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# Cell Phones and Couple Communication: The Impact of Mobile Device Distractions during a Dyadic Interaction

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**Cell Phones and Couple Communication:  
The Impact of Mobile Device Distractions during a Dyadic Interaction**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the Honors Studies in  
Psychology

By

Alyssa D. Servies

2012  
Psychology  
J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences  
**The University of Arkansas**

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### **Abstract**

Currently, the research concerning technology's impact on couple's communication is scarce. Although anecdotal evidence suggests mobile devices may be negatively impacting romantic couples' communication and intimacy, to date, no research has been done that looks at how technological distractions, such as text messaging, impact couples. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that distractions by mobile devices had on couples' feelings of connectedness during a dyadic interaction focused on solving a specific relationship problem. Participants included 40 heterosexual couples who had been in a romantic relationship at least 6 months. Couples were randomly assigned to either a control group or an experimental group. All couples were asked to discuss a current problem in their relationship. Couples in the experimental group discussed their problems for 15 minutes while being constantly interrupted by text messages from the researcher, while couples in the control group were not interrupted. Both sets of couples completed measures assessing their relationship satisfaction, perceptions of the problem-solving interaction, perceptions of their ability to communicate, and the level of intimacy and commitment they experienced. Results of the experiment showed that mobile device distractions had no impact on men and women's perceptions of communication, intimacy, or commitment. Correlational data showed an association between problematic (but not excessive) use of mobile devices (talking on cell phones, texting) and lower relationship satisfaction in men, but not in women. Although experimental data did not support the hypothesized relation between mobile device distraction and problematic dyadic interactions, correlational data suggest this association may exist and is worthy of additional investigation.

### Cell Phones and Couple Communication:

#### The Impact of Mobile Device Distractions during a Dyadic Interaction

Popular psychology seems to have grasped the idea that the recent increase in use of technological devices negatively impacts romantic relationships. Recently, National Public Radio aired a story and posted an article on their website concerning the negative effects that individual cell phone use is having on romantic relationships. “And the iPhone Makes Three” focuses on two couples, each of whom are dissatisfied with their partner’s use of his or her smart phone (Ludden, 2010). Couples in the article discussed the loss of closeness they felt toward their partner when he or she was paying more attention to the phone than to the partner. The article cites *Married to Distraction: Restoring Intimacy and Age of Interruption* (2010), a book written by psychiatrist Dr. Edward Hallowell and his wife Sue Hallowell, a couple’s therapist. This book discusses the problems that couples are experiencing with new technology as well as provides a month-long plan for restoring intimacy in relationships. However, these recommendations are not supported by scientific evidence.

Much of the recent research into cell phone use with couples has focused on the impact couples’ use of cell phones for communicating with one another has on their relationship. A study concerning couples’ cell phone use found that couples who spent more time on the phone with each other reported higher levels of relationship commitment (Jin & Peña, 2010). The authors surveyed 197 college students (30% male) in current romantic relationships (average time in relationship = 15.4 months). Participants took an online survey which asked questions concerning time they spent using their cell phones, the frequency with which they used the cell phone to communicate with their romantic partners, and measures of relational uncertainty, love, commitment, and attachment style. Researchers

found that the more often participants spent calling their significant others, the less relational uncertainty they felt. They also found that participants who used their cell phones more with their partners reported more love and commitment in their relationships than those who did not use their cell phones as often. No significant correlations were found between positive relationship variables and text messaging.

Cell phones have allowed people to be available to each other much more often and in more places. While this has some benefits, such as increased feelings of connectedness to others, a potential cost is the loss of autonomy and an increased perpetual accountability to another person. Another recent study into the use of cell phones in romantic relationships focused on how cell phone usage influences feelings of autonomy and connection in young adult romantic relationships (Duran et al., 2011). Two hundred and ten participants (69% women) who were currently involved in a romantic relationship ( $M$  relationship = 21.88 months) were asked to fill out a 3 part survey. The survey assessed participants' rules concerning cell phone use with their partners, satisfaction with that use, perceptions of autonomy versus connection in the relationship, and two open ended questions concerning possible conflicts with cell phone use. Duran and colleagues discuss the impact that "perpetual contact" (Katz, 2002) has on romantic partners' interactions. The results of this study showed that participants who were dissatisfied with their cell phone use in their relationship were more likely to be dissatisfied with the time spent with their partner. Their results show the serious impact that young adults' reliance on cell phones can have on their romantic relationships. Duran et al. also found that feelings of jealousy arose when one of the partners was using the cell phone to talk to a member of the opposite sex.

Although the recent research has demonstrated that cell phone use for communication between couples may be linked to higher feelings of intimacy and commitment, there has been a gap in the amount of research conducted to determine the potential problems with cell phone use. What kind of an impact does cell phone use have on relationship satisfaction when it is only one partner constantly using his or her phone, or when use is not related to increasing communication with the romantic partner?

