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The Effect of Mobile-Phone Use on School Children's Friendship: An Examination of Causality with a Panel Study

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In the present study, we conducted a panel study of 450 elementary, junior high, and senior high school students, in order to examine the influence of mobile-phone use on two aspects of their friendship: depth and dependence. Results of data analysis showed that the more junior high school students use mobile phone, the less dependence and attachment in their friendship. The reverse was true for senior high school students: more phone use meant more dependence and attachment in their friendship. No similar effect was observed for the depth and intimacy aspect. Results of comparisons between age groups indicated that junior high school students were most strongly affected by mobile-phone use as a whole, and at the same time, it was suggested that there would be some reciprocal relationships between use of e-mail and dependence.

Keywords: mobile phone, friendship, children, panel study, causality

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