

**Letter to Editor****Mobile phone using pattern and the perception amongst university students in Dhaka city****Tasnuva Ferdous<sup>1</sup>, Sanzida Shuchi<sup>2</sup>, Asma Begum<sup>2</sup>, MdShohag Hossen<sup>2</sup>, Mohammad Nazir Hossain<sup>3\*</sup>**<sup>1</sup>*Department of Biochemistry, Primeasia University, Banani, Dhaka, Bangladesh*<sup>2</sup>*Department of Biochemistry, Primeasia University, Banani, Dhaka, Bangladesh*<sup>3\*</sup>*Associate Professor, Department of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh*

**ABSTRACT:** In modern days, people are using cell phone not only as telephone but also as a media for text messaging, email, internet access, short-range wireless communications (Bluetooth), gaming and photography. Besides its hazardous physiological effect due to electromagnetic radiations; it can act as a feasible microbiological threat, serving as vehicles to transfer contamination from place to place. This study investigated the extent of mobile phone use amongst university students and thereby explores perceived effect on their academic performance, as well as it determines personal hygiene factors, the relationships between its using pattern and the psychological effect involved with it. A random sampling was employed to identify the students (N=220) who are using mobile for the last one year from different universities in Dhaka city. The data analyzed using SPSS version 18.0 (SPSS Inc.) and are summarized as counts and percentages. Key findings from the study state that out of total 109 (49.5%) male and 111 (50.5%) female participants, maximum belongs to age range 21-25 years (70%). Of them, male participants are 70.6% and female are 69.4%. 37.73% students are using cell phone for 3-5 hours mostly for conversation (50.45%), 29.4% male and 32.4% female students agreed that cell phone use can hamper their study very much. 46.8% male and 19.8% female students are using cell phone in toilet and 67.27% students confessed that they do not use any disinfectant to wash their cell phone. 51.36% students admitted they feel pain on shoulder or hand while using mobile; when 23.39% felt eye discomfort. Most of the students (75%) put mobile under the pillow while 38.64% are using it when the charge is below 30%. Moreover, 45% male and 54% female students are using it at late night. This exploratory study may be helpful as a preliminary background for further research in this field.

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Citation: Tasnuva Ferdous, Sanzida Shuchi, Asma Begum, MdShohag Hossen and Mohammad Nazir Hossain; Mobile phone using pattern and the perception. *Biores Comm.* 6(1), 872-881**INTRODUCTION**

The mobile phone is one of the most promptly growing new technologies in the world, creating an emergent "mobile youth culture" [1]. A cell phone is a device that can make and receive telephone calls over a radio

link whilst moving around a wide geographic area. In the 21st century this device has been becoming an essential part of everyday life because we are moving into an era when mobile devices are not just for talking

and texting, but can also access to many internet facilities. Therefore, comparatively more hours are spent on a smartphone than on a conventional phone [6]. Cell phones are considered as a mixed blessing, as teenagers think mobiles make their lives easy and more convenient, since they also quote new tensions connected to it [2].

By the end of 2010, however, cell phone subscriptions had reached five billion worldwide [23]. Obviously, this increase includes a sharp increase in the number of cell phones used by the younger generations [18]. In various studies, the unregulated usage and over dependent attitude on these devices is observed among the youth which could have a serious effect on their academic performances. In an attempt to discuss about the issue of this topic on phones and its usage via the internet, various observations have been seen among student using the phones for visiting social platform, such as the Facebook, Twitter, 2go, Myspace and instant messengers like whats app, Imo, Line, Viber during academic periods and off academic periods indicating that the internet phones have a strong effect on the students. [23]

It should be pointed that, the usage of mobiles are not intended for negative purpose and influence; however, the attitude and time conducted towards these devices has dominated the student, also making them addicts. A study by the University of Navarra affirms that young people between 15 and 19 admit being addicted to their cell phones (Naval et al., 2004). Also, British scientists noted that more and more people are getting addicted to their cell phones, causing stress and irritability (BBC, 2006). While specialists indicate that the abuse of the use of cell phones could be typified as 'a disorder of addiction that has to be stopped as soon as possible' (Paniagua, 2005).