Research into the area of adult Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has discovered that the symptoms of ADHD, including distractibility and interruptions, have a negative impact on relationship satisfaction (Overbey et al., 2011). It seems reasonable to assume that distractions and interruptions, regardless of their cause, can interfere with couple functioning. Mobile device use may be increasing interruptions and distractions during interpersonal communications, as the previously mentioned NPR story described. Furthermore, a study of 128 college students from a liberal arts college in New Jersey showed that both men and women are sending an average of 112 text messages a day, which demonstrates the increased reliance on cell phones as a mode of communication (Angster, Frank, & Lester, 2010). A recent study of 339 community participants between the ages of 20 and 35 (50.1% men) found a link between excessive cell phone use and impulsivity through the Problematic Mobile Phone Use Questionnaire (Billieux, van der Linden, & Rochat, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary for research to examine the impact that such use has on relationship satisfaction.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that distraction by interruptions from an electronic, hand-held device (a smart phone) had on couples' feelings of connectedness during a dyadic interaction (i.e., a conversation between two people who



were romantically involved). Specifically, the study explored how mobile device distractions affected couples' perceptions of how well they communicated with each other when there was a relationship problem they needed to discuss.

The study addressed three hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that couples who were frequently distracted by a cell phone (i.e., those in the experimental group) would report lower intimacy ratings than couples who discussed problems without interruption (i.e., those in the control group). The second hypothesis was that couples in the experimental group would report less satisfaction in their communication compared to the couples in the control group. The third hypothesis was that couples in the experimental group would report lower levels of commitment to each other than couples in the control group.

Additional analyses of correlational data explored how participants' endorsement of "excessive" and, separately, "problematic" use of their cell phones related to relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that both excessive and problematic use of mobile devices would be associated with lower relationship satisfaction.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Forty introductory psychology students were recruited through Experimentix, an online experiment management system used in introductory psychology courses at the University of Arkansas. Inclusionary criteria were age at least 18 years or older and being a current romantic relationship of 6 months' duration or more. Participants were instructed to bring their romantic partners with them for the study. There was an equal number of male ( $N = 40$ ) and female ( $N = 40$ ) participants and all participating couples were heterosexual. Relationship length for these couples ranged from 0.3 to 4.3 years ( $M = 1.7$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ). The

reported age range of participants was between 18 and 26 years ( $M = 19.5$ ,  $SD = 1.9$ ).

Participants in the experimental condition ( $M = 18.9$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ) were significant younger than participants in the control condition ( $M = 20.0$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ),  $t(76) = 2.70$ ,  $p = .009$ .

Regarding race/ethnicity, 80.0% of participants identified as Caucasian, 5.0% of participants identified as Asian, 2.5% identified as African American, 2.5% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 7.6% identified as mixed. The experimental group (82.9% Caucasian) and the control group (81.4% Caucasian) did not differ in ethnic diversity. In terms of their class standing, 37.5% of participants were freshman, 41.3% were sophomores, 8.8% were juniors, 5.0% were seniors, and 3.8% identified themselves as being in their 5<sup>th</sup> year or beyond.

There were no differences in class standing between the two groups,  $X^2(4) = 7.27$ ,  $p = .129$ .

Some participants were no longer enrolled in college and others were enrolled at other universities. Percentages do not add up to 100 because of some missing data.

## Materials

**Demographics.** Participants filled out a demographic questionnaire that asked for their sex, age, race/ethnicity, and year in school. In addition, participants were also asked to say whether they owned a cell phone (yes/no), whether they thought their own cell phone use was excessive (yes/no), and if the phone had ever gotten in the way of an interaction with their romantic partner (yes/no).

**Relationship Problems.** In order to determine what problems the couple was experiencing in their current relationship, a 51-item version of the Areas of Change Questionnaire (ACQ; Weiss & Birchler, 1975) (Appendix A) was used which was modified to address several conflict areas that may arise in a typical college relationship. The original questionnaire is divided into three sections that reflect the degree of change required. The

first 25-item section is for the participant to report the degree to which the participant wants their partner to change, and the second 25-item section is for the participant to report the degree to which their partner wants the participant to change. The third section is an open ended question asking about other areas that the participants feel need to be changed. This scale is reported to be able to distinguish between distressed ( $M = 59.96$ ) and nondistressed ( $M = 11.74$ ) couples. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported as being 0.84 (Weiss & Birchler, 1975). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.67 for self scores, and 0.71 for partner scores.

**Relationship Satisfaction.** In order to assess relationship satisfaction, each participant completed a 32-item modified version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) (Appendix B). The scale was modified to reflect issues more applicable to relationships of college students (e.g., items regarding parenting or household finances were removed or reworded). The DAS has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.96 (Spanier, 1976). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.84.

**Communication.** To assess perceptions of the couples' ability to communicate effectively, a set of questions was developed that asked participants to rate a laboratory based interaction they just had with their romantic partners. A total of 12 items assessed perceptions of the interaction (Appendix C). Responses were summed to create a total score, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with the interaction. The items evidenced good internal reliability, with a Cronbach alpha of .82.

