



## Gratification of Mobile Phones

Dr. Salah M. AL-Fadhli\*

Dr. Ali A. Dashti\*\*

### *Abstract:*

Mobile phone has become indispensable tool in the people life. With all applications & services available on it, mobile phone is not a mere communication tool, rather it is playing several roles. Within mobile phones, smart phones dominating the market with diversified services offered. Through his/her mobile, user can link to thousands of applications available in mobile software stores.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the factors incline and gratifies phone users to use smart phones. Uses and Gratification theory will be applied as a framework. The sample of this study include the Kuwait mobile users selected by simple random sampling. A survey of 36 questions was designed using online site. The survey classified into three sections. First section consists of questions related to demographic data. Second section deals with the behavior of using mobile phones. Third section composed of attitudes questions' toward using mobile phones. The results of this study revealed four motives for using mobile phones among Kuwaiti people. The four factors emerged were social, psychological, instrumental/info centric, and entertainment. Among the four factors, social factor was found to be the main motive of using mobile phones in Kuwait.

### *1- Introduction*

Information technology has impacted all aspects of our lives. Mobile phone as one of the most explosive technology changes the way we do business, the way we communicate, the way we educate, and the way we spare our time. As Katz & Arkhus (2002) articulated:

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\* Scientific Assistant, College of Business Administration, Quantitative Methods and Information System, Kuwait University.

\*\* Assistant Professor, GUST University.

technology become our second skin. Mobile phone becomes indispensable tool in our daily life.

By adding many services and functions to mobile phones, its role has changed from being a solely communicating tool to a multi-purpose tool. Mobile phones affect every aspect of the personal and professional lives of people to the level of addiction. According to Cholz (2010), addictive cell phone use may meet several criteria for dependence, including excessive use, problems with parents associated with excessive use, interference with school and other personal activities. Beside fulfilling the basic function of making and receiving call, the new generation of mobiles, especially smart phones, offer an access to internet and unlimited number of diversified applications which adds much to gratification of cell phones' users. According to Kats & Akhus (2002) "They (mobile phones) have transformed social practices and changed the way we do business, yet surprisingly we have little perception on their effect in our lives". As new generations of mobile networking (3G, 4G, LTE) advance, smart phones are becoming more powerful, and in consequences, it is deeply affecting our life style.

Mobile marketing is becoming increasingly important to businesses across the globe. Today, there are about 6 billion mobile phone users around the globe. Statistics shows that 86% of world population has a mobile phone (ITU, 2011). Out of the 5.98 billion mobile phone users in the world, 1.08 billion are smartphone users (eMarketer, 2012). Beginning in the late 2000s, smartphones gained high popularity around the world. The number of users is rapidly increasing following the new generations of smartphones and with wide availability of various applications. Smart phone sector compromised 60.1% of the whole telecommunication market. The Coda Research Consultants (2012) predicts global smartphone sales of 2.5 billion over the 2010-2015 period. Both analysts, Gartner (February 2013) and Canalys (January 2013), predict that marginally more smartphones will be sold in 2013 than feature phones (non-smart phones). Canalys believes that by 2016 smartphones will outsell feature phones by a considerable margin.

In Kuwait, Government is the sole provider of the fixed line services, while the mobile sector is operated by private sector. Mobile phones first introduced in 1984. Telecom market in Kuwait witnessed big boost in the last few years. In 2011, the market grew at the rate of 12%, and it is expected to further expand by over 30% in the coming five years (Taiyo Reports, 2012). Within the consumer market, mobile phone considered as the most influential sector. Penetration ratio of mobile phone in Kuwait reached 189% in 2012. There are now three operators (Zain, Watania, Viva) operating in the cell phone market. The number subscriptions of mobile phones boosted in the last few years. In 2003, there were 1,775 million subscriptions. The number jumped to more than 4,934 million mobile subscriptions in 2011 (CSB, 2011).

## **2- Uses & Gratification:**

Although uses and gratification theory originally developed as a paradigm in the mass communication media to study consumer motivation, it has been then extended to several other areas. Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1944-3) were the pioneers of the Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory, which focused on the question, “What does the media do to people?”. Katz (1959), reversed the question to “What do people do with the media?”.

