# Improving Quality of Social Life: A phenomenological Study of Mobile Phones as Leisure Partners

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the phenomenon of using smartphones for entertainment and leisure purposes has gained greater attention. Technology companies are exploring the new possibilities of this in the form of metaverse. However, research exploring the relationship between smartphones and leisure is a very recent phenomenon. Therefore, understanding the role of smartphones in the leisure context has become increasingly important in business and social perspectives.

This study aims to explore the ways in which people relate mobile phones to their leisure time and engage themselves in mobile-leisure activities. For this purpose, qualitative research was conducted in which five in-depth interviews with professionals & housewives and three focused groups involving the students were conducted to explore the participants' perception and their experiences about the mobile-leisure relationships. Six theoretical dimensions i.e., socialization, connectivity, entertainment, discovery, indulgence & addiction, and recalling emerged from the study.

The findings revealed that students and employed individuals were more involved in using mobile phones for leisure purposes as compared to housewives. Further, it was observed that although smartphones enhance leisure experiences, not everyone is dependent on smartphones for spending leisure time. The study claims theoretical contribution in the areas of Marketing and Technology. This is in addition to the implications of the study for businesses for reasons including identifying the new frontiers of business.

**Keywords:** Communication, Smartphones, Technology, Mobile Usage, Mobile Leisure

## 1. Introduction

Use of mobile phones, especially smartphones, has been increasing ever since their introduction in the early 21st century. These highly functional gadgets have occupied a central position in our lives and can have a significant impact on our lifestyles. Mobile phones allow connectivity through texting, calling, and accessibility to the internet at places and times of our choice and convenience. Hence, mobile phones are becoming a necessity of everyone's life. In 2000, there were 738 million mobile cellular subscriptions and due to advancement in technology, more than seven billion mobile subscriptions were registered by the end of 2015 as per the new report from International Telecommunication Union (May, 2015). The number of active smartphone users worldwide is more than two billion. An

overwhelming majority (83%) of the global internet users prefer to connect to the internet through their mobile phones (Nair, 2015).

In Pakistan too, the scenario is not different. Mobile phones have turned into an essential part of people's lives.  With the introduction of 3G/4G technology in Pakistan, the usage of mobile phones has greatly increased. 72% of mobile phone users in Pakistan have smartphones as their primary phone. According to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, the number of mobile phone users in Pakistan has reached 124.24 million.

This small but highly featured device has become so common that keeping the latest smartphone has become a status symbol for the majority of people across the world. In 2013, a study manifested that 61% of men and 38% of women consider that the first thing noticed by other people is their mobile phones.  Another study stated that people use their smartphones more than computers for purposes including emails (Perlow, 2012). Among these users, college students are considered the first cohort who are born and raised in this technological era. This is the reason why they are assumed to be the earliest adopters of mobile phone-related technologies (Lepp, 2014).

The young generation in Pakistan, especially the students, are highly addicted to smartphone usage. According to Grappetite (n.d.) in Pakistan, 77 % of smartphone users belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years.  One of the studies conducted in Pakistan explored that a vast majority of teenagers including males and females have smartphones with dual SIM enabling them to have more talk time and internet bundles (Ali, Rizvi, & Qureshi, 2014).

Smartphones have become increasingly a source of fun, recreation, and satisfaction for the users including students. A research study conducted by Kaya and Argan (2015) among Turkish students highlighted multiple themes such as socializing, fun, and recreation of using mobile phones in a leisure context.

Many companies also provide smartphones to their workers to keep them connected with their offices. This develops a habit among employees of using their smartphones even for leisure and recreational activities (Perlow, 2012). But besides work, employees need leisure time too as suggested by Woody (1957) that "Labor enables a man to live; leisure makes a good life possible." Thus, leisure can be provided by smartphones as well. Smartphones allow workers to get out of the tough busy routine of jobs and sit back and relax and engage themselves in different leisure activities.

Another category of mobile users is housewives who are regularly using smartphones while staying at home. And despite household work, they spend plenty of their free time on mobile phones. Habuchi, Dobashi, Tsuji, and Iwata (2005) described in their study how Japanese housewives use their mobile phones for leisure activities by using social apps in their daily routine. An Indian study on smartphones usage done by Juxt-Consult - a market research company - revealed that housewives spend more time on talking on smartphones than the corporate sector, self-employed individuals, and business owners when combined together (Agency Dna India, 2010). So the phenomenon of mobile leisure is not just limited to the students but also employees and housewives are also significant users of mobile phones.

