

## **Mobile Phone as parenting device in Dhaka City**

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### **Abstract**

The study was aimed at exploring the usage of mobile phone as a parenting device in Dhaka City and its impact. The study deals with both qualitative and quantitative data, hence, a triangulation strategy was chosen to gather the data, interpret the facts and analyze the results. The quantitative data was gathered through a structured questionnaire survey that included 100 respondents using random sampling method. For qualitative data gathering, eight parents were interviewed face-face using a semi-structured interview schedule contacting open ended questionnaire. Most of the respondents in the study were from middle income nuclear families of 3 to 5 members. Educational qualification of most of the respondents ranged between secondary and undergraduate level. The findings show that all the respondents perceived mobile phone as an inseparable part of life. It was also found that, the respondents overwhelmingly supported the idea of providing mobile phones to teens. The main reason given was “getting updates and providing directives while they are away”. However, many parents considered the other uses of mobile phone- entertainment, social networking and education. Regarding the central focus of the study, i.e., usage of mobile phone as a parenting device in Dhaka City, the researcher found that it can strengthen parental control, but simultaneously, it might as well have the opposite impact, i.e., weakening parental control. It depends on mutual trust and respect between the teens and their parents as the present study reveals that parents in Dhaka City mostly use the calling feature of the mobile phone; even though many parents use smartphones, and know about the apps those can explore the location of a person without acknowledging him/her, none of them uses such apps. On the other hand, parents cannot completely control the usage of mobile phones by their teens. They can talk to anyone or use Internet the way they want to without acknowledging their parents. They can fix time and place for meeting with friends over phone as well which keeps their friends unknown to their parents. However, considering Prensky’s (2001) argument that the

teenagers of today's generation are digital natives and parents are digital immigrants, it's quite obvious that the 'digital immigrants' must cope up with the situation, and properly learn the usage of modern technologies if they want to use these for parenting. And, from the findings of this study, it is quite clear that the parents in Dhaka City are still far away from this.

**Keywords:** Mobile phone, parenting, teens, Dhaka City