

Understanding Youth Culture and Characteristics of Cellular Phone Communication in Korea

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In modern society, youth take lead on the life style against adult culture. The culture gap between adult and youth, here is a difference in general communication. Especially, the spread of cellular phone communication of the youth are changed the life style, non-verbal and verbal communication. The youth are more willing to embrace existing telecommunication devices and are accustomed to using technological devices, the new device can help to reduce uncertainly through immediate communication.

The youth might prefer informal, private and unregulated communication like the emoticon, e-language and written language, the increase is based on the growth of individualism which has increased through the change of personal identity in accord with the characteristics of cellular phone communication.

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I . Introduction

In modern society, youth are living in radically changing times. Many things are changing rapidly, especially, the change of communication styles. Developing telecommunication technology brings many basic changes in the interpersonal communication process. The developing direction of communication methods is in terms of more direct and immediate communication between youth. Therefore, it is important to research the essence of human communication as new telecommunication technologies develop. This paper will review research on cellular phone use of the youth in one fast growing culture in Korea.

The cellular phone has developed from the simple transmission of voice messages to more multi channel communication including e-mail and nonverbal messages. When the telephone was invented in 1876, the transmission of vocal information was regarded as a miracle, as it allowed interpersonal communication between individuals who were a long way off. However, it has evolved more and more into closer face-to-face communication device with new telecommunication devices like the Internet and cellular phones. As a result, it is now possible to communicate while seeing the other's facial expressions and other nonverbal messages through the cellular phone and doing audio-visual chatting through Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

Asian countries (especially, Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan) have the highest rate of diffusion of cellular phones with European countries such as England and Finland close behind (Na, 2001). For example, in Korea, by October 2000, 26,470,000 people used cellular phones. The subscribers to cellular phones outnumbered the 21,850,000 subscribers of wire telephones at that time. The diffusion rate of the cellular phone is 56% in Korea (Na, 2001, p.2). That means more than one person of every two people in Korean has a cellular phone. The subscriber rate of the cellular phone is actually seven or eight out of every ten people if infants and babies are discounted.

Nowadays, the increase in the cellular phone subscription rate is not only a special trend in Korea, but a general trend throughout the world (e.g., Hong Kong 74%, Finland 70%, England 65%, and Japan 50.3%). However, in Korea, it is unclear why cellular phone communication is so popular.

This research has three purposes: 1) to outline briefly the characteristics of the cellular phone communication form as an interpersonal communication process; 2) to review and critique prior research on cellular phone use; and 3) to examine the relationship between the characteristics of the Korean culture and cellular phone communication in Korea. In other words, this paper will review the characteristics of cellular phone communication styles, review the reasons for the popularity of cellular phones, and analyze the relationship between the Korean culture and the characteristics of cellular phone communication in Korea. To achieve these research

purposes, the following research questions should be asked: 1) what are the characteristics of cellular phone communication as an interpersonal communication process; 2) what are the strengths and weaknesses of prior research on cellular phone use; 3) what kinds of relationships are there between the Korean culture and the characteristics of the cellular phone communication in Korea; and 4) what are the differences between older and younger generations and between men and woman in cellular phone use in Korea.

II. Reviews on Youth Culture and Cellular Phone Communication

1) Literature Review

Youth is also a social category, framed by particular social institutions. Especially youth is something which is culturally determined in discursive interplay with musical, visual and verbal signs that denote what is young in relation to that which is interpreted as selfish language throughout the communication materials.

While a variety of studies related to the technology of cellular phones have been examined, for this paper only a small number of previous studies associated cellular phone communication dealt with the social phenomenon of cellular

phone use. One such study was conducted by Laurier (2001) who analyzed a feature of cellular phone conversation looking at why people give their geographical location as part of the opening sequence of a phone call. Through this study, the author tried to describe methods, in particular formulations of places used by people who competently make and receive phone calls on their cellular phones day in and day out as an ordinary, every day achievement. Laurier asked the research question "why do people say where they are when called on their [cellular] phones that is versed through actual instances" (Laurier, 2001, p.485).

The author argued that unlike typical phones, cellular phones overcome the limitation of space and time. This insight goes some way to reveal why one person seldom answers another person's cellular phone, as the caller is likely not to be calling a place but a person, and accounts for why they are picking up the phone without recourse to a phrase such as "she's not here right now"(Laurier, 2001). The author concluded that a concern with theory construction effectively distances such people from everyday affairs where ordinary people understand in particular terms and account competently for what is going on in their worlds. This practical understanding is inherent in the intricacies of a conversational ordering, which is at one and the same time also an ordering of the time and space of their worlds (Laurier, 2001).

In another study related to cellular phone use and social phenomenon, Forgacs(2001) tried to characterize the digital age. He explained that until the beginning of the 1990s, a typical national media system consisted of three discrete segments: print, film, and broadcasting. In addition, he pointed out that telephony was a technology used primarily for interpersonal voice communication and secondarily, for fax messages. However, he noted that these characteristics of the telephone changed with the appearance of the cellular phone (Forgacs, 2001). Therefore, he categorized the digital age (including cellular phones) into three characteristics: convergence, personalization, and exclusion (Forgacs, 2001).

