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Student and academician views on the use of smart phones during courses by the students studying in the department of social work: Ankara University sample

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the views of the students and academicians on the use of smart phones during the course. In the quantitative work, the data was gathered using a demographic information form and scale which was developed by the researchers and applied on 260 students and 15 academicians. The information was analyzed by utilizing F-test, t-test and r-test techniques. Whilst 96.6% of the students have mobile phones, 94.6% have social media accounts. 23.5% of them are using their phones 6 hours or more a day. There is a considerable difference between the prohibition of usage of smart phones, the reasons to use the phones and the relation between academician-student. The usage of smart phones during the course affects the relation between the academician and student. The academicians should find ways of turning this desire of students to use smart phones into an advantage and thus make it a contribution to the course.

Keywords: Academician, class, smart phone, social work students.

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1. Introduction

The rapid improvements in information technology make their appearance in the world of higher education as well. Young students adopt themselves to this massive fluctuation very swiftly and reflect in the courses.

The 21st century became the focal point where access to internet has shown an enormous improvement by mobile smart phones, tablets and laptops (McKendrick, 2014). Due to the fact that smart phones are personal, accessible and they are always side-by-side with the user (Yolal & Kozak, 2008; Ozascilar, 2012; Ay, 2013), as the souls of *net generation* (Robinson & Stubberud, 2012), the university students are using their smart phones at the class during their courses. Those smart phones have the capabilities to send on line text messages, multimedia messages, taking photos and recording videos, sending and receiving e-mails (Robinson & Stubberud, 2011; Karaaslan & Budak, 2012; Cosier, Gomez, McKee & Maghxi, 2015), recording voices, accessing the internet and social media accounts like facebook, twitter and instgram (Westwood, Taylor & McKendrick, 2014) and chat. Amongst the rapidly growing users of smart phones and social media, one can see mostly the teenagers and university students (Arslan & Tutgun-Unal, 2013; Mishra, Mishra & Rawat, 2015; Karpman & Drisko, 2016). Based on the research, the students are using their smart phones at different levels for different purposes such as texting, accessing internet, playing games, taking photos or recording videos, e-mail, research or for the courses (Dursun, 2004; Balci & Gulnar, 2009; Arslan & Yazici, 2016).

The fast spread of internet and the capability of the smart phones connecting to internet along with the variety of other functions causes especially on the young individuals to become addicted or troubled internet users (Balci & Gulnar, 2009; Ay, 2013; Aslan & Yazici, 2016). Addiction to internet causes in general; unrestrainable excessive use of internet, extreme temper and aggression in case when usage is lacking, degradation of individual's professional, educational and social life along with family relations; physical, social and intellectual life of the youth are threatened (Tuzun, 2002; Arisoy, 2009; Dinc, 2010). This also led to a new contribution to the literature in psychology: "nomofobi" which derives from "no mobile phone" (Dirik, 2016, p.24). The addiction to smart phones can be evaluated in relation with internet addiction, due to the easy access to the internet. (Kutlu, Savci, Demir & Aysan, 2016).

1.1. Social work education

The latest developments in computers and internet led to a revolution in social work education (Clayton & Uebel, 2014). In the last decade, they have been more widespread so that instructors and students communicate via mobile phones and text messages as alternative methods (Cosier et al., 2015). New learning opportunities will automatically increase as there will be more utilization of new technologies and software in the education environments (Jarvela, Naykki, Laru & Luokkanen, 2007). One of these new learning opportunities is social media, which can be used as a creative and sustainable educational tool and can create a platform for students to share information with each other and discuss online (Fang, Mishna, Zhang, Van-Wert, & Bogo, 2014; Franklin, Hossain & Coren, 2016).