According to U&G theory, people are goal-directed and socially active, and they seek information and content to satisfy certain needs; therefore, communications must be social to satisfy these information-seeking needs (Compaine, 1984, p. 239). U&G approach assumes that media is goal-directed, the audience is active, media can fulfill a wide range of needs, individuals have the self-awareness to articulate their reasons for using media and gratification is available through media content, exposure and social context (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

In his topology, McQuail (2005, pp.82-83) listed four main motivations that encourage audience to the use of media: *information* (seeking relevant events, advice, general interest, learning and gaining a sense of security), *personal identity* (reinforcing personal values, finding models of behavior, gaining insight and identifying with valued others), *integration and social interaction* (social empathy,

gaining a sense of belonging, basis for conversation and social interaction, substitute for real-life companionship, carrying out social roles and social connections), and *entertainment* (escaping, relaxing, enjoyment, filling time, emotional release and sexual arousal).

While earlier studies of U&G theory developed typologies of satisfaction for television (Rubin 1981), newspaper (Lichterstein and Rosenfeld, 1984), and for land line telephone (Dimmick et al. 1994; O'Keefe and Sulanowski, 1995), the newer studies extended the scope of the theory to Internet (Charney and Greenberg, 2002), email (Hand R2001), mobile phones (Leung, Wei, 2002) and other new technologies. Assuming that individuals differences cause each user to seek out different media and use the media differently, the uses and gratification approach provides an adequate framework for studying the cell phone (Wei, Lo, 2006). In applying U&G theory to mobile phones, several topologies (Dimmick, et. el., 1994; Wei, 2006; Mazzoni et. el., 2007) have been proposed to include new dimensions.

In terms of motivation to use technology, U&G theory can be applied to identify the customer social and psychological needs' to be fulfilled (Peters et. el. 2007). Individual needs have been classified into five groups: 1- *cognitive needs* (information, knowledge and understanding), 2- *affective needs* (positive emotional and aesthetic experiences), 3- *personal integrative needs* (credibility, stability and status), 4- *group integrative needs* (strengthened contacts with others and the world) and 5- tension-releasing needs (Compaine, 1984, p. 240; Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973; Serverin & Tankard, 1992, pp 269-270). When applying U&G to individual needs, the question involved would be articulated as "Why do people become involved in a particular type of mediated communication, and what gratifications do they receive from it" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 29).

Motivated by the need to varied impact of cell phones in our life, this study investigates the motives of the mobile phone users'. This study is important at the present, mainly because mobile phones usage has raised serious questions about the impact of mobile phone on our lifestyle.

What makes this study especially important is that it was conducted in the context of Arab countries. There are few studies conducted in the Arab societies applying uses and gratification theory to mobile phones' users. In his comparative study, Juda (2006) investigated the social impacts of using mobile phones among university students' in Saltan Qabos university and Ain Shams University. The study concluded that using mobile phone among university students' changed the type of social communication among people. Al-Hashmi (2008) conducted a study to investigate the impact of using mobile phones among Kuwait University' students. The study found that social communication is the main reason for using mobile phones followed by emergency situations. In the last three years, mobile phones have been used to achieve political goals. During Arab uprising in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, Mobile phones allowed democratization movements to develop new tactics overthrowing dictators' regimes (Philip, Hussain, 2011).

Based on the literature review of the major motives sought by mobile phone, a research question formulated as follows:

**RQ: What are the factors that gratify Kuwaiti mobile phone users'?**

### ***3- Methodology:***

Our goal in this study is to find out the factors that gratify Kuwait people in using mobile phone, and to investigate their attitudes toward mobile phone usage. Hence, the questionnaire designed to reflect this goal. A survey of 36 questions was designed using online site. Likert-type questions ranging from 1 for "completely disagree" to 5 for "Completely agree" were used to measure the attitudes of the participants. The survey classified into three sections. First section consists of questions related to demographic data. Second section deals with the behavior of using mobile phones. Third section composed of attitudes questions' toward using mobile phones. The data collected from 547 mobile phone users through online questionnaire, and 60 records discarded due to partial filling. A statistical software SPSS (21.0) was used to analyze the data collected. A pilot study conducted, and 25 users participated in it to test eligibility and understanding of

the questionnaire. Factor analysis was used to identify the grouping factors.