Much recent youth culture trend are showed related to cellular phone how to send the message with each other communication among the youth.

In order to look at future trends of cellular phone use and socialization, Charlton, Panting, and Hannan(2002) investigated cellular phone ownership among a sample of primary school pupils. These recent findings showed that nearly half of both girls and boys owned cellular phones in England. While only 19% had self-funded the cellular phone purchase, almost 50% had paid by their parents (Charlton et al., 2002). The results indicated that the favorite call destinations were parents. Also 38% reported that they had used their cellular phones when confronted by a crisis. One of the interesting findings is that the large majority both sent and received text messages, and about 1 in 5 were able to send texts via the Internet and search the net (Charlton

et al., 2002). In conclusion, they raised concerns that non-ownership of cellular phones may lead to social exclusion as well as limit pupils' involvement with and proficiency in using other communication technologies (Charlton et al., 2001).

The literature which most closely supports the present research is the literature from Korean communication scholars (Na, 2001; Kim, 2001; Lee, 2001) on cellular phone communication. Na (2001) examined the characteristics of cellular phone communication and discussed the relationship between Korean culture and cellular phone communication. Through this research, she pointed out that because of the characteristics of immediate and direct interaction of cellular phones, Korean people who do not have a smooth flow of communication between groups adapted cellular phones quickly to satisfy their communication desires (Na, 2001, pp. 2-3). In conclusion, she argued that modern society is a coexistence period of variety so that various immediate and direct individual communication styles are desired. Because of this desire, use of cellular phones is increasing especially in Korea. In Korea, cellular phone communication serves as a connection between individuals without the limitation of time and space (Na, 2001, p.23).

Another study of cellular phone was conducted by Kim (2001). Through this study, he tried to find the meanings of a new communication system that was developed by using cellular phones. He found that the technologies of cellular phone such as mobility, individuality, and secrecy has

influenced the rapid diffusion of cellular phone use.

Finally, Lee (2001) researched the characteristics of textual communication used by Korean teenagers through cellular phones. Through her research, Lee explained that a cellular phone is not only a verbal communication device but also a multi-communication device (e.g., Internet, e-mail, and textual communication) (Lee, 2001, p.50). In addition, according to her survey about the frequency of use of cellular phones for textual communication, 61% of the total respondents used textual communication every day, and 34% of the total of 100 respondents used textual communication every hour. A target of textual communication was usually close friends, family members, and girl/boy friend. These findings indicate that the textual communication of cellular phones is a method to connect persons within a group (Lee, 2001, p.58).

While much work has focused on the characteristics of communication by cellular phones and the diffusion of cellular phones in Korea, rather less research has looked at the relationship between traditional Korean culture and cellular phone usage.

2) Theoretical Frameworks

This section reviews various communication traditional theories that may be useful in understanding the uses and functions of cellular phone communication.

(1) Uncertainty reduction theory

The characteristics of cellular phone communication generally are relevant to a person's inclination to reduce uncertainty. The qualities of cellular phone communication such as immediate accessibility, control, direct interaction between individuals, and constant contact availability reflect a desire of persons to conduct tasks and relationships surely and quickly. Hofstede(1991, p.115) explained that Koreans have weak uncertainty avoidance. Thus, Koreans prefer constructed situations with weak content; Koreans feel easy with many rules and official documents; Koreans sense danger about strange things; Koreans want to conduct tasks as quickly as possible(Na, 2001, p.8). Therefore, according to these characteristics of Korean people, immediate and direct communication of the cellular phone tends to suit most Koreans' inclinations.

Berger and Calabrese(1975), in their article, "Some Explorations in Initial Interaction and Beyond," describe the Uncertainty Reduction Theory.²² *In their article, authors did not call the theory "Uncertainty theory". However, later, their notion of uncertainty reduction was called as the "Uncertainty Reduction Theory" by Sunnafrank, M.* In this theory, generally people, in a first meeting, enlarge the range of reconnaissance through increasing the quantity of communication gradually to reduce uncertainty. This theory regards the self-exposure aspect as important(Berger & Calabrese, 1975). For example, a study by Berger(1975)

revealed that during the course of interaction between strangers, the amount of demographic (low intimacy) information asked for and given was highest during the first minute of interaction. After the first minute, statistically significant decreases in the amount of demographic information exchanged were observed; while the amount of information asked for and given in such more intimate categories as "attitudes and opinions" and "other persons" increased(Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p.104).

Later, Sunnafrank(1986) defined the Uncertainty reduction theory as follows:

Uncertainty reduction theory, the most formally articulated theoretical treatment of this position in communication, proposes that a key element in relational development is [an] individuals' uncertainty level concerning knowledge and understanding of selves and others. The original uncertainty perspective focused exclusively on potential influences of uncertainty and uncertainty reduction during beginning acquaintance(Sunnafrank, 1986, p.3).