The mobile phone is apparently a useful tool for health progression. Mobile applications may offer effective ways to promote one's lifestyle, for example, by increasing physical activity [7], controlling weight [8, 9], and treating obesity [10]. On the other hand, when used excessively, it could cause physical [11-13] and psychological [14, 15] health problems. Studies showed that mobile phone use at late night negatively impacts sleep outcome [6, 17]. This may be due to exposure to bright light and electromagnetic radiation from electronic devices, disturbing high volume rhythms and then hampering sleep quality [16-18]. Mobile phone overuse may also cause the risk of mobile phone addiction [4, 14], thus contributing to poor sleep quality [13, 14, 19, 20] and psychological problems such as depression and anxiety [13, 21, 22]. Extensive usage of smartphones has an effect on human's brain, upper extremities, back, and neck. [23]

With the advent of the mobile phone, telephony has completely permeated in public space, with people talking on the phone in most public places, such as

buses, swimming pools, streets, shopping centers, gyms etc. Interactions between microorganisms and contact material surfaces play an important role in biology and different technologies, including the food, pharmacy and service industries [3]. Contaminated hands of mobile phone users play a major role in spreading infections into other areas. Hand hygiene is one of the most important preventive interventions against the spread of infections [4].

A world-wide promotion of smartphones and a little knowledge about their side effects triggered us to start a research on the extent of mobile phone using pattern of university students which relates to their everyday life. This survey-based research was to identify the side effect of using smartphones among users aged between 15-35. Focusing on overall hours spent on mobile phone per day, this cross sectional study aims to investigate the prevalence of using mobile phone among university students, as well as the physiological effect and hygiene factors related to it. Findings from this study may be useful to the university students as they will understand the way they use the mobile phone and the consequences of its inappropriate use. Researchers will find some information from this study which can enhance their understanding and ability to provide guidance that inspires positive mobile computing activities.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was an observational cross-sectional study performed from 1 September 2018 to 1 November 2018 among some private university students in Dhaka city. The universities were being selected following random sampling method which included Primeasia University, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology, Caledonian College of Nursing, Daffodil University, City University and Dhaka University. A convenience sampling method was applied to find a total of two hundred and twenty (220) students from different level academic background. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed among students with informed consent (both verbal and written). The questionnaire was then filled by the students and returned back to our questionnaire administrators. The questionnaire consisting four parts is mentioned here:

### A) General

1. How long have you been using cell phone?
  - a) less than one year
  - b) more than one year
2. How much time do you spend on mobile phone? (on hours)
  - a) <1
  - b) 1-3
  - c) 3-5
  - d) >5
3. How much money do you spend on mobile per day?

