

AGGRESSION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PREDICTORS OF PHUBBING

Abstract: Our skills and attitudes have an effect on our behaviors. Phubbing, which is described as ignoring the interlocutor during communication by focusing on the cellphone, is also highly effective in our behaviors. In this context, this study aimed to determine the predictive effect of aggression and emotional intelligence on the level of phubbing. The study group consisted of 768 adult individuals [Female:461, Male:307] living in different provinces of Turkey. Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 57. The data of the study were collected using the Phubbing Scale, KAR-YA Aggression Scale, Emotional Intelligence Scale, and a personal information form. According to the findings obtained from the study, there was a significant negative relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence, a significant positive relationship between phubbing and aggression, and a significant negative relationship between aggression and emotional intelligence. According to the preliminary analysis, sex did not cause a significant difference in phubbing scores, while marital status and level of education caused a significant difference. According to the results of the hierarchical regression analysis, emotional intelligence and aggression were found to be predictors of phubbing behaviors. The research findings were discussed under the literature, and some recommendations were made.

Parmaksız, İzzet PhD
Associate Professor Dr.
Faculty of Education
Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University
Turkey
E-mail: izparm44@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0003-2468-6134

Kılıçarslan, Suat PhD
Associate Professor Dr.
Faculty of Education
Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University
Turkey
E-mail:
suatkilicarslan@hotmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-2907-8480

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INTRODUCTION

Technology is one of the leading tools of change in the ever-changing world. Especially, smartphones that almost everyone has been using recently and the Internet technology, which makes smartphones more practical, have made phones indispensable for people. The use of smartphones with Internet technology has offered people many activity options, such as conducting business in many areas, keeping up with the world, and enjoying their time. By making phones indispensable, this situation has led to the emergence of a behavioral problem called phubbing (Macquarie Dictionary, 2013). The term, phubbing, which refers to deliberately ignoring someone while using a mobile phone, was coined by combining the words phone and snubbing. The term was first used in the Macquarie Dictionary in 2013. Smartphones, which make it easier for people to communicate with anyone anywhere and to interact with anyone very close or on the other side of the world, can harm social interaction due to behaviors like phubbing, despite their apparent advantages in connecting people. Phubbing behavior cannot be evaluated independently of the attitudes or behaviors we have. Phubbing occurs when a person suddenly turns their gaze slightly towards their phone and plunges into it during social interaction. Phubbing is a process where a person interacts with their phone during a conversation or communication with others, and avoids interpersonal communication, and this behavior can considerably damage social interactions (Ang et al., 2019). Phubbing behavior, which we can be subjected to (phubbee) or the doer of (phubber), manifests itself as a behavior that is widely observed everywhere in today's technologically advanced societies (Haigh, 2015) and almost everyone does it (Nazir, 2017). While phubbers have problems in eye contact and communication, most people isolate themselves from their own environment (Karadağ et al., 2016). Therefore, phubbing is generally perceived as disrespectful, rude, and socially inappropriate behavior (Vanden Abeele et al., 2016). Studies show that phubbing is associated with lower perceived quality of communication (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas 2018). This is because when people are together, they feel connected to each other. Factors that eliminate or ignore this connection can seriously damage the quality of communication. Although mobile phones and other technological devices serve as efficient tools in people's lives, researchers investigating the effects of phubbing agree that interruptions stemming from these devices can cause problems in relationships (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019). This is because when people do phubbing, the quality of face-to-face communication falls, and it becomes less empathetic (Misra et al., 2016). In addition, phubbing has negative effects on communication and relationship satisfaction as it negatively affects mental health and poses a threat to basic needs, such as a sense of belonging, self-esteem, the meaning of existence, and having control (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018). Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) also showed that the use of smartphones in social interactions negatively affected the way individuals who can normally communicate well evaluate each other. Experimental studies have shown that these interactions are not a matter of lower quality interactions that trigger phubbing, but that phubbing is responsible for these undesirable situations (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas 2018; Dwyer et al., 2018; Vanden Abeele et al., 2016). Since phubbing is regarded as disrespectful behavior towards others, it can harm real-life social relationships (Karadağ et al., 2015). However, although people often see phubbing behavior as annoying and disrespectful, they also keep doing the same thing (Aagaard, 2020). As a result, phubbing is a problematic behavior that can harm both the phubber and the phubbee (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas 2016). Phubbing is known to negatively affect various relational outcomes, such as making an impression, quality of interaction, and quality of relationship in interpersonal relationships (Krasnova et al., 2016; Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2017; Vanden Abeele et al., 2016). Although the factors that lead to phubbing are listed as mobile phone addiction, internet addiction, social media addiction, mobile game addiction, depression,