Cellular phone communication usually takes place between individuals who have known each other for a long time and more often than between individuals who meet each other for the first time. These are the people who the Uncertainty reduction theory is focused on. Cellular phone communication seems to

be a more useful communication method than the typical telephone and electronic mail communication in uncertainty reduction.

Furthermore, Berger(1979), Berger & Bradac(1982), and Sunnafrank(1986) proposed a distinction between two types of uncertainty: cognitive and behavioral. "Cognitive uncertainty encompasses uncertainty that individuals have about their own and relational others' beliefs and attitudes. [On the other hand,] behavioral uncertainty refers to the predictability of behavior in particular circumstances (Sunnafrank, 1986, p.5). "Between these two uncertainties, cellular phone communication has a connection to behavioral uncertainty reduction through increasing predictability. Berger and Calabrese(1975, p.101) have argued that crucial to an understanding of a given individual's communication behavior is a knowledge of the kinds of predictions and explanations the individual has for the behavior of the person with whom he is interacting. In short, "in some circumstances behavioral uncertainty may be strongly influenced by knowledge of situational constraints on behavior that have little relation to cognitive uncertainty" (Sunnafrank, 1986, p.5).

(2) Predicted outcome value theory and expectancy-value theory

After the introduction of the Uncertainty reduction theory, some theorists did follow up research(Berger, 1979, 1987; Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Celabrese, 1975). Based on this research and his own research, Sunnafrank (1986) presented an expansion and reformulation of the Uncertainty reduction theory through introducing "a predicted outcome value". Sunnafrank explained the differences between the Uncertainty reduction theory and the predicted outcome value in his article as follows:

uncertainty reduction theory proposes that communication behavior in these situations is primarily understandable through interlocutors' goals of predicting and explaining the actions of partners and self. Conversely, predicted outcome value theory posits that interactants' goals of achieving positive relational outcomes provide a more accurate and complete account of both communication behavior and uncertainty reduction attempts in beginning interactions(Sunnafrank, 1990, p.76).

Through the Predicted outcome value theory, Sunnafrank continues to explain that "positive predicted outcome value leads individuals to communicate in a manner calculated to continue, expand, or escalate their interaction and relationship

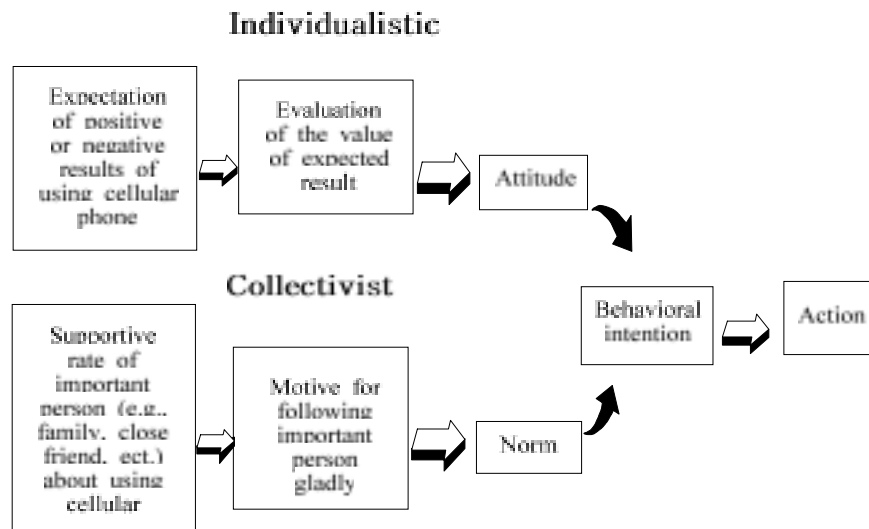
with initial interaction partners”(Sunnafrank, 1990, p.82).

As the predicted outcome value theory proposes, cellular phone communication continues to exist as a personal communication method with an increasing usage rate because people can obtain many positive values as a result of using cellular phone communication. Possible positive values brought about by cellular phone communication may include: direct and immediate interaction, spatial-temporal transcendence, and person-to-person interaction. When these values exceed the discomforts that a person gets by using a cellular phone, the quantity and expression of cellular phone communication will increase and continue, according to this theory.

On the other hand, to examine the attitude toward usage of cellular phones, the Expectancy-value theory can be useful. Perhaps the Expectancy-value theory is best known as the subjective expected utility model of the behavioral decision theory(Edwards, 1954). According to this theory, when a person needs to make a behavioral choice, he/she will select that alternative which has the highest subjective expected utility(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p.30). This theory is usually used for research about consumer behavior or voting behavior. However, although this theory is criticized for too much dependence on rational decisions, it is still applicable to many situations. Figure 2 shows the decision process about whether a person continues to use a cellular phone or not. The model shows that the decision is affected by self-attitude and personal norms.