To date, very limited research points out intersection between mobile phones and leisure (Lepp, 2014). So the purpose of this study is to further understand the phenomenon of mobile leisure among

different types of social groups in Pakistan. Also, most of the studies done on mobile phone and leisure targeted students and teenagers. Very few studies explored the phenomenon of mobile leisure in students, professionals and housewives together. The present research will contribute to this desirable area of research. Research based on qualitative research design and in the empirical context of Pakistan are the other distinctive characteristics of this study. The study will provide theoretical understanding of the topic among different social groups. The findings of this study will have important marketing implications as well. The study will facilitate the Information and Communication professionals to design, implement and promote the leisure services needed in this rapidly changing world.

## 2. Literature Review

Mobile phone is not merely a device of communication anymore, instead it has taken an important role in people' lives for a variety of purposes including leisure. Group messaging increases and enriches social and leisure experiences of mobile phones users (Counts, 2007). Research conducted in India revealed that young adults use mobile phones for various purposes such as news, entertainment and communication etc. Further, mobile phones were used to record and secure personal data and maintain confidentiality (Matanhelia, 2010). A study by Arora (2012) on 'The Leisure Divide' argues that in Third World countries, mobile phone users' usage is heavily leisure oriented. As stated in this article, "an idle mind is a devil's workshop" that leads to "all work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy." Thus leisure has started to get a legitimate role in academic literature; as it was gaining attention and recognition by many of the researchers in different usage aspects.

Jacobsen and Forste (2011) reported that over two-thirds of the university students use electronic media such as mobile phones during class time and even while studying at home. The Internet services, social apps and games provide a way to escape and ease the time of loneliness (Toda et al., 2008). And because students and retired men apparently have more leisure time hence the increase in these social groups will lead to an increase in the population's overall leisure time (Ja cobs & Gerson, 2001).

Mahlangu & Dlodlo (2013) indicated that usage of mobile phones for recreation is motivated by the perceived enjoyment derived from its use. Social norms, quality of life and actual usage had strong associations with mobile phones usage. The Millennial Generation (aged 15 to 24) constitutes the largest social group who has mobile devices as a social luxury and accessory (Mahlangu & Dlodlo, 2013). So it seems that this social group is greatly influenced by technology, especially mobile phones.

Mobile phones facilitate people to spend their leisure time on these devices and escape boredom and tediousness. For instance, the survey conducted by Lepp, Barkley, Sanders, Rebold, and Gates (2013) on university students showed that 88.2% of students use cell phones primarily for leisure purposes. Another study by Lepp (2014) suggests that high-frequency mobile users are more dependent on their cell phone than low-frequency mobile users. And their aim is to have experiences such as enjoyment, relaxation, freely chosen and perceived motivated leisure (Lepp, 2014). Similarly a study conducted on Turkish university students reveals that Boredom and escape can be considered as one of many factors in the leisure and recreation context (Kaya & Argan, 2015). Kaya and Argan (2015) also stated that "Mobile devices have not only become a communication tool but also a leisure or recreational symbol". As indicated by Lepp (2014), the relationship between humans and mobile phones needs to be explored as it is an emerging line in the field of leisure and mobile phones.

Leisure plays an important role in young people's lives in all the modern societies (Elkington & Gammon, 2013). Leisure always provides chances of freedom in which activities performed are purely for intrinsic satisfaction. Australian researchers Foley, Holzman, and Wearing (2007) were the first scholars who identified "cell[mobile] phone use as an influential leisure activity". But the research exploring the relationship between mobile phones and leisure is very scarce and further work is required to explore this phenomenon (Lepp, 2014). Rapid adoption of mobile phones is contributing to changes in how people experience leisure through their mobiles phones hence there is a need for more and broader research in this area. And since, by the evolution of technology and its increased use, the perception about leisure has changed into more technology driven activity. As a result, it has reformed the perception of leisure. Everyone has now his/her own perception about spending leisure time, influenced greatly by technology and mobile devices. Therefore, it has become increasingly important to understand mobile phones influence on leisure. As a small step towards understanding this issue, this study explores the meaning of mobile phones in leisure contexts among Pakistani people. In other words, **what meaning** people give to mobile phones in leisure contexts and **how they use** mobile phones in leisure time. Studying the emerging phenomenon of mobile leisure may help in identifying the future tendencies of people and their potential effects on Pakistani society. This study can possibly be considered as a gateway to further explore the relationship between mobile phones and leisure in Pakistani context.

