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Investigating Smartphone Presence on Social Enjoyment During Various Conversations

Cicely Dunaway & Jamiah Sutton

Longwood University



Introduction

- 43% of teens use their phone to avoid daily interactions (Schaeffer, 2019)
- Phones distract and disconnect individuals from others in their environment (Kushlev & Dunn, 2019)
- During a shared meal with friends and family, the presence of a smartphone led to a decrease in social enjoyment (Dwyer et. al, 2017)
- Conversations that occurred without the presence of a phone had higher quality interactions (Misra et. al, 2016)
- When phones are not present, those who have conversations about a meaningful topic show higher social enjoyment than if they were to have a casual conversation (Przyblski & Weinstein, 2013)

Hypothesis

- Social interaction enjoyment levels will not be affected during casual conversations whether there is a smartphone or not compared to enjoyment levels being higher in meaningful conversations without the presence of a smartphone

Methods

- IVs: Phone vs. Phoneless (1) & Casual or Meaningful Conversations (2)
- DV: Social enjoyment level

Participants

- 56 participants
- Undergraduates at Longwood
- Ages 18 to 27

Materials/Procedures

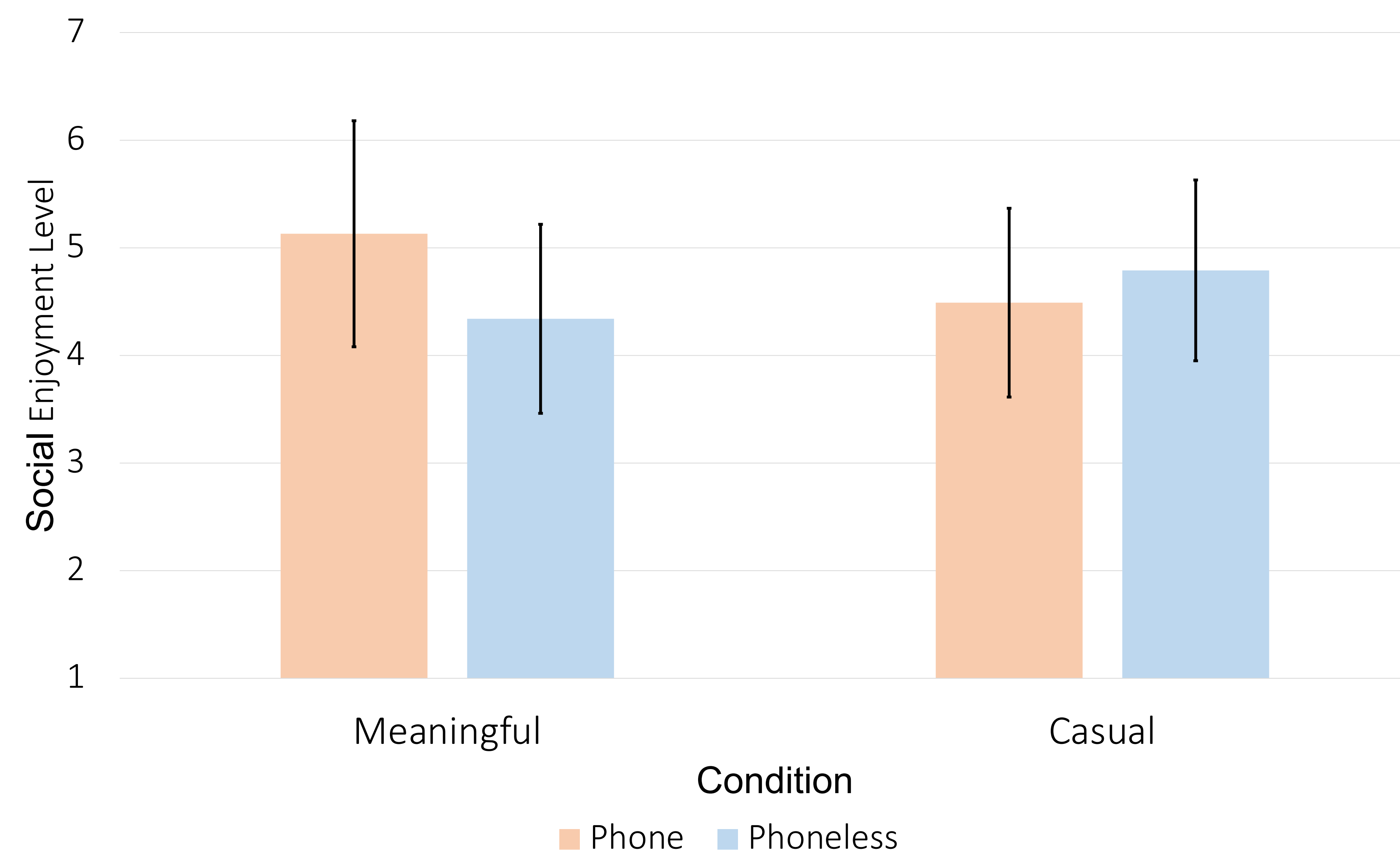
- Participants were randomly assigned to each level of the IV by the researchers flipping two coins
- PowerPoint instructed participants on what to do with their cell phone; depending on condition and showed the topics of conversations one at a time
- Participants were asked how they were feeling via email/piece of paper midway through session
- Conversations took 10-15 mins
- Likert scale questionnaire given after conversations to determine social enjoyment level

Q2 Int/Enj For each of the following statements, please indicate how true it is for you with regards to your conversation experience today.

	1 Not at all true	2	3	4 Somewhat true	5	6	7 Very true
I enjoyed this experience very much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would describe this experience as very interesting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During this experience, I was thinking about how much I enjoyed it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the experience, it was easy for me to concentrate on what I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the experience today, I was easily distracted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results

- Two-way ANOVA was conducted to test the interaction between presence of phones and conversation type on social enjoyment (see Figure below)
- The interaction between presence of a phone and conversation topic was not significant, $F(1, 52) = 3.1043$, $p = 0.084$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.056$



Conversation Topic

- Describe your perfect weekend
- What is your favorite season, why?
- What superpower do you wish you had, why?
- Favorite restaurant in town
- Preference on city vs. Rural
- Do you believe in aliens?

Conversation Topic

- Best piece of advice you received?
- What are your long-term goals?
- Who in your life brings you the most joy, why?
- Who has had the biggest impact on the person you have become, why?
- What is your best childhood memory?
- What would you do if you had 24hrs left to live?

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	Phone Group	Conversation Topic	Social Enjoyment Level	Sample Size
Mean	Phone Present	Meaningful	5.13	N=16
		Casual	4.62	N=13
	Phoneless	Meaningful	4.32	N=13
		Casual	4.69	N=14
Standard Deviation	Phone Present	Meaningful	1.05	
		Casual	0.877	
	Phoneless	Meaningful	0.878	
		Casual	0.840	

Discussion

- Data did not support hypothesis or have statistically significant results
- No main effects for phone presence or conversation topics found
- No interaction between phone presence or conversation topic found
- Phone presence did not matter in this type of setting during these conversation topics

Limitations

- Lack of data connection in room led to decrease in notifications received
- Some groups were more outgoing than others
- Not all participants followed phone use directions

Future Directions

- Alter the way phone presence is manipulated by having participants actively use their phone
- Look into different settings, such as a classroom, in which phones could be distracting

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