and manage this form of addiction. Lack of studies on mobile phone addiction and its impact on the youth of the city of Shillong suggests that there is a knowledge gap. This gap needs to be covered for better understanding and coping with the effects and impact of mobile phone addiction especially among the impressionable youth of the society. Therefore, this study is a necessary attempt to bridge that gap of knowledge concerning the perceived impact and effects of mobile phone addiction affecting the youth of the country in general and city of Shillong in particular.

VII. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mobile phones have become an integral part of our everyday lives. Today mobile phones are not only devices that we use to make and receive calls. In fact they have become instruments for organizing and managing our everyday lives, for interacting with others through social media and for entertaining ourselves with the multitude of applications and games. This widespread and high penetration of mobile phones especially amongst the younger college going generation makes them susceptible to getting addicted to this technological marvel of humankind. As with other kinds of addictions the young generation is more prone to developing dependencies relating to mobile phone usage. Possible reasons for this are that young college students have yet to develop a firm sense of identity and have a strong desire to develop meaningful and intimate relationships in their lives. Any kind of addiction puts the overall wellbeing of an individual at risk and needs to be understood and addressed. Mobile phone addiction as with any kind of addiction has negative impact on the life and wellbeing of individuals. Hence, it has to be understood so that possible solutions for managing and addressing factors and causes that have a bearing on influencing the susceptibility of individuals to developing addiction to mobile phones. In view of the above, the problem is stated as a study of Mobile Phone Addiction among college going students in Shillong.

VIII. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

The present study involve some key terms which are defined as below:-

Mobile Phone Addiction: Mobile phone addiction is a great dependency on ones mobile phone, thereby escaping from reality, compensating and engaging in ritual like SMSing all the time.

College Students: College students here refer to students both male and female studying Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Commerce in the colleges of Shillong.

IX. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the mobile phone addiction among college going students in Shillong.
- To find out the mobile phone addiction among male and female college going students of Shillong.
- To assess the mobile phone addiction among college going students from different courses.
- To find out the mobile phone addiction among college going students based on pocket money available per month.
- To investigate the mobile phone addiction among college going students in relation to the pocket money available to them.

X. NULL HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between male and female college students.
- There is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between students from B.A and B.Sc.
- There is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between students from B.A and B.Com.
- There is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between students from B.Sc and B.Com.
- There is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between the students having high and low pocket money.
- There is no relationship between availability of pocket money and mobile phone addiction.

XI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to time constrain the present study is delimited to 159 college students of Shillong.

XII. RESEARCH DESIGN

“Research design is the plan and the procedure for research that spans the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It involves the intersection of philosophic assumptions, strategies of inquiry and specific methods” (Creswell, J. W. 2009). The research design includes the following:

Population

The present study intends to find out the mobile phone addiction among college going students in Shillong. Hence, all the college students in Shillong were the target population. In the present study, the sample selected consisted of college students who are in the arts, science and commerce stream. The sample size of the study was 159 college students. In this study, the technique used to select a representative sample from the population under study was random sampling.

Method

Descriptive survey method was used in the present study.

Descriptive studies are more than just a collection of data; they involve measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation.

Tool

The tool used for the study was the Mobile Phone Addiction Scale (MPAS) developed by A. Velayudhan and S. Srividya.

XIII. MAIN FINDINGS

Mobile phone addiction among college going students in Shillong

The data shows that there exists moderate mobile phone addiction among college going students of Shillong. The observed mean score on the mobile phone addiction scale is 112.62 with a standard deviation of 22.18.

Mobile phone addiction among college going students in Shillong

Table No. 1: Frequency scores and Percentages of Male and Female College Students on Mobile Phone Addiction

Sub-Scale	Range of Scores	Frequency Scores		Percentage		Interpretation
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Maladaptive Usage	9-20	24	7	33.33	8.05	Low addiction
	21-29	34	34	47.22	39.08	Moderate Addiction
	30-45	14	46	19.44	52.87	High addiction
Self Expression	9-22	23	11	31.94	12.64	Low addiction
	23-32	36	41	50	47.12	Moderate Addiction
	33-45	13	35	18.06	40.22	High addiction
Peer relationship	6-17	31	17	43.06	19.54	Low addiction
	18-22	31	34	43.06	39	Moderate Addiction
	23-30	10	36	13.88	41.37	High addiction
Interpersonal Relations	4-12	24	6	33.33	6.89	Low addiction
	13-16	33	48	45.83	55.17	Moderate Addiction
	17-20	15	33	20.83	37.93	High addiction
Impulsivity	4-12	34	15	47.22	17.24	Low addiction
	13-16	26	32	36.11	36.78	Moderate Addiction
	17-20	12	40	16.66	45.97	High addiction
Usage time	5-12	19	8	26.38	9.19	Low addiction
	13-17	43	37	59.72	42.52	Moderate Addiction
	18-25	10	42	13.88	48.27	High addiction
Scale as a whole	37-99	26	27	36.11	31.04	Low addiction
	98-127	33	29	45.83	33.33	Moderate Addiction
	128-185	13	31	18.05	35.63	High addiction