a) <20 tk b) 20-50 tk c) 50-100 tk d) >100 tk e) Do not know

### B) Hygiene :

1. Do you use cell phone in toilets?
  - a) yes
  - b) no

2. How frequently do you clean your cell phone?  
a) every day b) each month c) twice in a month  
d) rarely e) never
  3. Do you Use any disinfectant/alcohol to clean cell phone? a) yes b) no
  4. Do you have any restrictions using phone while working on lab or clinics? a) yes b) no
  5. Do you clean your mobile after sneezing or coughing holding your phone? a) yes b) no
  6. Do you take food while using cell phone?  
a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never
  7. In which hand do you hold your cell phone most of the time? a) right hand b) left hand
  8. In which place do you keep your cell phone?  
a) chest pocket b) pant pocket c) bag
  9. Do you use hand cleaner after touching mobile? a) Very much b) Much c) Somewhat  
d) Rarely e) Never
  10. Do you wear finger ring? a) yes b) no
  11. Do you use a phone cover? a) yes b) no
  12. If yes, how much frequently do you change the cover? a) every day b) each month c) twice in a month d) rarely e) never
  13. Do you share your cell phone with others?  
a) Very much b) Much c) Somewhat d) Rarely  
e) Never
  14. Do you use hand wash/ soap before meal after using mobile? a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely  
d) Never
  15. How often you cut your nails? a) weekly b) 1-2 weeks c) 3-4 weeks d) more than a month e) do not know
  16. Do you brush your teeth at night? a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never
- C) Using Pattern:
1. What is the reason of your using mobile?  
a) Conversation b) Entertainment c) Texting d) Using alarm or calculator e) Other
  2. Frequency of text messaging (sending or receiving per day) a) <5 b) 5-10 c) 10-20 d) >20
  3. Duration of calls per day ( in hours) a) <1 b) 1-3 c) 3-5 d) >5
  4. Do you think your usage hamper your study?  
a) Very much b) Much c) Somewhat d) Rarely e) Never
  5. Scenario of keeping phone mute a) while in class b) in work c) At movie or concert d) while driving e) while sleeping f) Never
  6. Do you use phone while crossing road or driving? a) Never b) Sometimes c) Always d) rarely
  7. Scenario when phone is turned off?  
a) While in class b) In work c) At movie or concert d) while driving e) while sleeping f) Never
  8. What time do you use your phone mostly?  
A) Morning b) After noon c) Evening d) Late night
  9. Do you feel safe while using mobile while crossing road or driving? a) yes b) no
  10. Is it okay to talk loudly in phone on public place? a) yes b) no
  11. Do you think you are using phone too much? a) yes b) no
  12. Are you trying to reduce using phone? a) yes b) no
  13. Do you think students are adopting non-standard languages through SMS texting? a) yes b) no
  14. Do you share educational material through mobile? a) very much b) much c) Somewhat d) Rarely e) Never
  15. Do you think mobile can increase academic performance of students? a) very much b) much c) Somewhat d) Rarely e) Never
  16. Do you think cell phone use can decrease parental control a) Very much b) Much c) Somewhat d) Rarely e) Never
- D) Physiological effect:
1. Have you experienced any discomfort or pain in shoulder or hand after prolonged use of mobile? a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never
  2. Have you experienced tangling sensation/ numbness in your arm/shoulder/finger after prolonged use of mobile? a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never
  3. Which symptoms have you experienced after prolonged use of mobile? (You might have more than one answer)  
a) Headache b) Fatigue c) Distraction d) Insomnia e) Eye discomfort f) Body ache g) loss of attention h) Memory loss i) Neck pain j) feeling stressed k) feeling restless l) Anxiety m) Low self esteem n) Other.....
  4. Do you put your mobile under the pillow during sleep?

The first part contained questions on demographic information of the respondents; such as gender, age, profession. Second and third part represented about the hygiene and physiological issues respectively, fourth part focused on the using pattern of cell phone. Ethical approval was taken from the Scientific Research Committee of Primeasia University, Dhaka and performed in accordance to the Helsinki Declaration. The data collected were entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 (SPSS Inc.) and were summarized as counts and percentages.

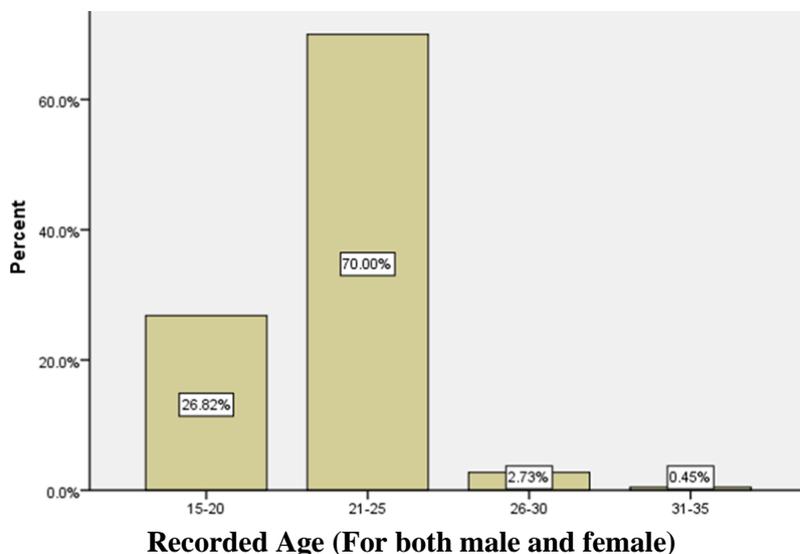
## RESULT

Two hundred and twenty (220) university students from Dhaka in Bangladesh are counted in this study .Table 1 shows the result of demographic variables and the status of Cellular Phone using Pattern. The relationship of two

demographic factors (gender, age) with the condition of Cellular Phone using Pattern is examined.