and nomophobia (Afdal et al., 2019), the frequency of phubbing is affected by the characteristics of individuals. Phubbing behavior can be affected by many individual characteristics due to its motivations and consequences and may play a role in the emergence of different behaviors. The literature shows that phubbing can affect social communication and lead to negative psychological consequences (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018; Ergün et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2017). Besides, it can be thought that aggression and emotional intelligence may be associated with phubbing behavior based on the results of studies that phone addiction harms psychological health by causing anxiety, anger, and aggression (Gracia et al., 2020), low-quality relationships are associated with anger (Belu et al., 2016), and that there is a negative relationship between smartphone use and emotional intelligence (Demir & Cenkseven-Önder, 2021).

Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand and describe his/her emotions, as well as understanding the emotions of others and organizing all these emotions in a way that will continue and improve his/her social life (Goleman, 2018). Briefly, emotional intelligence is the level of competence that an individual has about when, where, in what proportion, and how to use his/her emotions. Also, emotional intelligence is a skill that is learned and developed at different ages (Titrek, 2011), and it is the way through which one evaluates and expresses his/her emotions accurately (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence is not a domain of cognitive intelligence (Bar-On, 1997). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are those with a high level of adaptation and high problem-solving skills (Perera & DiGiacomo, 2015). Those who are successful in regulating their emotions can facilitate their social interactions, make more accurate decisions about their social interactions, and are more accepted in their environment by being more initiative in every field (Kaya & Birol, 2018). Since low emotional intelligence may lead to inadequacy in human relations and adaptation skills in different social areas, people pay attention to applications offered by smartphones. Therefore, phubbing behavior becomes inevitable. When the literature is examined, there are studies investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and mindfulness and psychological well-being (Deniz et al., 2017) coping with stress (Aslan, 2018) loneliness (Özdemir & Tatar, 2019) academic performance (MacCann et al., 2020), problem-solving skills (Ertuğrul & Kutluca, 2020), smartphone addiction (Demir & Önder, 2021), cyberbullying (Kırat & Dilmaç, 2021), and communication skills (Raeissi et al., 2021). Although there are studies that address the relationship between emotional intelligence and different variables, no research, except for the study of Juliah (2019) and Bitar (2021), which deals with the relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence, has been found. This shows that the relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence is an important field of study that needs to be addressed.

Another feature that affects phubbing, which is considered an important behavioral problem in terms of human relations, is the aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that individuals exhibit under stress and tension. Aggression, which is increasing every other day in Turkey and the world, is defined as all kinds of acts or behaviors intended to hurt or harm others (Ballard et al., 2004; Freedman et al., 1998; TBMM, 2007; World Health Organization, 2002). While behavioral approaches explain aggression as a learned behavior (Kaymak Özmen, 2004), it is seen as a secondary behavior caused by anger emotion according to emotional approaches. The review of the literature indicated there was no research that directly revealed the existence of a relationship between aggression and phubbing behavior, while there were studies that reported the internet usage time and using technology and social media frequently and in unhealthy dimensions might be related to aggressive treatment and behaviors in individuals (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Werner et al., 2009; Yu & Cho, 2016; Yen et al., 2011). For example, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found relationships between the use of the Internet for social networks and aggression. Ko et al. (2009b) revealed the problematic relationship between internet use and

aggression. However, Lim et al. (2015) found that internet addiction and aggression predicted each other mutually, and Kim et al. (2008) reported that internet addiction and frequently played online games were positively correlated with aggression. Similarly, in recent studies conducted in Turkey on the subject, significant relationships have been revealed between the level of problematic internet use and violent and aggressive behaviors (Gümüş et al., 2015; Durak et al., 2018). Although smartphones trigger phubbing behavior, it is the internet technology that draws the attention of dynamic individuals on their phones. If there were no Internet, people would not always pay attention to their phones, as the options offered by the phone would be limited. For this reason, the relationship between the Internet and aggression can be addressed by associating it with phubbing.

