



## Study of Mobile Phone Dependence of Undergraduate Students in Relation to their Emotional Maturity

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### Abstract

The most prevailing kind of information and communication technology is the mobile phone, the use of which in the past few years has increased substantially due to social impact. Mobile phones are slowly replacing more and more portable objects that we have been carrying and are still carrying with us: pictures in the wallet, address book, calendar, music player, common transportation tickets and even our wallet. Mobile phone is a great tool and ready-made forum for communication. This digital revolution has touched and turned almost every aspect of life of its users whether it's physical, social, emotional, moral or ethical etc. Hence, the current study focused to explore the relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity among undergraduate students. For this purpose, a sample of 100 boys and 100 girls with age ranging from 18-24 years was taken. In this study, the test of mobile phone dependence [4] and emotional maturity scale [18] were used. Findings revealed that inverse and significant relationship exists between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate students. Results also revealed insignificant gender differences in mobile phone dependence and significant gender differences in emotional maturity of students.

**Keywords:** Mobile Phone Dependence; Emotional Maturity; Communication Technology

A subtle change is happening within our society. We are in the process of being a "dot com" nation. As a society, we are moving forward. We are coming up with new ways to disclose and share personal as well as public information. It's the mobile phone, the strongest invention of the century that makes all the things possible in every way. The mobile phone is one of the major technological systems currently changing how we define knowledge, personal value and social relationships [15]. It enables the user to explore new ideas, enter into complex systems, and/or develop new intellectual connections. The mobile phone is the most radioactive domestic appliance ever invented [4]. It has become ubiquitous, invading our classrooms, bedrooms and other places of social interaction. Its role has evolved in the past decade from an instru-

ment for communication to a luxury and has recently morphed "into an appendage" [8].

According to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the total number of mobile phone subscribers in India reached 1175.27 million as on 28 January 2021. The numbers of wireline subscribers are 20.07 million and the numbers of wireless subscribers are 1155.20 million. In the race of subscriptions to mobile phone, India is expected to be the world's third largest mobile market by number of users, behind China and the United States.

Almost every developmental phase (namely youth, childhood, adulthood or older age) is using mobile phone but one of the groups where the increase in mobile phone usage has been the highest is

that of adolescents, not only because practically all adolescents have one of these devices but also the mobile phone dependency becomes much more relevant at the adolescence phase than it does in any other developmental phase. Recent studies show that the new generation is more dependent on technology than those born before mobile phones were available [1]. Young people use mobile phones to communicate [12], surf the Internet [7] and organize and maintain social networks [3]. College students are described as the most 'connected' and 'techno-savvy generation' [17]. Dependence on mobile phones may impact on college student's performance. However, every new technology is associated with its own set of problems and a more serious issue about the mobile phone is the problem of dependence among its users. This problem is a raising phenomenon affecting people with varying frequency around the world and has produced negative impacts on the various aspects of many lives.

More recently, the focus of research on mobile phone dependence has increased. Studies have used different methodologies to recognize the mobile addicts and have used many titles for it such as mobile phone addiction, problematic use of mobile phone, mobile phone abuse and Nomophobia. The young users have the highest level of dependence on mobile phone, from which it can be postulated that this type of dependence is expected to be take place among this group [2]. A study was conducted [6] in central India revealed that no significant association was found in relation to gender and academic sessions with regard to Nomophobia (fear of having no mobile phone). Likewise [11] discovered and coined the syndrome, "RINGXIETY". This phenomenon was auditory hallucination of ringing cell phone. It was a hallucination or a false belief that makes a person hears his/her cell phone ringing when it was not. It triggers anxiety when we feel or perceive cell phone ringing. This arises out of addiction to cell phone and it was present in both the genders.