Demographics of study participants are summarized in the representing table 1. The location of study respondents are Dhaka. Study respondents are more

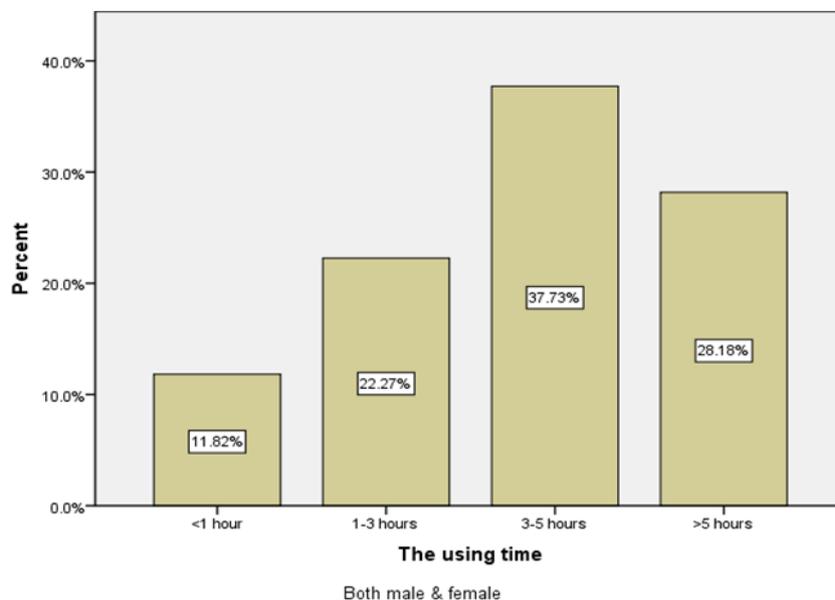
likely to be females who are 50.5% while the remaining 49.5% are males. Figure 1 represents the prevalence of using cellular phone on the basis of their different age groups.



**Figure 1.** Mobile phone using pattern in different age groups (n=220)

Figure 1 shows prevalence of using cell phone is high among the age group of 21-25 years (70%) and among 15-20 years it is 26.82%.

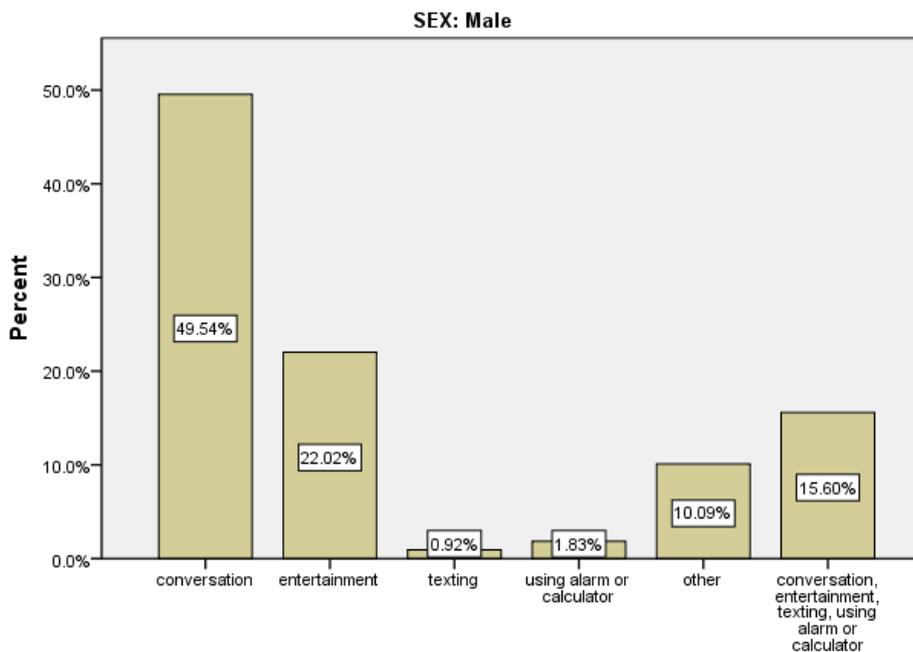
Figure 2 represents mobile phone using Pattern Based on Different Time Limits.



