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## From a commodity to addiction: Are mobile phones valuable commodities or sources of addiction for freshman students?

### Kullanışlı Bir Üründen Bağımlılığa: Cep Telefonları Üniversite Birinci Sınıf Öğrencileri İçin Değerli Bir Ürün mü Yoksa Bağımlılık Kaynağı mıdır?

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#### Abstract

Mobile phone use has increased exponentially on a global scale in all segments of society since the rise of the first mobile phones in 1970s. Although a wealth of research has been conducted to measure the effects of mobile phones on individuals, a few studies have been carried out to make a connection between similes and mobile phone use. In this respect, this study examined habits of students on mobile phone use through similes at a private university located in Erbil, Iraq. Students employed food, drink, household items and people to illustrate their mobile phone dependence rate. A questionnaire, a survey and an interview were adopted to gather data. The data which were collected by employing a mixed method design were analyzed through MAXODA software program and SPSS 25. The findings of the study uncover that mobile phone are indispensable in their lives with varying reasons to take advantage of them. Additionally, students have unsubstle plans to reduce their daily usage by channeling their energy to social activities. The findings of this study can have some implications to acknowledge negative points of mobile phone use and adopt realistic strategies to break mobile phone addiction on adults systematically.

**Keywords:** Mobile phone use, simile, addiction, mobile phone dependence.

#### Özet

1970'li yıllarda ilk cep telefonlarının ortaya çıkmasından itibaren cep telefonu kullanımı katlanarak küresel ölçekte tüm alanlarda arttı. Cep telefonlarının bireyler üzerindeki etkisiyle ilgili birçok araştırma olmasına rağmen, teşbih ve cep telefonu kullanımı arasında bağlantı kurulmasıyla ilgili sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Erbil Irak'ta bulunan bir özel üniversitedeki öğrencilerin cep telefonu kullanma alışkanlıklarını teşbih yoluyla incelemiştir. Öğrenciler cep telefonu bağımlılık oranını resmetmek için gıda, içecek, ev aletleri ve insanları kullandı. İki farklı anket ve bir görüşme ile veriler toplandı. Karma araştırma deseni ile toplanan veriler MAXODA ve SPSS 25 yazılım programları aracılığıyla analiz edildi. Araştırma sonuçları cep telefonlarının öğrenciler için vazgeçilmez olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, öğrenciler enerjilerini sosyal aktivitelere yönlendirerek cep telefonu kullanım oranını düşürme planlarının olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin cep telefonu kullanımının olumsuz yönlerini kabul etmeleri ve yetişkinlerde cep telefonu bağımlılığını sistematik bir yaklaşımla aşma noktasında gerçekçi stratejiler benimsemeleri için bazı çıkarımları içermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Cep telefonu kullanımı, teşbih, bağımlılık, cep telefonu bağımlılığı.

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## Introduction

Technological advancements have increased exponentially which have made mobile phone revolution possible. Since the advent of first mobile phone in 1973 by Martin Cooper, mobile phones have evolved significantly (Smith et al., 2011). First mobile phones' features were limited to calling or receiving a call, however, they played a key role in advancing the features of mobile phones. Nowadays, mobile phones are regarded as an inseparable part of our daily lives. Apart from using mobile phones to call or text, they serve human being in varied ways. For instance, mobile phones have been used to surf the internet, watch videos, do online shopping, draw pictures, compose novels, join lessons electronically, have instant online meetings, send emails and so on. Additionally, users have incessant interaction with their mobile phones, so they have embedded in their lives as an irreplaceable means of communication (Daskan & Yildiz, 2020; Yildiz, 2021). Considering this phenomenon, the number of mobile subscriptions increased to 8.6 billion worldwide and 1.43 billion mobile phones were sold only in 2021 (Statista, 2022). It seems that mobile phones have become an indispensable part of billions of people globally due to its convenience and relatively low price compared to the cost of pioneer mobile phone models.

Mobile phones are integral parts of many people's lives in many different fields. E-learning activities through mobile phones have been receiving much attention from the stakeholders of education ranging from teachers to students (Celik et al., 2022a). For instance, students can learn further thanks to educational websites if they have a mobile phone. Likewise, they can take Kahoot quizzes, do online experiments, take online lessons with their mobile phones. These activities can be useful to boost students' motivation and learning rate respectively. Apart from students, mobile phones are so essential for drivers to find the direction easily with GPS navigation apps. Additionally, mobile phones can be of greatest importance to people who want to cook at home through instructional videos about varied recipes. These people want to sharpen their skills about different cuisines with these videos. Furthermore, mobile phones have been used widely to do online shopping or use online banking. Users can save much time and money once they complete these tasks electronically. Subsequently, mobile phones can facilitate job seekers' lives through online employment websites. These websites can inspire people to secure a job in another country

and realize their dreams. Furthermore, mobile phones have many functions to relieve users' stress and spend quality time. Users who feel exhausted after a tiring day can take advantage of their mobile phones to have fun (Wei, 2008). It is crystal clear that mobile phones have many aspects to affect our lives directly.