The dependence on mobile phone deeply affects the development of emotional processes in young people because it transforms the way of thinking. It transforms it from an analogue, structured, sequential and referential one into a general, vague, global, and holistic one. It changes our experiences as well as mobile phone bring closer the distant things and move away the things that are close to us. Everything is simultaneous and momentary. Using the

mobile phone, one can immediately get the answer to the posed question. The intermediate stage of excitement during the search for the answer is therefore disappearing, along with yearning and uncertainty. There is no longer an intermediate time between the desire and the gratification, which naturally changes one's experience. There is no more room for patience, for the process, for creating strategies, for facing frustrations and problems, etc. which makes the young people emotionally immature. Today's young people are overwhelmed with experiences in their early childhood, which they cannot process. They are skilled in fast responses, but they are not capable of critical distance and reflection. So, there is a high level of malnutrition among young people in their emotional maturity.

The regular checking of mobile phone and excessive use of mobile phone has been linked with depression, anxiety, stress, problems in sleep and deterioration in well-being, academic performance, emotional maturity etc. Extravagant use of mobile phone can rob people of crucial time spent with family and friends, resulting in smaller social circles and increased levels of loneliness and stress. A lot of studies have been found a direct correlation between people's changing behaviours and their usage of technology. The limited users of mobile phones have better emotional maturity than unlimited users of mobile phones [20]. A study conducted by Sakarya University Turkey (2013) reveals that young people text at least five times each day and expect immediate responses. This demonstrates that as the frequency of mobile phone use grows, so does the amount of addiction. It was also found that when the mobile phone addiction level increases in the students, their emotional maturity deteriorates. The high use of mobile phone was associated with low levels of emotional maturity [10]. The emotional immaturity was associated with problematic usage of mobile phone more in male young adults as compared to females. Similarly, mobile phone users according to all criteria are emotionally immature. Findings of a study [16] explored that the rate of people's dependence to mobile phone has a reverse relationship with their emotional maturity. Similarly, those who did not use their phones on a regular basis were more emotionally matured than those who did. In the study, it was also discovered that boys had a higher level of emotional maturity than girls. One study found that those students who are dependent on gadgets are emotionally mature [13] which contradicts the above findings.

From above discussion we have seen that mobile phone dependence have increased terrifyingly especially among the youth. This type of dependency is never treated seriously instead; it is dismissed as a habit and is being ignored. This reliance on mobile phones has taken its deadly toll on the various facets of human existence including psychological, social, academic and other elements. The emotional facet i.e., emotional maturity is a crucial issue to consider because it is a sensitive factor of dependence. As students are the pillars of the upcoming generations so their ideals and model of emotional maturity are vital. Emotional maturity and stability of today's young generation mobile phone users is also one of the important issues we should be concerned about but not much researched. Whether today's young generation mobile phone users are emotionally mature or not? Is there any gender difference in the emotional maturity of mobile phone users? So, in the current research, the focus is on the investigation of association between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate students and also to see that if there are any differences in emotional maturity and mobile phone dependence between boys and girls?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were derived

- There exists no significant difference between mobile phone dependence of undergraduate boys and girls.
- There exists no significant difference between emotional maturity of undergraduate boys and girls.
- There exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate students.
- There exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate boys.
- There exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate girls.

### Method

#### Sample

In present study, a sample of 200 undergraduate students (100 boys and 100 girls) from the undergraduate colleges of Amritsar

city was taken. The sample of the study was delimited to students that were late adolescents, both boys and girls having chronological age ranges from 18 to 24 years and who have been using mobile phone from at least one or more years, one hour daily or four times a week. Simple random sampling was employed as a sampling technique.

### Measures

#### The test of mobile phone dependence (TMD) by Mariano Cholliz (2012)

The test of mobile phone dependence is a 22-item questionnaire originally developed and validated in Spain in 2012. The test was according to the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV-TR). Using an oblique translational technique, the test was translated directly from Spanish to Swedish. The test had a maximum score 88 points. On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (frequently), the first 10 items are answered. Respondents used a Likert scale ranging from 0 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree) for the next 12 items. The questionnaire had a good level of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.94). The questionnaire shows fine internal validity (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87).

