

THE IMPACT OF MOBILE PHONE USAGE ON MUSLIM STUDENTS LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

(Special Reference to South Eastern University of Sri Lanka)

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Introduction

Media is one of the key modern social institutions in the world and it plays vital role in modern society. The mobile phone is a unique device which associated with all kinds of behavior of the people in various levels. Mobile phone is an electronic telecommunications device, often referred to as a cellular phone or cell phone (Webopedia). Mobile phones connect to a wireless communications network through radio wave or satellite transmissions. Most mobile phones provide voice communications, Short Message Service (SMS), Multimedia Message Service (MMS), and newer phones may also provide Internet services such as Web browsing and e-mail.

The first hand-held cell phone was demonstrated by John F. Mitchell and Martin Cooper of Motorola in 1973, using a handset weighing around 2.2 pounds (1 kg). In 1983, the DynaTAC 8000x was the first to be commercially available. From 1990 to 2011, worldwide mobile phone subscriptions grew from 12.4 million to over 6 billion, penetrating about 87% of the global population and reaching the bottom of the economic pyramid (<http://mobithinking.com>).

In Q1 2012, based on Strategy Analytics, Samsung surpassed Nokia, selling 93.5 million units and 82.7 million units, respectively. Standard & Poor's has also downgraded Nokia to 'junk' status at BB+/B with negative outlook due to high loss and still declined with growth of Lumia smartphones was not sufficient to

offset a rapid decline in revenue from Symbian-based smartphones over the next few quarters (Ingrid Lunden, 2012).

Top Five Worldwide Total Mobile Phone Vendors, Q4 2012		
Rank	Manufacturer	IDC
1	Samsung	23.0%
2	Nokia	17.9%
3	Apple	9.9%
4	ZTE	3.6%
5	Huawei	3.3%
6	Others	42.3%

Source: IDC Worldwide Mobile Phone Tracker, January 24, 2013

Table 1 :- Top Mobile phone vendors

Other manufacturers outside the top five include TCL Communication, Lenovo, Sony Mobile Communications, Motorola. Smaller current and past players include Karbonn Mobile, Audiovox (now UTStarcom), BenQ Siemens, BlackBerry, Casio, CECT, Coolpad, Fujitsu, HTC, Just5, Kyocera, Lumigon, Micromax Mobile, Mitsubishi Electric, Modu, NEC, Neonode Openmoko, Panasonic, Palm, Pantech Wireless Inc., Philips, Qualcomm Inc., Sagem, Sanyo, Sharp, Sierra Wireless, SK Teletech, Soutec, Trium, Toshiba, and Vidalco.

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 Effects on University Students

The effects on university students' learning are 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.

Some positive and healthy impacts and effects of mobile phone on students' performance at the university level include:

- a) To contact easily with the teachers, classmates and parents.
- b) To trace easily the teachers, classmates for the solution of educational problems.
- c) To use internet to search out the useful information.
- d) To use the mobile as minicomputer.
- e) To use dictionary and thesaurus.
- f) To read news.
- g) To listen F.M radio for entertainment.
- h) To find out the translation of versus of Holy Quran.
- i) To make photos and movies.
- j) 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. In it, data can be transferred even from other mobile or computer which is 15 to 20 feet away.
- k) To handle and move easily because it is light weight and so on.

According to Ansari, it has a number of negative and unhealthy impacts and effects on students' performances at the university level, including the wastage of time and money (Ansari, R. 2007).

According to Awaz (2008), mobile phone affects the social life and health of all society members as well as university students. Some effects are as follows:

- a) It is a cause of disturbance to university students when they are busy in their lecture or projects in class rooms or libraries.
- b) It seems that it may cause increase in decline of moral values. With the use of mobile phone, now 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.
- c) Loss and misplacement of mobile phone is very common. The student who loses his/ her mobile phone also undergoes tension and this affects studies.
- d) Mobile phone is a source to introduce new culture of co-education in educational institutions. It is going to become the great tool of free relationship in the young generation. Long conversations on mobile phone lead them to that attitude which is not according to social acceptability. Their attitude affects their studies greatly. Sometimes they become the victim of emotional, physical and psychological problems.