Mobile phones have some drawbacks in people's lives as well if the amount of time to use the mobile phone is not balanced well. To illustrate it, students are likely to lose their concentration if mobile phones are not off or silent in the class. Additionally, drivers can crash if they are busy with their mobile phones while driving. Furthermore, office workers can miss the deadline if they cannot switch their attention from their mobile phones to their pre-defined duties. Subsequently, salesclerks cannot spare enough time for customers if they are not alerted to welcome them in a mobile phone free sales area. Apart from economic and academic loss, mobile phones can have adverse effects on people's social lives. For instance, parents may not nurture a good relationship with their kids if they are not away from their mobile phones. This troublesome relationship can have varied negative consequences in the future, so future generations can have countless issues related to it. Likewise, kids who spend much time with their mobile phones can be lost in virtual world which can take years to rehabilitate them. Apart from psychological effects, students' academic success can fall sharply if they cannot keep the balance between studying and being online with their mobile phones (Goswami & Singh, 2016; Celik et al., 2022b). It seems that there is a fragile line between using mobile phones in a beneficial way and destructive way.

Similes can be employed in literature as a figure of speech to compare two completely different entities with common qualities. Fishman (2021) postulates that simile is employed to make comparison between entities which bear no resemblance to each other directly. Similes are literary terms through which different entities are compared by using "like or as". There are two different similes which are closed and open simile. The former refers to revealing the shared quality explicitly, while the latter refers to not mentioning the common quality. To illustrate it, "You are walking as slow as a turtle." can be given as an example of closed simile because the shared quality is emphasized as slow while comparing a person with a turtle. On the other hand, "My grandmother walks like a turtle." is an

example of open simile because the shared quality is not emphasized explicitly.

### Literature Review

Although there are numerous studies about mobile phone use, a gap has been noticed in literature regarding adopting similes to illustrate importance of mobile phones for individuals, so this study was initiated and finalized to fill this gap.

Technological developments have significant impacts in this century to transform people globally. One of the most groundbreaking technological developments in history can be seen in mobile phone industry. Mobile phone use has increased globally since first mobile phone called Motorola was produced in 1970s by Martin Cooper. Although there were several initiatives to produce mobile phones in 1900s, they were limited to using them in trains, ships or cars, so Martin Cooper's portable mobile phone has been considered as a pioneer in this respect. The first ever mobile phone weighed 2 kilograms and it needed to be charged for 10 hours in order to make a 30-minute call. Since that time and model, mobile phone industry has revolutionized in an ever-increasing rate. Accordingly, mobile phone sales have increased significantly, and their features have been multiplied to meet users' needs (Quimí & Alexandra, 2022). Nowadays mobile phones have numerous functions such as voice or video calling, texting, watching videos, surfing the websites, doing online shopping, taking online lessons, sending or receiving e-mails, taking notes, drawing, playing online games, studying cooperatively, watching videos and so on.

Voluminous studies have been carried out to measure the effects of mobile phones in people's lives with varying implications. Some scholars (Şenel, 2016; Kates et al., 2018) argue that mobile phones are invaluable commodities, while others (Park, 2005; Chóliz, 2010; Shoukat, 2019; Yildiz, 2019) claim that mobile phone addiction can have adverse effects in people's personal, social and academic lives. The same controversy can be easily noticed in published articles. To illustrate, Morgan (2012) postulates that cell phones are precious for college students because they have the chance to stay in touch with their families and friends to get their support. He also states that students can access to information in seconds, get online tutoring and crosscheck the information they have learned to be sure about the accuracy. Additionally, Kara (2020) conducted a study on freshman students

about their habits on mobile phone use. The results revealed that social media platforms can be used widely to enhance students' learning. The only point to be considered is that beneficial pages and groups should be pinpointed in advance to take advantage of social media platforms. Otherwise, students can lose the track and disadvantages of mobile phone use can be more than the advantages. He exemplifies that YouTube can be a great source of learning different languages, watching insightful conference and TV talks. Likewise, Facebook can be an essential platform to make friends from different countries, so they can be knowledgeable about different cultures. Twitter can be a miraculous tool to expand knowledge and be a more knowledgeable and creative person. On the other hand, the same platforms can be turned into time consuming activities to drain people's energy. Similarly, Tian et al. (2009) attribute three factors to mobile phone use which are sense of security, self-character extension and sense of dependence. They conclude that there is a fragile line between using the mobile phone for useful purposes and being addicted to it. If both points are considered and necessary measures are taken, mobile phone use can be so beneficial for users. Otherwise, having some negative consequences may be inevitable. Nowadays, a new term has been coined as mobile learning (M-learning) which refers to learning continuously through mobile phones. Sullivan et al. (2019) attest that m-learning offers flexible, continuous learning which has some connections with formal and informal learning versions. It seems that mobile phone use has some dimensions according to the preferences and priorities of the users.