## 3. Methodology

In this study qualitative research design was applied to explore peoples' subjective perceptions to understand the phenomenon of mobile-leisure. Subjective perception refers to the personal interpretations and meanings people give to life-events based upon their knowledge, language and personal experiences (Banyard& Miller, 1998). People make sense of things differently and associate different meanings to it, leading to the development of perceptions and eventually diverse social realities (Flick, 2009). These social realities ultimately shape up cultures and restructure social norms and values that can have implications for decision makers. Hence, the phenomenon of mobile-leisure can be subjective one, that can be best understood if it is studied through qualitative research design.

Qualitative research design is a suitable approach to explore emerging phenomenon such as mobile-leisure in its real-life context. The design puts great emphasis on the role of subjective perceptions of people experiencing reality (Banyard& Miller, 1998). Therefore, in this study qualitative research design helped to understand how people give meanings to their experiences regarding usage of smartphones in leisure contexts. Further, qualitative research design can be instrumental in investigating people' ultimate association with smartphones for understanding leisure.

Within qualitative research design, focused groups and individual interviews were used as a method to collect data. Focused group is considered as an appropriate method to study mobile-leisure because it provides an atmosphere that stimulates thinking and facilitates more greater participation (Schulze &Angermeyer, 2003). When participants interact with each other in a group setting, they get more involved in the research study and generate greater number of ideas (Kitzinger, 2013). This method helped us in summarizing a broader phenomenon of mobile-leisure into a few more specific concepts. Individual interviews, on the other hand, helped to explore differing perspectives of social actors and gain insights of their lived experiences, about the given topic in more detail (Jacob &Furgerson, 2012; Turner III, 2010).

**Research Participants:** Research participants included students, employees/professionals and housewives. As stated by Ali et al. (2014), mobile phones have become an essential part of the lives of teenagers [students] for sharing, communicating, expressing likes and dislikes as well as for building new relationships. The young cohort seems to be the quickest adopter of smartphones as compared to adults (Grimm, 2001; Lepp, 2014; Wahla& Awan, 2014). Therefore, students were considered key participants of the study to examine how the digital generation has been using smartphones for leisure and recreation purposes.

Employees/professionals made up another significant category of smartphone users as previous research studies have highlighted employees' usage of mobile phones for work-related and various other purposes (Donya &Kumah, 2011; Wahla& Awan, 2014). Furthermore, housewives were added as a separate category to explore their views about mobile-leisure. Housewives use mobile phones for various purposes such as integrating domestic-life and work-world (Rakow, 1992), communicating with friends and family and securing safety (Katz &Aakhus, 2002). Fortunati and Taipale (2012) stated that young women have even surpassed young men in some aspects such as text messaging. Therefore, it could be said that housewives are also becoming a part of growing consumers of smartphones.

By including these three categories of participants, it could be believed that the research has focused on the key segments of Pakistani people for exploring the phenomenon of mobile-leisure. All study participants, aged from 18 to 35 years, took part in the study voluntarily without any financial incentive and had personal mobile phones in their daily usage for more than 5 years.

**Data Collection:** The participants were explained about the purpose of the research study before conducting focused group and individual interviews. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and they can withdraw at any time from the interview/focus group. Three focus groups were organized among university students making a total of 15 students including both male and female participants while six individual interviews. Three employees/professional and three housewives were interviewed. Each interview lasted for approximately half an hour while three focused groups took 45 minutes each. The interviews were audio recorded with participants' consent assuring complete confidentiality.

An interview guideline, comprising of semi-structured questions, was developed including both general and specific questions to explore themes and patterns regarding smartphone usage in leisure time. General questions were comprised of such questions like "what is the role of mobile phone in your life?" and "How often you keep your mobile phone with you and why?" These questions helped to understand the need and value people give to mobile phones and also the rationale of keeping the mobile phones with them. Specific questions were also asked such as "what do you do on your mobile phone in leisure time?" or "Define relationship between mobile phone and your leisure time?" or "Prioritize the activities you perform on mobile phones in leisure time." These questions helped us in exploring mobile usage-pattern of people in leisure time, relationship between mobile phones and leisure and activity or activities performed the most on mobile phones for leisure. To check the dependency or addictive behavior, the participants were asked to share their feelings and experiences when they did not have their mobile phones in leisure time.

Each question in interviews and focus groups was discussed with the participants and explanation or clarification was sought when required. Memos were recorded, along with the recording of data, to note down important points in order to facilitate the analysis. At the end of each interview and focused

group, participants' contribution was appreciated. The efforts were made to transcribe the interviews immediate after the completion of these interviews. Most of the interviews were in bi-lanuage i.e., Urdu (Pakistan's national language) and English. Hence during the preparation of transcription of the interviews the interviews were also translated into English language where required. The closest possible words were chosen for translation to ensure the accuracy of the responses of participants.

