

Nomophobia as a Social Problem- Habits of Using Mobile Phones

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Abstract: Nomophobia is a disorder of the modern, technologically advanced and digital world. It is becoming more common nowadays with increased development of mobile devices. In this paper, we can see that more than 60% of the surveyed students admitted that they are addicted to mobile phones, without even being aware of nomophobia itself. The impact of nomophobia is manifold, from the physical and psycho-emotional burden borne by the patient himself to the collective burden, whose influence changes the form of social interactions. The paper will say more about nomophobia itself, the advantages and disadvantages of using the technology itself, the impact on children and society, and the analysis of survey results from students.

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1. Introduction

Many of us cannot imagine a day without a cell phone. Those who are older remember the time when it was not in use, but that time has become far away, while the younger generations cannot imagine a world without technology and the Internet. As soon as they wake up and open their eyes, they pick up their mobile phones and check messages, notifications, news, horoscopes and more. Cell phones are probably the biggest addiction of the 21st century. People spend more than 9 hours a day with a mobile phone. This leads to the "paradox of technology", i.e. liberation from the real world and captivity in the virtual world [1].

The burden of this problem is growing globally, especially during a pandemic. Nomophobia refers to the pathological fear of not having a mobile phone, losing signal or running out of mobile phone battery. Women suffer from the phobia more often, but men are the ones who have two mobile phones each. A connection with younger age, low self-esteem, anxiety and impulsivity was established with certainty. Modern society has become more and more antisocial, socially isolated, most of our free time is spent in front of screens, which greatly spoils our vision and motor abilities, and there is less and less live socializing without the interference of mobile phones. Technology has taken over our lives and it is impossible to find some area in which it is not used [2].

However, excessive use of these means of technology is turning against us. Today it can already be encountered and people struggle with many consequences brought by technology.

The aim of the work is to raise awareness and educate students about the problematic phobia that they unconsciously experience every day. Students are encouraged to seek treatment for nomophobia, since with

it they cannot focus on their duties, studies, things that are natural and necessary for our normal course of life, such as hanging out with other colleagues live, exercising, sports.

2. Nomophobia

The term nomophobia is used to describe a psychological condition in which people are afraid of being without a mobile phone. Cell phones have effectively filled the void, with the help of social networks through which we are connected. Now we have thousands of friends on social networks (virtual friends), although in reality we may have very few people we really interact with [3].

Anxiety in cases of nomophobia is caused by many factors, such as losing a cell phone, losing signal, and having a low cell phone battery. Nomophobes show some unusual characteristics, such as impulsive use of mobile phones, as a protective mechanism to avoid social communication. Sometimes they carry multiple mobile phones along with a battery charger to avoid disconnection from the virtual world. Nomophobia can also lead to physical problems such as elbow, arm, neck and back pain. Various psychological factors are involved when a person uses a mobile phone excessively: disorders such as social phobia or social anxiety, low self-esteem and panic disorders. It has been documented that victims of anxiety disorders and panic disorders were more susceptible to nomophobia. It is very difficult to distinguish whether a person becomes nomophobic due to cell phone addiction or existing anxiety disorders are manifested by nomophobic symptoms. Therefore, doctors must be careful in establishing a diagnosis. Some mental disorders can accelerate nomophobia and vice versa. The solution is to limit the use of cell phones, rather than ban them, because we cannot escape the influence of modern technology in the 21st century [4].

Indicators of nomophobia are: checking smartphones after waking up in the morning, poor grades among students due to excessive use of mobile phones, young



people going through a crisis of social identity with the pressure of continuous connection to social networks, great extroversion on social networks, and introversion in reality, impulsiveness and a sense of urgency when sending a message or notification (some of those affected often look at the phone screen in order not to miss any notification - ringing anxiety), anxiety, changes in the respiratory system, tremors, sweating, agitation, disorientation, tachycardia [5].

When we talk on the mobile phone, we usually hold it to our ear. In this position, part of the EM radiation is also absorbed by the tissues of the head in the immediate vicinity of the phone. EM radiation has a stressful effect on our health, disrupting the activity of hormones and bodily processes, but the greatest area of interest is the impact of this radiation on the brain and brain nerves (especially the auditory nerve) [6].

2.1. Advantages of using cell phones

With one click, in a few seconds we can find whatever we need and what interests us. Now we can study without going to the library, looking for literature and bothering to return the book on time. Everything is at our fingertips. On the Internet, we can find everything we need faster and easier, so books are no exception. It also helps us to be constantly informed – aware of what is happening around us. In order to book a holiday, we don't need to visit travel agencies, we don't even have to go shopping. Everything can be ordered and arranged at home from the comfort of your chair, quickly and efficiently, without wasting time. As for contact and communication, it has never been easier to keep in touch with anyone, friends, relatives... Not even hundreds of thousands of kilometers can stop us when there are video calls, voice calls, social networks to share all possible media. We can drink coffee with someone who is on the other side of the world without leaving our armchair. Getting to know and making friends, even romantic relationships, is even less of a problem. It is a preoccupation of young people, but also of middle-aged and older people. They are increasingly reaching for virtual socializing.