#### ***4- Results & Discussions:***

The research question of this study inquired the relation between use of mobile phones and the gratification sought by the users. Sample of this study is Kuwaiti phone users. There were 547 participants, and they are ranged in age from 18 and above. The overall alpha core for the pilot data was 0.893, which indicated high reliability of the instrument. The sample selected by simple random sampling method.

Table 1 presents the demographic data for the study sample. Among the valid participants, there were 349 (63.8%) males and 198 (36.2%) females. The gap between percentage of male and female participants might be reduced to the conservative nature of the Kuwaiti society, where females are cautious in participating in such questionnaire. The results show that 152 (27.7%) are single, while 371 (67.7%) are married. Regarding the level of education, the majority of participants 280 (51.1%) found to be holding a bachelor degree. In terms of monthly income, most participants (60.0%) fall in the range of below KD 1500 per month (1 KD = 0.298 US dollars). The demographic variables represented the independent variables. Table (1) shows the details of the demographic data.

***Table (1)***  
***The sample's demographical data***

| Item   | Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male       | 349       | 63.7%      |
|        | Female     | 198       | 36.2%      |
| Age    | 18-24      | 137       | 25.0%      |
|        | 25-35      | 128       | 23.4%      |
|        | 36-45      | 142       | 25.9%      |
|        | 46-55      | 102       | 18.6%      |
|        | 55 +       | 38        | 6.9%       |

**Con/ Table (1)**  
***The sample's demographical data***

| Item                              | Categories          | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Status                     | Single              | 152       | 27.7%      |
|                                   | Married             | 371       | 67.7%      |
|                                   | Divorced            | 22        | 4.0%       |
|                                   | Widow               | 3         | .5%        |
| Educational Degree                | Below High School   | 20        | 3.6%       |
|                                   | High school/Diploma | 163       | 29.7%      |
|                                   | Bachelor            | 280       | 51.1%      |
|                                   | Master              | 42        | 7.7%       |
|                                   | PhD                 | 43        | 7.8%       |
| Monthly income<br>(Kuwaiti Dinar) | Less than 750       | 142       | 25.9%      |
|                                   | 750 - 1500          | 187       | 60.0%      |
|                                   | 1501 - 3000         | 161       | 29.4%      |
|                                   | 3000 +              | 58        | 10.6%      |

The results show that 65.7% of participants have iPhone, and 27.9% have Galaxy smart phones. This shows that great majority of Kuwaiti people using smart phones. It was found that 41.1% have two or more mobile phones, but results show no link between having more than one mobile phone and using it more frequently during the day. In terms of average monthly payment for mobile, 56.0% of the participants pay more than \$75 per month. This result is expected as we know that Kuwaiti society considered wealthy, and therefore can afford paying more for their mobile calls. The results show that 5.8% of the participants are using mobile phones more than four hours daily, where 11.1% of them using their phones for making/receiving calls 2-4 hours daily. These results show the heavy reliance on smart phones among Kuwaiti people. These results conform with the theory of uses and gratification which stress on users' seek for information and content to satisfy certain needs. Table (2) shows the details.

**Table (2)**  
***Behavior in using cell phones***

| Variable                  | Less than Hour | 1-2 hours  | 2-4 hours | 4-6 hours | 6+ hours |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Time spent on call        | 56.2%          | 26.8%      | 11.1%     | 3.6%      | 2.2%     |
| Time spent non-call usage | 17.5%          | 16.4%      | 25.2%     | 26.3%     | 14.2%    |
| Variable                  | Always         | Frequently | Sometimes | Rarely    | Never    |
| Call while driving        | 20.3%          | 23.0%      | 34.3%     | 13.3%     | 2.6%     |
| Messaging while driving   | 17.6%          | 24.9%      | 28.6%     | 16.1%     | 6.6%     |

\* The remaining percentage of participants does not drive cars.