**Data Analysis:** The data analysis was an inspired version of data analysis as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Transcribed interviews and the memos served the premises for the data analysis. Next, the data was organized in a way that facilitated the organization of first-order data that was later converted into descriptive codes addressing the key concepts of the study (please see Table 1 and Figure 1 for details). First-order data included representative quotes of the respondents about mobile-leisure. A back and forth method of scrutinizing data and relevant literature was acquired to refine the initial first-order data and link it with the emerging concepts of the study. The process continued until no new concept emerged from the study. These common concepts, named as second-order themes, were deeply evaluated to add more precision to the representation of the first-order data.

In the next step, the second-order themes were investigated to identify underlying theoretical dimensions. Themes that were interrelated, were encompassed into a single theoretical dimension that best possibly represented them. Figure 1 shows the finalized second-order themes and the emergent theoretical dimensions or third order themes of the study. The formation of an overview of data structure was guided by the data structure used in Neeley and Dumas (2016) study as it appeared to be more similar and relevant to the objectives of the current study. It can be believed that the analysis of the data description and the development of underlying theoretical dimensions appropriately convey the participants' opinions about using mobile phones in leisure contexts.

Further examination of the data and the underlying theoretical dimensions relative to each social category revealed that six theoretical dimensions emerged from the students' category while five theoretical dimensions emerged from employees and housewives categories (see Table 2). In summary, it shows that students portrayed much involvement and greater utilization of smartphones in leisure contexts, as compared to the other two categories.
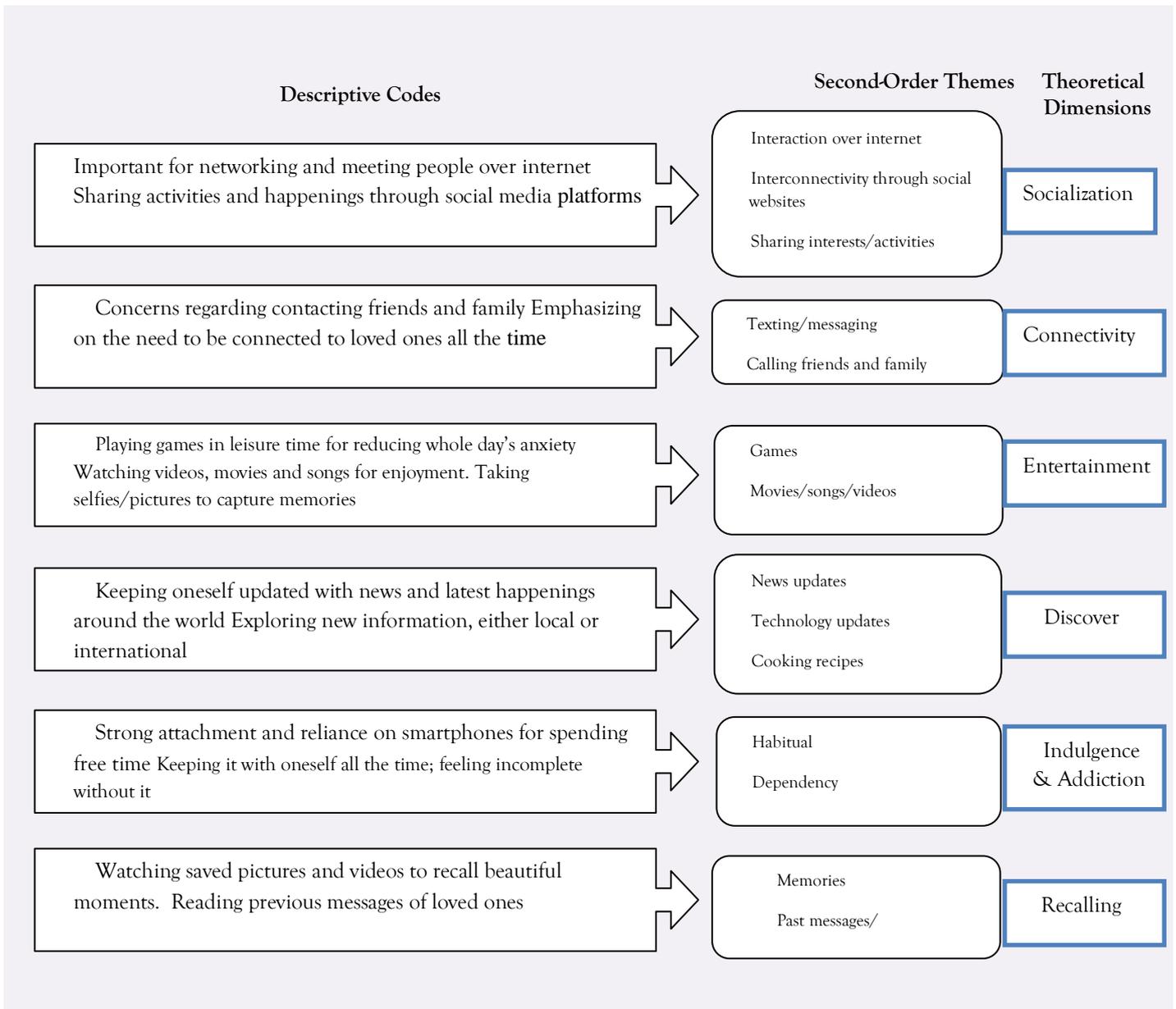
| Descriptive Codes | Second-Order Themes | Theoretical Dimensions |
|---|---|---|
| Important for networking and meeting people over internet Sharing activities and happenings through social media **platforms** | Interaction over internet Interconnectivity through social websites Sharing interests/activities | Socialization |
| Concerns regarding contacting friends and family Emphasizing on the need to be connected to loved ones all the **time** | Texting/messaging Calling friends and family | Connectivity |
| Playing games in leisure time for reducing whole day's anxiety Watching videos, movies and songs for enjoyment. Taking selfies/pictures to capture memories | Games Movies/songs/videos | Entertainment |
| Keeping oneself updated with news and latest happenings around the world Exploring new information, either local or international | News updates Technology updates Cooking recipes | Discover |
| Strong attachment and reliance on smartphones for spending free time Keeping it with oneself all the time; feeling incomplete without it | Habitual Dependency | Indulgence & Addiction |
| Watching saved pictures and videos to recall beautiful moments. Reading previous messages of loved ones | Memories Past messages/ | Recalling |