2.2. Disadvantages of using mobile phones

We all see only the benefits because it makes our lives easier. However, excessive use of these means of technology is turning against us. Today we can already meet and struggle with many consequences that technology has brought us. We are all turned to the Internet, we are too lazy to go out to socialize with friends. We become antisocial, lonely, and scientists say that depression is more and more common. Fewer people play sports and everyone loses their motor abilities. Mobile phones, tablets, laptops, computers, all technology radiates, which is dangerous to life because it can cause cancer, and constant radiation worsens vision. In addition, it can have a negative effect on our sleep, or more precisely, disturb our sleep. This automatically reduces our ability to think, learn and concentrate well. It leads to a very high drop in intelligence, people become addicted and forget about their obligations, they just follow the notifications that come to them. Newspapers

and reading materials are read less and less when everything is available, and with that, the wealth of vocabulary and intelligence itself is lost.

The nomophobia levels of students using their mobile phone for 4-6, 6-8 and above 8 hours a day were found to be higher than those of students using it for 0-2 hours a day. Also, students using their phone for 6-8 or above 8 hours a day had higher nomophobia levels than those using it for 2-4 hours a day. Finally, the nomophobia levels of students who used their phone for more than 8 hours were found to be higher than of those using it between 4 to 6 hours per day [7].

3. The impact of nomophobia on society

The social burden of nomophobia is tragically manifested in the growing number of traffic accidents caused by typing on the phone. Although it is questionable what percentage of participants in such accidents is really nomophobic, it certainly belongs to the aspect of impulsive use due to the fact that the possible consequences of such behavior are quite obvious, and in addition, such behavior in traffic is prohibited in a large number of countries. Surprisingly, there has also been an increase in accidents among pedestrians who use mobile phones while walking. This phenomenon is associated with a lower ability to shift attention from one task (typing) to another (walking). There is also an increasing distance between generations, mostly based on the degree of use of mobile phones for social networks [8].

Different age groups within society have different ways of communication, there has always been a certain lack of understanding between the generations because the way of life, different values and a number of other differences.

Social networks are a good way to create a false image of yourself. Some people, in order to gain the approval of the environment, many share unrealistic images of their bodies - there are so-called "influencers", i.e. people who, with their attitudes, habits and individual decisions, shape public opinion on many topics, mostly in relation to products available on the market, which many companies use to promote their own products. "Influencers" are defined as persons who "have the power to influence the consumer decisions of others due to their authority, knowledge, position or relationship with their audience". The last, but by no means less important, consequence was observed in school children and students. It has been shown that they are paying less and less attention to bans on the use of mobile phones during classes, and even that some teachers have begun to give in, thinking that it is impossible to control such a large number of children or because they simply do not consider it worth their effort.

However, a paradox can be observed in the educational discourse. Although a lot is invested in the technical equipment of classrooms and teachers use mobile devices in their everyday life and can hardly imagine life without them, mobile devices are rarely used in class.

4. Analysis and interpretation of research results

General data- N= 50, 3 groups Operational Management students, years 1-3, May 2022.

Surveyed respondents were 28% male, 72% female, aged- 74%- 20- 25yrs. 70% average (middle) income, 14% lower (and that was to establish brands of mobile phones and how much money they are ready to pay for cell phones).

Several hypothesis were placed:

- H0- more than 80% of students are addicted to their mobile phones
- H1- nomophobia has an influence on student's tasks
- H2- students cannot be functional without their mobile phones
- H3- students spend more than 3h daily using their mobile phones

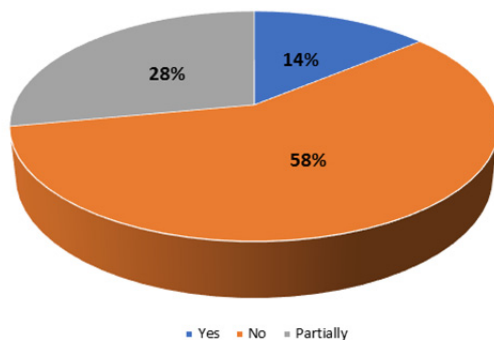


Fig. 1. Question: Do you know what nomophobia is?

Only 14% of surveyed students are familiar with the term nomophobia, while as many as 58% are not familiar with the term at all, and 28% know it partially (Figure 1).

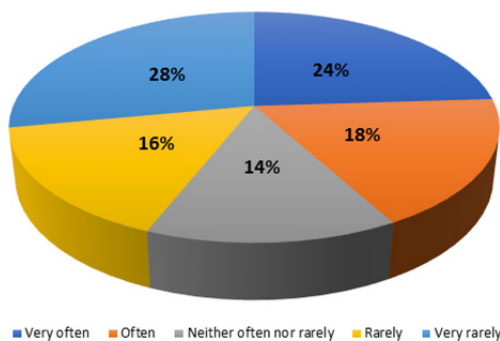


Fig. 2. Question: Have you ever forgotten your tasks during the day because of the phone?

As we can see from Figure 2, many students seem to forget their day activities and obligations due to spending time at their cell phones.