1.2. Problem

Along with its benefits or popularity among the users, social media (smart phones) create new problems for social work trainers (Fang, Mishna, Zhang, Van-Wert & Bogo, 2014). The students are using their smart phones at all times and all places and during courses (Dirik, 2016; Nikolic, Vukonjanski & Terek, 2016). They use their smart phones during course time not for academic purposes, but to surf the internet, social media or playing games (Dursun, 2004; Balci & Gulnar, 2009; Arslan & Yazici, 2016). Using the mobile phones at a high density causes distractibility in the students and prevents them to focus on the courses (Dirik, 2016; Nikolic, Vukonjanski & Terek, 2016). This

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status distracts the focus of academicians and affects the relations between academicians and students. Therefore, it is needed to find out the views of the academicians and students on the usage of smart phones by students during courses. Although there are works that approaches to the case of smart phones through social media or internet usage/addiction, there has been no work found before on this topic.

2. Method

The population of this research conducted during the 2015-2016 term is comprised of the registered 335 undergraduate and graduate students of the Ankara University Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Social Work, along with the academicians. The data was acquired from 260 volunteering students and 15 volunteering academicians who are among the participants to the courses at which the questionnaire forms were applied. The data was collected through questionnaires dedicated to students and another for academicians, which were developed by the researchers. Socio-demographic questions were placed in the first part of the questionnaire, whereas the second part included questions on the usage of smart phones during the courses. Due to lack of scale on this topic, in order to develop the questionnaire (scale), a pre-questionnaire was applied consisting of 4 open ended questions to 115 students and 15 academicians. The data from the pre-questionnaire was categorized into 6 points Likert scale questionnaire with close ended questions. In the new form (scale) created, there were 25 questions for students and 15 questions for the academicians. 6 questions of the students' (1, 2, 3, 13, 16. and 17) were statistically not found to have considerable results (less than 30%) and therefore were left out of evaluation. Later, a factor analysis was applied in order to determine whether there are any similarities between the answers provided by the students. As a result, one can find that the answers are clustered under three sub-dimensions. Those are as follows: 1) "detention" (detention of students on using smart phones during the course), 2) "reason of using" (smart phones) and 3) "Academician-student relation" (Table 1). The analyses have been conducted over those three sub-dimensions. To enable reliability of the scale articles, factor analysis and Cronbach alpha (α) were applied. The values resulted between 0.60 – 0.80 reliability limits.

Table 1.Sub-dimension values

Factor1)Detention of students on using smart phones during course	Post-Rotation Load Value	Total Item Correlation
Question 18: I think the instructors should not detain students from using smart phones unless interrupting class order.	0,428	0,502
Question 19: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel myself restricted, detained and I get angry.	0,712	0,741
Question 20: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel like I want to throw to phone at him/her.	0,696	0,659
Question 21: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel like I wish, desire to use it secretly.	0,741	0,764
Question 22: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel upset, demoralized and cannot focus to the course.	0,826	0,841
Question 23: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel like I will be the last one to know about if something will happen.	0,732	0,699
Question 24: When I am prevented of using phone during course I feel like my body is missing something very essential.	0,828	0,703
Question 25: If there is a topic which I am very curious about, I will have hard times in controlling myself on the use of phone during course.	0,654	0,597
<i>Eigenvalue= 4,758, Released Variance= 59,46, $\alpha= 0,901$</i>		
Factor 2)Reason of Using smart phones		

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Question 6: I use the phone to check on how much more time is left for the course to end.	0,489	0,432
Question 7: I use the phone when the course is not attractive, when I am bored or when I feel sleepy.	0,640	0,652
Question 8: I use the phone during course to play game and entertainment.	0,568	0,617
Question 9: I use the phone during course to take photos, record voices and videos.	0,509	0,328
Question 10: I use the phone to instantly communicate with my acquaintances who are not present at the class.	0,711	0,595
Question 11: I use the phone during course when I need to check the notifications coming from my social media accounts.	0,721	0,590
Question 12: I use the phone during course to check the news and follow current affairs.	0,685	0,644
<i>Eigenvalue= 3,353, Released Variance= 47,907, $\alpha= 0,813$</i>		
Factor 3: Academician-Student relation		
Question 4: I use the phone during course in order to provide quick answer when the instructor asks a question	0,687	0,566
Question 5: I use the phone during course when the instructor's knowledge is not sufficient.	0,765	0,426
Question 14: When checking the subjects which the instructors cannot recall, I think we establish positive relations with them.	0,682	0,422
Question 15: I think when using the phone on the course about the topics, it increases attendance.	0,660	0,431
<i>Eigenvalue= 2,037, Released Variance= 50,930, $\alpha= 0,678$</i>		