**Figure 1: Overview of Data Structure- Underlying Theoretical Dimensions**

TABLE 1: Second-Order Themes and Their Respective First-Order Data

| Second-Order Themes | First-Order Data |
|---|---|
| • Interaction over internet<br>• Sharing interests/activities<br>• Sharing pictures/videos<br>• Interconnectivity through social websites | "I use WhatsApp because my different friends are using it. I can also make different groups on it. Facebook is also important for keeping in touch with our friends. I also use Snapchat because it is an interesting app."<br>"Facebook, Facebook, Facebook."<br>"It helps me in connecting with other people through Facebook, WhatsApp or Viber." |
| • Texting/messaging<br>• Calling to friends/family | "My mobile phone is very important because it helps me keep in touch with other people. In leisure time, it is for contacting my friends. When I am outside home, it is for contacting family."<br>"I use it for communicating with people. I basically not use it, you know, for very complex reasons. Generally my use is very simple, calling, texting sometimes Facebook, check-ins, but not much."<br>"It is important just for communication which helps me to connect with friends, family and relatives. If I will not be connected with others, I will feel like a cut off from the world." |
| • Games<br>• Movies/songs<br>• Videos<br>• Taking pictures | "It is important for playing different games which entertain me."<br>"Sound-cloud is also used by me because it helps me in downloading different new and old songs."<br>"I browse Facebook, use WhatsApp, and play videos on Dailymotion, YouTube."<br>"...Sometimes I also play one two games on my phone as well at night before I sleep."<br>"It makes me feel relax, watching online dramas, playing games, chatting with my friends, listening to my music playlist." |
| • News updates<br>• Technology updates<br>• Cooking recipes<br>• General information | "It helps me a lot to connect with news updates which are happening around us."<br>"I browse news/sports websites to keep myself updated."<br>"I search for some info [general information], new movies, songs, etc. I search for cooking recipes too." |
| • Habitual<br>• Dependency<br>• 24 / 7 use | "Just for a lighter note I keep my phone even in the washroom, is that answer your question? there is this favorite quotation "without phone its take you 5 minutes to use washroom, with phone it take 10 minutes, phone with Wi-Fi and washroom 15 minutes" even then the most amazing statuses, you can ever post on Facebook, comes in the washroom."<br>"Every time it is with me for social networking. Even if I forget to take it with me, I go back. No matter how many kilometers I have to go back, I cover the distance and go back."<br>"I will feel incomplete. Life without mobile phone is lifeless." |
| • Memories<br>• Past messages/ Events/Pictures | "I have 3 phones, new, semi-new and old one...the semi new mobile phone has my memories. Those are personal."<br>"If I have free time then I watch pictures from my cell phone." |