**Intimacy and Commitment.** Participants completed two subscales, Intimacy and Commitment, of the Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment Scale (IPC; Lemieux & Hale,

2002) (Appendix D). According to Lemieux and Hale, the Intimacy subscale had good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, while the Commitment subscale's reliability was 0.87. The current study found a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.67 for the Intimacy subscale and 0.78 for the Commitment subscale. Lemieux and Hale (2002) discovered that as the length of a relationship increases, intimacy and commitment scores also increase.

**Mood.** In order to assess participants' mood states before and after the dyadic interaction task, a modified version of the Profile of Mood States (POMS; Lorr, McNair, Fisher, 1982; Appendix E) was used. This 37-item scale assesses negative moods (such as tension, anger-hostility, fatigue, depression, and confusion) as well as positive moods (such as friendliness, elation, and vigor). The measure has good internal consistency, with subscale reliability coefficients from .63 to .96 (Curran, Andrykowski, & Sudts, 1995). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.88.

### **Procedures**

In order to reduce demand characteristics, participants were told that they would be participating in an experiment to assess how mood affected their ability to communicate with a romantic partner. Couples were randomly assigned to one of two conditions using a random number generator. Couples were first brought back to the laboratory and separated into different rooms. They were informed about the study and asked to sign an informed consent form. They were then instructed to fill out a packet including the ACQ (Weiss & Birchler, 1975), the DAS Spanier, 1976), and the POMS (Lorr et al., 1982). After completing the first packet, couples were brought back together. The researcher then looked at what each couple had reported on the third part of the ACQ (Weiss & Birchler, 1975) and

selected one problem from each participant and instructed couples to discuss those two problems. The couple then had 15 minutes to discuss their problems or concerns. Depending on the condition, the couples were either left without any interruptions for the 15 minutes (control group) or instructed to answer text messages that assessed the mood of the individual holding the phone (experimental group). For the experimental group, the participant who had initially signed up for the experiment was instructed to answer the text messages. The texts occurred every 2.5 minutes of the 15 minute discussion and read “Please indicate your current mood: (1) Positive; (2) Somewhat positive; (3) Neutral; (4) Somewhat negative; (5) Negative”. All participants received the same text message. When the 15 minutes were up, the couple was again separated and asked to complete additional questionnaires, including questions assessing their perceptions of the interaction, a second POMS, and the Intimacy and Commitment subscales of the Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment Scale (Lemieux, 2002). After the couple finished the second packet they were brought back together in one room for a positive mood induction task. For 5 minutes, the couple was to discuss what they liked about each other and their relationship overall. After the positive mood induction task, the couple was debriefed. During the debriefing, couples were told that they were participating in a study to assess how distraction by electronic devices affects perceptions of intimacy, commitment, and communication.

### **Results**

Because all couples were heterosexual and to avoid violations of assumptions of data independence, hypotheses were explored separately for men and women. A series of independent t-tests were conducted in order to test the three hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that couples who were frequently distracted by the cell phone (i.e., the experimental

group) would report lower intimacy ratings than couples who discussed problems without interruption (i.e., the control group), as measured by Lemieux's Intimacy subscale. Two independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the intimacy scores for men and women in the experimental and control group. There was no significant difference in scores for men in the control group ( $M = 6.18, SD = 0.62$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 6.43, SD = 0.75$ );  $t(38) = -1.12, p = .268$  (two-tailed). Similarly, for women there was no significant difference in intimacy scores for the control group ( $M = 6.35, SD = 0.68$ ), and the experimental group ( $M = 6.31, SD = 0.74$ );  $t(38) = 0.15, p = .882$  (two-tailed). Results are displayed in Figure 1.

The second hypothesis was that couples in the experimental group would report less satisfaction in their communication during their laboratory interaction compared to the couples in the control group, as measured by the total score on the 12 items assessing perceptions of the interaction (Appendix A). For men, there was no significant difference in the scores for the control group ( $M = 34.64, SD = 7.45$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 33.94, SD = 7.65$ );  $t(38) = 0.29, p = .774$  (two-tailed). There was also no significant difference in the scores for women in the control group ( $M = 32.52, SD = 10.09$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 34.28, SD = 8.48$ );  $t(37) = -0.58, p = .564$  (two-tailed). Results are displayed in Figure 2.

The third hypothesis was that couples in the experimental group would report lower levels of commitment to each other than couples in the control group, as measured by Lemieux's Commitment subscale. Two independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the commitment scores for men and women in the control and experimental group. For men, there was no significant difference between the control group ( $M = 6.30, SD =$

0.83) and the experimental group ( $M = 6.42, SD = 0.77$ );  $t(38) = -0.48, p = .635$  (two-tailed). In addition, there was no significant difference between women in the control group ( $M = 6.60, SD = 0.69$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 6.43, SD = 0.57$ );  $t(38) = 0.82, p = .418$  (two-tailed). Results are displayed in Figure 3.

