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**EXAMINATION OF LONELINESS AND MOBIL PHONE
ADDICTION PROBLEM OBSERVED IN TEENAGERS FROM
THE SOME VARIABLES**

*ERGENLERDE YANLIZLIK VE MOBİL TELEFON BAĞIMLILIĞI
PROBLEMİNİN BAZI DEĞİŞKENLERE GÖRE İNCELENMESİ*

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Abstract

Loneliness is a serious problem, which is leading among the developmental problems in adolescence period. Individuals seek for various ways in order to be able to deal with this problem. One of these solutions is the use of mobile phone. However the excessive use of mobile phone leads to the issue of problematic mobile phone use. In the study, it is aimed at the examination of the loneliness level of teenagers as well as their problematic mobile phone use in terms of several variables. The study was conducted on the basis of relational screening model based on descriptive method. In the study carried out using suitable sampling method, 481 high school students were applied UCLA Loneliness scale and Problematic Phone Use Scale. The findings were interpreted applying descriptive, correlation, t test and Anova analysis techniques. When the findings of the study were examined, it was concluded that the problematic phone use differ according to the sex, male teenagers experience higher level of problematic mobile phone use than female teenagers, girls experience denser loneliness than the boys, loneliness increases, problematic phone use increases as well and the phone use time increases in line with problematic phone use situation, however the level of loneliness decreases,

the issue of problematic phone use increases in parallel with increasing time of speaking on the phone, but the loneliness decreases.

Key Words: Mobile Phone Addiction, Loneliness, Teenagers.

Öz

Yalnızlık ergenlik dönemi gelişimsel sorunların başında gelen ciddi bir problemdir. Bireyler bu sorunla baş edebilmede çeşitli çözüm yolları ararlar. Bu çözüm yollarından biride mobil telefon kullanımudur. Teknolojik gelişmelere bağlı olarak mobil telefon hayatı kolaylaştırma ve yaşam kalitesini artırma yönünde etki yapmasına karşın mobil telefonun aşırı kullanılması problemli mobil telefon kullanımı sorununu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışmada ergenlerin yalnızlık düzeyi ile problemli mobil telefon kullanımları, cinsiyete, kullanım süresi değişkenlerine göre incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma betimsel yöntemle dayalı ilişkisel tarama modeli esas alınarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak yapılan çalışmada 481 lise öğrencisine UCLA Yalnızlık ölçeği ve Problemli telefon Kullanma Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar üzerinde betimsel (Aritmetik ortalama, Standart sapma, Eleman Sayısı), korelasyon (Değişkenler arasındaki ilişki), t testi ve Anova analiz teknikleri uygulanmış ve sonuçlar yorumlanmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular incelendiğinde, ergenlerde genel olarak mobil telefon kullanımının yaygın olduğu, cinsiyete göre problemli mobil telefon kullanmanın farklılaştığı, erkeklerin kızlara göre daha fazla problemli mobil telefon sorunu yaşadıkları, kızların erkeklere göre daha yoğun yalnızlık sorunu yaşadığı, yalnızlık ve problemli telefon kullanımı arasında pozitif yönde, ancak telefon kullanma süresi ile yalnızlık arasında negatif yönde bir korelasyon olduğu, buna göre yalnızlık arttıkça problemli telefon kullanımının da arttığı, ancak telefon kullanımı arttıkça yalnızlık duygusunun azaldığı, telefon kullanım süresi ile ilgili olarak bakıldığında kendini yalnız hisseden ergenlerin günlük daha fazla telefonla konuştukları ve problemli mobil telefon bağımlılığı problemi yaşadıkları sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mobil telefon bağımlılığı, yalnızlık, ergenler.

INTRODUCTION

According to many theorists, the most critical years after the childhood period in developmental terms are those called as adolescence. The qualifications gained in this period help individual pass to adulthood in a sound manner and the problems to be experience will cause crises. The most important problems for teenagers are leaded by the feeling of loneliness. Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional state of mind experienced due to the fact that the individual feels himself lonely and as if no one

understood him and because of the difference between the existing social relations and wished social relations (Pepleu and Perlman, 1981), in which case there are not social relations needed or in spite of existence of different social relations, these relations are lack of intimacy, sincerity and sensuality (Weiss, 1973), and it is lack of satisfying social relations or it is a kind of psychological challenge accompanying to this absence (Young, 1982).

