

Mobile Phone Use by Kuwait University Students

Yousef Al-Failakawi

Information Dept., Faculty of Arts,
Kuwait University.

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Abstract

For the past few years, mobile phone usage has increased tremendously in Kuwait, especially at Kuwait University. This study examines Kuwait University students' mobile phone use patterns. It investigates the mobile phone procurement circumstances, rationale for ownership of mobile phones, frequency patterns for SMS use, and SMS message compositions for both sent and received messages. It also investigates the mobile phone options of choice, and the frequency with which students change their phones.

This study supports the hypothesis that mobile phones are very widespread among Kuwait University students and finds that almost every student has one. The study also finds that a major predictor of how Kuwait University students are using the mobile phones is the student's gender. Female students tend to be more serious in the way they use the mobile phones while the male students consider the mobile phones to be an accessory and a tool for sending love messages, harassing others and for use during exams and classes. Another major predictor is the college in which the students are enrolled, especially the College of Islamic Studies.

This study examines Kuwait University students' mobile phone use patterns. It investigates mobile phone procurement circumstances, rationale for ownership of mobile phones, use frequency patterns for SMS, and SMS message compositions for both sent and received messages. It also investigates the mobile phone options of choice, and the frequency with which students change their phones.

Background

The first mobile phones were introduced in the early seventies by the Ministry of Telecommunications. Those mobile phones were called 'car phones'. They were large, heavy, bulky and very expensive. In 1983, the first private mobile phone company, Mobile Telecommunications Co. (MTC) was established. Then, in 1999, the second mobile phone company (Wataneyyah Telecom) was established. These two companies offered mobile phones and paging services. At the outset, MTC mobile phones cost around \$6,000, a hefty price. Now, a person can have a mobile phone for as little as \$60. As a result, mobile phone use, which at first was cost-prohibitive for many, became more widespread. Now, there are about 1,000,000 mobile phone users (Al-mognee).

The two companies offer many services to their customers, such as: caller line identification (CLI), call barring, call forwarding, multi-part calling, call holding, call waiting, paging, wireless application protocol (WAP), roaming, voice mail, mobifax, mobidata and stock exchange, and short messaging service (SMS).

Using Mobile Phones

The law in Kuwait prohibits anyone less than 18 years of age from having a mobile phone connection. But there are many students who have had mobile phones since before they turned 18, and before they entered the university. How did they get their mobile phones? Who bought those phones for them? What are they using them for?"

Some students argue that the reason they use the mobile phones is to talk to members of the opposite sex without their parents' knowledge, and others argue that they use mobile phones to send and receive jokes through the SMS (Janet 3). Students have even created a special language when they write these messages. It is neither Arabic nor English. It is a mix of Arabic and English. It is what the students use when they chat over the Internet. The author calls it "the IRC language."

Some people think that the SMS has broken the barrier between males and females. Some people can't say things but can write them down. Others think that mobile phones can take someone's place in giving condolences and greeting someone on weddings or other occasions through the use of SMS (Janet 3).

One student says, "it is impossible not to have a mobile phone with the large number of advertisements in the media and the great offers that mobiles phone companies are giving" (Hasan 23). The student adds that now there are sites on the Internet that provide them with phone ring-tones, jokes, games and news about mobile phones.

One time, Al-Wataneyyah Telecom Company provided a special offer just for the university students. This offer, which lasted one week, let the university students purchase a phone service with a silver line¹ and a beeper for only \$170. This was a very enticing offer. The company claimed that the reason for this offer was to help the students reduce their financial burdens (Al-Qabas 2000, 18).

Mobile phones have become part of every Kuwait University student's life. Some say the reason for this increase is that mobile phones are very cheap in Kuwait; others claim that the reason for the increase is the large market in Kuwait, and some say it is because mobile phones have become a very necessary part of everyday life.

While it might be necessary to own a mobile phone at these times, it is also important to remember mobile phone use differs a great deal from normal phones. In this study, the question of use patterns for mobile phones by students at Kuwait University students is addressed.

