



# Journal of Arts & Humanities

Volume 07, Issue 12, 2018: 27-32

Article Received: 31-10-2018

Accepted: 13-11-2018

Available Online: 13-12-2018

ISSN: 2167-9045 (Print), 2167-9053 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18533/journal.v7i12.1524>

## Analysis of Phubbing Phenomenon among College Students and Its Recommendations

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### ABSTRACT

Mobile phones have laid a significant effect on college students with the development of science and technology. As previously reported, the number of phubbing quantity grew dramatically year on year. It has caused various problems such as damaging college students' physical and mental health and ruining their social communication skills and interpersonal relationships. This study attempts to identify the influence of mobile phones and reveal the reasons why it happens. This report, which adopts a web-based questionnaire for the authenticity and validity of the results, reached the results that smart phones have exerted great influence on students' lives with diverse powerful functions and fast updating speed; most of students think that phubbing phenomenon will become more and more popular.

**Keywords:** College Students, Mobile Phone Used Situation, Phubbing.

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### 1. Introduction

Mobile phones are very popular with the rapid development of social economy and they do provide plenty of convenience and change people's life significantly. However, to some extent, it is a double-edged sword. Just as Chunging Chen (2005) mentioned, "Like everything, Internet culture is a beautiful and evil double-edged sword". On one hand, users enjoy the benefits it brings. On the other hand, it also causes some problems such as social communicating and physical health problems. And phubbing phenomenon is especially an epidemic among university students, "college students are the main body of the phubbing group" (Yu, Meng, 2015). Accordingly, this research mainly focuses on the reason of phubbing and the exact influence of mobile phones.

#### 1.1 The reason of phubbing

According to the study of Varoth Chotpitayasunondh and Karen DouglasM (2016), smartphones

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allow people to connect with others from almost anywhere at any time. However, there is growing concern that smartphones may actually sometimes detract, rather than complement, social interactions. They examined the contributing roles of Internet addiction, fear of missing out, self-control, and smartphone addiction, and how the frequency of phubbing behavior and of being phubbed may both lead to the perception that phubbing is normative. The results revealed that Internet addiction, fear of missing out, and self-control predicted smartphone addiction, which in turn predicted the extent to which people phub.

### 1.2 The influence of mobile phones

The research by Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas (2018) experimentally investigated the social consequences of “phubbing”. Participants viewed a three-minute animation in which they imagined themselves as part of a dyadic conversation. Their communication partner either phubbed them extensively, partially, or not at all. Their results revealed that increased phubbing significantly and negatively affected perceived communication quality and relationship satisfaction. These effects were mediated by reduced feelings of belongingness and both positive and negative affect. Their research underlines the importance of phubbing as a modern social phenomenon to be further investigated.

### 1.3 Aims and expectations

All in all, this research is aimed at analyzing the influence of mobile phones on students and is expected to make a contribution to solving the problems caused by mobile phones. In order to collect effective data, this research adopted a web-based investigation system to encourage the informants to take part and finally 91 pieces of questionnaire were collected back.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Designing process of the questionnaire

#### 2.1.1 Choose the topic

After group discussion, we finally chose the status of mobile phone use of college students as our research topic. Based on our observation, we find that most of students would kill their time with mobile phones by listening to music, watching movies, or communicating with friends through social software. Some of them even cannot resist the temptation of mobile phones in class. Therefore, a rule came out, **banning** students using mobile phones in class. We think that this topic is closely connected to our daily life and it can reflect some problems of mobile phone using among college students. Some solutions can be provided after discussion.

#### 2.1.2 Design the questions

Referring to previous research from Lin, T.T.C., Chiang, Y.-H. (2017) and Yu Wang., Qingfeng Meng. (2015), which are closely related to mobile phones used situation, we came up seventeen questions, three of which are concerned with basic information of the informants, ten are aimed at investigating the reason and effect of phubbing, another three are designed to know the students’ attitude toward phubbing and the last one is an objective question for suggestions. Generally speaking, the questions are reasonable and were raised from different aspects, directly or indirectly. The questionnaire was uploaded on Wenjunaxing (<https://www.wjx.cn/?source=360&plan=%E9%97%AE%E5%8D%B7%E6%98%9F&keyword=%E9%97%AE%E5%8D%B7%E6%98%9F>) openly and finally we collected ninety-one pieces of results.