The loneliness is divided in two as social and emotional loneliness (Di Tommaso & Spinner, 1997). Especially teenagers feel the emotional loneliness intensely (Solomon & Greenberg, 2000) and emotional loneliness is a strong predictor affecting the life quality of teenagers (Salimi, 2011). The studies conducted on teenagers in Turkey suggested that loneliness is a common and serious problem and the girls experience loneliness problem more than boys (Gürsesa, Merhametli, Şahin, Güneş & Açikyildiz, 2011).

There many factors underlying the emergence of loneliness in teenagers. In the studies conducted, such factors as few social contacts (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2007), living alone, feeling of intense sadness, not being cared by friends and sisters/brothers (Adams et al, 2004; Dugan & Kivett, 1994), having physical handicap, using medication regularly and not having hobby (Arslantaş & Ergin, 2011), being lack of social support (Drageset, Kirkeveld & Espehaug, 2011), inactiveness, various diseases, death of a relative, physical-mental weaknesses and low economic level (Fokkema & Knipscheer, 2007), living separately from sisters/brothers and neighbors (Chalise, Saito, Takahashi & Kai, 2007), low care for the self, being unpleased with the living space and total dependency on someone else for daily activities (Hacihasanoglu, Yıldırım & Karakurt, 2012) trigger loneliness in teenagers.

Loneliness challenges teenagers emotionally as well as causes the development of unwanted problems. The most important problems include anger directed to the self and others (Lehnert, Overholser & Spirito, 1994; Çivitçi, 2011), self-pity and social disharmony (Joiner, Thomas, Peter, seeley & John, 2002; Baker & Bugay, 2011), low optimism and subjective wellbeing (Ottenheim et al, 2012; Hasida, 2012), weak social interaction and eating disorder (Levine, 2012), low living satisfaction (Azimeh, 2011), cognitive distortions, avoid affection and non-functional attitudes (Hamamcı & Duy, 2007), thoughts on death and alienation from social interaction (Ayalon & Shiovitz, 2011).

While teenagers resort to many ways to deal with loneliness problem, the use of mobile phone has increased recently depending on technological advances. The use of cell phone is effective against this problem under normal use conditions, whereas the excessive uses for different purposes cause any other problem. This problem is the problematic mobile phone addiction called as nomophobia. Today mobile phones have become the important part of individuals' daily life and regarded as the

compulsory tool to contact with other family members, call family members and friends, send message, be in contact with them in every possible place and time, connect to internet, play games and spend enjoyable time listening to music (Leena, Tomi,&Arja, 2005).

Nomophobia or the fear of being out of mobile phone contact affects the daily life styles of teenagers who especially want to connect to the social Networks. The term of Nomophobia is a problem, which was firstly discovered in the studies conducted in England in 2008 and 66% of teenagers stated that problematic cell (mobile) phone addiction always oppresses them (<http://www.radikal.com.tr>). The study conducted by Turkish Statistics Institute (2010) showed that the rate of owning a cell phone throughout Turkey is 90.5% while it is 92.8% and 85% in the urban and rural areas, respectively, which indicates that cell phones are quite common among teenagers.

When DSM-IV-TR (2005) criterion is examined, it is seen that mobile phone addiction is more of a habituation problem. Habits are the activities, which do not cause troubles in our daily life and enrich our life. However if these habits lead us to failure in solving our problems, if they cannot be controlled or become dangerous in psychological, social and cognitive terms, then it is indicated that these habits start to transform into addiction (Öztürk, 1989). According to Hollender (1993), mobile phone addiction is defined as the disorder which is comparable to obsessive-compulsive disorders and causes challenging behavior to eliminate anxiety or stimulation.