For the Mobile Phone Addiction Scale as a whole, it is found that 36.11% male students and 31.04% female students scored between 37- 99 have low addiction to mobile phone. Further 45.83% of the male students and 33.33% female students obtained scores of between 98 and 127 on Mobile Phone Addiction Scale indicating that they suffered from moderate level of addiction to mobile phones. Lastly 18.05% of the male students and 35.63% female students obtained scores of between 128 and 185 indicating that they suffer from high level of addiction to mobile phones.

The mean scores of mobile phone addiction of male college students is 109.14 and the mean scores of mobile phone addiction of female college students is 115.51. This indicates that female college students have slightly higher mobile phone addiction than the male college students. However, there is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between male and female college students. Therefore it is inferred that gender does not affect mobile phone addiction.

Mobile phone addiction among college going students from different courses

The mean score of students from B.A stream was found to be 107.45 with SD = 15.74; the mean score of students from B.Sc stream was 111.71 with SD= 21.85 and that of B.Com students was 119.23 with SD=23.77. No significant difference in mobile phone addiction between college students of B.A and B.Sc $t(110) = 1.08, p = 0.05$ and B.Sc and B.Com $t(108) = 1.69$ was found. However, there is a significant difference in mobile phone addiction between college students of B.A and B.Com $t(94) = 2.64, p = 0.05$. Therefore, it is inferred that course of study does not have any significant effect on mobile phone addiction among college going students.

Mobile phone addiction among college going students based on pocket money available per month

The observed mean score of students having pocket money of more than 500 was 114 with SD =25.65 and that of students having pocket money of less than 500 was 112.34 with SD = 21.50. No significant difference is observed in mobile phone addiction between college students having high pocket money and low pocket money, $t(157) = 0.30, p = 0.05$. This indicates that availability of pocket money does not affect the mobile phone addiction of college going students. Students with lesser pocket money per month were only slightly less addicted to their mobile phones compared to students who have higher amount of pocket money.

Further Product moment correlation shows that there is low positive correlation between mobile phone addiction and monthly pocket money of the respondents in the study. However, the relationship between these two variables was found to be not significant $r(157) = 0.028, p = 0.724$. Therefore we can infer that level of pocket money has no significant effect on mobile phone addiction of respondents. Availability of pocket money may allow the college students to be able to afford to buy different mobile services such as Voice calling, SMS and internet package. However availability of pocket money does not appear to have any significant relationship with college students' addiction to mobile phones.

XIV. DISCUSSION

The present study found that mobile phone addiction among college going students in Shillong is moderate with a mean score of 122.62 and with a standard deviation of 22.18. In a similar study Ahmed, Ishfaq, Qazi, Tehmina Fiaz and Perji, Khadija Aijaz (2011) revealed that youngsters use their cell phones under reasonable limits and do not tend towards extreme behaviours leading towards addictive mobile phone usage. However, Kamran Sohail 2010, discovered that the majority of youth are extremely high user of the mobile phone. Mirza, Anie, Razi Amir, Sikander Muhammad Usman, Shams Usman Bin, Ullah Qazi Rehmat, Suhail Fatima and Mehdi Muntazir (2013) also showed that majority of the participants (youth) are addicted to their mobile phones.

The present study revealed that there was no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between male and female college students. This indicates that gender made no difference in estimates of mobile phone addiction. However, it was found that female college students of Shillong were slightly inclined to being more addicted to their mobile phone compared to the male college students. In a similar study Chen, Yi-Fan (2006) reported the same findings, that there is no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between male and female students. Bianchi Adriana and Phillips James G. (2005) study also points to the fact that the appeal of mobile phones is gender neutral. That is, both males and females have embraced mobile phone technology equally. Hassanzadeh, Ramazan and Rezaei Abbas (2011) study showed that there is no significant difference between SMS addiction in male and female. However, different findings are found by the following; Raj, R.G and Balakrishnan, V (2012), Chóliz M. (2012) and Geser, Hans (2006) their study found that female students were more dependent on their mobile phones compared to male students. In another study conducted by Beranuy, Marta, Oberst Ursula, Carbonell, Xaview and Chamarro, Ander (2009) they found that the females in the research show more negative consequences of maladaptive mobile phone use than males.