To determine if the experimental manipulation impacted negative mood ratings, two analysis of covariance tests were. The independent variable was the experimental manipulation (distraction, no distraction), and the dependent variable was the overall score on the Profile of Mood States (POMS) after the interaction. Participants' scores on the pre-test administration of the POMS were used as the covariate in these analyses. After adjusting for pre-test score, there was no significant difference between men in the experimental and control groups on post-test POMS scores,  $F(1, 37) = 0.38, p = .539$ . Similarly, there was no significant difference between women in the experimental and control groups on post-test POMS scores,  $F(1, 37) = 0.25, p = .621$ .

Excessive and problematic cell phone use were significantly associated with each other. For men, 62.5% of those who believed they used their phone excessively agreed that it had gotten in the way of interactions with their partner and was thus problematic, compared to only 27.3% of men who did not report excessive cell phone use,  $p = .035$ . For women, 71.4% of those who reported they used their cell phone excessively agreed that it had gotten in the way of interactions with their partner, compared to only 26.3% of women who did not report excessive cell phone use,  $p = .004$ .

In addition to the three hypotheses, analyses were run to determine whether there was an association between reported relationship satisfaction for participants who reported they used their phone excessively and those who did not think they used their phone excessively.

Two independent samples t-test (one per gender) were conducted to compare participants who did and did not endorse excessive cell phone use scores on DAS total scores. For men, there was no significant difference in DAS scores for participants who reported excessive cell phone use ( $M = 114.79$ ,  $SD = 8.38$ ,  $N = 14$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 117.42$ ,  $SD = 12.44$ ,  $N = 19$ );  $t(31) = -0.69$ ,  $p = 0.498$ . Similarly, there was no significant difference in DAS scores for women who reported excessive cell phone use ( $M = 116.40$ ,  $SD = 10.76$ ,  $N = 20$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 118.19$ ,  $SD = 8.66$ ,  $N = 16$ );  $t(34) = -0.54$ ,  $p = 0.593$ . Results are displayed in Figure 4.

More analyses were run to test whether there was an association between relationship satisfaction and problematic cell phone use, defined as having occurred if participants endorsed an item stating they thought their cell phone got in the way of their interactions with their partner. An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in DAS scores for male participants who reported their cell phones did get in the way of their interactions with their partner ( $M = 111.07$ ,  $SD = 7.09$ ,  $N = 14$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 120.16$ ,  $SD = 11.63$ ,  $N = 19$ );  $t(31) = -2.58$ ,  $p = 0.015$ . These data are the only ones in the study that demonstrated a possible association between cell phone use and lower relationship satisfaction. However, female participants showed no significant differences in DAS scores by problematic ( $M = 116.06$ ,  $SD = 9.91$ ,  $N = 17$ ) and non-problematic ( $M = 118.21$ ,  $SD = 9.83$ ,  $N = 19$ ) cell phone use;  $t(34) = -0.65$ ,  $p = .518$ . Results of this set of analyses are displayed in Figure 5.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that distraction by interruptions from an electronic, hand-held device (i.e., a smart phone) had on couples'



feelings of connectedness during a dyadic interaction through experimental and correlational analyses. The study addressed three experimental hypotheses: that couples who were frequently distracted by a cell phone would report lower intimacy ratings than couples who discussed problems without interruption, that couples in the experimental group would report less satisfaction in their communication compared to the couples in the control group, and that couples in the experimental group would report lower levels of commitment to each other than couples in the control group. Through correlational data, a fourth hypothesis was that both excessive as well as problematic use of cell phones would be associated with lower relationship satisfaction.

Experimental analyses failed to show an association between frequent distractions and overall intimacy, satisfaction, and commitment scores. Neither men nor women appeared to be negatively impacted by the interruptions in their discussions with a romantic partner. However, correlational data suggested that problematic (but not excessive) cell phone use is associated with lower relationship satisfaction in men, although the same was not true for women.

There could be many reasons as to why the three experimental hypotheses were disconfirmed. A big problem with doing experimental work is one of external validity. Simply put, lab conditions cannot always reflect daily life. Because of the artificial nature of the task (asking couples to discuss a relationship problem during a laboratory visit, rather than allowing such a discussion to occur naturally), couples might not have been as engaged in the conversation as they would be under more personal circumstances. Also, the conversation that couples had with each other were not recorded or monitored, so the content of the conversation was hard to control. Although couples were assigned two conversation

topics, it is not certain that all couples were able to stay on topic. Along with this, the texts they received were formulaic and required an immediate response, something that both members of the couple were aware of. Therefore, the participant that was not receiving the messages might not have felt as ignored when their partner responded to these texts as the participant might have felt had a friend been texting and taking attention away from the relationship discussion. The fact that some correlational data suggested an association between problematic cell phone use and decreased relationship satisfaction suggests threats to external validity may well have impacted the study and contributed to the null results obtained.