How does mobile phone addiction occur? It is possible to reply this question from the point of different approaches. For example, according to Griffiths (2003), everything that arouses interest causes addiction. When it is looked from this perspective, the use of mobile phone causes addiction as it gives excitement to the individual. According to Jacobs (1988), low or high stimulus, low self-respect and negative early childhood experiences cause negative emotions and disturb the homeostatic balance of the individual. So people tend towards behaviors causing addiction in order to run away from these negative emotions and ensure homeostatic balance. According to behavioral approach, if it is reached to satisfaction and got pleasant result following a behavior (positive reinforcer) or if a behavior helps getting rid of a negative behavior as stress and anxiety (negative reinforcement), then that behavior is reinforced and the person continues to take that behavior in order to take pleasure or get rid of negative condition (Cüceloğlu,1993). When it is looked from this perspective, the use of mobile phone gives pleasure to the people using the phone as well as relieves them of the pressure or anxiety. It is considered that such a reinforcement situation causes cell phone addiction.

In the studies, it is seen that the people, who use mobile phone at high level, have low level of self-respect (Phillips, Ogeil ve Blaszczynski, 2011), self-confidence and social ability (Kring, Davison, Neale and Johnson, 2007).

Mobile phone is not only used as communication tool between individuals; it is also a tool connecting people each other emotionally. In this context, although the use of mobile phone is an effective method to deal with loneliness and provide emotional support, its excessive use causes different types of problems that may be associated with addiction. To raise awareness about the loneliness and use of mobile phone in order for teenagers to deal with these problems exert importance in terms of preventive psychological consultancy.

The aim of the study is the examination of mobile phone addiction and loneliness problem observed in teenagers from the point of some variables. Depending on this aim, it is sought for answer to the following questions.

1- Do mobile phone addiction and loneliness levels of teenagers differ according to the sex?

2- Is there any significant relation between the times allocated by teenagers for daily cell phone use and the level of problematic phone use?

3- Do the levels of loneliness and problematic phone use differ by daily mobile phone use times of the teenagers?

METHOD

This study is conducted according to a relational screening model based on descriptive research model.

Target population and Sampling

The study was conducted on the basis of Convenience Sampling method. In this method, researcher studies on the most available condition or sampling until s/he reaches to a group in the required size (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2009). In this method, there is no particular method to draw sampling. It is studied on the most convenient, economic and ready sampling which is accessible. For the calculation of the sampling size, it was used sampling table prepared by Çıngı (adapted by Büyüköztürk et al, 2009). According to the table, for the target population of 500 thousand and over, the sampling size with deviation of .05 and error margin of .05 must be at least 384 people. In the study, totally 481 high school students were taken as a sample. In the selection of sample, it was taken 137, 105, 98 and 141 students from Bahçelievler High School, Hendek Anatolian High School, Çarşıbaşı High School and Aksaray Anatolian High School, respectively, which are considered to be accessible, economic, different and reliable for obtaining data.

Data Collection Tools

1- The UCLA Loneliness Scale

It was developed by Russell, Peplau and Ferguson and was re-ordered in 1980 (Russell, Peplau & Cutrano, 1980). It is a scale made of 20 items of which 10 are direct and the other 10 are reverse coded. In each item of the scale, a circumstance that states a sense or a thought about the social relation is presented and the individuals are asked to state how often they meet this circumstance, on a four-point Likert scale. Higher score are accepted as a sign of loneliness that is met very occasionally. The lowest scores to be received from the scale is 20 and the highest is 80. In Turkey, the validity and reliability study of the UCLA Loneliness Scale was completed by Demir (1990). In the adaptation study, it was found out that there is a significant difference at the level of .001 between the groups which complain and which do not complain about loneliness. The validity - Cronbach Alfa coefficient of the scale was calculated as .96 and the test retest reliability coefficient as .94.

2- The Problematic Mobile Phone Use Scale:

The Problematic Mobile Phone Use Scale developed by Bianchi and Phillips (2005) was adapted to Turkish by Şar and Işıklar (2012). In the frame of adaptation works, the scale items were primarily translated into Turkish and then the opinions of nine specialists were taken, and the translation was improved in line with those opinions. The English and Turkish forms generated were filled out by 30 undergraduate students having a good command of English with 2-week intervals. The correlation value between English and Turkish forms was calculated as 0,78 and both scales were accepted equal. The scale was applied to 300 students for validity – reliability studies. For Turkish form of the scale, Cronbach Alpha coefficient for internal consistency was calculated as 0,94 and reliability co-efficient as 0,88. As a result of these values obtained, Turkish form of the scale was accepted as reliable and valid. The scores that may be gotten over a 5-point likert type scale with 27 questions vary between 27 and 135. As the scores that are gotten over the scale get higher, the mobile phone addiction increases.