Diffusion of Innovation

Research on the diffusion of innovation has discovered some predictable patterns about who starts using a new technology or idea, when, and why. In the most general sense, diffusion is a process by which an innovation (a new way of doing things) is communicated through certain channels (both mass media and interpersonal) over time (usually years) among the members of a social system. This approach has proved to be one of the most useful in describing how new media and information technologies get accepted and used.

How well an innovation diffuses depends on what kind of new idea or technology it is. According to Everets Rogers, some basic characteristics apply to virtually all new ideas and technologies:

1. **Relative advantage:** the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes
2. **Compatibility:** the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters
3. **Complexity:** the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use
4. **Triability:** the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis
5. **Observability:** the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others (1983, 15-16).

Rogers adds, "In general, innovations that are perceived by receivers as having greater advantages, compatibility, triability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations" (16).

The innovation decision process is a mental process through which an individual or other unit making decision passes. According to Werner Severin and James Tankard, the process consists of five stages:

1. **Knowledge:** exposure to an innovation and some understanding of how it functions
2. **Persuasion:** formation of an attitude toward the innovation
3. **Decision:** activity resulting in a choice to adopt or reject the innovation
4. **Implementation:** putting the innovation into use
5. **Confirmation:** reinforcement or reversal of the innovation decision made (1992, 199).

Among the first people to use portable cellular telephones in the United States in their cars were those who already used mobile radios to talk to other drivers or to people in their companies. Cellular phones were also first sold to traveling salespeople who needed to confirm appointments and do business while driving around. Even among traveling salespeople, some were more inclined to try out new gadgets than others. Mobile phones went from being associated with blue-collar delivery truck drivers to being chic for executives and salespeople (Straubhaar and LaRose 40).

People don't adopt new ideas at the same rates. Those who first figure out how to use a new technology or idea to accomplish something are called **innovators**. They are eager to try new ideas and form more cosmopolitan relationships than their peers. People who follow up on

innovative ideas through specialized media such as trade journals or interpersonal contacts are called **early adopters**. They are respectable localites, usually with highest degree of opinion leadership within a social system. Those who perceive a trend relatively early and decide to go with it are called the **early majority**. They deliberate and interact frequently with their peers but seldom hold leadership positions. Those who wait to see what most people are going to do are called the **late majority**. They are skeptical; they often adopt an innovation because of economic necessity or increasing network pressure. Those who wait until the very end have been called **laggards**. They are traditionalists, most localite and many are near-isolates (Straubhaar and LaRose 41).

Consequences are the changes that occur to an individual or to a social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of an innovation (Rogers 31). Rogers lists three classifications of consequences:

1. **Desirable** versus **undesirable** consequences, depending on whether the effects of an innovation in a social system are functional or dysfunctional
2. **Direct** versus **indirect** consequences, depending on whether the changes to an individual or to a social system occur in immediate response to an innovation or as a second-order result of the direct consequences of an innovation
3. **Anticipated** versus **unanticipated** consequences, depending on whether the changes are recognized and intended by the members of a social system or not.

Diffusion theory assigns a very limited role to mass media. Media mainly create awareness of new innovations. Only the early adopters are directly influenced by media content. Others adopt innovations only after being influenced by other people (Baran and Davis 162). Rogers recommended that diffusion efforts be led by change agents, people who could go out into rural communities and directly influence early adopters and opinion leaders.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how Kuwait University students are using their mobile phones. When we know how the students are using this technology, we will be able to know more about the effect of the technology on them, on their education and on others. Any message before it reaches the receiver or the audience goes through different



processes starting from the sender or the source and ending with the receiver who will react to these messages with some feedback. One of the more important aspects of these processes in this case is the vehicle or medium, which will deliver the message. The medium, the mobile phone, will have a great effect on the receiver and the feedback he will give. It is important to know more about this medium to understand how the receivers are using it.

Research Questions

- Q1:** Is there any relationship between gender and the monthly bill Kuwait University students pay for having mobile phones?
- Q2:** Is there any relationship between gender and using mobile phones during exams?
- Q3:** How do the Kuwait University students acquire their mobile phone services?
- Q4:** Why do the Kuwait University students have mobile phones?
- Q5:** What options do the Kuwait University students look for in the mobile phones they want to have?
- Q6:** How do the Kuwait University students use the SMS?

