Chapter 8
Associations Between Dependency on LINE Text Messaging and Occurrence of Negative Emotions in LINE Group Chats

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ABSTRACT

This study examined associations between dependency on LINE text messaging and the times at which negative emotions occurred in survey participants in LINE group chats in two situations—when waiting for a response and when making others wait for a response. The main results of correlation analyses of dependency scores and times are as follows. While effects were not observed for dependency as a whole, strong effects of partial subscales were observed. That is, the higher the score of relationship maintenance, which is a subscale of dependency, the shorter the time it takes for negative emotions to occur. On the other hand, it was partially suggested that the higher the score of excessive use, which is another subscale of dependency, the longer the time for negative emotions to occur. This study proposes that it is necessary to break down each aspect of LINE text-messaging dependency when examining the impact of the dependency on the timing of users generating negative emotions in LINE group chats.

INTRODUCTION

People spanning several generations are now using smartphones and other mobile devices on a daily basis for communication (Faulkner & Culwin, 2005; Skierkowski & Wood, 2012). Currently, the leading smartphone communication tool in Japan is the "Chat" text messaging function of the Line mobile app (hereinafter, the function and app are collectively referred to as "Line"), which is particularly widely used by young people. In 2016, 79.3% of teens and 96.3% of people in their 20s used Line (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2017). Unlike previous generations, which mainly relied on handwritten letters and emails, which are tacitly understood as a form of asynchronous communication, text messaging via smartphones and other mobile devices requires users to exchange messages—that is, to reply—with haste (Kato & Kato, 2015; Kato, Kato, & Chida, 2013).

Line has a function that allows the sender to see whether their message has been read by the recipient (i.e., that the recipient has opened the sender's message in Line); conversely, the sender can see that their message has not been read (i.e., that the recipient has not opened the sender's message in Line) when the "Read" notification is not displayed (Hoyle, Das, Kapadia, Lee, & Vaniea, 2017). The presence of this function, also known as "read receipts," on Line has given way to the naming of two phenomena: "unread/ignored," which is when a sent message has not been read (or has been read via means other than opening Line) and has not been responded to, and "left on read," which is when a sent message has been read, but has not been responded to. Line also has various other features, such as group chat—in which users can have simultaneous exchanges with multiple group members—and stickers, a new type of expressive image that can be sent and received. These features have diversified the forms of communication available to users, and are seen as benefits of using Line. However, they can also lead to various problems. One example is the negative emotions that occur when a user's message has been read but not responded to (Kato, Kato, & Ozawa, 2017). In other words, users have come to feel greater pressure to respond immediately after reading a received message than with email and other forms of communication (Kato, 2016). Furthermore, group chat-rooms result in more instances of unread messages and read messages without responses compared to individual exchanges because the application displays only the number of views; thus, the sender cannot identify who has read their message and who has not (Usuki, Kato, Ozawa, & Kato, 2018). This problem is one factor behind reports that using group chats leads to interpersonal conflict and bullying (Schreiber, 2015).

Because Line is a communication tool, its use can invoke in users the various emotions associated with interpersonal relationships. In addition, there are gender differences; for example, high school girls use communication applications more often than high school boys in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications,

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