The relationship between empathic tendencies and nomophobia of prospective teachers

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Abstract

Mobile phone ownership and use is prolific in many countries like Turkey, with the numbers of people owning and using mobile phones rising rapidly in recent years. Nomophobia is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The term, an abbreviation for "nomobile-phone phobia", was coined during a study by the UK Post Office who commissioned YouGov, a UK-based research organisation to look at anxieties suffered by mobile phone users. The study found that nearly 53 percent of mobile phone users in Britain tend to be anxious when they "lose their mobile phone, run out of battery or credit, or have no network coverage."Empathy is a potential psychological motivator for helping others in distress. Empathy can be defined as the ability to feel or imagine another person's emotional experience. The ability to empathize is an important part of social and emotional development, affecting an individual's behavior toward others and the quality of social relationships. The concept of empathic tendency is ability demonstrate the potential emotional empathy of the individual. The Empathic Tendency Scale developed by Dökmen (1988) was used in the determination of empathic tendencies level of the participants. The aim of this study, examine the relationship between teachers' empathic tendency and nomophobia. In the study, data will collect from 389 prospective teachers. Research applications and data analysis is underway.

Keywords: Nomophobia, empathy, empathic tendency, prospective teachers.

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1. Introduction

The scientific and technological boost in the recent years certainly facilitates the major tasks of the people such as transport and health. One of the global technological advances is the mobile phones. Thanks to the mobile phones the people you may want to reach are accessible both audio and video no matter where they are. The internet and other phone applications provide instant access to information in almost every field and thus are used as an effective tool. They are used as a learning tool for miscellaneous courses. Everyone's learning patterns and pace is different. Everyone should discover their own learning patterns and paces and may learning according to their own needs by using miscellaneous mobile applications. The user friendly interfaces of such applications are advantages of the smart phones. Some of the recent studies are regarding the usage of the smart phone as a tool of learning a second language (Kingsley, Mustaffa, Keikhosrokiani & Azimi, 2016), study of the attitudes toward the usage of the smart phones in the professional development of the teacher and the learning-teaching process (Ekanayake & Wishart, 2015), in the professional development of the teachers and teacher candidates (Burden and Kearney, 2016; Herrington, Ostashewski, Reid & Flintoff, 2014), and regarding the usage of the smart phones in order to provide students general and distance learning opportunities (Hartnell-Young & Heym, 2008; Herrington, Herrington & Olney, 2012).

The fast developing global technologies provide us with many technological appliances which in turn make our life easier and more practical. One of the most important technological devices is the smart phone. The usage of the smart phones becomes quite common in our country with the largest segment of its users being the students. This is mostly because the students may do almost all of their tasks which would require an electronic environment with their mobile phones. This tool aiming to enrich the communication and information is affecting both positively and negatively the social behaviors, learning abilities, performances and social relations of the students. Despite the advantages of the smart phones for the human life some negative aspects have been also indicated (Gumus & Orgev, 2015).

On the other hand Yekaterina Murashova a pediatric psychologist (Brightside, 2016) observed what happened when a group of children and adolescent were deprived during one day from internet and access to the modern technologies. The subject's age varied between 12 and 18 age of years and the volunteers were asked to spend eight hours without accessing any communication tool (mobile phones, internet etc.). Meanwhile they were not allowed to use their computers or any other electronic tools, radios or TVs. However they were allowed to perform many "conventional" activities on their own: writing, reading, playing a musical instrument, drawing, sewing, singing, walking etc.. According to the test criteria the participants had to explain how they dealt with being alone under such conditions. They were asked to explain how and what they felt during the test and to record their activities. Only three of 68 participants (one girl and two boys) managed to complete the test. Three of the participants had suicidal tendencies, five of them experienced intense panic attacks and 27 participants had sickness, sweating, dizziness, hot blushes and abdominal pains. Almost all the subjects experienced anxiety. After the termination of the test 14 of the participants accessed the social networks immediately, 20 subjects called their friends over their mobile, 3 participants called their parents and five participants visited their friends personally. The other subjects watched TV or started to play video games. Almost all of the subjects grabbed their earphones immediately (Brightside, 2016). These findings indicated the over dependency of the young generation to the technological devices. The young generation is not spending time alone and is not thinking- they are spending excessive time with things which they are not doing; they are insufficient in finding occupations and are so far from enlarging their imaginations. Teens are just too dependent on technology now. The general reason of the mobile phone dependency of the college students may be indicated as their desire to be in a constant touch with their families and friends.

The key statistics for digital, social, and mobile media in 2016 are (We Are Social, 2016):3.42 billion internet users, equaling 46% global penetration; 2.31 billion social media users, delivering 31% global

penetration; 3.79 billion unique mobile users, representing 51% global penetration; 1.97 billion mobile social media users, equating to 27% global penetration.

According to the results of the study conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) (2016) number of mobile telephone subscribers 1994   81.276, 1995 332.716, 2000   14.970.745, 2005 43.608.965, 2010 61.769.635, 2015   73.639.261 and 2016 73.650.996*.   * Data is by the end of June 2016

It is a fact that the use of smartphones and the Internet makes our daily lives easier in every aspect. However, the misuse and excessive use of the Internet bring about various physical, behavioral and psychological problems along with it. To give an example, individuals could be addicted to the Internet and consequently, they could have depression, low self-esteem, oversensitivity, guilt and despair (Gezgin & Cakir, 2016).

2. Method

This research has been carried out in accordance with the general screening model. The study was conducted in survey model and descriptive statistics.