The present study observed that there was no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between B.A and B.Sc college students and between B.Sc and B.Com college students. However, there was a significant difference in mobile phone addiction between B.A and B.Com college students. This indicates that the course of study may or may not have an affect on the mobile phone addiction of the students. However in a study conducted by Hassanzadeh, Ramazan and Rezaei Abbas (2011) they found that there is significant difference between SMS addiction in students of university with different course or academic groups. In another study conducted by Beranuy, Marta, Oberst Ursula, Carbonell, Xaview and Chamarro, Ander (2009) they showed that there is a significant difference between the patterns of maladaptive use of the new technologies in students with different course of study.

Another finding of the present study was that there was no significant difference in mobile phone addiction between the students having high and low pocket money. However, students with lesser pocket money per month are slightly less addicted to their mobile phones compared to students who have higher amount of pocket money.

The study also found that there is a low positive correlation between monthly pocket money and mobile phone addiction amongst the college going students in Shillong. The study further observed that the level of pocket money has no significant effect on mobile phone addiction of respondents. Thus, we can infer that the availability of pocket money may allow the college students to be able to afford to buy different mobile services such as Voice calling, SMS and internet package. However availability of pocket money does not appear to have any significant relationship with college students' addiction to mobile phones.

Suggestions to Prevent and Overcome Mobile Phone Addictions among Students

From the findings of the present study it is found that majority of the college going students of Shillong are moderately addicted to their mobile phones with a few being found to be also highly addicted to their mobile phones. Though mobile phone addiction may more often than not be passed off as a harmless phase; it is to be noted that mobile phone addiction has become one of the fastest growing addictions among the youths in the west and also across many parts of mainland India. The youth of Shillong being an integral part of an increasingly globalised society are therefore also likely to be exposed to the same risks of being affected by mobile phone addiction. Therefore ignoring these risks may be greatly regretted afterwards. Hence, it is necessary to become aware about mobile phone addiction and to gain knowledge as to how to prevent mobile phone addictions especially among the youth of Shillong:

Some of the steps that can be suggested for prevention of mobile phone addiction amongst mobile phone users are noted down as follows:

- Keeping track of the time one spends messaging or talking on the mobile phone can help the individual keep a control on his/her mobile phone usage. By jotting down in a notepad when one is talking, messaging, or conducting other activities on the mobile phone and keeping the journal for a week's time, then reviewing the amount of time they are spending on each activity, will help the user to realise how much time they are spending on their mobile phone. When one realises they are spending a significant amount of time in messaging, calling friends, using the internet, etc; they should make efforts to start cutting back on such significant usage of mobile phone applications.
- Turning the cell phone off, or at least putting it away out of sight, when engaged in a face-to-face conversation with another person.
- Turn it off whenever one goes to sleep or to not keep the mobile phone in or around the sleeping area.
- Setting aside specific times of the day or evening when one will use their cell phone for different purposes, rather than doing so all through the day even when one is supposed to be engaged in more important things.
- By organising counselling programmes in schools, colleges and universities.
- By having strict mobile phone usage regulations in schools, colleges and universities.

XV. CONCLUSION

Mobile phone addiction is not a new concept, but it is often ignored by many considering it to be a habit and not an addiction. There is a thin line between addiction and habit. A habit becomes an addiction when the habit interferes in the normal functioning of the individual and it often leads to several consequences unlike habit which has a constructive outcome.

The study showed that majority of male college going students are moderately addicted to mobile phone, they also showed moderate addiction to maladaptive, usage, self expression, peer relationship, interpersonal relations, impulsivity, and usage time. However, majority female college going students also showed moderate addiction to mobile phone for maladaptive usage, self expression, peer relationship, impulsivity and usage time. Female college going students have shown moderate dependency on mobile phone for communication, and maintaining relationship. Nevertheless the difference between male and female students in mobile phone addiction is not significant. B.Com students are significantly addicted to mobile phone as compared to college students from B.A and B.Sc stream. Pocket money does not influence the addiction of college students towards pocket money as negligible relationship was found between availability of pocket money and mobile phone addiction. The addiction could be due to attitude of individual towards the object and its usage as well as it may be linked to anxiety of each individual. More anxious an individual is, more tendency they may exhibit to depend on object like mobile phone.

Though mobile phone addiction amongst college going students in Shillong is still not widespread, there is a need to counter the negative effects of overindulgence and dependence on mobile phones or the time will soon come when the youth of Shillong too will be affected or influenced and get carried away by the marvel of this compact technology thereby affecting their wellbeing and healthy all round growth.

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