As can be seen above, the use of communication technologies, smartphones, and social media brings many advantages, as well as behavioral problems such as phubbing that can harm human relationships. This study is important in terms of identifying variables associated with phubbing, which we often encounter in communication because knowing more about the factors associated with phubbing will shape our understanding of social behavior, which is influenced by rapidly developing communication technologies all over the world. Thus, people will be able to reconsider their social communication norms and their own behavior. In this context, the present study aimed to determine whether aggression and emotional intelligence predicted phubbing behavior in adult individuals. For this purpose, we aimed to test the following question.

1. *Do aggression (physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger) and emotional intelligence predict phubbing scores significantly?*

METHOD

RESEARCH MODEL

The quantitative research method was adopted in the study. As a research design, the correlational survey model was used to examine the relationships between phubbing, aggression, and emotional intelligence. Correlational survey models aim to determine the existence or degree of the relationship between two or more variables (Karasar, 2005).

STUDY GROUP

The study was conducted with adults living in different provinces of Turkey. A total of 768 adults [female: 461 (60.02%), male: 307 (39.98%)] participated in the study. Participants' ages ranged between 22 and 57 ($\bar{X} \pm sd = 33.26 \pm 8.00$). The age range in the research was determined as the 20-60 age group based on the young adulthood and adulthood periods, two of the life periods. The simple random sampling method was employed in the study and participation was on a voluntary basis. In simple random sampling, each subject in the universe has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Balçı, 2010). This is the rule of nonbias, and the assumption that the sample will represent the universe is associated with nonbias (Bakioğlu & Kurnaz, 2011). While conducting sampling, the maximum number of people that could be reached by using the maximum diversity sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling techniques that reflects the diversity of individuals at the maximum level, was targeted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Based on this assumption, the study group was formed with randomly selected participants.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographic Variables	Gender		Marital Status		Level of Education				
	Female	Male	Married	Single	Primary school	High school	Associate degree	Undergraduate degree	Master's degree
	461	307	402	366	129	140	99	347	56

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS

The Personal Information Form: This form, created by the researchers, has questions about age, sex, marital status, and education level of the participants.

The Phubbing Scale: This scale was developed by Karadağ et al. (2015). It was developed to measure individuals' tendency towards phubbing. At the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) stage the principal component analysis with oblimin principal axis rotation was used and obtained two factors. These factors explained 56.19% of the total variance. Then, confirmatory factorial analyses (CFA) were performed to test model data fit. The goodness-of-fit indices showed an acceptable model data fit (RMSEA=.06, χ^2 /df=3.20, GFI=.92, AGFI=.91, CFI=.94). The scale consists of a total of 10 items and 2 factors, namely (i) communication disorder (5 items; α = .87) and (ii) phone passion (5 items; α = .85). It uses a 5-point Likert-type measuring scale with options between never (1) and always (5). The lowest and highest scores that can be obtained from the scale vary between 10 and 50. A score of 40 or greater obtained from the scale expresses individuals' phubbing addiction (Karadağ et al., 2015). Internal consistency values of the subscales were .77 and .79 (Balta et al., 2020). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was examined using Cronbach's alpha method and was calculated as .81.

The KAR-YA Aggression Scale: For the psychometric properties of the scale developed by Karataş and Yavuzer (2016), item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, criterion-related validity, internal consistency coefficient, split-half, and test-retest methods were used. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, a scale consisting of four factors, namely, physical aggression, hostility, anger and verbal aggression, and 23 items was obtained. A total score can be obtained from the scale. Four factors explain 51.71% of the total variance. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .92 for the overall scale, split-half test coefficient as .80 for both halves, and test-retest reliability coefficient as .86. Confirmatory factor analysis results performed on a different sample also confirmed the four-factor structure of the scale ($X^2 = 543.52$, X^2 /df=2.426, $p = .000$, NFI = .94, NNFI = .96, RFI = .93, CFI = .96, GFI = .86, AGFI = .83, RMR = .09, SRMR = .06, IFI = .96, RMSEA = .07) (Karataş & Yavuzer, 2016). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as .92 for the overall score with the data of the present study.