Data Processing

Regarding descriptive statistics used for data processing in the study, it was applied correlation analysis and t test for paired comparisons, and Anova test and for comparison of more than two groups, afterwards the results were interpreted. It was benefited from SPSS 10.00 program to evaluate data.

FINDINGS

1- Do mobile phone addiction and loneliness levels in teenagers differ according to the sex?

Table 1. The Scores and Statistics Results Regarding Mobile Phone Use and Loneliness Characteristics of Male and Female Teenagers

Variables	Sex	N	X	St. dv.	t	df	P
Prob. Mobile Phone Use	Male	127	53.68	26.03	2.36	479	.019*
	Female	354	47.96	22.46			
Loneliness	Male	127	37.40	10.75	-5.12	479	.000**
	Female	354	44.07	13.18			

* p< .05, ** p< .01

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is seen that upon the comparison of problematic mobile phone use scores of the teenagers that participated in the study according to sex variable ($t_{479}= 2.36$, $p< .05$), the difference is t significant, however the difference between loneliness scores ($t_{479}= -5.12$, $p< .01$) by the sex is significant.

According to this result, it can be said that the levels of problematic mobile phone use of teenagers are vary according to the sex; male teenagers experience higher level of problematic mobile phone use than female teenagers. Female teenagers experience higher level of loneliness problem than male teenagers.

2- Is there any significant relation between the times allocated by teenagers for daily cell phone use and the level of problematic phone use?

Table 2. Analysis of descriptive and correlation values regarding loneliness and problematic mobile phone use

	Prb. mob.tel.use	Loneliness	Use time
Prb.Mob.Tel. Use	N=481 X=49.47 Ss.=23.56	---	---
Loneliness	N=481 X=42.31 Ss.=12.91	.247*	---
Use Time	N=481 X=1.56 Ss.=.77	.806*	-.464*

*p< .05

When it is looked into the descriptive and correlation results with regard to the variables in Table 2, it is seen that the relation between problematic phone use of teenagers and their loneliness levels is positive and significant at the level of $p < .01$; the relation between problematic phone use time and problematic phone use is positive and significant at the level of $p < .01$ and the relation between problematic phone use time and loneliness level is negative and significant at the level of $p < .01$. According to these results, it can be said that as loneliness increases, problematic phone use increases as well and the phone use time increases in line with problematic phone use situation, however the level of loneliness decreases.

3- Do the levels of loneliness and problematic phone use differ by daily cell phone use times of the teenagers?

Table 3. Descriptive and Anova results of the data regarding loneliness and problematic phone use situations in teenagers according to daily phone use time

Variables	Daily Phone Use time	N	X	St.dv	F	P
Prb.Mob.Tel. Use	1-2 hour	297	38.22	10.05		
	2-4 hour	98	45.21	11.42	769.73*	.000
	4+	86	93.15	15.55		
	Total	481	49.47	23.56		
Loneliness	1-2 hour	297	47.59	12.37		
	2-4 hour	98	33.14	7.98	88.88*	.000
	4+	86	34.54	8.98		
	Total	481	42.31	12.91		

* $p < .01$

When Table 3 is examined, upon the comparison of problematic phone use scores of teenagers whom participated in the study according to phone use time ($F_{478} = 769.73$, $p < .01$) and phone use time, and their loneliness scores ($F_{478} = 88.88$, $p < .01$), it is seen that the differences are significant. The results of Tukeys'b test performed in order to determine which daily use time causes these differences are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Statistic results of the data regarding loneliness and problematic phone use score differences according to the female teenagers' daily mobile phone use time

Variables	Tel. Use Time	Tel. Use Time	Means Different	P
Prb.Tel. use	1-2 hour	2-4 hours	-6.98*	.000
		4+ hours	-54.92*	.000
	2-4 hours	1-2 hour	6.98*	.000
		4+ hours	-47.93*	.000
	4+ hours	1-2 hour	54.92*	.000