Teachers' opinion on mobile phone use in class has received much attention in many studies recently. To name a few, Thomas et al. (2013) carried out a study in the USA to welcome teachers' opinion on mobile phone use in classrooms for educational purposes. The majority of the teachers (69 %) took side with using mobile phone in class, whereas a slight number of teachers uncovered their hesitation on using the mobile in class on grounds that mobile phones can disrupt the learning and teaching atmosphere. Likewise, Leem and Sung (2019) conducted a study in Korea to explore teachers' opinion on mobile phone use which revealed that being familiar, adaptable and passionate are key factors to use mobile phones in class. They contend that the success rate of integrating mobile into class activities depends on the will of the teacher to a large extent. Subsequently, O'Bannon et al. (2017) conducted a study to get teachers' (15) and students' (103) opinions on

mobile phone use in an Indian middle school. The study revealed that 88 % of the participants were in favor of using the mobile in class, whereas 12 % emphasized some negative points. Additionally, the study illustrated that mobile phones have been used for 23 different purposes ranging from taking a photo to scanning QR code to learn further.

Apart from positive influence of mobile phones, some negative points have been emphasized in recent studies. To illustrate a few, Tindell and Bohlander (2011) enumerate some of the negative points of mobile phone use which are being distracted, exposed to cyber bullying and radiation. Additionally, they contend that cognitive alertness reduces if users cannot take a break regularly. Wexler (2019) conducted a study in the USA on integration of mobile phone into class activities which culminated with negative consequences. Most of the students earned worse marks in their upcoming exams once they started using their mobile phones in class. They also stated that students did not want to switch to traditional course books which was another challenge for the teachers. They concluded that disadvantages of mobile phone use in a college setting outweigh the advantages. Additionally, Baker, Lusk and Neuhauser (2012) conducted a study on university students to get their opinions about mobile phone use. The students admitted that mobile phone use distracted their attention considerably and affected their learning rate adversely. Similarly, McCoy (2013) attests that the distraction rate of the students increases in line with the features of mobile phones. Mobile phones are versatile nowadays with numerous functions such as calling, watching, surfing and earning money. He also argues that cyberbullying and being addicted to online games are other negative implications of excessive and unplanned mobile phone use. Additionally, Park (2005) conducted a study in Korea on university students. 83 % of the students admitted that they were using their mobile phones excessively. They also admitted that they felt regretful after using it for long hours. Furthermore, Ismail et al. (2022) carried out a study in Iraq on 453 different professions and students which concluded that only 25 % of the participants were classified as mild users, whereas 75 % were classified as either moderate or severe user. They also uncovered that there was a direct correlation between their mobile phone use and anxiety level. The participants whose mobile phone use was excessive felt more anxious than others who were classified as mild users. Another notable point to be emphasized in their study was that social interaction was lower

among moderate and severe mobile phone users compared to mild ones. Considering these negative implications of mobile phone use, many countries including Israel, France, Australia have implemented new regulations to impose a ban on mobile phone use in classes (Beneito & Vicente-Chirivella, 2022). It seems that it is a controversial issue to include or exclude mobile phones in educational settings.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine university students' habits on mobile phone use. To this aim, students' daily usage, different reasons to use the mobile phone, the frequency of grabbing the mobile phone and overall importance of mobile phone for them were measured through questionnaires, surveys and the interview. To illustrate the topic more clearly, students were asked to describe their mobile phone usage by adopting simile, so the researcher tried to pinpoint whether the students were taking advantage of their mobile phones or considering them as time consuming gadgets. Based on this framework, given research questions were explored in this study:

- Can students keep the balance between using their mobile phones and taking a break?
- What are the students' favorite activities with their mobile phones?
- Is there a considerable difference between the usage of mobile phones on weekdays and at the weekend?

### **Methodology**

This study was conducted by employing a mixed method design which has been employed to analyze verbally and statistically (Byrne & Humble, 2007). A survey, a questionnaire and an interview were included to collect data. The survey included 5 items to get further details about students' mobile phone use. The questionnaire comprised 9 items related to their mobile phone use and possible strategies to reduce mobile phone use. Once participants responded, the data were processed in SPSS 25. through descriptive statistics, so mean score, the percentage and the number of respondents for each item ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were collected in one point. Additionally, the interview included one question to pinpoint the students' habits on their mobile phone use through similes. The interview was conducted as one on one to get students' genuine opinions in a stress-free environment because it was noticed in the preliminary trial

that students were hesitant to tell their ideas freely on this topic. The prompt in the interview included a fill in the blank activity which can be seen below:

- My mobile is like a(n) ..... for me because .....

The responses of the interviewees were transcribed through MAXODA software program to classify and analyze accordingly.