The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale: This scale was developed by Schutte et al. (1998) to determine the level of emotional intelligence. In the present study, we used the version that was adapted to Turkish culture by Tatar et al. (2011). The scale has 41 items and is a 5-point Likert-type scale scored between 1 and 5. For each item on the scale, individuals are asked to state to what extent they agree on the statement of the item. The results of the sampling adequacy statistics showed that the correlations between items were suitable for factor analysis (KMO = .92). In addition, according to the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the level of correlation between items was enough to perform factor analysis (χ^2 (820) = 16705.78; $p < .001$). Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the entire scale is .82 (Tatar et al., 2011). The alpha value for this study was found as .85.

PROCEDURE

Participants in this study were selected on a voluntary basis, and their informed consent was obtained. The scales used in the study were filled out face to face and using pen and paper. The data of the study were collected in different provinces in 2020 with the contribution of psychological counselors living in the provinces where the application was carried out. After the purpose of the study was explained in the scale applications, the Phubbing Scale, the Aggression Scale, the Emotional Intelligence Scale, and the Personal Information Form were administered to the participants. The participants were told that their responses to the scales would be kept confidential, which aimed to prevent social desirability bias. The administration of the scales took approximately 20 minutes.

ANALYSIS METHODS

Within the scope of this study, the relationship between variables was examined and first of all, the homogeneity of the data was tested. The sample had a normal distribution. The skewness value ranged between -.21 and .81, and the kurtosis value was between -.55 and .35 for all variables. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients of close to ± 1 can denote that the scores do not deviate much from normal values (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010). T-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation coefficient, and hierarchical regression analysis were used in data analysis. The sample had a normal distribution. Skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable limits for all variables. Outliers with Mahalanobis distance values were calculated, and 6 data with extreme values were removed from the data set. The Durbin-Watson test that is used to test autocorrelation should have a value in the range of 1.5 - 2.5 (Kalaycı, 2010). It was found as 2.06 in this study. A tolerance value of $> .2$ and a VIF value of < 10 indicate that the scale has acceptable values (Green & Salkınd, 2010). In this study, tolerance values ranged between .37 and .89 and VIF values between 1.07 and 2.67. There was no multicollinearity problem between the independent variables (Table 4). The data were analyzed on SPSS 22 software package.

RESULTS

Table 2. The effect of sex and marital status on phubbing

Variables		N	\bar{X}	Sd	$t_{(756)}$	p	Cohen's d
Sex	Female	461	25.96	7.45	1.20	.23	.08 / 0%
	Male	307	26.62	7.34			
Marital status	Married	402	24.82	7.34	-5.62	.00	.41 / 17%
	Single	366	27.77	7.19			

As seen in Table 2, the phubbing scores of the participants did not differ significantly according to sex variable ($t_{(2-766)} = 1.20, p > .05$), whereas there was a significant difference according to marital status variable ($t_{(2-766)} = -3.25, p < .05$). The results indicated that the phubbing scores of married individuals were lower. The value of d is interpreted as follows: $20 \leq d < .50$, a low effect; $.50 \leq d < .80$, a moderate effect; $.80 \leq d$, a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Marital status had a low to moderate effect on phubbing tendency.

Table3. The effect of education level on phubbing

		N	\bar{X}	Ss	F	p	η^2
Level of education	Primary school	129	22.38	7.22	12.53	0.00	.05
	High school	140	26.60	7.52			
	Associate degree	96	26.75	7.30			
	Undergraduate degree	347	27.53	7.13			
	Master's degree	56	25.17	6.55			

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the level of education significantly differentiated the phubbing scores. According to the Tukey test, the

phubbing scores of primary school students were significantly lower than those of the high school, associate, and undergraduate students. There was no difference between the other groups. As seen in Table 3, the level of education significantly differentiated the phubbing scores ($p < .05$). The interpretation of η^2 value is as follows: $.01 \leq \eta^2 < .06$, a low effect; $.06 \leq \eta^2 < .14$, a medium effect; and $.14 \leq \eta^2$, a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Education level had a low to moderate effect on phubbing tendency.