Methodology

The aim of this study is to learn more about how the Kuwait University students are using the mobile phones. The population the sample was drawn from was all the Kuwait University students who enrolled in the summer and fall 2001, and winter 2002. The author used a multistage sample. Kuwait University has six campuses. First the author randomly selected courses from each college and then randomly selected students from those courses. The sample size was 1,331. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data for this study. Data collection started on June 16th 2001 and ended on April 23rd 2002.

Results

This study shows that 98% of all Kuwait University students have mobile phones. More than half the Kuwait University students have had their mobile phone services from one to three years. About 91% of Kuwait University students have a certain brand phones. More than half of the students change their phones at least once every six months. 64% of the students don't care if their mobile phones are different than their friends'

phones. More than half (57%) of the students don't use the answering machine service that the mobile phone companies offer, but 33% of the students use the answering machine between 1-5 times a day. Only 2% of the students always use the WAP service.

When Kuwait University students were asked how they use their mobile phones, 2% of them said that they always use the phones during exams to help them in their exams. When the students receive calls, about 49% of them answer all those calls and the same percentage of the students answer those calls only if they know the identity of the callers. Eighteen percent of the students always care about having the latest phone ring-tones, while 52% sometimes care about having the latest tones. About 13% of Kuwait University students exchange tones and another 18% always exchange pictures.

Research Questions:

To answer the first research question, *Is there any relationship between gender and the monthly bill Kuwait University students pay for having mobile phones?* students were asked to indicate their monthly bill for having a mobile phone. The data show that 46% of the Kuwait University students pay between 11-30 KD a month on their phone bills. The data also shows that there are statistically significant differences between genders and the monthly bill Kuwait University students pay for having mobile phones (see table 1).

Table 1
Monthly bill students pay for their mobile phones by gender

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
11 - 30 KD	50%	44%	46%
Less than 10 KD 16%	28%	24%	
31 - 60 KD	21%	16%	18%
61 - 100 KD	7%	7%	7%
More than 100 KD	6%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100

*n = 1304, $\chi^2 = 25.329$, df = 4, p = .000

Regarding the **second research question**, *Is there any relationship between gender and using mobile phones during exams?* the study finds that there is a difference in using mobile phones during exams between Kuwait University students. This difference is very clear between males and females and this difference is statistically significant (see table 2). Male students tend to use mobile phones more often than female students.

Table 2
Using mobile phones during exams by gender

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Never	85%	92%	90%
Sometimes	11%	6%	8%
Always	4%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100

*n = 1303, $\chi^2 = 16.834$, df = 2, p = .000

To answer the **third research question**, *How do Kuwait University students acquire their mobile phone services?* students were asked to indicate the person who purchased the service. The data shows that about 59% of Kuwait University students obtained their mobile phone services from their parents and 23% purchased the phones themselves (see table 3). There is a statistically significant difference between Kuwait

Table 3
The person who purchased the service

	Frequency	Percent
Parent	722	59%
Myself	297	23%
Brother/Sister	127	10%
Husband/Wife	44	3%
Member of a Family	42	3%
Friend	11	1%
Others	11	1%
Total	1304	100%

University student mobile phone acquisition method and gender (see table 4). About 49% of Kuwait University male students obtained their mobile phones from their parents, while 64% of the female students got their mobile phones from their parents. 40% of the male students purchased their mobile phones by themselves while only 14% of the female students purchased their own. The data also shows that 12% of the female students depended on their brothers/sisters to get them the services.

Table 4
Mobile phone acquisition method by gender

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Parents	49%	64%	59%
Myself	40%	14%	23%
Brother/Sister	6%	12%	10%
Husband/Wife		5%	3%
Member of a Family	3%	3%	3%
Friend	1%	1%	1%
Others	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100

*n = 1304, $\chi^2 = 129.814$, df = 6, p = .000

The study also reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the mobile phone service acquisition methods and the college of enrollment (see table 5). It was found that most of the students whose parents purchased the mobile phones are from the College of Business, while most of the students who obtained the services by themselves are from the College of Arts, Islamic College and from the College of Medicine.