### Participants, Setting and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study accounted for all students who studied in language preparatory school (LPS hereafter) of a prestigious private university located in Erbil, Iraq during 2021-2022 Academic Year. 100 students received a high-quality education which included 100 % English as the medium of instruction. The

university had a diverse community to welcome around 10 different nationalities on the campus in a peaceful atmosphere, so it offered a welcoming atmosphere to get ideas from different nationalities. LPS students were admitted to university with a condition to improve their English during the year by receiving 24 hours of instruction and summarizing a short story in instructor's office as a presentation on a weekly basis. The Academic Year started in December and ended in October which was quite feasible to improve their 4 skills in a professional conduct. Apart from regular classroom activities, the students took some quizzes through Kahoot, Google Form or Padlet. They also had some debates to improve their critical thinking, problem solving and public speaking skills. In terms of classroom materials, the students completed three main course books, three vocabulary books, 2 grammar books and 1 listening and speaking book.

**Table 1.**

*The number of male and female students as well as their ages Participants` Frequency in Terms of Gender and Age*

Variable(s)	Option	F	%
Gender	Female	32	64
	Male	18	36
Age	18-20	43	86
	21+	7	14
<b>Total</b>		50	100

Once Table 1 was examined, it was seen that female students (64 %) were higher than male ones (36 %). In addition to the gender, the participants ages were illustrated in detail which displayed that 86 % of the students were between 18 and 20 years old, whereas only 14 % of the students were 21 years old or older.

When it was time to choose the sample from the population, the researcher adopted systematic sampling method for its convenience. The researcher listed all the students alphabetically. Later, he chose 2nd student randomly which was followed by each subsequent second student, so the researcher chose 50 students out of 100 who represented the population. Systematic sampling method has been preferred in social sciences to give equal chance to each participant by dividing them into intervals (Mostafa & Ahmed, 2018).

### Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

The study lasted for 4 weeks which included to lay a background about simile and metaphor, taking a questionnaire and the interview.

In week 1, the researcher displayed some clear examples of simile and metaphor, so the participants did not feel confused while expressing their ideas on simile and their mobile phone use. Also, they read some articles on advantages and disadvantages of mobile phone use. They also read some tips to switch their concentration from their mobile phones to other activities to socialize. In the final step, the students brainstormed about finding a connection between simile and their mobile phones.

In week 2, the students answered the items in the questionnaire which was about the importance of mobile phone for them. The students had a briefing about 5-point Likert scale in advance. Once they answered the questions, they analyzed

different previous studies about using mobile phone globally.

In week 3, the students took the interview to pinpoint whether their mobile phone use bears a resemblance to some people, devices, items. In other words, they wanted to illustrate their mobile phone use with a familiar object or person, so the researcher figured out the importance of their mobile phones with the attributed person or object.

In week 4, the researcher analyzed the data to interpret scientifically. The first step was to extract data from the questionnaire and the survey respectively, so their daily routine on the internet through their mobile phones, genuine opinions on the effects of the internet and favorite activities were figured out accurately. In the next step, the researcher transcribed the data

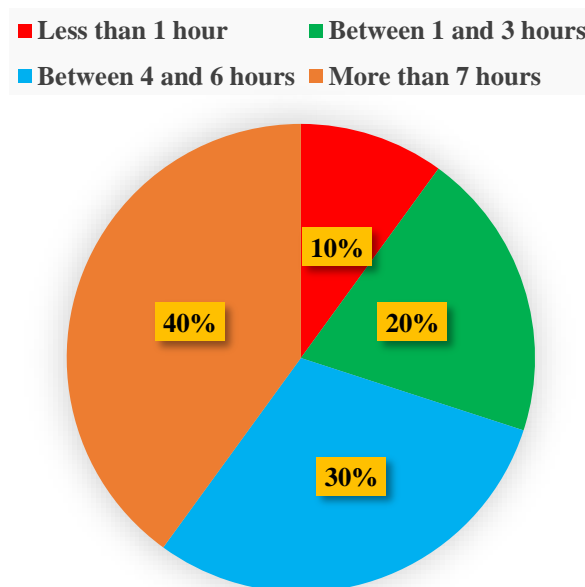
in the interview, so different classifications could be made with ease. Finally, the items in the questionnaire were converted into SPSS to get the mean score, frequency and percentages for each item with certain numbers.

Once all data were uncovered, the committee came together to analyze the data and compile the valuable information for the research paper.

### Findings

Findings of this study were classified under 3 headings which were the survey, the questionnaire and the interview, so each instrument was elaborated to get detailed analysis and make interpretations accordingly.

Figure 1 Illustrates the amount of time allocated for using the mobile phone on weekdays.