Because the population of academicians who attended the research was limited, the answers provided to the scale questions could not pass validity-reliability test. 7 questions (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11. and 14.) out of 15 in the questionnaire form (scale) dedicated to academicians could not pass the validity-reliability test; therefore they were excluded from the questionnaire. The 8th and 15th questions among the remainder were selected as the representative committee and have been evaluated (Table 3) through the following factors: "Views factor towards the quality of the course (Factor 1" and "Attractiveness to the course factor (Factor 2)". The data of the work were analyzed via variance analysis (F Test), t test, correlation (r) and frequency distribution techniques.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings regarding the students

72.7% of the students were female, whereas 27.3% were male. 23.1% of them were freshman, 24.2% sophomore, 17.7% were junior, 20.4% were senior and 14.6% were graduate students. 96.6% of the students own smart phones with internet access. 94.6% have social media accounts. Likewise, based on the Turkish Statistical Institute research in 2016 on the usage of Information Technologies by the Household, 96.9% of the dwellings have mobile phones and among the internet usage purposes, social media takes part in the first stage. 23.5% of the participants use their smart phones 6 hours or more per day, whereas 28.1% uses between 4-6 hours a day, 30% between 2-4 hours, 7.7% between 1-2 hours and 8.5% less than 1 hour. This result coincides with the results of Jankovic, Nikolic, Vukonjanski and Terek (2016) argues the students' daily mobile phone usage is found to be 8.34 hours, based on their research made on 485 university students.

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When evaluating the mobile phone usage depending on *gender*; detention, reason to use and relation sub-scales do not create a considerable difference ($p>0.05$). Based on *grade*; there is a considerable difference seen between “detention”, “reason to use” and “academician-student relation” sub-dimensions (Table 2). Whereas the freshman experiences the emotion of “detention” the least (6.10%), the graduate students experience it the most (40.26%). This result can be explained on the basis that the freshman students have just graduated from high school where there are more rules and thus are more obedient and adaptive to the new rules of the new educational environment and have more interest in the courses. The graduate students on the other hand are more matured to the extent of academic perfection and thus experience the emotion of detention the most. When the “reason to use” sub-scale is evaluated, the highest difference is noticed between the graduates (28.13%) and freshman (26.76%). On the “academician-student relation” sub-dimension, with 17.84%, the relation between graduate students and academicians are considerably more different than the undergraduate students based on the smart phone usage during courses.

Table 2. Smart phone usage status based on grade

		N	\bar{X} Mean	Sd	F	p
Detention of students on usage of mobile phones during courses	Freshman	60	6,10	6,95	12,344	0.001
	Sophomore	63	30,82	8,76		
	Junior	46	29,76	9,97		
	Senior	53	30,49	10,43		
	Graduate	38	40,26	5,89		
	Total	260	33,16	9,36		
Reason to use smart phones	Freshman	60	25,76	6,22	14.898	0.001
	Sophomore	63	22,19	6,78		
	Junior	46	19,10	7,97		
	Senior	53	19,47	7,34		
	Graduate	38	28,13	6,09		
	Total	260	22,78	7,61		
Academician-student relation	Freshman	60	14,05	3,58	7,816	0.001
	Sophomore	63	14,19	4,18		
	Junior	46	13,19	4,00		
	Senior	53	14,83	4,03		
	Graduate	38	17,84	4,74		
	Total	260	14,64	4,29		

3.2. Findings regarding academicians

60% of the participant academicians were female, whereas 40% were male. 66.7% were research assistants, 6.7% instructors, 13.3% assistant professors, 6.7% associate professors and 6.7% were professor doctors. 66.7% were in 25-30 age group, 13.4% in 31-40, %21.1 in 41 and above. All of them have smart phones and 66.7% have social media accounts. 20% of the academicians are using their smart phones 6 hours and more per day, 26.7% between 4-6 hours per day, %33.3 between 2-4 hours, 6.7% between 1-2 hours and 13.3% less than an hour.