In answering the **fourth research question**, *Why do Kuwait University students have mobile phones?* this study finds that 53% of Kuwait University students have their mobile phones so they can check on their families, while another 33% have their mobile phones in order to finish and check on other matters (see table 6). The data also shows that there are statistically significant differences between genders in rationale for having mobile phones (see table 7).

Table 5
Mobile phone acquisition method by college

	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	College					Law	Total
					Busi- ness	Isa- mic	Educ- ation	Medi- cine	Phar- macy		
Parents	58%	64%	60%	59%	73%	38%	49%	54%	75%	49%	59%
Myself	25%	17%	24%	27%	19%	35%	23%	30%	11%	24%	23%
Brother/Sister	7%	14%	9%	9%	3%	15%	18%	6%	8%	19%	10%
Husband/Wife	4%	2%	3%	1%	1%	9%	7%	1%	2%	7%	3%
Member of a Family	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	9%	2%	5%	3%
Friends	1%			2%			1%		2%	5%	1%
Others	2%			1%	1%	1%	1%		1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*n = 1295, $\chi^2 = 139.752$, df = 54, p = .000

Table 6
Reasons for having a mobile phone service

	Frequency	Percent
To check on family	465	53%
To finish and check on other matters	290	33%
Accessory	44	5%
To talk to people behind my parents' back	26	3%
Necessary	14	2%
To be like my friend	12	1%
Others	10	1%
To answer exams during tests	5	0.6%
Harassment	4	0.5%
Total	1083	100%

Table 7
Reasons for having a mobile phone by Gender

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
To check on family	13%	60%	54%
To finish and check on other matters	40%	30%	33%
Accessory	5%	5%	5%
To talk to people behind my parents' back	6%	2%	3%
Necessary	3%	1%	2%
To be like my friend	1%	2%	1%
Others	3%	0.5%	1%
To answer exams during tests	1%	0.3%	1%
Harassment	1%		1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*n = 1083, $\chi^2 = 98.875$, df = 9, p = .000

There were statistically significant differences found between the rationale for having mobile phones and GPAs (see table 8), total number of credits (see table 9) and the college of enrollment (see table 10).

Table 8
Reasons for having a mobile service by GPA

	GPA						Total
	4.00-3.51	3.50-3.01	3.00-2.51	2.50-2.01	2.00-1.51	1.50-1.01	
To check on family	64%	56%	56%	52%	46%	38%	54%
To finish and check other matters	24%	36%	30%	36%	35%	48%	33%
Accessory	5%	3%	6%	5%	5%	10%	5%
To talk to people behind my parents' back	3%	1%	3%	3%	6%		3%
Necessary		2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	
To be like my friend	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	5%	1%
Others		1%	1%	3%		1%	
To answer exams during tests			1%	1%			1%
Harassment	1%				3%		1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*n = 1083, $\chi^2 = 126.111$, df = 54, p = .000

Table 9
Reasons for having a mobile service by total number of credits

	Total Number of Credits				Total
	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	
To check on family	53%	55%	54%	51%	54%
To finish and check other matters	30%	32%	34%	38%	33%
Accessory	5%	5%	7%	2%	5%
To talk to people behind my parents' back	3%	3%		6%	3%
Necessary	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
To be like my friend	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Others	2%	1%	1%		1%
To answer exams during tests	0.5%	1%	0.5%	1%	1%
Harassment	1%	0.5%	0.5%		1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* $n = 1083$, $\chi^2 = 54.432$, $df = 27$, $p = .004$

Table 10
Reasons for having a mobile service by College

	College										
	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	Busi- ness	Islami- c	Educ- ation	Medi- cine	Phar- macy	Law	Total
To check on family	49%	58%	60%	53%	62%	30%	53%	59%	63%	34%	54%
To finish and check other matters	41%	33%	27%	28%	28%	58%	25%	28%	31%	26%	33%
Accessory	4%	3%	8%	10%	2%	2%	9%	2%	2%	10%	5%
To talk to people behind my parents' back	3%	2%	2%	5%	2%		4%	2%	1%	7%	3%
Necessary	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
To be like my friend	1%	2%		1%	1%		5%	3%		2%	1%
Others		1%	1%	1%	4%	2%	1%		1%		1%
To answer exams during tests				1%	1%		1%	3%			1%
Harassment	1%	1%				2%			1%		1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*n = 1083, $\chi^2 = 248.8319$, df = 81, p = .000

Kuwait University students were asked to select from a list two options they would like to have in the mobile phone they wanted, in order to answer **the fifth research question:** *What are the options they look for in the phone they want to have?* Twenty-seven percent of them ranked "Small size" as the most important option they wanted in their mobile phones. Another 22% wanted their mobile phones to have good reception and another 22% wanted their phones to have a long battery life (see table 11).