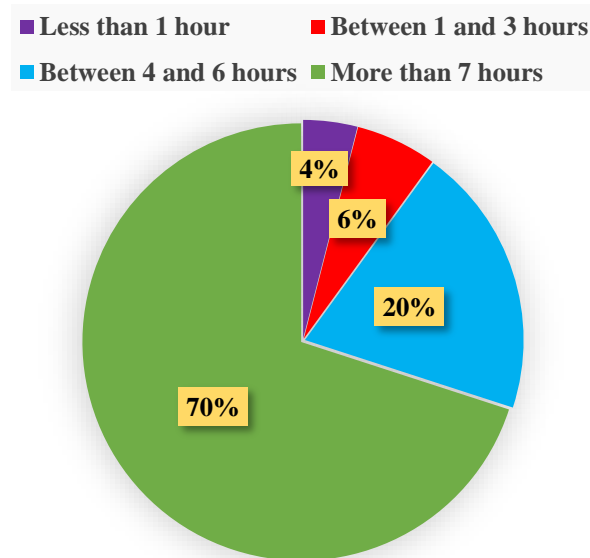


**Fig 1.** The amount of time spent with mobile phone on weekdays.

As can be seen in Figure 1, it was noticed that 40 % (20) of the students had a habit of using the mobile phone more than 7 hours. Additionally, 30 % (15) of the students set aside between 4 and 6 hours for mobile phone usage. Conversely, only 20 % (10) of the students spent between 1 and 3 hours using their mobile phones. Likewise, only 10 % (5) of the students allocated less than 1 hour for using their mobile phones. These

figures demonstrate that the highest percentage was recorded with using the mobile phone at least for 7 hours, whereas the lowest percentage was related to using the mobile phone for less than 1 hour.

Figure 2 illustrates the amount of time allocated for using the mobile phone at the weekend.



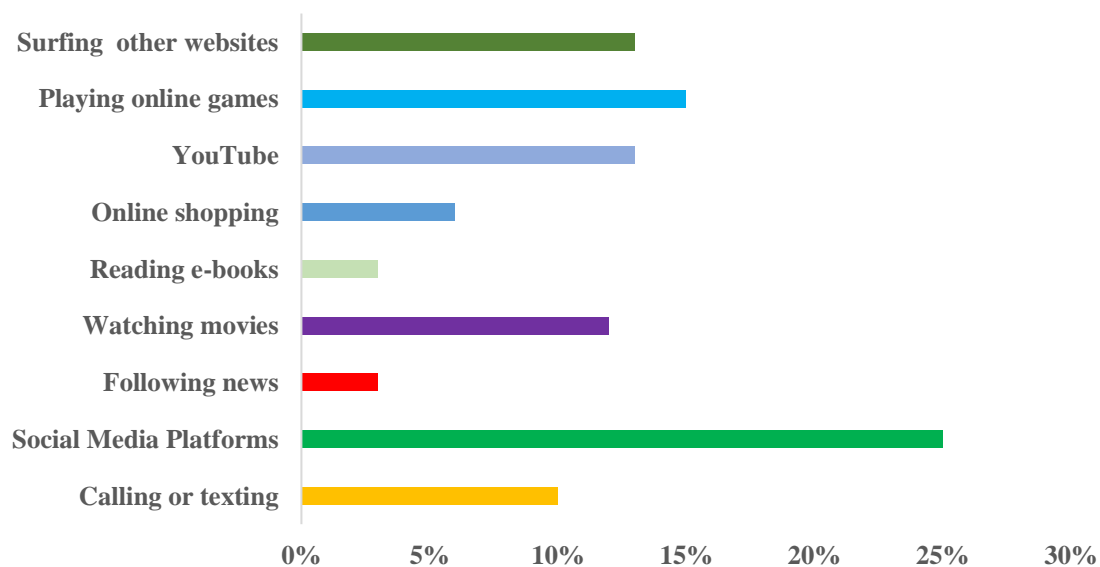
**Fig 2.** The amount of time spent with mobile phone at the weekend

Once Figure 2 was examined, it was noticed that 70 % (35) of the students had a habit of using the mobile phone more than 7 hours. Additionally, 20 % (10) of the students set aside between 4 and 6 hours for mobile phone usage. Conversely, only 6 % (3) of the students spent between 1 and 3 hours using their mobile phones. Likewise, only 4 % (2) of the students allocated less than 1 hour for using their mobile phones. These figures demonstrate that the highest percentage was recorded with using the mobile phone at least for

7 hours, whereas the lowest percentage was related to using the mobile phone for less than 1 hour.

When weekdays and weekend mobile phone usages were compared, it was observed that the amount of time to use mobile phone increased substantially.

Figure 3 displays the participants` favorite activity on their mobile phones



**Fig 3.** Users` favorite activity on mobile phone

Once Figure 3 was observed in detail, it was figured out that social media platforms received the highest share (25 %) which was not surprising considering their users globally. Additionally, playing online games followed social media platforms in terms of popularity among participants with a 15 % popularity rate. Spending time on YouTube and surfing other websites were placed as 3rd and 4th in terms of popularity. The former one's percentage was 13 %, while the latter one's percentage is 12 %. Watching movies was the 5th one with a 11 % rate. Final point to consider was that calling or texting through traditional telecommunication

service providers, online shopping, reading books online and following news did not appeal to many participants as their percentage was 10 or less as a single unit. It is important to note that YouTube was written as a single item in this study rather than merging it with other social media platforms.

The rationale to classify YouTube in this way was that YouTube has been the second most visited website in the world after Google, so the researcher wanted to measure its popularity as a single entity.