Table4. Correlation between variables and descriptive statistics

	Mean	Sd	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Phubbing	26.23	7.41	1							.28	-.13
2. Emotional Intelligence	151.10	18.27	-.13*	1						-.21	-.55
3. Physical aggression	13.35	5.59	.15*	-.26*	1					1.1	1.1
4. Verbal aggression	9.45	3.74	.16*	-.22*	.59*	1				.60	-.20
5. Hostility	15.04	5.51	.17*	-.30*	.49*	.48*	1			.62	-.14
6. Anger	11.16	5.04	.21*	-.24*	.71*	.67*	.54*	1		.81	-.13
7. Aggression	49.01	16.48	.21*	-.31*	.86**	.79*	.78*	.88*	1	.81	.35

* $p < .01$

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients between the participants' phubbing tendencies, emotional intelligence, physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger, and total aggression levels, the arithmetic means of the variables, standard deviation values, and the skewness and kurtosis values of the scales.

The r value is interpreted as follows: $.10 \leq r < .30$, a low effect; $.30 \leq r < .50$, a medium effect; and $.50 \leq r$, a large effect (Cohen, 1988). As seen in Table 4 that shows the results of the correlation analysis, there was a weak positive relationship between phubbing and aggression and its sub-dimensions, a weak negative relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence, and an almost moderate and negative relationship between aggression and its sub-dimensions and emotional intelligence.

The examination of the correlation analysis results in Table 4 indicated that there was a positive relationship between phubbing and aggression, a negative relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence, and a negative relationship between aggression and emotional intelligence.

RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine whether the participants' aggression and emotional intelligence scores predicted the phubbing scores. In hierarchical regression analysis, the researcher enters the predictive variables in a specific order determined by theoretical or empirical evaluations. Thus, by calculating the change in corrected R^2 in each step of the hierarchical regression analysis, a variance increase is observed in the regression model after each variable or group of variables (Büyüköztürk, 2018). Since marital status and education level significantly differentiated phubbing scores and had a normal distribution, they were defined as dummy variables and included in the regression analysis. Since the effect level of demographic variables without other variables is wondered, first of all, the predictive effect of these variables was examined. Then, the analysis continued according to the level of relationship. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis performed to determine whether the aggression and emotional intelligence scores of the participants predicted the phubbing scores are given in Table 5.

Table5. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis

		Independent variables	R ²	F	β	t
Phubbing	Model 1	Marital status Education Level	.07	29.53*	-.14 -.19	-3.79* -5.13*
	Model 2	Marital status Education Level Emotional intelligence	.09	26.00*	-.14 -.20 -.15	-3.18* -5.39* -4.20*
	Model 3	Marital status Education Level Emotional intelligence Physical aggression	.10	22.10*	-.13 -.20 -.12 .11	-3.54* -5.52* -3.29* 3.08**
	Model 4	Marital status Education Level Emotional intelligence Physical aggression Verbal aggression	.11	18.61*	-.13 -.20 -.11 .06 .09	-3.53* -5.50* -3.09** 1.40 2.07***
	Model 5	Marital status Education Level Emotional intelligence Physical aggression Verbal aggression Hostility	.12	16.72*	-.12 -.21 -.09 .03 .06 .11	-3.35* -5.72* -2.56*** .66 1.35 2.58***
	Model 6	Marital status Education Level Emotional intelligence Physical aggression Verbal aggression Hostility Anger	.12	15.39*	-.11 -.21 -.09 -.03 .01 .08 .14	-3.16** -5.78* -2.54*** -.65 .23 1.98*** 2.58***

*p < .001, **p < .01, ***p < .05

As seen in Table 5, according to the results of the hierarchical regression analysis, the predictive effect of dummy variables was 7% in model 1, whereas it increased to 9% with the inclusion of emotional intelligence in the second phase. In the next stages, the total predictive effect increased to 12% with the inclusion of aggression sub-dimensions (physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger) in the analysis. According to these results, it was found that aggression sub-dimensions predicted phubbing positively and that emotional intelligence predicted phubbing negatively. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger and emotional intelligence were significant predictors of phubbing. The R² value is interpreted as follows: .02 ≤ R² < .13, a small effect; .13 ≤ R² < .26, a moderate effect; and .26 ≤ R², a large effect (Cohen, 1988). In the light of these findings, 88% of the variance was affected by other variables since there was a low predictive effect of around 12%.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine whether aggression and emotional intelligence in adult individuals predicted phubbing behavior. According to the results of the study, emotional intelligence and physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, and anger, which are the sub-dimensions of aggression, were significant predictors of phubbing behavior.