#### Emotional maturity scale (EMS) by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (2006)

The scale has a total of 48 items under the five categories. These categories are emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence. The first four categories contain 10 numbers of items and last category contains 8 numbers of items. The higher the score on the scale, the more emotional immaturity there is, and vice-versa. The scale items are in question form demanding information for each in any of the five alternatives- 'very much', 'much', 'undecided', 'probably', 'never'. The maximum score of the emotional maturity scale can be obtained 240 and minimum can be 48. The scale is meant for adolescents and adults. The test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.75. The scale was validated against external criteria i.e., validity of the scale is 0.64.

### Results and Discussion

To find out the differences with regard to the different aspects of mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity for under-

graduate boys and girls, t-values were determined whereas in order to find the correlation between the variables mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity for undergraduate students, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) analysis was used and following inferences were drawn.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t
Mobile Phone Dependence	Boys	100	44.740	13.291	0.286
	Girls	100	44.200	13.409	
Emotional Maturity	Boys	100	132.640	32.929	3.699**
	Girls	100	117.340	25.033	

**Table 1:** Showing Gender Differences in Mobile Phone Dependence and Emotional Maturity of Undergraduate Boys and Girls (N = 200).

\*=p < 0.05; \*\*=p < 0.01.

	Gender	Emotional Maturity
Mobile Phone Dependence	Total Sample (Boys and Girls)	0.179**
	Boys	0.067
	Girls	0.329**

**Table 2:** Showing Correlation between Mobile Phone Dependence and Emotional Maturity of Undergraduate Students.

\*= p < 0.05; \*\*= p < 0.01.

The table 1 reveals that mean scores of mobile phone dependence for boys and girls were 44.740 and 44.200 and standard deviations for boys and girls found to be 13.291 and 13.409 respectively. The t-value determining the significance of mean difference between mobile phone dependence of undergraduate boys and girls is 0.286 (N = 200) which was found to be insignificant. Therefore, hypothesis-1 which states that “there exists no significant difference between mobile phone dependence of undergraduate boys and girls” stands proved. It indicates significant differences do not exist between mobile phone dependence for undergraduate boys and girls. Further, perusal of the table 1 suggests that mean value of emotional maturity for boys and girls was 132.640 and 117.340 respectively. The S.D. came out to be 32.929 for boys and 25.033 for girls. It was noticed that the calculated t-value 3.699\*\* (N = 200) was significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypoth-

esis 2, “There exists no significant difference between emotional maturity of undergraduate boys and girls” was disapproved. So, there was significant difference between emotional maturity of undergraduate boys and girls.

From above analysis, we can interpret that both the genders are equally dependent on mobile phone. It may be because of different reasons, firstly, now it’s not a big secret that adolescents have complex and close link with technology i.e., mobile phone. The mobile phone use is universal and also equally distributed among boys and girls. The mobile phone offers these digital natives a potential to connect not only to friends and family in town but to friends, families and strangers across the globe. Secondly, in 21<sup>st</sup> century’s parents provide full freedom to both the genders in case of owning a mobile phone. Equal opportunities and resources are available to them. Thirdly, in the time of COVID-19, education is heavily dependent on mobile phone. Students prefer to use mobile phone rather than laptops, computers etc. to access digital education during pandemic. Some college students spend a lot of time in searching and collecting information that has relationship with their work. Therefore, there was no significant difference between mobile phone dependence in undergraduate boys and girls. Further these findings were in agreement with findings of [6,11] who reported that no significant association was found for mobile phone dependence in relation to gender among the college students.