**Table 2.**  
*Students' opinion on their habits related to mobile phone use*

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
1. Whenever I get up, I am inclined to grab my mobile phone.	4,48	68 %	34	20 %	10	6 %	3	4	2	2 %	1
2. I cannot imagine a day without using my mobile phone.	4,92	92 %	46	8 %	4	0 %	0	0	0	0 %	0
3. I can keep the balance between studying in my room and using the mobile. phone to surf.	1,86	10 %	5	8 %	4	0 %	0	22 %	11	60	30
4. If am close enough to my mobile phone, I cannot study for more than 30 minutes	3,06	34 %	17	18 %	9	0 %	0	16 %	8	32	16
5. My mobile phone helps me to expand my knowledge.	5	100 %	50	0 %	0	0 %	0	0	0	0 %	0
6. The disadvantages of my mobile phone outweigh the advantages.	4,24	52 %	26	32 %	16	8 %	4	4	2	2 %	2
7. My GPA can be higher if I limit my mobile phone use.	4,56	56 %	28	44 %	22	0 %	0	0	0	0 %	0
8. I have concrete plans to use the mobile phone less in the following days.	4,7	70 %	35	30 %	15	0 %	0	0	0	0 %	0
9. Joining some social activities can be helpful to reduce the adverse effects of this bad habit.	5	100 %	50	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0

The participants responded to 9 questions to pinpoint their genuine opinions on mobile phone use.

Once item 1 was analyzed about grabbing the mobile phone as soon as waking up, the mean score was recorded as 4,48 which was quite significant. 34 (% 68) and 10 (% 20) students clicked on strongly agree and agree option



respectively. However, only 3 (6 %) students chose neutral. Likewise, only 2 (4 %) and 1 (2 %) students choose disagree respectively. Considering these figures, it can be suggested that the participants' inclination to hold their mobile phones after waking up is quite significant.

When item 2 which was related to spending a mobile phone-free day was analyzed, the mean score was recorded as 4,92 which was highly significant. 46 (92 %) students opt in strongly agree, while 4 (8 %) students chose agree option. On the other hand, no student chose neutral, disagree or strongly disagree option. It can be concluded that students had very strong bonds with their mobile phones.

When item 3 which was about balancing between self-study and surf the internet was analyzed in detail, it was observed that the mean score was 1,86. Only 5 (10 %) students chose strongly agree. Likewise, only 4 (8 %) students chose agree option. On the other hand, no student opted in neutral option. The most noticeable points in this item were related to disagree or strongly disagree which were chosen by 11 (30 %) and 22 (60 %) students respectively. These figures uncover that students were not satisfied with their will to make a distinction between studying and surfing the internet.

When item 4 which was related to the duration of studying was examined, the mean score was noted as 3,06. 17 (34 %) students chose strongly agree, while 9 (18 %) students chose agree option. Additionally, no student chose neutral. However, 8 (16 %) students chose disagree, while 16 (32 %) students chose strongly disagree option. Considering these figures, it displays that their motivation decreases when they are close enough to touch their mobile phones.

Once item 5 which was about expanding the knowledge was investigated in detail, the mean score was recorded as 5. All students opted in strongly agree option which meant that mobile phones helped them to enrich their knowledge in general.

Once item 6 which was related to choosing a side between disadvantages and advantages of mobile phones, the mean score was 4,24. More than half of the students (52 %) chose strongly agree, while more than a quarter of the students (32 %) chose agree option. However, only 4 (8 %) students chose neutral. Additionally, only 2 students (4 %) chose disagree or strongly disagree option respectively. These figures can

be contemplated as a sign of taking side with the disadvantages. A higher proportion of the students held the opinion that the disadvantages of the mobile phones are more than the advantages.

Once item 7 which was related to the estimation of GPA if mobile phone use is curbed was analyzed in detail, the mean score was recorded as 4,56. It was observed once more that more than half of the students (56 %) chose strongly agree option and more than 40 percent (44 %) of the students chose agree option. No student opted in neutral, disagree or strongly disagree option. These data show that students' opinion is to increase their GPA if they devise some novel strategies to reduce the amount of time with their mobile phones.

Once item 8 was analyzed in detail, it was noticed that students had concrete plans to reduce mobile phone use in the near future. All students opted in either strongly agree (70 %) or agree option (30 %). These figures illustrate that students are aware of the issue which poses may problems in their social and academic lives and they are planning to take action soon.

Once item 9 was analyzed in detail, all students had positive views on joining some social activities which can be doing sport, joining some clubs, hanging out with family members or friends. It shows that joining some activities can be of greatest importance to alleviate the effects of mobile phone use in students' lives.

Considering all items, it can be concluded that students cannot make a distinction between studying and spending time through their mobile phones. However, they are optimistic about coming to a resolution soon. They reiterated that they know how to kick this habit with some clear plans.

## Interview

The participants were interviewed one on one to get their genuine opinions on their mobile phone use. Once the data were collected, they were classified in 3 groups which were food and drink, household items and people. Thus, the analysis could be completed as early as possible.

