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Time and money spent on cell phones by urban undergraduate students and their background variables

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the sample students started using cell phones when their age was between 16 to 19 yrs irrespective of their SES and gender. The cell phones were provided to them by majority of the parents for children's (students) security and to have good connectivity with them. The income of parents and time spend on cell phone by males were significantly positively correlated denoting increase in parental economic level coinciding with time spent by males on cell phone. Ordinal position of the UG female and male students was positively significantly correlated with time spent with average time spent on cell phone conversation significantly. The increase in parental economic level was positively correlated with time spent by male students on cell phone significantly. Year of degree programme of the UG students in which they were studying and the expenditure on cell phone was correlated positively regardless of gender. Positive significant correlation was recorded between age of males and increasing cell phone bills.

KEW WORDS : Urban UG students, Cell phone, Time and money spending pattern, Socio-economic status

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INTRODUCTION

Cell phone is a long range, portable and wireless electronic device of communication. In the current scenario almost every college going student owns a cell phone as an important personal accessory irrespective of gender, socio-economic status, area, education etc. Youngsters are fond of using various features of cell phone and make their life easier, comfortable, enjoyable as well as stylish. They spend hours and hours time on cell phone on using features like text messaging, calling, playing games, music, reminder, clock, alarm, internet, mailing, torch, phone books, address books, dairy, multimedia, camera, calculator, calendar and so on.

The cell phones have made the life easier and comfortable by keeping in touch with family and friends though they are at long distances. This technology has reduced the stress of elderly and children by keeping in close contact with dear and near. The most research studies have shown that majority of the youth make calls at night and more than half of them reported that their parents were paying their phone bills (Aoki and Downes, 2003). Further it was reported that cell phones were bought for them by their parents on family plans, largely for security and emergency reasons (Schiano *et al.*, 2002). The youngsters were spending more than seven hours in a day on texting and they were addicted to SMS was reported by Selian (2004). However, on an average, nine and half hours were spent on media and calls each day by youngsters (Synovate and Rattaya, 2009). MACRO (2004) reports reiterated that females had an inclination towards pre paid than post paid services of cell phones as it helps them to budget their telephonic expenses. Even total usage of talk time was found to be higher in females (71%) when compared with their counterparts (63%).

METHODS

Three hundred urban UG students were chosen at random from randomly selected 9 colleges of Parbhani town, Maharashtra state in the year 2010 was 18 to 25 yrs. The 260 UG cell phone owner students in the age range 18 to 25 yrs were selected for the study. Out of these 300 samples, 260 students owned a cell phone for personal use while the rest of the 40 students did not own a cell phone but used it often belonging to their family

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members or friends or classmates as and when required by them. Among these 300 samples, 150 were students and the remaining were male students. The information pertaining to study was collected with the help of open ended interview schedule from sample students. The collected data was compiled, classified and tabulated for subjecting it to statistical analysis on the basis of students' gender, age, SES, ordinal position, family type, family size, income, staying arrangement (home or hostel).

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 illustrates about the background of the selected urban UG students and their parents. The sample students considered of 50 per cent each of males and females. Most of them were in the age range of 18-21 yrs (90%) and studying in either first or second yr of the degree programme (55.33%). About 60 per cent of the students were day scholars while 40 per cent of them were hostelites. Regarding ordinal position of the students, 40.67 per cent of them were first born followed by middle (35.33%) and last born (24%). Majority of them were hailed from nuclear type families (77.33%) followed by joint (21.00%) and extended families (1.33%). Seventy one per cent of the students belonged to medium sized families followed by small (18.33%) and large (10.66%) families. A majority (80%) of the students belonged to middle socio-economic status while remaining 20 per cent of them were from low SES families. With respect to their parental monthly income, 44 per cent of the families reported to have Rs. 5000-15,000/- month income followed by Rs. 15,000 to 30,000/ month (41%) and Rs. 30,000-45,000/ month income (14.67%). Majority of the parents (51.56% fathers and 77.39% of the mothers) were found to be school educated. About 59 per cent of their fathers were businessmen while 85.87 per cent of their mothers were unemployed and were only home makers. About 87 per cent of the students possessed own cell phones while the rest of the 13 per cent of them were cell phone non owners.

It can be concluded that majority of the sample UG students were in the age range of 18 to 21 yrs, day scholars (59.67%), from middle SES, nuclear, medium size and having Rs. 5000-15000 monthly family income.