		2-4 hours	47.93*	.000
	1-2 hour	2-4 hours	14.45*	.000
		4+ hours	13.04*	.000
Loneliness	2-4 hours	1-2 hour	-14.45*	.000
		4+ hours	-1.10	.666
	4+ hours	1-2 hour	-13.04*	.000
		2-4 hours	1.40	.666

* p< .01

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the score averages between daily phone use time groups of 1-2, 2-4 and 4+ hours and problematic phone use differ and this difference is significant at the level of ($P<.01$), and likewise while the difference between phone use time groups of 1-2 and 4+ hours and loneliness scores is significant ($P<.01$), the difference between 2-4 and 4+ groups is not significant ($p>.01$). When these results are evaluated together with descriptive statistics results, it can be said that those talking on the phone much experience problematic phone use problem more intensely, however long talking time may decrease loneliness in teenagers.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the study, the loneliness and the behavior of problematic phone use observed in teenagers are addressed with regards to different variables.

When the results of the study are examined, it can be said that the levels of problematic mobile phone use of teenagers are vary according to the sex; male teenagers experience higher level of problematic mobile phone use than female teenagers, and it is concluded that girls experience more intense loneliness problem than boys. According to this result, it can be said that female and male teenagers are affected different levels from the problems that arise due to the mobile phone use increasing among teenagers.

When the relevant literature is studied, Bianchi and Phillips (2005) concluded that teenagers spend more time for mobile phone use than adults and have higher level of problematic phone use, and there is not significant difference among teenagers in terms of sex, while Martinotti et al (2011) concluded in their studies that the level of problematic mobile phone use among female and male teenagers is high and 6.3% of these teenagers display other addiction behaviors. Shih, Chen and Chiang (2009) drew such conclusion in their studies that there is not significant difference between girls and boys from the point of problematic phone use as well as in terms of addiction, mobile phone and internal phone cause similar effect. When the result obtained and the literature is compared, it can be said that it is needed different studies on the subject.

According to another result of the study, girls experience more intense loneliness than boys. The studies related with loneliness show that this emotional disorder is a very common problem among teenagers. Yang & Christina (2011) found out that loneliness reaches to peak during youth period in 25 different countries of Europe, loneliness is a common and serious problem in Turkish university students and girls experience more intense loneliness than boys (Gürsesa, Merhametli, Şahin, Güneş & Açıkyıldız, 2011). When the result of the study and the literature are evaluated together, it is revealed that loneliness problem is very common among teenagers and generally girls experience this problem more intensely than boys.

When the second and third hypotheses of the study are evaluated together, it is found out that the problematic phone use problem increases as talking time increases, however increase of talking time decreases loneliness level in teenagers. Mobile phone does not only establish physical connection between individuals, but also helps establishment of an emotional tie. Establishment of such an emotional tie gives psychological and social support to the individuals suffering from loneliness and helps them deal with this problem. However it can be said that this positive support functions as a reinforce and causes the problems of talking more on the phone and problematic phone use. When the studies conducted are examined, it is seen Takao et al (2009) concluded that teenagers with problematic mobile phone use display much more self-monitoring behaviors and willingness of being approved, but their loneliness levels are low; Yen and others (2009) drew such conclusion that the problematic mobile phone use is very common among teenagers and that the teenagers experiencing this problem spend more time and money for phone and feel more depressed; Reid and Reid (2004) found out that the individuals using mobile phone much more to talk and send SMS experience lower anxiety and loneliness; Beranuy, Oberst, Carbonell, & Chamarro (2009) concluded that the individuals with problematic phone use experience lower level of stress; Watanabe and others (2011) found out that although internet addiction and sending sms via mobile phone have positive relation with depression, it has a negative relation with anxiety; Preziosa, Grassi, Gaggioli and Riva (2009) drew such conclusion that the psychological consultancy provided through use of mobile phone is an effective method in decreasing stress. It is seen that there is a consistency between study results and the findings obtained.

It can be made following suggestions for the loneliness and problematic phone use problems observed in teenagers on the basis of study results and the relevant literature studies.

1- Supporting teenagers in dealing with loneliness will improve their mental health gradually.

2- Informing teenagers on the subjects regarding use of technological tools such as effective mobile phone and internet use will protect them from experiencing addiction problems.

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