Table 3 illustrates the categories, examples of simile, frequency and percentage. Students bore some resemblance to these items or people while describing their relationship with their mobile phones.

**Table 3.**  
*Classification of Simile Examples*

Categories		Frequency	%
<b>1. Food &amp; Drink</b>	water, tea, coffee, alcohol, cigarette, coke, mineral water	16	32
<b>2. Household Items</b>	window cleaner, key, hanger, light bulb, ladder, fan, iron, bin, laundry basket, sink, lantern, bookcase, sofa, door	14	28
<b>3. People</b>	best friend, mother, father, grandparents, siblings, teacher, cousin	20	40

When the categories and frequency were analyzed in detail through Table 3, it was seen that students chose some people (40 %) to describe their relationship with their mobile phones. Later, food & drink (32) and household items (28) followed it. It can be suggested that students' bonds with their loved ones are unbreakable as their mobile phones. Some students' opinions can be seen below to get a clear image about this connection:

**Food and Drink:** My mobile phone is like water for me. Water is regarded as the source of life. Our body cannot function properly if the amount of water we drink is less than expected. Likewise, my mobile phone is the source of life for me. I quench the thirst for knowledge when I research on the internet with my mobile phone. (Student 7)

My mobile phone is like tea for me. I cannot imagine breakfast without drinking tea. Likewise, I cannot spend a day without my mobile phone. (Student 9)

My mobile phone is like coffee for me. I need coffee to start my day in an awaken way. Likewise, I need my mobile phone to feel awaken while scanning the latest news on well-known websites. I feel shocked, irritated, amazed or amused while checking the daily news, so this news helps me a lot in order not to be sleepy anymore. (Student 13)

My mobile phone is like drinking alcohol. I know that drinking alcohol can lead to chronic diseases such as liver disease, heart attack or digestive problems in the long run. Likewise, I know that I can be more sociable if I reduce the amount of time I spend through my mobile phone. (Student 16)

My mobile is like coke for me. Although I know that there are many negative impacts of drinking it, I cannot do nothing but to drink it regularly. Likewise, I am quite sure that there are adverse

effects of using the mobile phone. However, I can channel my attention to other activities. I spend at least 5 hours on the internet with my mobile phone. (Student 19)

My mobile phone is like mineral water for me. When I drink mineral water, it helps me to digest the food I eat easily. Likewise, my favorite activity is following the latest issue of Reader's Digest magazine with my mobile phone. This magazine helps me to absorb and digest large amounts of content. (Student 21)

My mobile phone is like smoking cigarette for me. Although I know that smoking kills people gradually, I cannot quit this bad habit. Likewise, I spend so much time on the internet instead of studying for my upcoming exams. (Student 24)

**Household Items:** My mobile phone is like a window cleaner. Window cleaners are so functional at houses or in offices. We use them to remove dirt from the window. Likewise, my mobile phone helps me to see a brighter image. Thus, I can go further to access to reliable information on the internet through my mobile phone. I can eliminate fake news from the real ones because I can access to different news channels by one click. (Student 26)

My mobile phone is like a key for me. I need the key to lock or unlock the doors. Likewise, I need my mobile phone to unlock my full potential. I will exploit all means to expand my knowledge on the internet through my mobile phone. (Student 29)

My mobile phone is like a hanger for me. I use my hanger to reserve my clothes in the closet once needed. Likewise, I take notes on my phone to read again as a reference in the future. I also save some websites to access to information later again if the needs arise. (Student 32)

My mobile phone is like a light bulb for me. A light bulb ensures that my room is bright enough

to study, chat or play some games. It facilitates our lives to complete our daily routine activities during daytime or at night. Likewise, my mobile phone illuminates my world. Once I learn novel information through my mobile phone, I assume that a brighter future is waiting for me. Additionally, it does not matter to be in the morning or evening. I can access to any websites for 24 hours through my mobile phone. (Student 33)

My mobile phone is like a ladder for me. I use the ladder to hang curtains, paint the wall or trim the peach trees in my garden. Likewise, my mobile phone helps me to access to trustable information step by step. In the past, people used to reach news through newspapers, but now I can check the accuracy through numerous websites which offer online news. Additionally, I can learn different languages in a graded way through my mobile phone. (Student 34)

My mobile phone is like a fan. I take advantage of a fan at home to cool, so I can feel more relaxed. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to read funny stories and relax after an exhausting day. My mobile phone helps me to break the monotony and feel relaxed. Additionally, I feel cool when I have an opportunity to go online. (Student 36)

My mobile phone is like an iron for me. I use my iron to make my clothes flat and smooth, so they will seem better. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to refine my knowledge. I research a lot before making a presentation in class in front of my friends and the instructor. This endeavor is so crucial, otherwise, I can address my presentation with full of deceptive information. (Student 37)

My mobile phone is like a bin. I use the dustbin to throw rubbish. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to delete unrelated or unnecessary items. Thus, I can reach the most updated information and concentrate on relevant information rather than focusing on out of date one. (Student 39)