The behavior of participants differs in terms of demographic variables. Gender was a significant indicator of frequency of using mobile phones, more calls, texts while driving. The results shows that women tend to make more calls to friends and family members, which comply with previous studies, while men have inclined to have more than one cell phone. In terms of social status, married participants tend to use mobile phone less than single participants. This finding can be referred to more leisure time available for singles compared to married users. Results show that younger participants send more text while driving more than older ages. Participants with high monthly income pay more than what low-income participants pay.

### ***Factor Analysis***

Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to reduce redundancy in data as well to reduce the number of indicators based on their correlation structure results on grouping the items into four factors represent the dependent variables. The four factors named social, psychological, instrumental/info centric, and entertainment. Total variation explained by the factor analysis is 63.2% and an amount of 36.8% of the variation remained unexplained. Table (3) shows the communalities of questions.

**Table (3)**  
**Communalities of questions & Means**

| Dimension                                      | Mean | Std.<br>Dev. | Reliability<br>Cronbach | Explained<br>Variance | Factor<br>Loading |
|------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Social Dimension</b>                        | 4.18 |              | .763                    | 35.6%                 |                   |
| C14 (Contact friends)                          | 4.37 | .711         |                         |                       | .616              |
| C15 (Feel follow)                              | 4.03 | .905         |                         |                       | .698              |
| C20 (Contact people)                           | 4.03 | .842         |                         |                       | .567              |
| C23 (Cell phone necessary<br>in my life)       | 4.32 | .849         |                         |                       | .670              |
| <b>Psychological Dimension</b>                 | 2.92 |              | .785                    | 11.8%                 |                   |
| C16 (Self-esteem)                              | 2.68 | 1.233        |                         |                       | .534              |
| C17 (Fun & happy)                              | 2.98 | 1.076        |                         |                       | .708              |
| C19 (Up-to-Date)                               | 3.04 | .995         |                         |                       | .595              |
| <b>Instrumental/Info centric<br/>Dimension</b> | 3.38 |              | .775                    | 8.4%                  |                   |
| C4 (info seek)                                 | 3.62 | .857         |                         |                       | .647              |
| C11 (for work and study)                       | 3.12 | 1.170        |                         |                       | .561              |
| C12 (sending E-mail)                           | 3.45 | 1.347        |                         |                       | .570              |
| <b>Entertainment Dimension</b>                 | 4.16 |              | .754                    | 7.3%                  |                   |
| C5 (playing games)                             | 3.49 | 1.131        |                         |                       | .606              |
| C6 (passing spare time)                        | 4.80 | 1.009        |                         |                       | .700              |
| C8 (overcome stress)                           | 3.20 | 1.173        |                         |                       | .593              |
| C9 (during waiting time)                       | 4.04 | .965         |                         |                       | .694              |

As shown in Table (3), only questions with communality values of at least 50% are accepted. The listed questions shares at least 50% of association with other factors are kept. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. The result of reliability for the factors 1,2,3 & 3 found to be .763, .785, .775, and .754 respectively, indicating that the questions were internally consistent.

The items of the first factor F1 explained 35.6% of the variation. This means that these items are the most important motives among Kuwait mobile phone users. This factor was named “social”, and it consisted of four items. This result indicates that role of the social dimension plays a major significant role in the respondent perception of mobile phones. The high mean of this factor (4.18) indicate the strong agreement with the items. The second factor F2 explained 11.8% of the variation. This factor was named “psychological” and it consisted of three items. With mean of 2.92, the psychological factor seems to be neutral. The third factor F3 explained 8.4% of the variation, and it was named “instrumental and information seeking”. Info seeking was the main motives for using mobile phones in this dimension. The fourth factor F4 explained 7.3% of the variation. This factor was named “entertainment”. The greatest agreement in this dimension was with the use of mobile phones for passing time, and followed by using it during waiting times.