The attitude of using a cellular phone is predicted through results that are positive or negative based on past experience using a cellular phone. When the expectation and value of a positive result (e.g., it is possible to talk with friend anytime) exceed the expectation and value of a negative result (e.g., price is a burden), the behavioral intention of using a cellular phone is increased. Furthermore, the subjective norm is determined by the results of the important person's agreement rate about using a cellular phone and the intention to follow his/her opinion joyfully. This norm then determines the personal attitudes and behavioral intention of using a cellular phone. The Behavioral intention model may apply differently in Eastern or collectivist cultures. According to previous research, in the Western culture, behavioral intention is generally determined by personal attitudes. In the Eastern culture, behavioral intention is determined by not only personal attitude but also the important person's (e.g., family and close friends, etc.) thinking(Na, 2001, p.10).

Figure1. Behavioral intention model about the decision process of a cellular phone using behavior



Source: Na(2001). The communication characteristics of cellular phone and Korean culture. Paper presented at the seminar of Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies, Seoul, Korea. P.10.

Lee(1988) amended and adjusted the behavioral intention model to Confucian culture. In Lee's research, he substituted the norm factor of Fishbein and Ajzen's model (1975) to prestige pressure. Through this research, he found that the face-saving pressure works on visible things, and conformity pressure works on invisible things. In Na's research(1995) using Lee's paradigm, she revealed that prestige pressure works on visible necessary articles for marriage, and the conformity pressure works on invisible small tokens of one's gratitude

powerfully. Moreover, she pointed out that older generations and men are weak to the prestige pressure, and younger generations and women possibly are weak to the conformity pressure.

Relating to people who have cellular phones, the possible working time of the prestige and conformity pressure can be changed. In general, possession of the thing that is expensive and is possessed by only a few people is regarded as the symbol of privilege. For example, in Korean culture, the power gap (psychological gap between high position people and low position people) is large. Almost everybody wants to have privilege and have the symbols of high position(Hofstede, 1991). When the cellular phone was introduced and was expensive, people who had a cellular phone appeared to have a high position and privilege and became an object of envy. Therefore, people preferred to have a cellular phone as a way of increasing their prestige (importance or power).

The cellular phone and many other telecommunication devices are considered as symbols of privilege and high positions when these devices are introduced. Thus, although these devices are expensive in the beginning, people want to possess the devices to show off their privileges. As telecommunication devices become more common, conformity pressure comes into play and status differences may be reduced. In other words, people who do not have the devices feel pressure: why do I not have one although everybody does; don't you have one yet? As a result, many

people buy the devices to be the same as other people and the devices turn into necessities that almost everybody has.

(3) Gratification theory

Through cellular phone use, most people get the satisfaction of immediate and direct communication that was not served by a typical telephone. In other words, to obtain satisfaction and benefits, people usually buy and use a cellular phone. One of the most popular theories of mass communication, the uses and gratifications theory, explains that an individual chooses media (including communicating devices) to gratify needs. In general, the uses and gratifications theory focuses on the consumer rather than the media (including messages). In other words, the uses and gratifications theory argues that "we should ask not only 'what media do to people,' but also 'what people do with the media' (Webster & Phalen, 1997, p.33).

Since the early 1970s, the uses and gratifications theory and research have attracted considerable attention³³. *For more information, see Rosengren, K. E., Wenner, L. A., and Palmgreen, P. (Eds.). (1985). Media gratification research: Current perspectives. CA: Sage.* (Webster & Phalen, 1997, p.34). Unlike the traditional studies (such as powerful-effects), this theory considers the audience to be an active user of media. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch(1974) discussed this concept as follows:

compared with classical effects studies, the uses and gratifications approach talks [about] the media consumer rather than the media message as its starting point, and explores his communication behavior in terms of his direct experience with the media. It views the members of the audience as actively utilizing media contents, rather than being passively acted upon by the media. (Katz et al., 1974, p.12)

In the uses and gratifications theory, the audience is the subject that has the responsibility for choosing media to satisfy his/her needs. Although no prior research on cellular phone from the uses and gratifications perspective was found, we can guess that cellular phone users probably choose cellular phones to know and meet their personal needs. In short, people choose a cellular phone as a personal communication device to satisfy their needs(e.g., immediate and direct interaction with close friends, family members, and girl/boy friends).

Overall, like the uses and gratifications theory in which the audience is imagined to be active and goal-directed, cellular phone users actively adapt new communication devices(such as cellular phones) and use them to satisfy their needs(such as direct and immediate communication and constant contact).

III. The characteristics of cellular phone communication

To understand cellular phone communication, we need to understand interpersonal communication because these two communication styles are similar. To maintain relationships between individuals, amicable communication is needed, and for this amicable communication, a speaker needs to easily access a receiver.¹ The receiver means the person answering the phone call. Furthermore, the receiver should respond immediately. If the receiver is always available to talk, and if the speaker can access the receiver immediately anytime and anywhere, interpersonal communication is quickly accelerated. Cellular phone communication has similar characteristics to these characteristics of interpersonal communication. The characteristics of cellular phone communication can be explained by three characteristics: immediate accessibility and control, direct interaction between individuals, and constant contact availability.