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Whereas 53.3% of the academicians totally agree to the statement that “the academician should state the smart phone usage rules during the course in the first hour”, 40% agree and 6.7% partially agree. Almost half of the academicians (46.7%) agree that “smart phone usage during the course has no positive side and thus should be prohibited”, the responses of the remaining academicians in different percentages (20% sometimes, 20% don’t agree, 13.3% completely) disagree with this statement (Table 3).

Table 3. Factors regarding the academicians

	Number	%
Factor 1: Views Factors towards the Quality of the Course		
Question 8: The academician should state the smart phone usage rules during course in the first hour		
Completely agree	8	53,3
Agree	6	40,0
Sometimes agree	1	6,7
Total	15	100,0
Factor 2: Attractiveness Factor to the Course		
Questions 15: Smart phone usage during course has no positive sides and thus should be prohibited		
Sometimes agree	7	46,7
Sometimes disagree	3	20,0
Disagree	3	20,0
Completely disagree	2	13,3
Total	15	100,0

4. Conclusion and Evaluation

The research revealed that when academicians prohibit the use of smart phones during the course, it backfires with addictive behavior from students (Table 1, Factor 1). Among the reasons to use the smart phones during the course are the following: disinterest in the course, playing games, taking photos, recording videos or sound, communicating, checking notifications from social media and checking news (Table 1, Factor 2). Regarding the relations with the academicians, the purposes of use are as follows: quick response, instructor’s knowledge is insufficient, establishing positive relations by finding the topics through internet from smart phones and checking topics related to the course and thus increase attendance (Table 1, Factor 3). These results show resemblance to the other works in the literature. According to Robinson and Singer (2014), the discussions in the course are usually held stable. The students are using mobile technologies in order to make those talks meaningful in their daily lives. In the work conducted every year with university students by EDUCASE Center for Analysis and Research (Brooks, 2016), the students recognize their use of phones as a key element to their success in their academic life and use them profoundly.

Analyzing the results related to the academicians, the percentages that have social media accounts (66.7%) are lower than the students’ (94.6%). It is argued that the fact that 33.5% of the academicians are above 30 years old is effective in this result. While 23.5% of the students use smart phones 6 hours or more per day, similarly 20% of the academicians use their smart phones 6 hours or more per day. It is argued that the fact that 66.7% of the academicians are almost peers (age 25-30) is effective in this result. 46.7% of the academicians, which is almost half of them, think that usage of mobile phones

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during courses has no benefits and should be prohibited. Based on the results, the different opinions of the students and academicians on the usage of mobile phones during the course naturally affect the relations of these two groups considerably.

With the new technological advancements, technology has naturally become a part of the social work education (Robbins & Singer, 2014). Experimental research shows that utilizing technology effectively, thoughtfully and skillfully in the classroom is beneficial for students (Brooks, 2016). Additionally, internet makes key contributions to one's learning process by accessing the needed information instantly, sharing information and satisfying learning requirements with this method; moreover simplifying communication with the world (Karahan & Izci, 2001). It is important to underline that technology is rapidly advancing and today's social work students are being prepared to a more different era in 30 years where more dense technological applications will be used (Zorn & Seelmeyer, 2017). The "Digital Native" generation who are born and raised in the era of digital technology are now applying for higher education. We the academicians cannot deny the power of the internet and technology which also covers smart phones, nor can we ignore (Fang et al., 2014). In addition to this, contemporary social work application requires contemporary social work implementers (Westwood et al., 2014), thus academicians who train these implementers shall utilize contemporary education methods and think on how to integrate (Brooks, 2016) technology, especially smart phones to their courses within a class environment. The wish of the students to use smart phones is high and it seems there is no comeback. By taking this fact into account, academicians should benefit from the positive features of smart phones with internet access and find ways to turn this to their advantage so that it will contribute to the course in a class environment; and enable students to develop themselves in this regard.

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