It is bad for socializing a human interaction that students spend time constantly checking notifications, even while they are at work, in a lecture or just sitting somewhere with their friends.

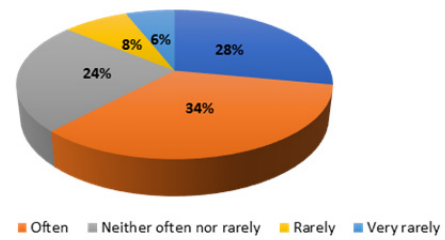


Fig. 3. Question: Do you check notifications on your phone while socializing?

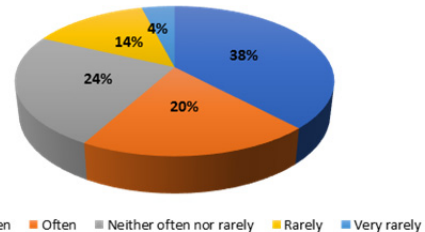


Fig. 4. Question: Have you ever had a panic attack if haven't felt phone in your pocket?

The chart from Figure 4 indicates a problem of another sort. It is very troublesome situation that 38% of students have a panic attack if they think they don't have their cell phone with them.

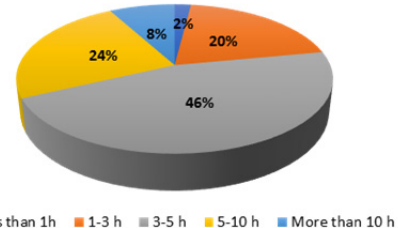


Fig. 5. Question: The usage of cell phone per day?

A large number of students spend 3- 5 h using the cell phone (Figure 5).

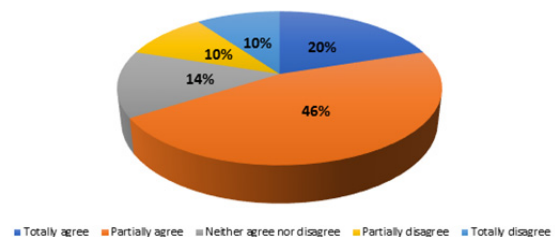


Fig. 6. Question: Are you addicted to your phone?

A lot of students agree or partially agree that they are addicted to their phones. However, none of them want to change that fact and have a different habit in life.

H0- more than 80% of students are addicted to their mobile phones- not confirmed because the research has shown only 20% agree totally and 46% partially. H1- nomophobia has an influence on student's tasks- confirmed while 24% students agree totally. H2- students cannot be functional without their mobile phones- confirmed while 32% of students totally agree.

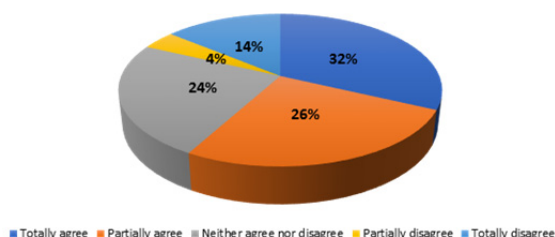


Fig. 7. Question: Do you think that one cannot live without the phone?

H3- students spend more than 3h daily using their mobile phones- confirmed while 46% of students use their phone 3- 5 h.

Students can no longer function without a mobile phone, 88% of those surveyed communicate only via mobile phone and receive the student schedule, homework, grades and everything necessary for studying there. The vast majority of students completely or partially agree (32% and 26%) that you cannot live without a mobile phone, which confirms the very conclusion that people are becoming slaves to the mobile phones themselves.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that life and society when our grandparents were growing up compared to modern society with all the possibilities offered by technology can be seen as a relationship between heaven and earth. Before, people had one phone at home and it was the only way to communicate with other people outside the home. Whoever had a cell phone in those days was the biggest "face" in the whole school and everyone admired that. The children played and moved a lot more because there were no computers or mobile phones, they had to go outside to have fun. The biggest problem today is that children don't have the kind of childhood that children had twenty years ago, they don't move enough, they grow up in a sedentary lifestyle.

In this way, they only spoil their own motor abilities and disrupt the course of development, and this only increases the dependence on technology. Parents play a big role in this, because if the parent does not allocate enough time for the child and only gives them technology without setting a time limit and explaining what the technology is for, their own child turns into a slave to technology who will not be able to eat, play, meet friends,

all they will focus on is the cell phone, computer and television. An adult who just got a cell phone at the age of 30 can get hooked on a cell phone and won't be able to go anywhere without it. As it is with children who grow up with mobile phones from a young age, we need to find a solution so that technology can be a service to us, and not that we are its slaves.

Just by surveying the students of the Polytechnic Hrvatsko zagorje in Krapina, majoring in operational management, it can be confirmed that nomophobia is clearly present, with the fact that 58% of them do not know about it at all. Most students (46%) use their mobile phones for 3-5 hours a day, 24% of them use their mobile phones for more than 5 hours, and there are even students (8%) who use their mobile phones for more than 10 hours a day, which is a shocking amount. This takes a lot of time that should be used more for student duties and hanging out with friends.

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