(1) Immediate accessibility and control

Cellular phone communication can be defined as "an immediate and direct interaction between individuals through transcendence of time and space"(especially space) (Na, 2001, p.2), which is a fascinating characteristic of cellular phone communication. According to Na, between immediate and

direct interaction, there are similar meanings, but there are different meanings as well.

"Immediate interaction" means that whenever a speaker wants to send a message, the speaker can send the message anytime, and as soon as a receiver gets the message, the receiver can respond to the speaker. On the other hand, "direct interaction"(non-mediated) refers to communication between the speaker and the receiver. Both parties can send and receive the message without any intermediation(Na, 2001). In short, in cellular phone communication, no one interrupts the speaker and receiver except noise or technological problems (e.g., an antenna, relay station, or network) because the speaker and receiver control their cellular phones by themselves.

In addition, cellular phone communication is also similar to computer-mediated communication (CMC). Computer-mediated communication is a direct contact between individuals via computer or the Internet through transcendence of space, and it normally uses written language. This definition is similar to the definition of cellular phone communication that I explained before. Computer-mediated communication is a contact method between people who are separated by time and space through a computer network(e.g., Internet or e-mail). Computer-mediated communication(such as chat rooms through the Internet) is very similar to cellular phone communication because both media share the characteristic of immediate interaction. Currently, people can send visual and spoken language through the Internet but the difference

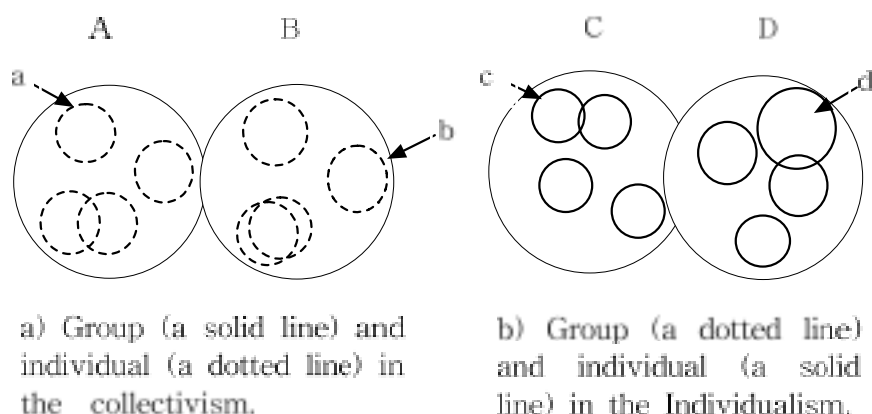
between cellular phone and Internet communication styles is that cellular phone communication uses spoken language and computer-mediated communication most often uses written language. However, nowadays, even cellular phone communication can use written language to send text messages. In addition, computer mediated communication can use visual and spoken language by using video cameras and microphones.

Another characteristic of cellular phone communication is communication control. If the receiver does not want to talk with the speaker or does not want to receive a message, the receiver can control communication in several ways. For example, in cellular phone communication, people can turn off their cellular phones anytime if they do not want to receive messages or talk with the speaker. In this way, people can avoid being the object of immediate and direct interaction via a cellular phone. On the other hand, people can limit receiving calls by giving their cellular phone numbers to only a limited group of people. In other words, in cellular phone communication, personal direct control of phone communication is becoming a more advantageous way of sending and receiving messages. In computer-mediated communication, people also can control communication by turning off their computers and giving their e-mail address to only a select group of people.

(2) Direct interaction between individuals

Since this study focuses on cellular phone use in Korea, we must first define some differences between Korean and Western cultures. This will allow us to identify unique research needs and specific communication challenges affecting cellular phone use in Korea. Min and Na(1998) presented a model of symbolic groups and individuals who are in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. For example, the U.S. is mainly individualistic and Korea is mainly collectivistic. Figure1 illustrates these two models. In these two diagrams, a solid line represents a part(group) which cannot be crossed over because the boundary is clear. In contrast, a dotted line means the part (group) can overlap because the boundary is not clear. As seen in Figure1, individuals in a collectivist culture have a clear boundary between the inner groups. In the inner group of collectivism, there are many parts that are held in common without classification of "yours and mine"(Min & Na, 1998). Thus, communication between group members overflows to the inside of group (Park, 1994, 1996).

Figure 2. The model of group and individual in collectivistic and individualistic cultures.



In this circumstance, through cellular phones, the possibility of immediate and direct interaction means contacting individuals directly without the consciousness of the groups' boundaries. For example, if a person (c) who belongs to group (C) wants to contact with a person (d) who belongs to group (D), the person (d) who belongs to group (D), the person (c) can contact the person (d) directly without considering the group (D) itself. In other words, before the cellular phone existed, if a boy (a) wanted to talk with his girlfriend (b), he had to call his girlfriend's house (group (B)) first, and then through one of the householders (gatekeepers) he could talk with his girlfriend. However, through cellular phones, there are no gatekeepers, so he can call his girlfriend directly.