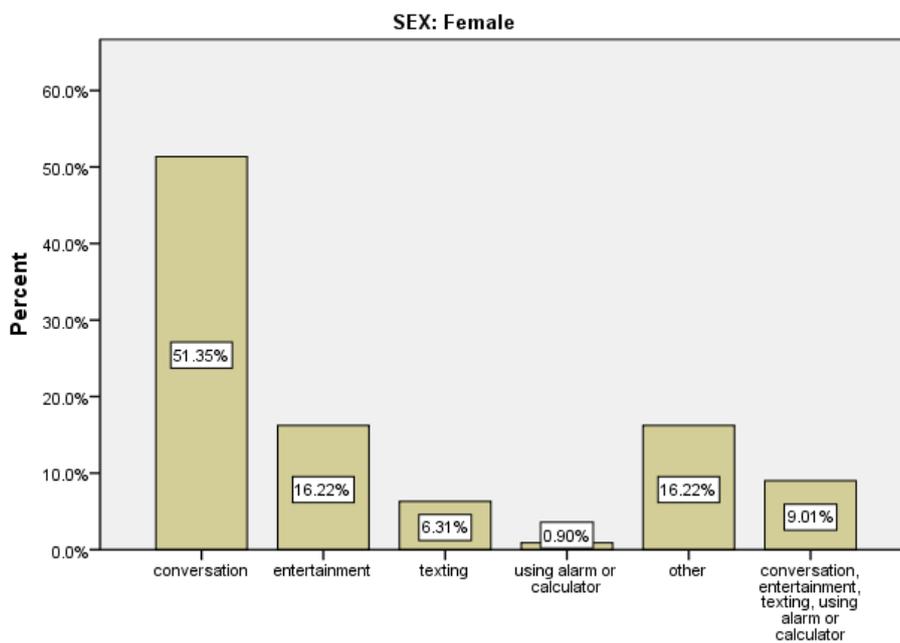
The using time (in hours)

**Figure 2.** Using Pattern Based on Different Time Limits (n=220).

This graphs shows the time limits of both male and female/s regarding using cellular phone. It seems 37.73% of students are using mobile phones for 3-5 hours per day and 28.18% student use cellular phone for more than 5 hrs.



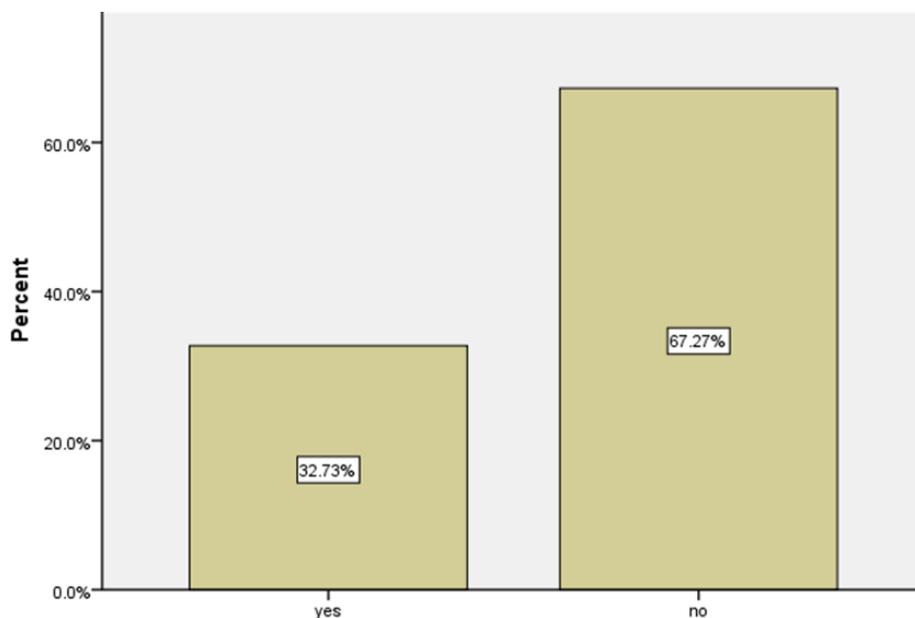
**Figure 3.** Reasons for using cell phone for male (n=109)



**Figure 4.** Reasons for using cell phone for female (n=111)

From figure 3 we can see out of total 109 male students, 49.5% are using cellular phone for conversation whereas 22% of them are using for entertainment purpose. Figure 4 represents out of total 111 females