In the preliminary analysis, sex did not significantly differentiate phubbing scores. On the other hand, marital status and education level significantly differentiated phubbing scores. Regarding sex, Blachnio and Przepiorka (2019) stated that females scored higher than males in phubbing behaviors, such as communication disorder and phone obsession. Çizmeci (2017) also found that sex significantly differentiated phubbing scores. On the other hand, consistent with the data of this study, Al-Saggaf et al. (2019), Brañas-Garza et al. (2018), and Rand et al. (2016) stated that sex did not affect the frequency of phubbing.

On the other hand, marital status significantly differentiated phubbing scores. Benvenuti et al. (2020) and Çizmeci (2017) found that consistent with the findings of this study, phubbing scores differed significantly according to marital status. When the literature was examined, no findings contrary to these findings were found.

Another finding of this study was that education level didn't significantly differentiate phubbing scores. Yıldız-Durak (2019) stated that education level was a predictor of smartphone addiction, which is the most important dynamic of phubbing. This result was consistent with our study findings. Çizmeci (2017) found that in parallel with the data of this study, education level significantly differentiated phubbing behavior. On the other hand, Al-Saggaf et al. (2019) stated that the frequency of phubbing did not differ significantly according to the level of education. Considering the variables of sex, marital status, and education level, there were different results in the literature. As a result, it can be said that the socio-demographic variables used in this study are not a determining factor that defines phubbing behavior. Because the cause of technology-based behavioral problems such as phubbing may be more multidimensional, environmental, and attitudinal, demographic characteristics that one has may not have the desired effect in revealing the direction of behavior. However, the fact that there is much more need for technology today and that smartphones have a very important place in the social, emotional, and professional life areas of adults of all ages, regardless of gender and education level, shows the need for conducting more comprehensive further research on this subject.

In this study, it was found that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and phubbing and that emotional intelligence predicted phubbing. Julia (2019) found that there was a negative relationship between phubbing behavior and emotional intelligence. In another study, no relationship was found between smartphone use, which leads to addiction and is one of the main dynamics of phubbing, and emotional intelligence (Van Deursen et al., 2015). However, a negative relationship was found between emotional intelligence and inappropriate use of the Internet and mobile phones (Beranuy et al., 2009; Griffiths et al., 2012; Reisoğlu et al., 2013; Usta, 2017), and it was determined that emotional intelligence was a predictor of problematic Internet use (Ançel et al., 2015). In their study with the adult population, Parker et al. (2008) found that low emotional intelligence was a strong predictor of problematic internet use. Studies showing a negative relationship between problematic internet use and emotional intelligence indicate that people who spend time on the Internet have less emotional skills than other individuals (Mia et al., 2012), excessive use of the Internet is associated with the inability to express emotions (Okçuğ, 2012), and that emotional intelligence is low due to emotional inadequacy in individuals using the Internet excessively.