Another issue may have been that the length of time couples had to discuss problems in their relationships as well as the problems they were asked to address might not have been distressing enough to negatively impact their relationships. If participants were not already having problems in the areas of intimacy, commitment, and satisfaction, then it is possible that this interaction would not impact their overall scores.

Probably an important reason why the results did not show significance was the fact that most couples who participated were fairly well adjusted. Most of the problems discussed by participants were not distressing and could easily have been resolved. Therefore, if the relationship problems were not significant, then perhaps the conversation would not have that much of an effect on intimacy, communication, and commitment scores. If, instead, the sample population came from a group who had more significant relationship problems, then the results may have differed and the hypotheses might have been supported. Along with that, the average relationship length was around 1.5 years, meaning that most couples had not been together very long. Studies show relationship satisfaction tends to decline with

increased relationship length (e.g., Dush, Taylor, & Kroeger, 2008). The results may have looked different if the sample population came from couples who had been together for significantly longer periods of time.

Although excessive cell phone use was not associated with relationship satisfaction, male participants who reported their use had interfered with their relationships had lower dyadic satisfaction than male participants who did not. It is possible that this is a result of men feeling unhappy when (or if) their significant others chastise them for being on their cell phones during interactions. If women are complaining more toward men, then that may show up in the overall relationship satisfaction scores. On the other hand, because of the correlational nature of these findings, it is also possible that male participants in less satisfactory relationships are more willing to use their cell phones in problematic ways when interacting with their romantic partners.

Given these limitations, future research in this area may benefit from adjusting the experiment to more natural conditions. For instance, it would be interesting to send a couple on an actual date and compare scores between groups who were allowed to have their cell phones and those who were not. Another option would be to make this a longitudinal study. If it were possible to have couples keep a journal of how much time they spent together with and without their cell phones, then maybe the results would be different. A simpler change within the laboratory could be providing a different cellular distraction. Instead of being asked to rate their mood, one participant could be asked to complete some kind of problem solving activity while not sharing it with their partner. That way, the distraction might be more time consuming than simply answering a mood rating question. More to the point of the study, it could be a requirement that the participant holding the phone is responsible for

sending text messages to the researcher a certain number of times. He or she could also be prohibited from sharing the content of these messages with their partner. This would take away part of the sterile laboratory environment and improve external validity. It could also be beneficial to vary the amount of time each participant is required to spend texting.

Despite these limitations, the study helps forward our understanding of how mobile devices and technology may be impacting romantic couples. Although they can be used fruitfully to increase communication and, therefore, commitment (Jin & Peña, 2010), anecdotal evidence and correlational data from this study suggest that being distracted by a cell phone may be associated with decreased relationship happiness. Given that increasingly young adults are using these devices, continuing to understand and explore how they impact relationships will be important.

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Figure 1.