In another example, if someone wants to talk with a company director, he/she can call directly through a cellular

phone without gatekeeping (by a secretary) if he/she knows the company director's cellular phone number. However, most of time, the company directors control cellular phone communication by giving their cellular phone number to a limited number of people. Unlike in typical phone communication, people can interact only with people the speaker wants to talk to through cellular phones. Increasing use of cellular phones makes possible direct interaction between individuals anywhere and anytime without passing through groups. This means that human culture is gradually changing to prefer person-to-person contact without the intervention of a group.

According to Hofstede(1991), because of increasing individualism, the media or the medium of communication has become gradually smaller and smaller (p.76). Hofstede(1991) explains the process by noting that almost every media of communication has become individualized after increasing the level of wealth:

when a country's wealth increases, its citizens have access to resources which allow them to 'do their own thing'. The storyteller in the village market is replaced by TV sets, first one per village, but soon more. In wealthy Western family homes every family member may have his or her own TV set. The caravan through the desert is replaced by a number of buses, and these by a larger number of motor cars, until each adult family member drives a different car.

The village hut in which the entire family lives and sleeps together is replaced by a house with a number of private rooms. Collective life is replaced by individual life(Hofstede, 1991, p.76).

The telephone has similar circumstances. The first time the telephone was introduced, only one phone existed in a village; after several years, almost every house had its own phones; nowadays, in many families (in Korea), every household member has his/her individual phones. Moreover, in many cases, one person has more than two phones (including cellular phones).

(3) Constant contact availability

Cellular phone communication gives the feeling of constant contact availability without the limitation of time and space. The cellular phone also is useful to build trust between persons(especially in close relationships). For example, in Korea, many parents buy cellular phones for their children to check upon their locations. Through cellular phone communication, people can have the feeling that the receiver is always there whenever they need to talk with him/her. Constant contact availability is one of the characteristics of cellular phone communication and is a useful fact in the security of a relationship.

Even though the speaker and the receiver are in different locations, whenever the speaker wants to talk with the receiver, the speaker is able to contact the receiver. If by

chance, a speaker cannot contact the person immediately, the speaker may leave a message. As soon as the receiver gets a message, the receiver can call back through a cellular phone. However, although the receiver can call back to the speaker immediately, the receiver may not call back. In that case, the speaker cannot contact the receiver immediately. Nevertheless, through cellular phones, it is possible to contact people anytime and anywhere.

IV. Korean Youth cultural characteristics and cellular phone communication

1. The change of identity and the change of communication style

From a cultural perspective between individualism and collectivism, generally, Korea is classified as a collectivistic culture. However, in the last two decades, the value of individualism has increased through the change of personal identity(Na & Cha, 1999). Especially, this change is conspicuous in the younger generation. Because of this change and the desire for individualization by the younger generation, the need for individual value and contact are increasing, even though group, national, and organizational values are emphasized externally in Korea. In the Korean culture, because the boundary between groups is clear,

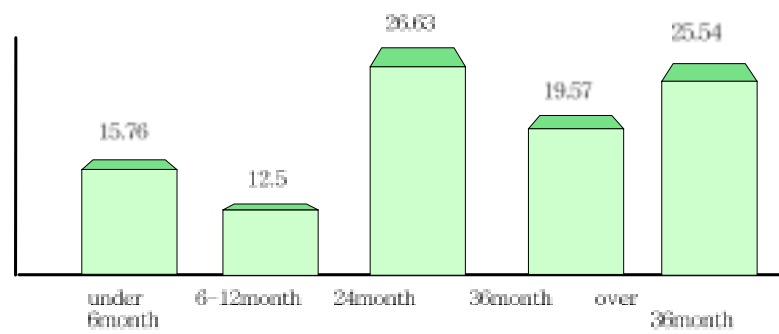
crossing the boundary is difficult. Therefore, a rapid increase in cellular phone use is possible due to the growth of the desire for direct and immediate contact between individuals passing over the group boundaries.

To illustrate the rapidly changing values of young people in Korea, Na & Cha(1999) examined that individualism has increased in Korea. According to their research, during the last two decades, Korean people chose themselves and their families as more important aspects in their lives than national and group identities(Na & Cha, 1999). For example, in Na & Cha's(1999) research, 33.3%(men) and 49.3% (women) chose themselves and their families as the most important aspect of their lives in 1979, but in 1998, more than 71% of people chose themselves and their families as more important than the nation or the group. Even though the cultural aspects have changed, if communication still stresses the group, it is reasonable that the desire for direct contact between individuals will expand. This family-central individualism goes along with the cellular phone communication, thus the cellular phone communication is utilized to strengthen close relationships between close friends or between family members.