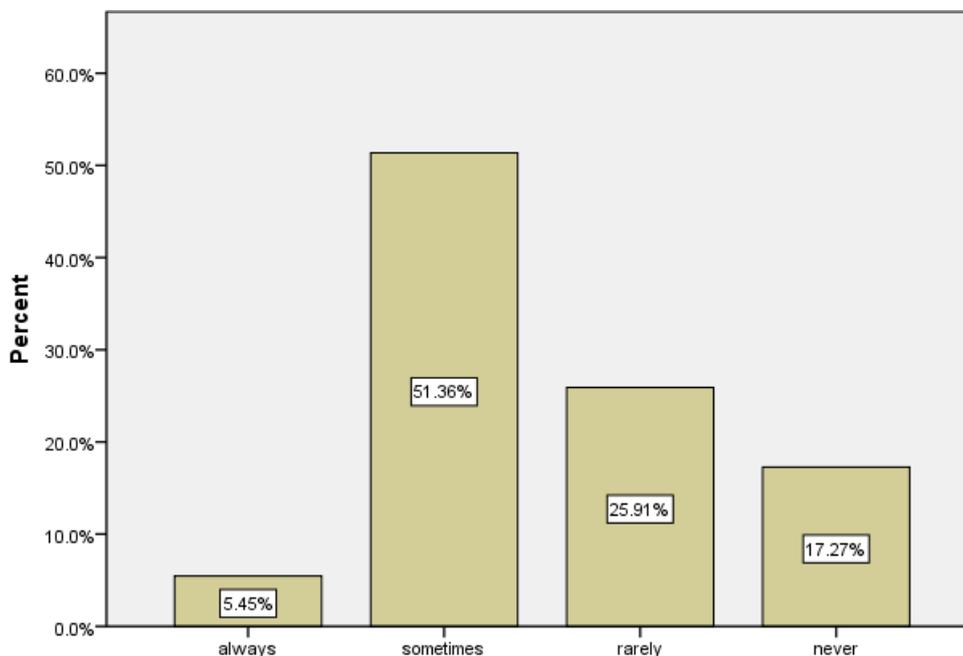
51.4% are using cellular phone for conversation, 16.2% of them are using for entertainment purpose. Figure 5 represents about the pattern of using disinfectants for washing cell Phone.



**Figure 5.** Using dis-infectants for washing cell Phone (n=220)

The figure 5 shows in this issue; 32.73% said YES, and 67.27% said NO. This study can be compared with the study conducted in Nigeria where 62% respondents do not use any disinfectants.<sup>[42]</sup> Disinfectants means chemical liquid that destroys bacteria, such as 70% isopropyl alcohol or ethyl alcohol. The proper use of medical disinfectants can help to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses. Many infectious diseases can be halted by the proper use of medical disinfectant

products, and by the routine disinfection and sterilization of hand hold devices. One study conducted in Slovakia significantly proves the impact of using disinfectants. Their results revealed reduction of contamination with antibacterial wet wipe led to a significant reduction of microbial contamination of surfaces, with effect ranging from 36.8 to 100%.<sup>[45]</sup> Figure 6 represents the frequency of feeling discomfort while holding mobile for a long time.



**Figure 6.** Frequency of feeling discomfort while holding mobile for a long time (n=220)

Figure 6 shows 51.36% students admit that, they sometimes felt discomfort while holding mobile for too long.

Figure 7 represents about symptoms experienced after prolonged use of mobile. All that staring from frequent phone use, computer use, and TV-watching can all lead to eye strain, an eye health issue that, when

found in this context, is often called Computer vision Syndrome. Blue Light from mobile Phone May Be Permanently Damaging eyes. Too much screen time can wreck eyes. Smart phones, laptops, and other handheld devices all transmit light. These reactions within the eye can be poisonous to the photoreceptor cell molecules rendering them damaged<sup>[43]</sup>. From this figure we find that the highest number of students (23.39%) fell eye discomfort which is followed by headache (16.06%). Various studies show the connection between cell phone usage and physical state of the users' health. Some studies report that users complain about a headache, hand tremor and finger discomfort. This data can be compared with a study by a group of Korean scientists from Injr University. The result concluded "a significant association between the total times spent using a mobile device each day and pain in the right shoulder, and between times spent internet browsing and pain at the base of the right thumb."<sup>[44]</sup> Rajan Balakrishnan and

Elanchezhian Chinnavan conducted another research on the extensive usage of handheld devices and their impact on musculoskeletal disorder. In their work the scientists acknowledged that "prolonged use of cell phone is known to cause symptoms of musculoskeletal disorder keeping this into consideration, more study should be done in the future to create awareness among cellphone user regarding the seriousness of this matter".<sup>[44]</sup> Another interview based study performed in America can be stated here. The Interview results revealed that extended usage of smartphones/HHDs affected human health. Mainly, prolonged usage of smartphones/HHDs increased tension on muscles such as upper trapezius, extensor pollicis longus and abductor pollicis and caused eye tension and fatigue. In this study, 90% respondents felt pain in shoulder and hand, 60% had symptoms such as a headache, fatigue, distraction, inattention after using mobile phone more than two hours, and 100% respondents felt eye tension after prolonged smartphones/HHDs usage<sup>[44]</sup>.