*Intimacy subscale scores by gender and experimental condition.*

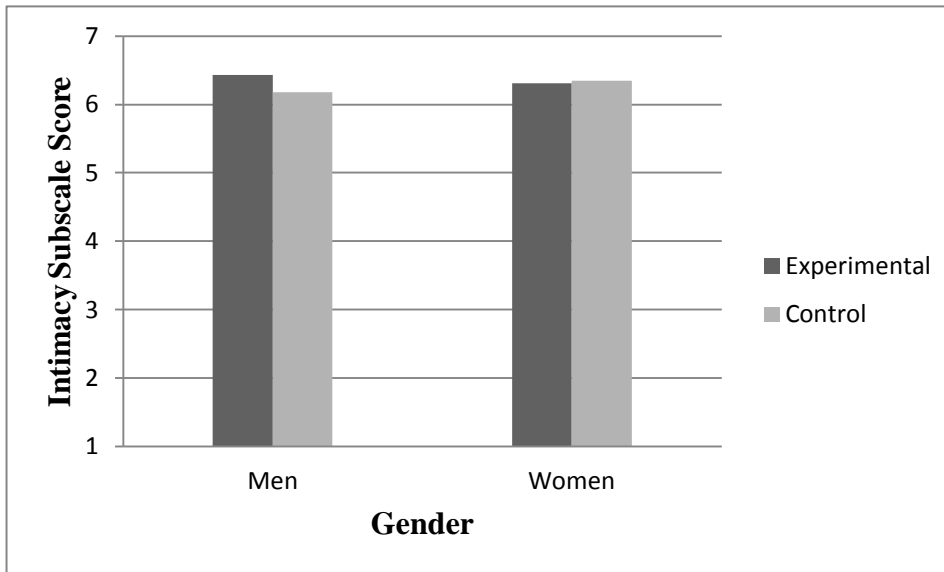


Figure 2

*Communication scale scores by gender and experimental condition*

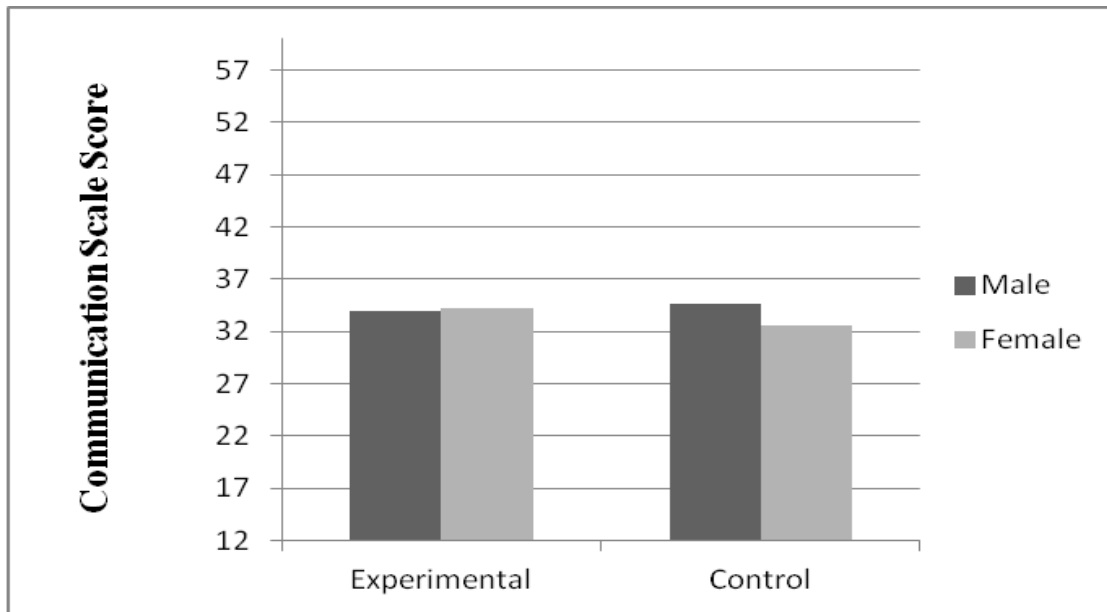




Figure 3

*Commitment subscale scores by gender and experimental condition*

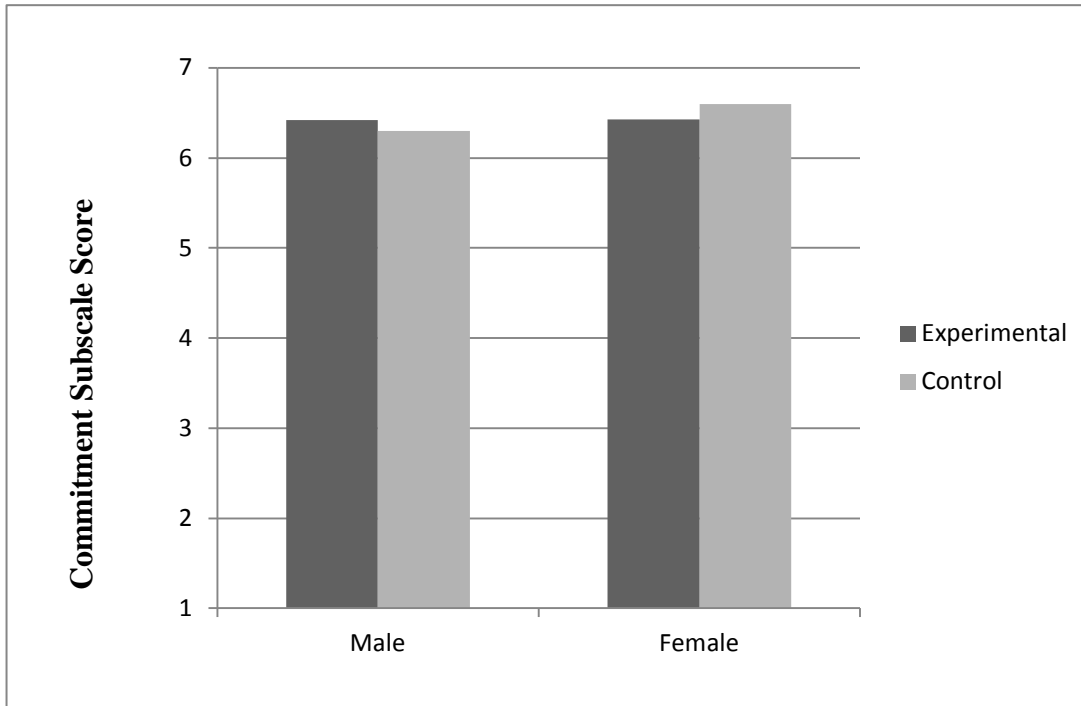


Figure 4

*Dyadic Adjustment Scale scores by excessive cell phone use responses (yes/no) and gender.*