Several research studies and meta-analyses have also shown significant gender differences in the emotional maturity in adolescents and adulthood stage. The differences in the emotional maturity of boys and girls may be due to the fact that boys become anxious very soon. Their feeling of insecurity, lack of ability to adjust makes them different from the girls. They may get annoyed easily by things and people, showing marked dissatisfaction. They get frustrated easily as compared to girls. Boys may not cry, but they convert their sadness into anger and throw it on someone else. Whereas girls are sensitive by heart and express their feelings. They do not get anxious soon and show aggression as much as in case of boys. They have the ability to tolerate delay in satisfaction of needs, ability to tolerate a moderate degree of frustration, to believe in long term planning and to delaying or revising their expectations in terms of the situation’s demands. So, there was significant difference between emotional maturity of undergraduate boys and girls. The undergraduate boys were found to be emotion-

ally immature as compared to girls. Likewise, studies [9,19] were also reported significant differences in the emotional maturity of boys and girls.

A perusal of table 2 suggests inverse and significant correlation between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity ( $r = .179^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) of undergraduate students. Therefore, the hypothesis-3 "there exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate students" stands proved. Further, table reveals coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity for boys was 0.067. The value of coefficient of correlation was found to be insignificant. Accordingly, the hypothesis-4 "there exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate boys" is disapproved. Whereas in case of girls, inverse and significant correlation between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity ( $r = 0.329^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) exists. Thus, the hypothesis-5 "there exists significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate girls" is proved.

From this we can deduce that the more they use their mobile phone, the lower their emotional maturity will be. As high scores in the manual of emotional maturity scale indicates the low levels of emotional maturity. As we all know that the mobile phone has revolutionized our lives. So, students are dependent on it for various purposes like internet browsing, photography, video games, email, text messaging, voice and video communication, wireless communication like bluetooth etc. The dependence on mobile phone deeply affects the development of emotional processes in young people because it transforms the way of thinking. Using the mobile phone, one can immediately get the answer to the posed question. There is no longer an intermediate time between the desire and the gratification, which naturally changes one's experience. There is no more room for patience, for the process, for creating strategies, for facing frustrations and problems, etc. which makes the young people emotionally immature. The results of the present study were supported [10].

The results of the present study reveal insignificant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity of undergraduate boys. It implies that dependence on mobile phone does not negatively impact their emotional maturity. In fact, boys

are physically strong than their counterparts, likewise they are sufficient enough to control or manage their emotions according to the situation. From this we can conclude that no doubt they are dependent on mobile phones for various purposes but they are not attached emotionally to their devices. So, that's why their emotional maturity is not much affected with the dependence on the mobile phone.

Results of the study also revealed that more dependence on mobile phone negatively impacts the emotional maturity of undergraduate girls. The reason behind this may be that girls pick up smart phone for social networking sites including facebook, instagram and whatsapp etc. Girls also use mobile phone during breaks, look at their screen while talking with others and also on the move and for academic purposes etc. In this way they become dependent on their devices and attached emotionally to the mobile phone like making relationships on internet with strangers. The results of another study conducted [21] were at par with the results of the present study.

### Implications

This study has implications for parents, teachers, educational administrators, other lay persons and all those involved in the lives of undergraduate students. Mobile phone is a readymade forum for social interaction easily available to students of 21<sup>st</sup> century at home, schools and cyber cafes at anytime. So, there is a strong need to aware and motivate the students to safe and appropriate use of mobile phone from information, education and communication point of view. Orientation programmes on appropriate use of mobile phone may be organized for undergraduate students by college administration and government officials time to time. Use of mobile phone in teaching-learning process should be according to the needs, interests, ability and the potential of the adolescents.

### Conclusions

The results obtained in the study showed that mobile phone dependence was found in both the genders. Mobile phone dependence has already been associated with a multitude of psychiatric disorders. We have observed a significant relationship between mobile phone dependence and emotional maturity among undergraduate students. The prevalence of mobile phone dependence and its association with problems related to emotional maturity

has the potential to increase in future as the availability of mobile phone in general and enrichment of the virtual world with more high-quality, attractive and addictive digital contents are rising. We have also found significant differences in emotional maturity of undergraduate boys and girls.

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