TABLE 2: Theoretical Dimensions Emerging From Each Social Category

| Students | Employees | Housewives |
|---|---|---|
| Socialization | Socialization | Socialization |
| Connectivity | Connectivity | Connectivity |
| Entertainment | Entertainment | Entertainment |
| Discover | Discover | Discover |
| Indulgence and addiction | Indulgence and addiction | Recalling |
| Recalling | | |

## 4. Findings and Discussion

This study proposes six theoretical dimensions of mobile-leisure as mentioned in Figure 1. Five theoretical dimensions, namely: 1) socialization, 2) connectivity, 3) entertainment, 4) discover; and 5) indulgence and addiction are convergent with previous study of Kaya and Argan (2015) on mobile-leisurewhile the theoretical dimension "recalling" is divergent. In the next section, we will explain all these six theoretical dimensions.

**Socialization:**Socialization can be defined as going out and meeting with friends and other people of the society. It is a continuous learning process which takes place in the environment where we live, interact with others and learn social norms of the society. In recent times, smartphones have emerged as an important source of socialization. Smartphones have become a platform for many Apps such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp which help people to become more interconnected and socialized. The findings of this study suggest that using smartphones in leisure time has played a major role in socialization. For example, it can be inferred from the excerpts below that people spend sufficient time in texting, talking, making new friends, sharing videos and pictures through social Apps on smartphones.

> *I use WhatsApp because my different friends are using it. I can also make different groups on it. Facebook is also important for keeping in touch with our friends. I also use Snapchat because it is an interesting app (Focus Group 2-Respondent 3).*

> *I use Facebook because it is a social app. It helps me to make new friends and stay in touch with new updates. I like to have a lot of friends and Facebook helps me in doing so (Focus Group 2-Respondent 1).*

Respondents give preference to WhatsApp, Facebook and Snapchat to become socialize. These apps help them to connect with others and make groups of friends. Respondents also give more importance to Facebook because it gives them the opportunity to make new friends as well as keep in touch with new updates which are happening around them. These findings are in line with the study of Kaya and Argan (2015). Similarly, a study on mobile phones in Pakistan by Mahmood and Farooq (2014) revealed that people who like to spend significant time in using and thinking about Facebook are often more social, outgoing, extrovert and cheerful. Further, Adolphs (2003) argued that social abilities and social networking of people has greatly enhanced as a result of social interaction through social Apps. Furthermore, Auld and Case (1997) stated that social interaction is considered as a central component of leisure activities. Thus, smartphones have greatly increased the social abilities of people by providing opportunities to socialize in leisure time. Therefore, it can be inferred from these findings that smartphones are instrumental in meeting humans basic need of socialization, hence, smartphones can improve lives of human beings.

**Connectivity:** Connectivity means remaining in touch with others. People want to be connected with their family and friends either by meeting directly or through calls or messages. According to Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, it is among the basic needs of people to make friends and enter into relationships with others in a society (McLeod, 2007). Smartphones have enabled people to stay in touch with the important people of their lives as illustrated in the excerpts below.

> *All the time I keep my mobile phones with me. I prefer sweaters that have pockets so that I can keep my mobile with me all the time. It helps me to connect with my loved ones (Interviewee 6).*

> *I use Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, for connecting with my people. I am always connected with them in leisure time (Focus Group 3- Respondent 4).*

Connectivity is important for people which influences even clothing the individuals would like to have - having pockets in our case. Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are main sources which help them to connect with each other. Various research studies conducted on mobile phones share similar results. Nickerson, Isaac, and Mak (2008) portrays that 80% of the people [who are using mobile phones] say that they are very much sure about where their friends and family members are; they are always in contact with them [due to smartphones] and surely it gives them peace of mind. Cohen (2011) suggests that smartphones have a positive impact on efficiency of employees as it is more convenient for them to connect with each other through a portable gadget. Thus smartphones provide a way to stay connected to the important people in one's life. Making calls and texting etc., allow mobile users to keep their loved ones around them no matter how far they are.

**Entertainment:** Entertainment can be defined as an activity that attracts the attention of people and gives some kind of pleasure to them which relaxes their minds. People find ways to engage themselves in activities that entertain them and one such activity is mobile-leisure. The study findings show that although smartphones serve as a communication device it is also used by people for entertainment. To feel relaxed and stress-free, people watch entertaining videos, play interesting games, watch TV and online dramas or perform any other kind of activity that provides some sort of entertainment to them as shown in the excerpt below. Even one of the respondents said that he/she plays games every day at night before sleeping just to relax his/her mind.