Table 11
Options students want in their mobiles

	Frequency	Percent
Small size	347	27%
Good reception	278	22%
Long battery life	275	22%
Has Arabic letters	131	10%
Nice look	108	9%
Has variety of ring-tones	65	5%
Has an answering machine	19	2%
Has changeable cover	19	2%
Can send and receive data by infrared	18%	2%
Has WAP	8	0.6%
Others	4	0.4%
Total	1272	100%

The data shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the options Kuwait University students wanted in their mobile phones and the college they are enrolled in (see table 12).

The **last research question** asks, *How do Kuwait University students use the SMS?* The data shows that 77% of the students **send** at least one SMS day and 61% of the students send between 1-10 messages a day. The data also shows that the difference between the numbers of SMS the students send and the college they are enrolled in is statistically significant (see table 13).

In looking at the SMS Kuwait University students receive, the study finds that 87% of Kuwait University students receive at least one SMS a day. About 61% of the students receive between 1-10 messages a day.

The data also reveals that statistically significant differences were found between the numbers of SMS the students receive and the college they are enrolled in (see table 14).

Table 12
Options students want in their mobiles by college

	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	College					Law	Total
					Busi- ness	Isa- mic	Educ- ation	Medi- cine	Phar- macy		
Small size	27%	30%	26%	33%	24%	27%	25%	27%	30%	22%	27%
Good reception	23%	25%	21%	16%	28%	25%	21%	16%	17%	26%	22%
Has long life battery	22%	23%	23%	25%	26%	17%	21%	22%	18%	15%	22%
Has Arabic letters	9%	4%	9%	11%	5%	20%	21%	6%	10%	13%	10%
Nice look	8%	8%	10%	3%	5%	9%	7%	18%	11%	13%	9%
Has variety of ring-tones	7%	6%	5%	3%	5%	1%	4%	6%	9%	5%	5%
Has infrared option	0.5%	1%	2%	3%	2%	0.5%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Has an answering machine	1%	2%	1%	4%	2%		1%		2%	0.5%	2%
Has changeable cover	3%	1%	0.5%	2%	1%	0.5%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Has WAP		0.5%	2%		1%		0.5%	0.5%		2%	0.5%
Others		0.7%	0.5%		1%	5%		5%			0.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* $n = 1272$, $\chi^2 = 214.43$, $df = 90$, $p = .000$

Table 13
Number of SMS students send by college

	College							Total
	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	Busi- ness	Isia- mic	Educ- ation	
1-5 SMS	47%	48%	52%	51%	47%	34%	49%	48%
Don't send any SMS	24%	28%	13%	22%	24%	43%	26%	23%
6-10 SMS	10%	9%	17%	13%	13%	11%	10%	13%
More than 15 SMS	13%	9%	10%	8%	10%	6%	12%	11%
11-15 SMS	6%	5%	8%	5%	6%	6%	4%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* $n = 1291$, $\chi^2 = 80.33$, $df = 36$, $p = .000$

Table 14
Number of SMS students receive by college

	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	College					Law	Total
					Busi- ness	Isla- mic	Educ- ation	Medi- cine	Phar- macy		
1-5 SMS	54%	60%	52%	53%	59%	43%	55%	57%	61%	36%	54%
6-10 SMS	19%	15%	20%	21%	14%	15%	14%	17%	16%	24%	17%
Don't send any SMS	8%	13%	8%	12%	14%	33%	16%	8%	10%	7%	13%
More than 15 SMS	14%	9%	15%	12%	10%	3%	8%	11%	9%	25%	11%
11-15 SMS	6%	3%	5%	2%	4%	6%	7%	7%	4%	9%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*n = 1300, $\chi^2 = 97.54$, df = 36, p = .000

It was found that the Islamic College students were the students who least send and receive SMS. On the other hand, the Law College students were found to have the highest percentage for sending and receiving messages.

