

AFTER-DEATH COMMUNICATION WITH CELL PHONES: INTERIM RESULTS

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Background: There has been a history of apparent communication between the living and the dead through electronic means, known as instrumental transcommunication, including a history of “telephone calls from the dead.” With advances in technology during the 21st century, particularly smartphone development, this study extends previous research to examine whether apparent after-death communication occurs with cell phones. Data from 22 participants in a pilot study suggested this possibility.

Aims: To document the occurrence and characteristics of after-death communication with cell phones and to replicate these phenomena in a laboratory setting using smartphone applications that were developed for that purpose. Only the first of three studies is described here.

Method: A survey questionnaire was set up on Western University's server using Qualtrics. The questionnaire consists of 6 demographic items, 55 items specific to a participant's anomalous experiences, Saucier's Personality Inventory, and Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being. It was made available through online contacts with people interested in after-death communication.

Preliminary results: Of 118 survey respondents, 56 indicated they had experienced apparent after-death communication with cell phones. The most frequent forms of communication were text messages, incoming calls, and photos or videos showing up on a cell phone. Participants scored higher than norms for Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, Intellect, Autonomy, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, and Self-Acceptance. Cluster and reliability analyses of anomalous experiences items yielded 8 dimensions characterizing the messages, emotions, and circumstances of these events. These results suggest that at least some cases of anomalous apparent communication with the deceased are likely to have occurred and that they appear to have had a positive impact on participants.

Keywords: After-death communication, Instrumental transcommunication, Survival hypothesis

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