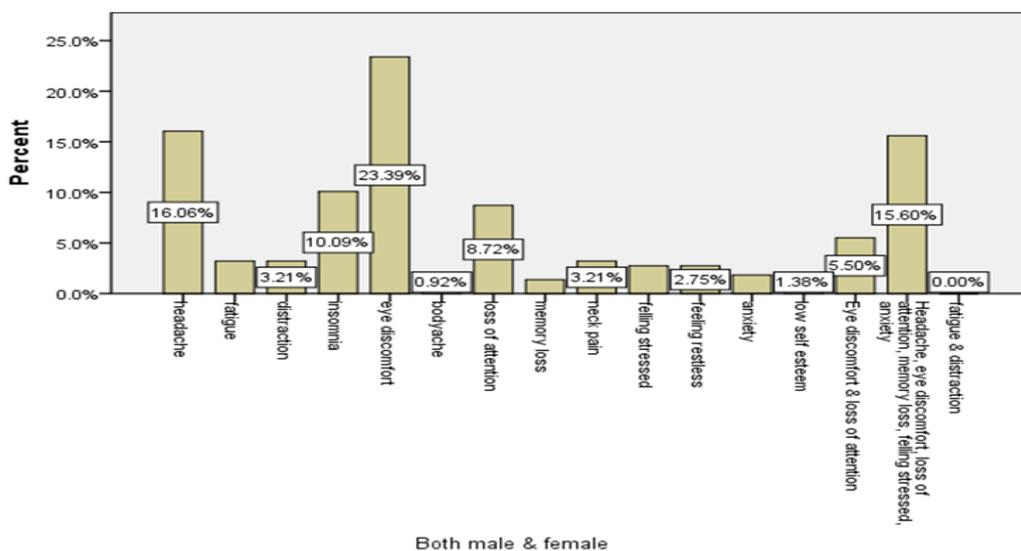


Figure 7. Symptoms experienced after prolonged use of mobile (n=220)

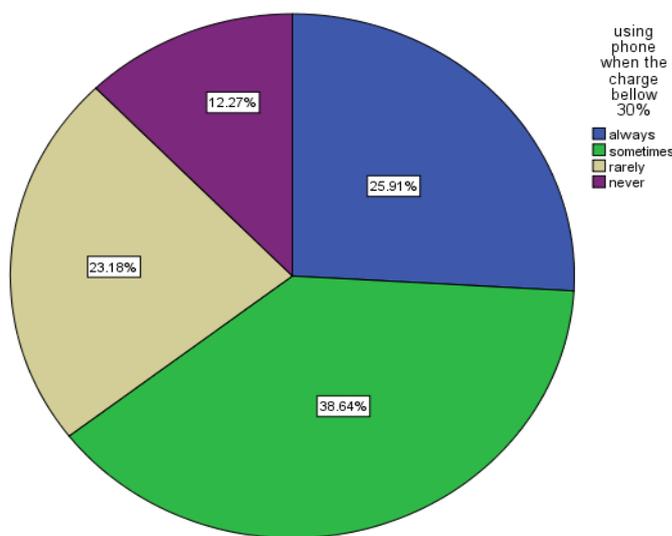


Figure 8. Frequency of using phone below 30% charge.

The pie chart represents (Figure 8) the highest number of students (38.64%) in green area showing sometimes, followed by 25.91% (blue area) admits always while 23.18% students are using cell phone rarely when the charge is below 30%. Low battery and high cell phone radiation do not form a causal relationship, but there is an indirect relationship. According to wiki, it is erroneously assumed that a cell phone with lower battery has higher radiation. The key variable is the quality of the network. Low network quality causes battery drainage and also high radiation. Various studies indicate that the emissions from a cell phone can be extremely harmful, causing genetic damage, tumors, memory loss, increased blood pressure and weakening of immune systems. Increase risk of brain tumor in people who have used a mobile phone for a long time. [46]