(Engelberg & Sjöberg, 2004), all of which reveal a relationship between phubbing and emotional intelligence that manifests itself with excessive use of the Internet and smart phones. Another important result of the study was that the level of aggression in adult individuals predicted phubbing behavior. In the regression analysis, it was determined that physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, and anger sub-dimensions of aggression were low-level positive predictors of phubbing behavior. The review of the literature indicated that, as emphasized before, there was no research result showing that violence and aggression attitudes and behaviors directly explained phubbing behaviors. However, it can be said that the relationship of the Internet and smartphone use with aggression also applies to phubbing, as excessive use and abuse of the Internet and smartphones triggers phubbing behavior. Many studies revealed a significant relationship between the problematic use of the Internet and technology, which is one of the most important problems of our age and the trigger of phubbing, and aggression (Gümüş et al., 2015; Ko et al., 2009a; Koo & Kwon, 2014; Ko et al., 2009b; Lim et al., 2015). When some studies on this subject conducted in recent years were examined, a significant relationship was found between internet addiction and aggressive behaviors (Durak et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2008; Ulusoy, 2008). The tendency for violence, too, had a predictive effect on problematic internet use (Gümüş et al., 2015). It is also reported that online games that affect phubbing (Parmaksız, 2018) show a positive correlation with aggression (Kim et al., 2008; Ulusoy, 2008). In addition, it is known that problematic internet use affects the tendency towards violence (Gümüş et al., 2015). Individuals with higher internet usage frequency tend to commit to cyberbullying more (Erdur-Baker, 2007). In another study, which supported our findings, a positive correlation was found between smartphone addiction and aggression (Kim et al., 2015). Based on the results of this study, the result that the problematic use of smartphones and the Internet, which are the main dynamics of phubbing behavior, is correlated with violence and aggression also confirms the relationship between phubbing and aggression. In addition, although physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, and anger, which are sub-dimensions of aggression, were determined as variables associated with smartphone use (Kim, 2017; Nuri et al., 2021) and internet use (Evren et al., 2019; Khatoon et al., 2018), only physical aggression and hostility sub-dimensions were found to be predictors of internet addiction (Evren et al., 2019). In our study, all sub-dimensions of aggression were found as predictors of phubbing behavior. Fengqiang et al. (2016) and Teng et al. (2014) found that internet addiction positively predicted aggression and was associated with low self-control. At the same time, low self-control predicted aggression (physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, hostility) positively in our study (Teng et al., 2014). Reflecting on this point of view, it can be said that the phubbing tendency, which can be associated with internet addiction and aggression, can be reduced by gaining self-control. However, no research findings have been found showing the existence of a direct relationship between the sub-dimensions of the aggression scale and phubbing. In this respect, it can be said that there is a need for new in-depth research with different methodologies and populations that can reveal these relationships and their justifications in more detail. In addition, when phubbing behavior is examined, a social exclusion behavior stands out (Xie & Xie, 2020). Social exclusion often leads to negative emotional disturbances such as aggression (Twenge et al., 2001). Also, several studies have proven that social exclusion increases aggression (Dewall & Bushman, 2011; Ren et al., 2018). On the contrary, telling people who are socially rejected that they are accepted can reduce the tendency towards aggression (Dewall & Bushman, 2011). Based on all these findings, it can be said that phubbing behavior can be reduced with the correct use of smartphones and the Internet.

Besides, social, behavioral, and emotional problems caused by phubbing behavior can be minimized.

The results of this study are important in properly understanding the phubbing behavior that we all do or others do to us from time to time. Necessary awareness should be raised for the causes and consequences of phubbing behavior, which has been brought to our lives by the developing technology and turned into an inevitable problem in our social relationships, and for the measures that can be taken regarding this behavioral problem. This problem is a risk for all age groups, but it is thought to pose greater risks, especially for children and adolescents. Schools, institutions providing mental health services, and other units working on technology addiction should see this risk and take necessary precautions. Since all dimensions of aggression predicted phubbing tendencies, psychoeducational programs can be organized for individuals with a tendency toward aggression. In addition, public awareness activities can be organized to raise awareness that all kinds of tendencies toward aggression can be harmful. Also, since emotional intelligence is a skill that is acquired later, activities to gain this skill can be included in the school curriculum. Thus, individuals can be encouraged to gain positive attitudes, and their tendency toward inappropriate behavior such as phubbing can be reduced.

Results can be analyzed comparatively by repeating the study with sample groups with different socio-demographic characteristics. While trying to adapt to the developing and changing world, it is thought that the problem of phubbing, which occurs due to intense contact with smartphones in daily life, will increase gradually in Turkey and that mental health professionals will encounter this situation more frequently. For this reason, it is thought that different studies are needed to comprehensively investigate other psychological factors, which are thought to affect the phubbing problem, and solutions. In future studies, the reasons for individuals' tendencies for phubbing can be better understood by examining the relationship of phubbing with different personality traits and attitudes. However, the results of the present study are limited to the measurement tools and the sample used in this study. Since this research was conducted with a cross-sectional research method, causal relationships could not be determined. Social desirability bias may have been involved in the research data since the measurement processes were based on self-report. Since the use of smartphones is a behavior that almost everyone does, the small sample size of this study is an important limitation to the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the small number of demographic data, which is thought to be an effective factor in the tendency towards phubbing, is another limitation of the study.

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