With mean of 4.32, there is a common believe among participants that mobile phone become a necessary part of our daily life. The results show that opening their mobiles is the first thing the majority (62.9%) of participants do when they wake-up in the morning. High percentage of the participants (77.6%) reveal that they use mobile phones to make/receive calls while driving, and 71.1% of them send text while driving. All these results indicate that using mobile became an addiction to great majority of people. With mean of 4.12 for female and 3.62 for male, women seem to be more addicted to use mobile phones.

According to Wei & Lo (2006), social groups experience a given new media technology differently due to their differences in social structures. To find out whether gender, age, education level, marital status, and monthly income have a significant role in the respondents' attitudes, Mann-Whitney test was performed. It was found that all demographic factors were significant, while age, marital status, monthly income are most significant factors among the five demographic variables. Gender was significant factor for the psychological and entertainment aspects, while education level was significant in instrumental and entertainment needs. Using correlation analyses

revealed strong association between social and psychological factors. The results presented in table (4) indicates that male and female differed significantly in seeking gratification of social, psychological and instrumental/info centric factors.

**Table (4)**  
**Gratification significance regarding demographic variables  
of cell phone users**

| Factor          | Social | Psychological | Instrumental | Entertainment |
|-----------------|--------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Gender          | .119   | .002*         | .700         | .000*         |
| Age             | .000*  | .191          | .000*        | .000*         |
| Marital status  | .001*  | .611          | .035*        | .000*         |
| Education level | .103   | .909          | .023*        | .000*         |
| Monthly income  | .002*  | .093          | .000*        | .000*         |

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Gender found to be significant variable in many items especially in being close to family members, feeling save, self-esteem, being addicted to mobile phone, and in keeping contact with people. In terms of age, younger ages (18-35) found to be more addicted mobile phones than older ages. Age variable plays an important role when it comes to the negative impact of using mobile phones on social duties. Results show that mobile phones have negative impact on the social duties of younger ages than on older ages. Information seek, use it to access internet, playing games, release stress, and passing spare time are more important aspects for younger ages.

Results also show that marital status plays significant role in the behavior and the attitudes toward using mobile phones. Single users are more inclined to use mobile phone in playing games, use for work-study, following news, and in feeling happy. Married users are more concerned with being in contact with family members. Results indicated that education level has limited impact on participants' attitudes toward using mobile phones. Education level was significant only when it comes to use mobile phones for work purposes. Income was found to be influential on several items. Income found to be

positively correlated with arranging appointments, passing spare time, and releasing stress, while correlated negatively with playing games, playing games and being in contact with people.

### ***5- Conclusion and limitations***

Studies on how people use their mobile phones can develop deeper understanding of the motives that gratify them. This understanding should be helpful in studying the consequences of using mobile phones on people life style. The aim of this paper is to investigate the factors incline and gratifies phone users to use smart phones. The results of this study revealed four motives as reasons for using mobile phones among Kuwaiti people. The four factors emerged were social, psychological, instrumental/info centric, and entertainment. Among the four factors, social factor was found to be the main motive of using mobile phones in Kuwait. This finding conforms with the nature of Arab societies where social ties plays major role in individuals' daily life. It is reasonably then to expect that mobile phones enhancing the social relationships among people in general, and within family members in specific. The of this study are consistent with similar studies conducted in Arab countries (Juda, 2006; Al-Hashmi, 2008; Philip, Hussain, 2011).

Based on the findings of this study we can list some recommendations. First, Knowing that 76% of the of the mobile users use it while driving, it is recommended that a harsh penalties should be given to those who use mobile while driving, as they endanger their and other lives. Second, studies shows that a driver using a mobile phone while driving is four times more likely to have an accident than the driver who is not using it during driving (McEvoy et. El., 2007; Asgharabad, Naghibzadeh, Khanjani, 2013). Therefore, awareness programs and seminars should be organized to make the drivers aware of the high risk of using mobile phones while driving.

To conclude, mobile phones in general, and smart phones in specific changed our way of life. The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution, as the study restricted to Kuwaiti phone users. Research need to be extended to other Arab countries to find out if there is a common cultural indicators affecting the attitudes of mobile phone users.

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