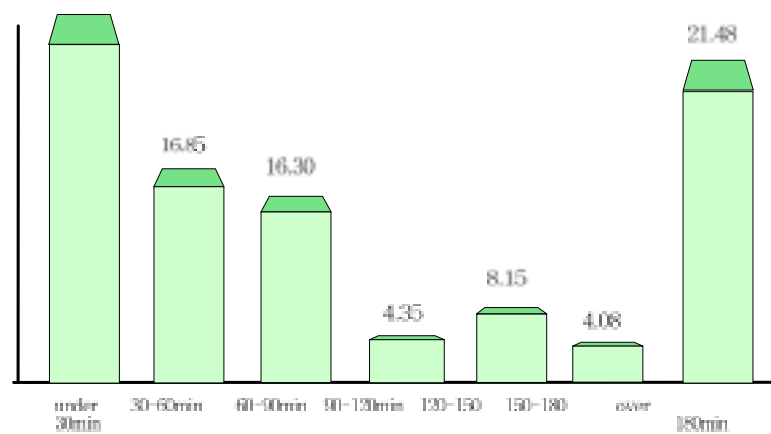
Yang(2002, pp.42-43) was studied to search to use on cellular phone of the Korean youth. She had presented to result as the table 1.

<table 1> The used degree on cellular phone of the youth

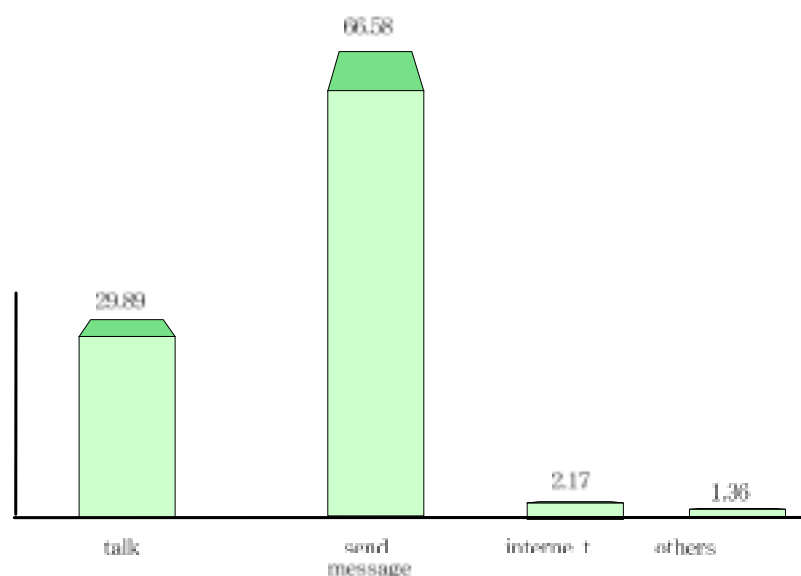
① Period



② Time



③ Purpose



Especially the major reason to use of the cellular phone were represented to the send to written message with youth each other.

Besides the increasing individualism in Korea, another conspicuous change of identity is the increase of self-opinion which could also indicate a change in the way people communicate their opinions. For example, according to Na & Cha's study, in 1998, 90.6% of male respondents and 83.3% of female respondents responded that younger people should point out a mistake when older people make a mistake. On the other hand, in 1979, 87% of male respondents and 61% of female respondents responded that younger people should indicate an error when older people make a mistake.

Since Korean culture is changing, this change has affected communication style and phone usage in Korea. For an example of cultural change in Korea, Na & Cha (1999) discovered a conspicuous change in their survey question about whether people should be patient or require correction about other family members' requirements or mistakes. In 1979, among male respondents, correction (81%) is higher than patience, and among female respondents, patience (52%) is higher than correction. On the other hand, in 1998, the male respondents on the subject of correction were reduced by 20%, but the female respondents of correction increased by 20%. In the typical Korean culture, to keep happiness with family women usually should be patient when men require something of them. In short, for women, patience was a noble attribute in Korean customs of long standard; however, it is changing now. Thus part of Korean culture is being reduced in Korea.

These changes of identity in Korea bring necessarily the change of communication style. People want direct communication (person-to-person) without going through the group because of increasing individualism. Unlike Western countries, in the Korean culture, direct and expressive communication has become pressed by social hierarchy and customs of long standing traditions (especially, for women and the younger generation). Once immediate and direct communication between individuals on cellular phones became possible, women and members of the younger generation quickly adapted the cellular phones.

Besides individualism and self-opinion, the other cultural characteristic that affects the cellular phone use is the uncertainty reduction, as mentioned above. Relating to the cellular phone communication, people tend to prefer communicating directly and immediately with the desired person and to dislike waiting to connect with their desired person. The certainty that people can take a call anywhere and anytime and transmit their messages on the first attempt affects people who have a high tendency of uncertainty reduction as a fascination. The reason for the preference is that cellular phone communication has immediacy and spatial-temporal transcendence and is based on immediacy of response, whereas electronic mail communication has spatial-temporal transcendence but does not have immediacy.