Questions are as following:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your grade?
3. What specialty do you major in?
4. Do you think mobile phones have a great influence on your life?
5. In most situations, which means do you prefer to communicate with others?
6. In which situation do you prefer to use mobile phone most?
7. What is the main purpose of using mobile phone?
8. How much time do you spend on mobile phone everyday on average?

9. Would you play your mobile phone in classes?
10. Do you have to carry mobile phones out even for a short time (within half an hour)?
11. If you forget your mobile phone, what will your day be like?
12. Which of the following choice is accordance to your mobile phone use situation?
13. Do you think your mobile phone use situation is reasonable?
14. Have you ever heard about phubbing? (It refers to those who always stare at their phones)
15. What is your attitude toward phubbing?
16. What do you think is the tendency of phubbing?
17. Do you have any suggestions for university students to use mobile phones?

## 2.2 Object of the research

The research is aimed at investigating the use of phones among university students. Therefore, the object of the research is limited to university students. And in order to enhance the persuasiveness, university students from different grades, majors and genders are included as the table showed below. Therefore, the object of the research has reached the demand of universality and pertinence.

Table 1: Response to question 1

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Male	23	25.27%
B. Female	68	74.73%

Table 2: Response to question 2

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Grade One	14	15.38%
B. Grade Two	39	42.86%
C. Grade Three	23	25.27%
D. Grade Four	12	13.19%
E. Grade Five	3	3.3%

Table 3: Response to question 3

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Linguistics	33	36.26%
B. Software	21	23.08%
C. Art	6	6.59%
D. Economy and Management	24	26.37%
E. Others	7	7.69%

## 2.3 Tool of the research

A web-based investigation system called Wenjuanxing afore mentioned is utilized to analyze the data. The results and data are authentic and reliable.

## 3. Results and discussions

According to the research it can be found that nowadays mobile phones have a great effect on students' daily life and it reflects in many different perspectives. In this part, we will discuss the results from three sections: great influence of mobile phones, what are phones used for and college students' knowledge of the phubbings.

### 3.1 Great influence of mobile phones

Through a considerable number of investigations, we can see that mobile phones have a great influence on students. As table 4 shows that nobody thinks our life is independent from mobile phones and about 45% of informants think they are influenced a lot by mobiles. One of the greatest influences in table 5 shows in what situations people are prone to use phones. Among several conditions, the highest rate appears in the time quantum before people go to sleep and after they get up. Also another 28% of

people decide on the last option which represents that all the conditions mentioned are frequent for them to use phones. The results directly and strongly support the idea that with the development of technology the influence of phones is gradually prominent.

Table 4: Response to question 4

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Great influence	41	45.05%
B. Relatively great influence	33	36.26%
C. Kind of influence	17	18.68%
D. Not great influence	0	0%
E. No influence at all	0	0%

Table 5: Response to question 6

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Study or work	16	17.58%
B. Walking or taking the traffic tools	18	19.78%
C. Having meals	3	3.3%
D. Before and after sleep	28	30.77%
E. All above	26	28.57%

Besides, some further details suggest the great influence of mobile phones. From table 6, 7, 8, the survey reveals students' degree of dependence on mobile phones, which embodies in two aspects. First, over 70% of students spend 1-5 hours on their mobile phones. According to the survey, even nearly 20% of students spend 5-8 hours per day with their mobile phones, which covers about one third of their daily time. Second, nearly 80% of students must or always carry their phones even though they just leave a moment (within thirty minutes) and over 90% of students say that a day without mobile phones will make them uncomfortable to varying degrees. Even 13.19% of informants claim that they will return home immediately for the phone if they forget to take it. Students' reliance on telephone is apparent and it also illustrates the great influence of mobile phones.

Table 6: Response to question 8

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Within an hour	5	5.49%
B. 1-3 hours	40	43.96%
C. 3-5 hours	27	29.67%
D. 5-8 hours	17	18.68%
E. More than 8 hours	2	2.2%

Table 7: Response to question 10

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Always have to	38	41.76%
B. Often have to	33	36.26%
C. Occasionally have to	16	17.58%
D. Never have to	3	3.3%
E. Have no idea	1	1.1%

Table 8: response to question 11

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. No difference	7	7.69%
B Slightly uncomfortable	47	51.65%
C. Uncomfortable	25	27.47%
D. Confused, go back home to catch it	12	13.19%
E. Have no idea	0	0%

### 3.2 What are phones used for

#### 3.2.1 Tools to communication

The study shows that among the informants, 49.45% of them would like to communicate with each other through mobile social APPs and only about 10% of participants choose making calls, messages and letters to connect with others. And another 39.56% informants prefer to communicate with other people face to face.