2.1. Study model and participants

The universe of research is composed of students of Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education and the sampling of the research is made of 284 female, 105 male, total 389 students who study various main disciplines of the faculty. The sampling of the survey is selected by random cluster sampling method among the students who attend faculty in 2015-2016 education year.

2.2. Instruments

Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q), which was developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015) and adapted into Turkish by Yildirim, Sumuer, Adnan, and Yildirim (2015) was used in the study. The scale was itemized according to 7 Likert Type and included 20 items. The reliability coefficient of the original scale was calculated as .95 by using Cronbach's Alpha and the reliability coefficient of Turkish version was found as .92. As is known, having this value over .80 means that this scale has a high reliability (Field, 2005) The scale has four sub- dimensions. Not Being Able to Access Information (4 items), Losing Connectedness (5 items), Not Being Able to Communicate (6 items) and Giving up Convenience (5 items). In the original scale, the reliability coefficients of these sub-dimensions were given as in the order, .94, .87, .83 and .81. The reliability coefficients of the scale were reported as .90, .74, .94 and .91.

2.3. Analysis of data

Pearson moments correlation parameter technique is used in research in order to determine relationship between empathic tendencies and nomophobia of prospective teachers.

3. Results

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of the nomophobia scale and sub-dimensions

	Min	Max	X	Standard Deviation
Not being able to access information	1,00	7,00	4,28	1,806
Losing connectedness	1,00	7,00	2,69	1,557
Not being able to communicate	1,00	7,00	4,58	1,777
Giving up convenience	1,00	7,00	3,99	1,709
Total	1,00	7,00	3,89	1,712

The inability to establish contact and access information which is one of the sub dimensions of the nomophobia scale was at the highest levels.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the empathic tendencies and nomofobia.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
NoMob	3,8990	1,37297	389
EmTend	62,7589	6,54206	389

Table 3. Correlations of the empathic tendencies and nomofobia

	NoMob	EmTend
NoMob Pearson Correlation	1	,226**
Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
N	389	389
EmTend Pearson Correlation	,226**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
N	389	389
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

A statistically significant low level relation was observed between the emphatic tendency and nomophobia.

Table 5. Group statistics of the empathic tendencies and nomofobia

			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NoMob	Gender	Female	284	4,09	1,341	,0796
		Male	105	3,39	1,331	,1299
EmpTend	Gender	Female	284	63,06	6,463	,3835
		Male	105	61,94	6,713	,6551

The female participants had higher emphatic tendency levels as well as nomophobia levels.

Dimensions of nomophobia were identified: not being able to communicate, losing connectedness, not being able to access information and giving up convenience (Yildirim and Correia, 2015). Nomophobia is defined as the fear and anxiety when an individual cannot access his or her mobile/smart phone or cannot have the chance to communicate online and offline via mobile devices. Nomophobic tendencies can change individuals' daily habits. Negative emotions due to nomophobic tendencies like fear and anxiety especially in young people is thought to affect their school lives and academic achievements (Gezgin and Çakır, 2016).

GSMA Intelligence (2016) reports that today, the number of active mobile subscribers more than 7.8 billion. International Business Times' definition (2013) lists some of the situations in which people get anxious: "Nomophobia or no-mobile-phone-phobia is an anxiety which people face when they feel they could not get signal from a mobile tower, run out of battery, forget to take the phone with them or simply do not receive calls, texts or email notifications for a certain period of time. In short, it is a psychological fear of losing mobile or cell phone contact." And "It's (nomophobia) is happening subconsciously, and one out of five people are texting while they're driving. For many under-30s, the

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smartphone has become an extension of themselves, from the moment they wake up until the second they fall asleep."

A study findings were that when iPhone users were unable to answer their ringing iPhone during a word search puzzle, heart rate and blood pressure increased, self-reported feelings of anxiety and unpleasantness increased, and self-reported extended self and cognition decreased. These findings suggest that negative psychological and physiological outcomes are associated with iPhone separation and the inability to answer one's ringing iPhone during cognitive tasks (Clayton, Leshner and Almond, 2015). International Business Times' (2013) in a survey finding, nine out of 10 people under thirty years of age admitted to be suffering from nomophobia.

A survey results (Yildirim, Sumuer, Adnan & Yildirim, 2015) revealed "42.6% of young adults had nomophobia, and their greatest fears were related to communication and information access. The study also found that gender and the duration of smartphone ownership had an effect on young adults' nomophobic behaviors, whereas age and the duration of mobile phone ownership had no effect."

According to research by SecurEnvoy (2012) said a student interviewed; "It's funny, I've lost my keys, my wallet and just about everything else — but never my iPhone. The way I keep it with me, I don't know if that's even really possible," and recent survey, 66 percent of people suffer from nomophobia, the fear of being without their mobile phone. According to SecurEnvoy, a mobile phone technology company ages 18-24 are considered to be most nomophobic at 77 percent. The study by SecurEnvoy also found that 75 percent of people use their phone in the bathroom. Society is connected like never before with instant access to friends, family and information. With so much personal information that users are able to have on their phones, from schedules and reminders to pictures and apps that are an asset to daily life, phones have become an extension of ourselves.

Smartphone addiction risk was positively related to perceived stress, but the latter was negatively related to satisfaction with life. Additionally, a smartphone addiction risk was negatively related to academic performance, but the latter was positively related to satisfaction with life (Samaha & Hawi, 2016).

The smart phone shall be thought of as a device which may meet certain necessities of the people. The phones should not become a purpose. The teacher candidates should be explained the effectiveness of the usage of the technological tools but they should be prevented of becoming technology slaves.

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