This study also looked at the kind of SMS Kuwait University students send and receive. The study finds that 38% of the students send and receive SMS jokes and another 25% send and receive normal conversation SMS (see table 15). 14% of Kuwait University students send and receive love SMS.

Table 15
Kinds of SMS students send and receive

	Frequency	Percent
Jokes	395	38%
Normal conversations	259	25%
Love messages	141	14%
Exchange information	94	9%
Making appointments	59	6%
International messages	48	5%
Others	23	2%
Harassment	16	1.5%
Answering tests	11	1%
Total	1272	100%

The data did not reveal any statistically significant differences between GPA or total credit numbers. However, the study shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the kind of SMS students send and receive and the gender of the students. Male students tend to send and receive love messages more often than female students do, and they send and receive more SMS during exams to help in answering the exam (see table 16). On the other hand, female students tend to send and receive jokes and normal conversations more often than male students.

Table 16
Kinds of SMS students send and receive by gender

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Jokes	35%	39%	38%
Normal conversations	20%	27%	25%
Love messages	17%	12%	14%
Exchange information	7%	10%	9%
Making appointments	8%	5%	6%
International messages	6%	4%	5%
Others	2%	2%	2%
Harassment	2%	1%	2%
Answering tests	2%	0.5%	1%
Total	1272	100%	100%

*n = 1046, $\chi^2 = 49.05$, df = 8, p = .000

The data also reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between the kind of SMS students send and receive and the college they are enrolled in (see table 17).

Regarding the language Kuwait University students use when they send or receive SMS, 40% of them use Arabic and another 37% use "IRC"² language. Of those students who send or receive SMS, 16% always send and receive SMS outside Kuwait and 9% of the students always send SMS during class.

Discussion

This study clearly shows that mobile phones are very widespread among Kuwait University students. Only 2% of the students don't have mobile phones. The students frequently change the cover of their phones and exchange ring-tones and pictures. Only certain brand of phones provide them with the options to change the cover of their phones and allow them to receive new ring-tones and pictures. Other phones don't allow them to do that. That is why almost all of the students have a similar brand of phones.

Because the mobile phone companies don't allow those who are less than 18 years old to have mobile phones and because students start going to the university when they are 17 years old, many had to depend on someone else to get them the service. But this study finds that female

Table 17
Kinds of SMS students send and receive by college

	College										Total
	Science	Engin- eering	Social Science	Arts	Busi- ness	Isl- amic	Educ- ation	Medi- cine	Phar- macy	Law	
Jokes	40%	34%	37%	45%	36%	34%	38%	42%	37%	35%	38%
Normal conversations	19%	25%	27%	22%	25%	24%	23%	32%	29%	23%	25%
Love messages	19%	12%	16%	14%	11%	13%	14%	9%	10%	15%	14%
Exchange information	10%	9%	7%	9%	11%	8%	8%	4%	11%	11%	9%
Making appointment	5%	10%	3%	7%	5%	13%	4%	5%	5%	3%	6%
International messages	3%	6%	3%	3%	6%	6%	7%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Others	1%	3%	3%	0.5%	2%	3%	5%	3%	3%		2%
Harassment	2%	0.5%	2%	1%	2%		2%		0.5%	5%	2%
Answering tests	1%	1%	2%	0.5%	3%			1%	1%	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* $n = 1046$, $\chi^2 = 129.7$, $df = 72$, $p = .000$

students depend more on others, especially their parents and their brothers and sisters, to get them the service than the male students, the majority of whom acquired their services by themselves. Probably female students depend on others because they don't have enough experience to decide where and how to get a new mobile phone service. Female students are found to pay less money for using their mobile phones than male students.