My mobile phone is like a laundry basket for me. I use my laundry basket to keep dirty clothes before washing or take washed clothes to the clothesline. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to collect information in one point and transfer it to other fields once the need arises. (Student 40)

My mobile phone is like a sink. I use the sink to wash my hands and face or brush my teeth by running water which helps me to be more hygienic. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to

distinguish fake news from the real one, so I can reach the refined information. (Student 41)

My mobile phone is like a lantern for me. I use the lantern to light the room once power is off, so I will not be in a dark place. Likewise, I use my mobile phone to shed light on my way. I learn how to overcome my stress and be optimistic when I go online. In addition, I can increase my knowledge via my mobile phone. I see that a brilliant future lies for me if I have a chance to go online by my mobile phone. (Student 42)

My mobile phone is like a bookcase for me. I use the bookcase to read and be more knowledgeable. Likewise, I can download countless books and read on my phone. My phone is a real treasure for me to reach the latest books in an online format. (Student 43)

My mobile phone is like a sofa in the living room. The sofa has an irreplaceable place in the living room. Likewise, my mobile phone is indispensable for me. I cannot envision a life without my mobile phone as no one can imagine a living room without a sofa. (Student 45)

My mobile phone is like a door for me. The door's function is to protect the house against theft. It also welcomes people to show the interior design of the house. Likewise, my mobile phone helps me to take measures against theft and open new opportunities in my life. (Student 46)

**People:** My mobile phone is like one of my best friends. My best friend supports me whenever I need his assistance. We also travel, hang out and study together. Likewise, my mobile phone is more than a device for me. It helps me to relieve stress, boost my learning, revise my presentations and find the cheapest hotels before travelling. My mobile phone is a great companion like one of my best friends. (Student 10)

My mobile phone is like my mother. My mom is so precious for me because she does her best to secure my life and nurture my mental health. Likewise, my bonds with my mobile phone are so strong. My mobile phone helps me for the betterment of my lifestyle, so I will be capable of finding solutions and leading a happy lifestyle. (Student 11)

My mobile phone is like my father. My father has an irreplaceable place in my life. I need his support, affection and guidance as long as I live. Likewise, my mobile phone is indispensable in

my life. I can take advantage of my mobile phone in many ways according to my needs. (Student 12)

My mobile phone is like grandparents for me. My grandparents pass on their knowledge to me whenever they have a chance. Likewise, my mobile phone is a great source for me to learn valuable lessons, so I will not repeat the same mistakes. My life is trouble-free thanks to learning precious lessons with my mobile phone. (Student 47)

My mobile phone is like my siblings. My siblings encourage me to sharpen my skills. Likewise, my mobile phone helps me master many skills such as cooking, learning languages, installing programs, learning how to play instruments. (Student 48)

My mobile phone is like my teacher. My teacher is so knowledgeable to inspire us. Likewise, my mobile phone has millions of websites to learn and get inspired. (Student 49)

My mobile phone is like my cousin. I get on well with my cousin because we have so many common points. Likewise, my mobile phone is a great means to play online games, order food and drinks or book a hotel. It facilitates my life to be more sociable. (Student 50)

### Conclusions

In this study, LPS students' attitudes towards their mobile phone use were explored in detail through a questionnaire, a survey and an interview. Considering the collected and synthesized data, some interpretations can be made.

The first noticeable point was that excessive mobile phone use was quite noticeable which was 70 % at the weekend. It was in line with previous studies (Liu et al., 2020; Shoukat, 2019) which argue that mobile phone consumption of adults increases when they do not have responsibilities to join lessons or work. Another significant point was that social media platforms received much more attention than any other online activities thanks to their popular features such as watching videos, doing online shopping, sharing photos or earning money as stated by Sun and Zhang (2021) in previous studies. In other words, social media platforms were ahead of playing online games, reading e-books, watching movies or spending time on YouTube (Yildiz, 2020). Additionally, many students were aware of the problem posed by the internet, so they had

set a clear guideline to reduce the amount of time by channeling their energy on different activities such as joining a club, doing sport, hanging out with family members and friends. They stated that their well-being and academic success will be far better if they eliminate internet addiction from their lives. Moreover, they referred to the food and drink, loved ones and household items to describe their relationship with their mobile phones. It can be suggested that the students have strong bonds with their loved ones. Furthermore, their will to change this negative cycle was promising although they had set aside more than enough time for mobile phone use recently. In other words, they were hopeful to reduce daily usage by taking part in different activities to socialize.

Some recommendations can be made for further studies. This study included students' mobile phone usage with similes. Other forms of figurative language can be integrated to illustrate the points more clearly. Additionally, students' exam scores and their mobile phone use can be compared to pinpoint whether there is a correlation between their mobile phone use and academic success in general. Finally, only food and drink, household items and people were categorized as a form of simile. Electronic devices, means of transportation, sources of energy can be included in further studies. Finally, only 50 students who have been studying in LPS of the students were included in this study. More students who have been studying at different stages of the university can be considered as participants in further studies to welcome larger segments from different stages of the university

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