Objectives of This Study

The aim of present study is to discuss the effects of mobile phone culture on students learning at university level. The objectives are:

1. To evaluate the advantages and effects of mobile phone on university students leanings.
2. To identify the problems due to use of cell phone facing by South Eastern university of Sri Lanka students.
3. To suggest possible solutions to the problems caused by cell phone.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted by using the procedure of survey method which is a type of descriptive research. Out of 1200 students enrolled to the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, 130 students from four faculties were selected. Following is the sample for this study.

Faculty	Number of Students (Samples)
Faculty of Islamic Studies & Arabic Language	50
Faculty of Arts & Culture	30
Faculty of Management	30
Faculty of Applied Sciences	20
Total	130

Table 2

A questionnaire of a five point rating scale was developed to collect the data about the effects of mobile phone on students of The South Eastern University of Sri Lanka as research tool. Twenty five items were carefully included in this rating scale. Students were required to respond on a five point Likert scale. The reliability of the instrument was calculated by using MS Excel 2007. The instrument was personally administered to the sample.

To analyze the data, students' responses were converted into numerical scale according to the following description: Strongly Disagree 1, Disagree 2, Undecided 3, Agree 4, Strongly Agree 5. The data was analyzed in two steps. Firstly, the average score for each statement was calculated. As it was a five point scale, the maximum average score would be 5 and minimum possible score would be 1.

Findings

The findings, drawn out from the data collected through the questionnaire and analyzed in terms of mean score, are given below.

Positive Impacts

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
The student can easily contact with the lecturers for study purposes.	34	48	18	10	20	3.50
The student can easily contact with class fellows to get help in studies.	57	49	09	10	05	4.1
The student's academic performance has been increased due to this technology.	33	34	32	14	17	3.4
The Mobile Phone has helped to improve the level of the quality of education.	21	41	07	40	21	3.00
The student puts his/her Mobile Phone on silent before offering	55	38	15	13	09	3.9

prayers.						
The Mobile Phone helps the students to share helping materials among students.	30	67	05	20	08	3.7
The parents of female students feel more satisfaction due to Mobile Phone because their daughters can contact them easily	50	32	24	11	13	3.73
Student uses dictionary/thesaurus/calculate of mobile.	40	47	05	29	09	4.19

Table 3: Positive impacts of mobile phone on students learning achievements

Negative Impacts

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
The student misuses the Mobile Phone.	26	25	25	27	27	2.96
The student's Mobile Phone ring tone remains „On“ in the classroom while the teacher is delivering the lecture.	18	42	29	28	13	3.18
The student purchase Mobile Phone without the permission of their parents	21	36	25	27	21	3.06
The student wastes his/her time	42	34	13	32	09	3.52

in writing/sending useless SMSs to friends/colleagues.						
The Mobile Phone is the wastage of time for students.	50	33	04	21	22	3.52
The female student doesn't feel hesitation to give her Mobile Number to male classmates.	18	34	06	40	32	2.73
The Mobile Phone Culture has increased the rate of telling lie among students.	34	39	04	34	29	3.34
The student feels proud of having costly Mobile Phone.	58	25	14	18	25	3.79
The student teases the class fellows by sending missed calls through unknown numbers.	41	33	22	24	10	3.54
Student enjoys music on Mobile Phone.	65	38	18	05	04	4.19

Table 4: Negative impacts of mobile phone on students learning achievements n=130

Discussion

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 students' academic performance has increased due to this technology. 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 has put negative impacts on students' moral values and the students misuse their mobile phones. 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. As we know that at the university level, students are in adulthood and wise enough to recognize their duties. It is the responsibility of students to use this marvelous magic device in a better way and never misuse it. Universities 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 university 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.

Conclusions

The results of this study reveal that the students at the university 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 university students as we all know. The university students must be sensible and careful to get maximum advantages from this technology which was a dream 25 years ago, but a reality now. If the students use it wisely and properly then they can improve their education and construct a better future for them

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