The most immediate communication device as a direct connection device between individuals appropriately satisfies Korean people who have a desire to hurry. In addition, when people face impossible forecasts or uncertain situations (such as traffic jams), the desire for a communication device by which people can quickly inform other people about the situation is increased. In short, the popularity of the cellular phone communication in Korea is due to the tendency of uncertainty reduction, increasing individualism, and an increasing self-opinion value.

According to the using of cellular phone of the youth have been seriously problem on the identity crisis looks like a aggressiveness and depression.

2. Cultural gap between the older and younger generations and the cellular phone communication

In the last two decades, the change of Korean identity can be summarized as an increasing generation gap and decreasing gender gap(Na & Cha, 1999). Because of the cultural gap between the older and younger generations, there is a difference in general communication styles. Furthermore, like general communication styles, in cellular communication styles the difference follows naturally. In general, because the older generation has great reluctance to use new technological devices and is unaccustomed to using new technological devices, the new device increases uncertainty.

The cultural role of teenagers also tended to enlarged in cities. In contrast, because the younger generation is more willing to embrace existing telecommunication devices and is accustomed to using new technological devices, the new device can help to reduce uncertainty through immediate communication. Because of these characteristics, the younger generation might be expected to have an open mind to adapt and use cellular phones in various ways (e.g., talking, sending text messages, using it as a video camera, finding information, reservation of tickets, and tele-banking). The younger generation not only prefers direct and immediate communication but also has a tendency to show off their uniqueness. In other words, in general, because the younger generation might prefer informal, private, and

unregulated communication, their characteristics are in accord with the characteristics of cellular phone communication naturally. In addition, because the younger generation has low rejection and has high curiosity about new technological devices, they are enjoying the new device in various ways.

Also, the younger generations are used to send the various message like the emoticon, destructive language as the follows examples to other friends.

In Cohen's investigation, a couple of youth groups deviating behaviour caused the panic(John Fornas & Goran Bolin, 1995). In other cases, the causes have been street assaults, drugs abuse, violence, eating disorder, unwanted pregnancies, bullying, and dropping out of school. What has triggered off the alarm has been a new mass medium considered particularly dangerous for youth.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of cellular phones and the relationship between Korean culture and cellular phone communication. The findings of the current research indicate that nowadays, the cellular phone is settling down as a necessity for interpersonal communication because of three characteristics: immediate accessibility and control, direct interaction between individuals, and constant contact availability.

Especially in Korea, a rapid increase in cellular phone

use is occurring because of the growth of the desire for direct and immediate contact between individuals passing over the group boundaries(such as family). This increase is based on the growth of individualism which has increased through the change of personal identity in Korea. In addition to increasing individualism, another characteristic that affects cellular phone use is the uncertainty reduction (e.g., people's tendency to prefer communicating with target person and to dislike dealing with intermediate interlocutor or waiting to communicate with the person they want to talk to). Lastly, the other characteristic that affects the cellular phone use is an increasing self-opinion value which has influence on increasing the use of cellular phones. As a result, the popularity of cellular phone communication in Korea is because of an increasing individualism, the tendency of uncertainty reduction, and an increasing self-opinion value.

Finally, this study does not analyze people's reactions to cellular phone use but analyzes the characteristics of cellular phone communication and the relationship between Korean culture and cellular phone communication, based on a survey of prior research. Future research on the analysis of cellular phone communication can examine users' reactions to their satisfaction through using cellular phones. Through researching users' reactions, future research can reveal how cellular phone users satisfy and meet their desires.

In addition, this current research has only looked at the relationship between the Korean culture and cellular phones. To examine differences of using cellular phones in different

cultures, future research can analyze the characteristics of cellular phone use in different cultural contexts(e.g., Western vs. Eastern countries, developed vs. undeveloped countries, and democratic vs. communist countries). Through this analysis, future research can find out different characteristics of cellular phone use in different cultural, economic, and ideological contexts.

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한국 청소년의 핸드폰 문화와 의사소통의 이해

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현대사회의 정보화가치에 대한 평가는 매우 중대하게 논의되면서 그 한편에 청소년들이 사용하는 커뮤니케이션의 유형도 빠른 속도로 변화하고 있다. 기성세대와의 차별적 특성을 보이는 청소년들의 휴대폰 사용에 따른 문화적 격차는 점차 확대되면서 그들만의 문화 즉 정보수용형태로 자리잡고 있다. 휴대폰은 그 특성상 과거의 단지 의사소통의 시각을 무선과 정보전달, 문자제공 등 다양한 영역에서 변화를 가져오면서 기존의 사고를 변화시키고 더 나아가 주 제층으로 이용자인 청소년들의 휴대폰사용에 따른 기성세대간의 문화적 격차는 더욱 심화된 전망이다.

이러한 점에서 청소년들이 사용하는 휴대폰과 관련된 커뮤니케이션 스타일과 관련된 이론을 제시해 보고 그들이 보이는 문화 즉 휴대폰의 과도한 사용과 문제가 기성세대의 격차를 심화시키는 데 따른 문제점을 간단히 제시해 보았다.

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