## DISCUSSION

The pattern of using mobile phones relates to hygiene and physiological effects, as previous studies identified, is much higher in developing countries than developed countries. The present study showed how mobile phone using pattern is associated with hygiene issues as well as excessively long hours of mobile phone use is allied with some physiological effect. Our practice focused among 220 university students in Dhaka city. In Kenya, the data comprised of 100 percent mobile users among university students and distributed into 55% male and 45 % female; a well distributed age groups from 19 to 25. Most of the users (77 %) spent 1-3 minutes to make their calls [39]. The other studies done in Malaysia recorded a total of 26 thousands users during that year. More than half (56.4%) of the users were males and the rest (43.6%) were females. The survey further revealed that the main users of the mobile phone were those ranging in age from 20 to 49 years. While pre-teens and students below 19 years old make up 20.9% and the elderly consists of 12.3% [40]. These data is comparable to the present study which showed that female students used mobile phones slightly higher (50.5%) than males (49.5%). The highest using age ranged between 21-25 (70%) compared to the study done in Kenya [39]. Many studies also indicated that women anticipated to overuse online applications for social function or communication, such as e-mail, chat, and SNS [26-28]. Thus, female adolescents, particularly, should be more careful to avoid mobile phone overuse. Additionally, It is reported that internet addiction can be forecasted by the use of SNS (e.g., Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) and chat rooms [30,31]; and that the use of SNS endorsed to psychological distress and suicidal attempts [32,33]. Moreover, overuse of online communication was more likely to cause sleep disturbances and stress among women [29]. Among adolescents in Hong Kong, long hours of mobile phone use were correlated with short sleep duration, poor sleep quality, and excessive daytime sleepiness [24]. Another

study in Japanese high school students reported that long hours of mobile phone use was associated with short sleep time and fatigue [25]. Compared to the another study done in Ghana, the research revealed that 20.0% of the respondent always listening to music on their mobile phones, playing games 7.9%, watching movie 2.0%, social networking 46.5%, work-related research 12.9%, educational related research 17.8%, religious programmers 3.2%, personal finance 15.0%, current events 3.2% and making and receiving calls 65.0%. The research also looked at the duration of usage by the students at school, home and at the work place. When it comes to using the mobile phone at home 32.0% said they spent 7 hours or more on their mobile phone at home, 9.9% spent 7 hours or more at school and 3.5% spend the same hours or more at the office [41]. Sampasa-Kanyinga and Lewis [33] reported that using SNS for more than 2 h every day was independently associated with poor self-rating of mental health, high levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation, which is related to our study. More than half of the students felt discomfort (51.36%) such as eye discomfort (23.39%) or felt headache or anxiety (15.60%).

According to a previous study [34], 32 % of people use their mobile phone in toilet and almost half of the people do not wash their hands after using it [35-38], everyone needs to be conscious that the transfer of potentially pathogenic microorganisms on the mobile phone surfaces is very natural. Which relates to our study where we see about 46.8% male students are using mobile phone in toilets and more than half of the students do not wash their mobile at all. According to Cuttler et al. [35], 16 % of hands and 16 % of phones were found to harbor bacteria of a faecal origin, where those who had bacteria on their hands were more likely to have bacteria on their phone as well. In such situations, hand washing is the simplest and also the most effective measure to prevent the spread of agents responsible for communicable diseases.

## CONCLUSION

This study was carried out in an attempt to understand the behavior of mobile phone users among university students. The effect of cell phones and their influence on human health are still being tested and studied. Mobile phone use has been hugely accepted by Bangladeshi students especially in Dhaka. Born in this technological era, it is seen that users not only espouse the technology for simple use, but also they are actually adopting the technology according to their lifestyle and individual desires.

The findings from this study may be used as a foundation for other researchers who intend to examine how mobile phones are used among students, as well as other issues relating to it. Data obtained from the present study provided baseline information regarding

the patterns and problems of mobile phone usage, and psychological health of university students.

However, the present study had some limitations. The present subjects were limited to participants in some of the private universities in Dhaka city, so the findings from this study cannot be largely generalized to other areas of the country. Furthermore, the questionnaires were self-administered; thus the reliability and validity of the information obtained depended solely on the honesty of the respondents. Despite the limitations, the current study should provide the motivation for new investigations to refine the understanding of mobile phone use amongst university students. Further research could be investigated which could shape the mobile phone behaviors of the students.

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