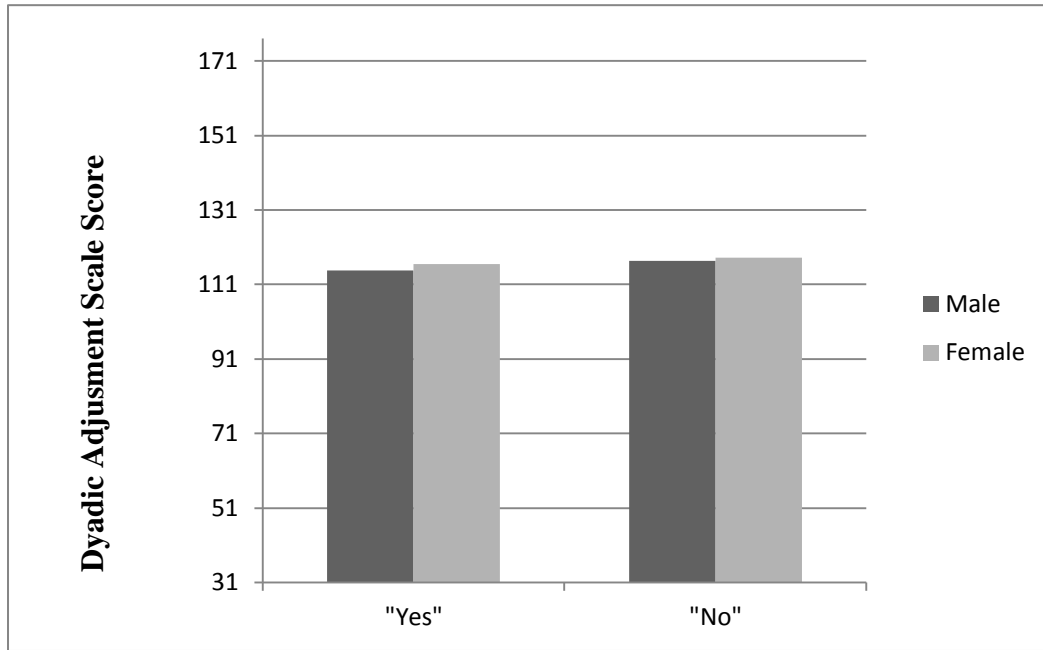
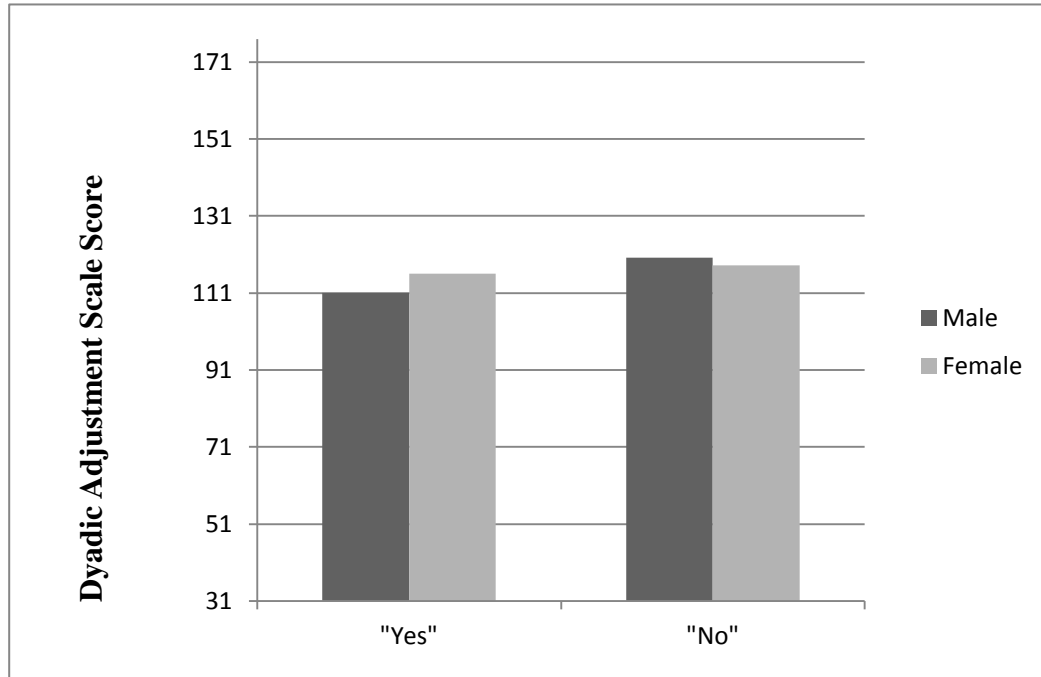


Figure 5

*Dyadic Adjustment Scale scores by problematic cell phones use responses (yes/no) and gender.*



**Appendix A**

## Modified Areas of Change Questionnaire

## Part I:

Please indicate how much you want your partner to do each of the following, using this scale:

- Much less
- Less
- Somewhat less
- No change
- Somewhat more
- More
- Much more