> *It makes me feel relaxed, watching online dramas, playing games, chatting with my friends, listening to my music playlist(Interviewee 6).*

Therefore, the use of smartphones in leisure keeps their mind relaxed when they watch dramas, play games, listen to music or talk with friends. These activities keep their minds stress free. This finding is in line with the study of Kaya and Argan (2015). Through mobile phones people perform endless activities that can be viewed as entertainment and it differs from person to person (Kaya & Argan, 2015). Thus it can be said that smartphones serve as an entertainment gadget in a leisure context.

**Discover:** Discover means to find or become aware of anything. According to this study, access to the latest news and updates around the world is not difficult anymore. Social networking sites have become the quickest channels for knowing the latest news and updates, social facts, videos, peoples' opinions and information. These can be characterized as discovering new experiences. People spend a lot of their leisure-time in discovering and searching for new contents as expressed by our study participants in the following two excerpts.

> *I spend my free time in searching. Searching for anything like news, latest fashion, reading material etc. (Focus group 2-Respondent 5).*

> *It provides me with lots of information and happenings going around all over the world... I search for some info, new movies or songs. I search for cooking recipes too (Interviewee 6).*

Use of smartphones is also very beneficial for them because they remain in touch with whatever is happening around them like news, latest fashion, cooking shows etc. People also enjoy music in their leisure time. These findings are also convergent with the study of Kaya and Argan (2015). Smartphones are like a door of entrance to the world of learning, discovering new things and a big

source of accessing new updates of information (Kaya & Argan, 2015).Thus, usage of smartphones in leisure context has opened infinite ways of searching new things and discovering unlimited information around the globe with much ease and comfort.

**Indulgence and Addiction:** Indulgence relates to the act of allowing oneself to do something enjoyable and addiction refers to the condition of becoming physically and mentally dependent on something. The phenomenon of indulgence and addiction on smartphones means the excessive use of smartphones in leisure time for enjoyment which makes them habitual users. People get themselves indulged in using smartphones in leisure time and find it difficult to spend leisure time without it. This study reveals that smartphones have made everyone's lives so much easier and joyful that one cannot live without it or cannot even afford to neglect smartphones from one's life. Thus, people show much indulgence in using smartphones for leisure activities than before. Due to the availability of an increased number of mobile apps, games and a variety of usages, people keep smartphones with them all the time, as illustrated by the excerpts below.

> *Every time, it is with me for social networking. Even if I forget to take it with me, I go back. No matter how many kilometers I have to go back, I go back because life without a phone is like living in a stone age (Focus Group 3- Respondent 5).*

> *It's with me all the time even while sleeping, it remains under my pillow. And when it vibrates I wake up to see it (Focus Group 3- Respondent 1).*

People have become habitual of this gadget. They feel incomplete without it because it became an important part of their lives. They want to keep it all the time with them, however, if they forget to take it with them they go back to take it. Without smartphone, life is not colorful.The study of Kaya and Argan (2015) shared similar findings. According to them, smartphone's dependence has increased because of its easiness, portability and both communication and entertainment features. Despite showing indulgence and addictive behavior towards smartphones in leisure time, not every participant of this study showed mobile-addiction. Few of the respondents said that they can spend their time without using mobile phones. The relief from the activity of continuously checking mobile phones provides more relaxation and tension-free feelings as illustrated in the excerpt below.

> *It has happened with me twice or thrice (having no mobile phone in free time) and it is like I am moving freely, without any tension. I don't have to reply to anyone or check Facebook. It (mobile phone) is like an activity and I will feel a relief without it (Focus Group 3- Respondent 4).*

Further, some people are not very habitual of it. They feel themselves tension free without it. They think that it is a responsibility to keep it with them because they have to answer calls or to reply messages. Without smartphones they feel relaxed and have more time to do other important tasks. Hence, extreme addictive behavior of using mobile phones was not exhibited by everyone. Some people can spend their leisure time without mobile phones. These findings confirm the findings of Ahmed and Perji (2011) study.

**Recalling:** Recalling can be defined as remembering or bringing back something into one's mind. The possibility of capturing beautiful memories and events of life through mobile cameras never existed before. People do not need any special gadget to capture new experiences and events in today's era. Every memory is just a click away. People capture these memories using smartphones and then recall them in their free time. People watch pictures they take with their loved ones at different moments in leisure time. It gives them pleasure and amazement as illustrated in the excerpt below.

