IMPACT OF CELL PHONES ON PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

Synopsis of Ph.D Thesis

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Cell phones have provided avenues for individuals to stay connected on a new level that does not depend on space or time, but is readily accessible at anytime, anywhere. Never being disconnected has allowed social networks and relationships to be strengthened as well as new relationships formed. Cell phones have also allowed individuals all over the world whom, without the cell phone would never have access to all of the networks, assets and information that they do via the mobile phone.

While it has provided a new avenue to social networking and interactions, the change in the space and time concept has also had a negative effect as well. Many of us have likely experienced a situation where we have been in the presence of a cell phone user who is engaging in some form of rude behavior that lacks respect for the individuals around them. Cell phones have changed the way that individuals socially interact. Individuals are communicating more via text messages and cell phones than they are face-to-face, changing our social environment.

Individuals have become enveloped in their cell phones and less aware of their social surroundings, missing out on possible new social interactions. The danger is that many people do not know when to turn off their cell phone. Personal contact and good listening skills have
become less of a commodity than availability. Cell phones have influenced every aspect of our lives.

The study was conducted on a sample of 613 students belonging to Medical and Engineering Colleges. In Medical, there were 436 students and in Engineering there were 177 students. There were 347 students below 20 years of age and 266 students above 20 years of age. And, the sample included 251 males and 362 females.

Based on the objectives of the thesis, a schedule was designed, carefully. Four dimensions of the schedule were identified – namely, cell phone as a communication tool, multimedia applications, status, security and freedom, cell phone addiction and family and interpersonal relationships. The items in the schedule were prepared in such a way that a high score indicated less usage or less impact.

The findings of the present study show that a substantial percentage of students uses the cell phone for more than 4 hours per day; receive on an average 18 calls per day and make about 8 calls daily. The most popular applications are music and games. They fell that cell phones are status symbols and that most of the world is addicted to cell phones.

They admit that cell phones provide security when are lost or in new places but state that late night conversations do not disturb
concentration in the class. About 40 percent of students admit that they would prefer talking to friends on their cell phones rather than parents when they are at home. However, they do not prefer to engage in cell phone conversations when they are in a low mood.

The study also highlighted significant gender differences in cell phone usage and effects. Male students use the phone more than the female students. They are more unlikely to switch off their phones and are prone to disturbance in concentration. Male students have also been found to yield to peer pressure to buy new models of the cell phones and rely on cell phones when they have to tell a lie. The influence of play of stay on cell phone usage and effects shows that the effect is more for students staying at home. This group of students uses the cell phone more and show more addiction. The students residing at home prefer to talk to their friends more than their parents.