1. Pay attention to his/her appearance
2. Get together with his/her friends
3. Prepare interesting meals
4. Start interesting conversations with me
5. Go out with me
6. Show appreciation for the things I do well
7. Get together with my relatives
8. Have sexual relations with me
9. Drink
10. Get together with my friends
11. Spend time in outside activities
12. Pay attention to my sexual needs
13. Give me attention when I need it
14. Left me to be myself
15. Study with me
16. Be honest with me
17. Play video games
18. Talk about his/her emotions
19. Plan our life together
20. Spend time with ex-girlfriends/boyfriends
21. Help with chores
22. Plan dates
23. Respect opinions on subjects such as politics and religion
24. Keep me updated on what on what he/she is doing
25. Understand my emotions when we argue

## Part II:

Please indicate how much your partner would like you to do each of the following, using this scale:

- Much less
- Less
- Somewhat less
- No change
- Somewhat more
- More
- Much more

1. Paid more attention to your appearance
2. Got together with my friends
3. Prepared interesting meals
4. Started interesting conversations with him/her
5. Went out with him/her
6. Showed appreciation for the things he/she does well
7. Got together with his/her relatives
8. Had sexual relations with him/her
9. Drank
10. Got together with his/her friends
11. Spend time in outside activities
12. Paid attention to his/her sexual needs
13. Gave him/her attention with he/she needed it
14. Left him/her to be himself/herself
15. Studied with him/her
16. Was honest with him/her
17. Played video games
18. Talked about my emotions
19. Plan our life together
20. Spent time with ex-girlfriends/boyfriends
21. Helped with chores
22. Planned dates
23. Respected opinions on subjects such as politics and religion
24. Kept him/her updated on what I am doing
25. Understood his/her emotions when we argue

Part III:

In this section, please write down some areas in your relationship that you feel need to be different.

**Appendix B**

## Modified Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

To answer items 1-15, use this scale:

- Always agree
- Almost always agree
- Occasionally disagree
- Frequently disagree
- Almost always disagree
- Always disagree

1. Handling finances
2. Matters of recreation
3. Religious matters
4. Demonstrations of affection
5. Friends
6. Sex relations
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)
8. Philosophy of life
9. Ways of dealing with parents
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important
11. Amount of time spent together
12. Making major decisions
13. Household tasks
14. Leisure time interests and activities
15. Career decisions

To answer items 16-22, use this scale:

- All the time
- Most of the time
- More often than not
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

16. How often do you discuss or have you considered terminating your relationship?
17. How often do you or your mate leave after a fight?
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
19. Do you confide in your mate?

20. Do you ever regret that you are in this relationship?  
 21. How often do you and your partner argue?  
 22. How often do you and your mate "get on each others' nerves"?

23. Do you kiss your mate?

- Every day
- Almost every day
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

- All of them
- Most of them
- Some of them
- Very few of them
- None of them

Rate how often each of the following occur between you and your mate using this scale:

- Never
- Less than once a month
- Once or twice a month
- Once or twice a week
- Once a day
- More often

25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas  
 26. Laugh together  
 27. Calmly discuss something  
 28. Work together on a project

There are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinion or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no.)

29. \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No      Being too tired for intimacy  
 30. \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No      Not showing love



31. The following circles represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness in most relationships. Please circle the phrase which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extremely Perfect	Fairly unhappy	A little unhappy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about your future relationship?

- I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and I would go to almost any length to see that it does
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does
- It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed
- It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do anymore than I am doing now to keep the relationship going
- My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

**Appendix C**

## Perception of Interaction

Please rate each of the following questions using this scale:

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- A little bit
- Mostly
- Completely

1. How well do you think you and your partner communicated during your interaction?
2. How well do you think you and your partner were able to solve your problem?
3. How close do you feel to your partner after your interaction?
4. My partner listened to what I had to say.
5. My partner understood my point of view.
6. I felt judged by my partner.
7. I felt we communicated well.
8. My partner devoted his/her full attention to me during the discussion.
9. My partner seemed distracted during this discussion.
10. My partner compromised with me.
11. My partner contributed to the conversation.
12. I felt ignored by my partner.

**Appendix D**

## Intimacy and Commitment Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items using this scale:

- Strongly disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree
- Strongly agree

1. My partner and I share personal information with one another.
2. There is nothing I couldn't tell my partner.
3. My partner and I self-disclose private thoughts and information to each other.
4. There are things I could tell my partner that I can't tell anyone else.
5. My partner understands my feelings.
6. My partner and I are psychologically close to one another.
7. I am committed to continuing our relationship.
8. I think of our relationship as a permanent one.
9. I am likely to pursue another relationship in the future.
10. Commitment is an important part of our relationship.
11. I think its relationship will last forever.

**Appendix E**

## Profile of Mood States

Describe how you feel right now by checking one box after each of the words listed below

	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
Tense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worn out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peeved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grouchy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energetic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hopeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uneasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fatigued	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annoyed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discouraged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resentful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miserable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhausted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anxious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bewildered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full of pep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forgetful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uncertain about things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bushed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>