*I sometimes read my previous messages or view my call list to see who has contacted me. I also look at my pictures in my gallery. I smile when I look at the pics with my friends (Focus Group 1-Respondent 4).*

Selfies have become a new trend since the past many years. People take selfies to see their own images at events or to capture pictures with their friends and family. This creates a memory for all, including their parents, who were part of a selfie , as expressed by one of the participants in the following excerpt.

*I use gallery to watch my pictures mostly. It's a kind of fun. My kids keep on taking different selfies and I love to watch these pics again and again (Interviewee 5).*

So recalling old memories and pictures has also become a part of leisure activity. Reading messages of loved ones in free time, keep them emotionally close to them. People like to keep their past memories with them to forget the stressful moments of the present. Thus, recalling memories in leisure-time serves as a strategy to overcome stressful moments of the present and to keep all the important life events with themselves. Therefore, smartphones can play an important role in improving the lives of human beings.

## 5. Conclusion

Reliance on mobile phones has significantly shaped leisure activities of people in the current technological era. Mobile phones' multiple functions and availability of variety of mobile apps (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, and Instagram, etc.) have significantly influenced everyday activities and habits of people in terms of spending their leisure times. People are giving much value to smartphones to facilitate and enhance their leisure experiences than any other leisure activity such as physical activities, outing or watching TV. Smartphones are providing all the facilities in a single portable device, hence increasing its multiple uses in leisure time and context. In general, mobile phones have changed the perception of leisure among Pakistani people and mobile-leisure is more deeply tangled in our everyday lives now.

This study contributes in developing understanding about the role of mobile phones for leisure purposes. The study explored the relationship between mobile phones and leisure time in an Asian country – Pakistan. People have shown significant association between smartphones and their leisure time which in turn affects the way they interact with each other in Pakistani society. Five theoretical dimensions emerged in this study are in line with the existing literature on mobile-leisure, showing a significant penetration of global technological advancements in Pakistani society. This means that theoretical dimensions defined in Pakistan are in alignment with the global trends and there are similar patterns of mobile-leisure in Pakistani society. The study suggests that the massive usage of mobile technology in leisure time influences personal and social lives of people in Pakistan. The increased availability of a diversified portfolio of mobile apps has made people mobile addicted. Thus, the effects of the ways of spending leisure time on smartphones could be seen on how people manage relationships with family and friends, interact with people in the society and the activities they perform in free time.

Further, the study contributes by suggesting that socialization is still one of the basic needs of people as presented in Maslow's hierarchy of needs but the medium of meeting this social need has changed. Today smartphones have become a tool to cater social needs of individuals by providing infinite ways of connecting and socializing with others. Thus it would be insufficient to consider smartphones only as a communication gadget, but an essential device to fulfill basic needs of an individual such as the need of belonging and socialization.

Furthermore, this study has identified another interesting dimension – recalling – that can be considered as a theoretical contribution in the literature on mobile-leisure. This has not been identified as a separate dimension in the existing literature on mobile-leisure but our study proposes it as a significant theoretical dimension. People capture new experiences and events by taking pictures and making videos and then recall them in their leisure time. This provides them with a chance to keep their memories afresh in their minds and help people tie their present with their past. Future studies could further explore this theoretical dimension to develop insights of the effects of recalling memories in leisure time on the lives of people.

This study has valuable implications in the field of marketing (including communication), technology and sociology. For academia, the emerging phenomenon of mobile-leisure can be used to study changing societal values and norms in Pakistani context. The multiple uses of mobile phones in free time influences the way people think and act in a society. Usage of smartphones in leisure time creates new ways of interacting and communicating with people. Universities and educational bodies can further examine the current tendencies of using mobile phones for leisure to deal with this emerging technological and societal trend.

Further, the study has implications for marketers and mobile app developers. Mobile-app developers can take benefit from this study to come up with new mobile apps that will provide more facilities to enhance leisure experiences. The marketers can develop marketing strategies that could increase the urge of using smartphones for leisure purposes by different societal groups.

Due to time limitations and resource restrictions, the study could not be conducted on a greater scale. Further study of these social groups may develop more understanding of mobile phones in leisure contexts. The future study can include more age groups to represent all age sections of society as the existing study participants were young. The less addictive behavior of people can be further explored so that the mobile companies can develop apps that engage and cover this segment of mobile users too. The potential of mobile phones to be used as leisure, needs greater attention from marketers, practitioners and educational institutions.

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