Table 2 interprets correlation between average time spent on cell phonic conversation in a day by UG students and their background variables. The time spent on cell phone by the UG students included conversation with parents, friends, classmates, siblings and relatives through calls. These calls may be done by the UG students or may be received from the other end. It was found that irrespective of gender, ordinal position of the UG female

Table 1 : Background information of the selected urban UG students and their parents

Background variables	Percentages of students (300)	
Gender		
Male	50.00 (150)	
Female	50.00 (150)	
Age (yrs)		
18-21	90.00 (270)	
22-25	10.00 (30)	
Year of degree programme		
1-2	55.55 (166)	
3-4	44.66 (134)	
Stay of the students		
In home	59.67 (179)	
In hostel	33.67 (101)	
Ordinal position		
First born	40.67 (122)	
Middle born	35.33 (106)	
Last born	24.00 (72)	
Family type		
Nuclear	77.33 (232)	
Extended	1.33 (4)	
Joint	21.00 (63)	
Family size		
Small (below 4 members)	18.33 (55)	
Medium (4-8 members)	71.00 (213)	
Large (Above 8 members)	10.66 (32)	
Socio-economic status (SES)		
Low	20.33 (61)	
Middle	79.66 (239)	
Parental monthly income		
Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000	44.33 (133)	
Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 30,000	41.00 (123)	
Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 45,000	14.67 (44)	
Parental education	Parental (n-289)	Maternal (n-283)
Non literates	0.35 (1)	2.83 (8)
School educated	51.56 (149)	77.39 (219)
College educated	47.75 (138)	19.79 (56)
Occupation	Parental (n-289)	Maternal (n-283)
Semi professionals	16.61 (48)	2.47 (7)
Businessman	59.52 (172)	4.59 (13)
Skilled workers	23.88 (69)	7.07 (20)
Non employed/Home makers	--	85.87 (243)
Employment (n-300)		
Both Parents employed	11.33 (34)	
Only fathers employed	86.66 (260)	
Only mothers employed	2.00 (6)	
Cell phone possession		
Cell phone owners	86.67 (260)	
Cell phone non owners	13.33 (40)	

Table 2 : Correlation between average time spent on cell phonic conversation in a day by UG students and their background variables

Background variables of students	Correlation with time spent on cell phone		
	Irrespective of gender (260)	Males (130)	Females (130)
Age	0.018^{NS}	-0.035^{NS}	0.013^{NS}
Ordinal position	0.197^{NS}	0.196^{NS}	0.036^{NS}
Year of degree programme	0.037^{NS}	0.026^{NS}	-0.093^{NS}
Type of stay of the students	0.167^{NS}	0.082^{NS}	0.195^{NS}
Parental income	0.199^{NS}	0.195^{NS}	0.108^{NS}

Table value of r at 5% level 0.195 and at 1% level 0.254 NS=Non-significant

Table 3 : Correlation between monthly expenditure incurred on cell phone and background variables of urban undergraduate students

Background variables of students	Correlation with time spent on cell phone		
	Irrespective of gender (260)	Males (130)	Females (130)
Age	0.195^{NS}	0.195^{NS}	-0.024^{NS}
Ordinal position	0.047^{NS}	0.062^{NS}	-0.015^{NS}
Year of degree programme	0.198^{NS}	0.267^{NS}	-0.053^{NS}
Type of stay of the students	-0.025^{NS}	-0.050^{NS}	0.037^{NS}
Socio-economic status (SES)	0.062^{NS}	0.111^{NS}	0.076^{NS}
Parental income	0.075^{NS}	0.012^{NS}	0.199^{NS}

Table value of r at 5% level 0.195 and at 1% level 0.254 NS=Non-significant

and male students was positively significantly correlated with time spent on cell phone. Furthermore it was reported that males who were first and second born in their families were spending more time on cell phonic conoversation. Even some of the male students also opined that they shoulder some of the family responsibilities. Many times parents assign them activities outside the home like purchasing grocery or vegetables, bank transactions etc. For such reasons, they need to communicate with family members on cell phone. The hostelite female students' were found to be positively correlated with average time spent on cell phonic conversation significantly. These females opined that mostly they contacted parents, especially mothers for casual reasons or friends for various causes in routine life. The increase in parental economic level was positively correlated with time spent by male students as well as irrespective of gender on cell phone significantly.

Correlation between monthly expenditure incurred on cell phone and background variables of UG students is given in Table 3. The background variables considered for studying correlation with their monthly expenditure incurred on cell phone were age, ordinal position and year of degree programme, type of stay of the students *i.e.* dayscholars or hostelites and their parental income. Among these, there was significant positive correlation between year of degree programme of the UG students in which they were studying and the expenditure on cell phone regardless of gender, denoting as UG students were progressing the year of their educational degree, their expenditure on cell phone was also increasing. Similarly highly significant positive results were noted among males too. Further, positive significant correlation was recorded between age of males and their increasing cell phone bills indicating that as the age of male students increased, there was an increase in cell phone usage as well as bills. The reason behind it opined by the males was that in final year of their degree programme, cell phone usage helped them in completing their assignments. Due to cell phone it became convenient for them to contact classmates, coordinate the work and submit their records and assignments in time. Therefore the cell phone expenses were found to be increased with progressing year of degree programme. With regard to female students, it was noticed that as the income of the parents was increasing likewise their cell phone bills were outstripping indicating positive significant correlation between these two variables. The reason for increasing cell phone bill among females from high income families may be that with better economic background, they may be liberal in making more phone calls resulting into increased cell phone bills.

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