Kuwait University students have mobile phones so they can check on their families and their families can check on them. Some of the students said that they need the phones so they can call their families and tell them where they are and when they will be home. However, female students use their mobile phones more seriously than the male students. The female students have their mobiles because the mobile phones are necessary for them to finish personal business, and to check on their families, while the male students have their mobiles because they think that mobile phones are accessories and in order to harass other people. Students with higher GPAs use mobile phones to check on their families more than other students. Students with a total number of credits between 91-120 or those students who are enrolled in the College of Islamic Studies are the students who least use the mobile phone to check on their families, and are the students who most use the mobile phones to finish and check on other matters.

Some teachers complain that students use mobile phones during exams to help them in answering the exams, but this study clearly shows that only 2% of the students use the mobile phones during the exams. The study finds that there is a relationship between gender of the students and using the mobile phones during exams. It was found that more male students use the mobile phones during exams to help them answering tests than female students. It was also found that more students with GPAs of between 4.00 and 3.51 use the mobile phone during exams than other students.

This study defines the mobile phone characteristics Kuwait University students like to have in their mobile phones. The current study finds that the size of the mobile phone is very important to students. Most of them prefer small-sized phones that have a long battery life and good reception. Also, an Arabic letter option is important.

One of the options the two mobile phone companies offer is the SMS, which is very popular among Kuwait University students. Almost all of them

send and receive SMS. Most of those students who don't use this option are from the College of Islamic Studies. On the other hand, those students who are enrolled in the Social Science College or in the College of Arts send and receive more SMS than the other colleges. Joke messages are very widespread among Kuwait University students. Students also send and receive normal conversation messages, but those with low GPAs or male students, tend to send and receive more love messages than other students. The study also finds that male students depend more on SMS to help them in answering their questions during exams.

The language Kuwait University students use when they write the messages are either Arabic or the IRC language. Very few of them use standard English when they write their messages.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how Kuwait University students use their mobile phones. Many people argue that mobile phones are very widely used by Kuwait University students. This study supports this hypothesis and shows that mobile phone technology is diffused widely among the Kuwait University students. The study shows that most Kuwait University students are early adopters. They have mobile phones before they are allowed to have them, except for the students who are enrolled in the College of Islamic Studies. The latter are 'laggards.' They are probably still evaluating the technology or implementing it.

Even though in order to have a mobile phone a person must be at least 18 years old, some of the students had their mobile phones before they became 18 and before they entered the university. Most of those got their phones from their parents or from brothers or sisters.

The Kuwait University students have a lot of knowledge about mobile phones. The students implement this technology and accept it and are reinforcing it by using all the options that this technology offers. They change the cover of their phones and exchange ring-tones.

The study finds that almost every student has a mobile and is using a certain brand phone that have Arabic letters, can receive and send pictures and ring-tones, can change their covers, and are small in size. These options are what Kuwait University students look for in the mobile phone they want.

Male Kuwait University students are more of innovators than female students who depend on someone else, an opinion leader, to teach them and convince them about the service. Mobile phones are diffused among male students more than female students. They change the phone more often than female students. The implementation of this technology to the female students is larger than the male students. This may be because the female students are still putting this technology to test before adopting it. Male students adopt this technology faster than female students.

The study finds that a major predictor of how Kuwait University students use mobile phones is the student's gender. Female students tend to be more serious in the way they use the mobile phones while male students consider the mobile phones to be an accessory and a tool for sending love messages, harassing others and for using during exams and classes. This study finds that having a mobile phone is very important for a female student in Kuwait. It may also be important as a means for parents of female students to keep track of their daughters or wives, to know where they are, when they will be home, when they require being picked up from school and about their personal welfare. Traditionally, male students have more freedom to go anywhere and to stay up late without having anyone looking for them.

Another major predictor is the college in which the students are enrolled, especially the College of Islamic Studies. This study raises the question, "Why are the students who are enrolled in the College of Islamic Studies conservative in the way they use the mobile phones?" Those students tend to care less about the characteristics of the mobile phones they want to have, don't send or receive messages, don't use the phone during the classes and they tend to talk less. Why are they are using the mobile phones in this way? What makes those students use the mobile phones that way?

It will be interesting to apply this study to a sample of older people than the university students to see if there is a relationship between age and diffusion of the mobiles, especially since this study didn't ask students about age.

NOTES:

- (1) Silver Line has all available services and three same numbers.
- (2) The language some people use when they chat on the Internet.

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