Thus, it can be found that:

a. Recently mobile phones are widely used as tools to communicate and many people are used to social APPs communication and most students prefer to communicate with others through apps on mobile phone.

b. At the same time it weakens the status of traditional communication channels such as phone calls or letters because of its convenience and low-cost thus it has a great attraction toward students.

c. In the era of science and technology, a number of students still thirst for communicating with others face to face.

Table 9: Response to question 5

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Mobile social software	45	49.45%
B. Telephone, short messages	8	8.79%
C. Paper letters	2	2.2%
D. Face to face communication	36	39.56%

#### 3.2.2 For fun

Another purpose of using mobile phones is for fun. Based on the list designed in table 10, we can see that over 75% of informants use phones to glance over WeChat or enjoy music or movies. Only about 15% of people use the phone to look for study materials or read current news. All in all, recreation is another main use of mobile phones. It is the entertaining function that may directly results in phubbing phenomenon.

Table 10: Response to question 7

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Look up information for study	10	10.99%
B. Watching videos or listening music for entertainment	24	26.37%
C. Look through Weibo and WeChat	47	51.65%
D. Get information of news	3	3.3%
E. Make phone calls or send messages	7	7.69%

### 3.3 Phenomenon of Phubbing

Just as we supposed, all the participants have heard the concept of “phubbing” before and about 40% of them can always hear it. (Table11) It proves that the phenomenon of phubbing is very common among the public.

In addition, what is noticeable is that despite 74% of respondents who are opposed to the phenomenon of phubbing, over 80% of them predict that the phubbing will be more and more common in the future. However, to our relief, the phenomenon of phubbing is not as severe as we supposed. As table 13 shows, more than half of the students declare that they occasionally play phones when they are in class.

How could this happen? Maybe students are aware of the physical harm and social problems caused by phubbing. But with the development of society, social APPs communication and phone recreation will be more popular. However, is it a good transformation? And how can we balance face to face communication and phubbing? The further research focus on its solutions.

Table 11: Response to Question 14

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Always heard of it	39	42.86%
B. Often heard of it	30	32.97%
C. Have heard of it	19	20.88%
D. Occasionally heard of it	3	3.3%
E. Never heard of it	0	0%

Table 12: Response to Question 16

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. More and more popular	74	81.32%
B. Maintain the present status	6	6.59%
C. Less and less popular	10	10.99%
D. Have no idea	1	1.1%

Table 13: Response to question 9

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Always	8	8.79%
B. Often	25	27.47%
C. Occasionally	48	52.75%
D. Seldom	10	10.99%
E. Never	0	0%

Table 14: Response to question 15

Options	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Very approve of it	1	1.1%
B. Relatively approve of it	6	6.59%
C. Approve of it	16	17.58%
D. Relatively disapprove of it	58	63.74%
E. Very disapprove of it	10	10.99%

#### 4. Conclusion

Through the result of the finished questionnaire, we came to following conclusions on mobile phone used situation among college students.

1. With the popularization of phones and diverse powerful functions of phones, students (81.31%) think phones have a deep influence on their lives. They use phones on many occasions and mainly use phone as communicating and entertaining tools (81.32%). And an increasing number of students rely on phones. Most of them (92.31%) would be uncomfortable without phones. But it would result in plenty of problems such as distracting them from study as the study shows that as much as 90% of students at least occasionally play mobile phones during class.

2. Most of students (96.7%) have heard of the concept 'Phubbing', and they think that this phenomenon will become more and more popular. According to the survey, over 70% university students said they mainly use phones for listening music, watching videos and looking through social apps, which probably is one of the reasons for its popularity. And another 40% of students prefer face-to-face communication. Therefore, we think the phenomenon of phubbing might be eased with proper guidance.

#### 5. Recommendation

Firstly, the university should help students to cultivate a good habit of using mobile phones. One of the most important tasks is to inform students of its harm if may have on them and call on the students to raise their heads from mobile phones.

Secondly, it is essential to develop students' other interests, such as doing sports or reading. In this way, students can distract attention from phones and get off the control of mobile phones.

Finally, a better social atmosphere is expected. Many college students are immature enough that



they can be easily affected by others. A better social atmosphere with less dependence of mobile phones will lead them away from their phones.

### **Project number**

Supported by Planning Fund of Social Sciences in Liaoning Province (L13DYY035)

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