

Nomophobia and its Relationship with Loneliness in College Students

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Abstract

We all have an attachment to our cell phones, in today's era cellphone is very basic need of our life. But there are some people who heighten their anxiety beyond normal levels without their phones or losing internet access. Among adolescents, nowadays mobile phones have become an important part of everyone's life. But more than necessity leads to several problems like psychological and physical. Present research study explored the relationships of nomophobia and anxiety among college students. A total of 80 college students were voluntarily participated in this study, including 40 boys and 40 girls. Data were collected to employ two instruments: Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) and Percieved Loneliness Scale. Through this study we will get a chance to understand adolescents' mental health in greater depth, as related to smartphones. In the present study an attempt was made to study the relationship between nomophobia and loneliness among college students. Purposive sampling has been used for the collection of data. For the analysis of results t-test and Pearson Correlation were used and results were discussed accordingly.

Keywords: Nomophobia, college students, loneliness

Nomophobia

We all use smartphone for many purposes such as making calls, sending messages, browsing the internet, taking pictures, playing games, and many more. In today's digital era, smartphones have become most important part of our daily lives. However, this addiction to our smartphones has become a serious problem for many people, and it is known as Nomophobia. In today's world Nomophobia affects every generation, but it affecting more to the young people. Nomophobia is an individual's psychological condition that causes different impacts on different individuals. Some Psychological symptoms that are commonly related with this disorder: he or she cannot sleep if the phone battery drains or miss any updated social media sites, a sensation of anxiety and panic in case an individual is not getting their phone or can't update their social media status or online presence, a feeling of losing control over life, facing difficulty in concentrating or carrying out normal functions without a handset, anticipatory anxiety thinking about a situation where they might have to be without a phone, charging the phone even when it is fully charged, carrying the device everywhere they go, repeatedly checking whether they have the phone with them, the persistent urge to use the phone when not in contact and the inability to turn the device off.

Many research studies have been done in many countries which showed that we cannot ignore the way nomophobia is increasing day by day among people, especially among young people (Kaur & Sharma, 2015; Pavithra & Madhukumar, 2015). The term NOMOPHOBIA or we can say 'No Mobile Phobia' firstly comes in the knowledge in 2008 and its defined as when individual experience anxiety or stress about not having connectivity of mobile phone and does not wants to switch off their mobile phones. When people are separated from their smartphones then they feel anxiety and it also reflects the feeling of uneasiness. This fear is not specific to losing, breaking or forgetting the device; it even extends to

the level when one starts suffering from anxiety about being away from the device. It can lead to agitation, changes in breathing, disorientation, trembling, sweating and other symptoms. They may dislike the idea of going out without their phone for prolonged periods. It founded by many researches that when they couldn't use their phones, 58% of the respondents felt uncomfortable. People wanted to stay connected through their mobile phones at all times. Some of the common triggers of nomophobia are as follows: fear of staying physically away from the phone, losing the phone or when it has been stolen, when the battery runs out of battery, in places or situations where it is expected to keep the phone away, during software updating when one cannot access their cellular network or Wi-Fi, when the device cannot be accessed for a period of time, the fear of missing out on the notification when the phone is on silent, when someone uses the phone, even for a shorter period, if any preferred website or application is not working, in case the phone charger is not working.

Loneliness

At some point in their lives every human being experiences a feeling of Loneliness. However, it is significant to identify that loneliness can have major outcomes on one's well-being and mental health as well (Arslan, 2021). Therefore, it is essential that we make an effort to build significant relationships to connect with others (Valtorta et al., 2016).

Loneliness is defined as 'the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's networks of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively' (Perlman & Peplau, 1981). We can describe Loneliness as a "subjective experience of social isolation" (Golden et al., 2009). It's a state where person wants to have contact with others but feels lonely. Loneliness is subjective perception that person lacks in close interpersonal relationships. We can say individual feels lonely if he or she desires close interpersonal relationships but not able to establish them. Loneliness is the emotional outcome of not being able to encounter emotional

and social and prospects in relationships (Russell et al., 2012). 'People can also feel lonely without being alone or alone in a crowd' (Peplau & Perlman, 1976). Reason behind loneliness can be belonging to a social group, lacks in social communication or may be close emotional closeness and adolescence may be the stage where feelings of loneliness are most experienced and it is affecting adolescents more (Duy, 2003).

Nowadays people give less importance to physical interaction and depend more on technology and even in this technology smartphone is the most common or easy tool to keep themselves connected to social media. Additionally, Bian and Leung (2014) lonely people more attracted on mediated communications like social networking sites. Even people who like smartphone use very much tends to avoid face to face communication with others and indulge in virtual mobile environment. As a result loneliness correlated with nomophobia and smartphone overuse. Those people are poor in interpersonal contact are depend themselves on online communication, which might detach them from their environments and lead to loneliness (Yildiz-Durak, 2018). Research reveals that adolescents who spend their time on smartphones showed higher loneliness and anxiety loneliness due to higher levels of nomophobia (Kara et al., 2019). Biggest barrier of communication with others is fear. Fear of judgment, fear of rejection, fear of vulnerability, all these fears obstruct individuals to connect with others.

We all should be aware about the harm caused due to excessive phone use and at the same time we should also understand how much it affects us. The aim of the present research is to find out the relationship between nomophobia and loneliness and its effect regarding internet use and smartphones in College students.

Pekin et al. (2022) did a research study on 'Examining Loneliness and Nomophobia in Terms of Different Variables'. Researcher wants to see the relationship between Nomophobia and loneliness in university students. The results showed no significant correlation between Nomophobia and loneliness in college students. Nguyen et al. (2023) also did a research study on 'The role of loneliness and self-control to the association between nomophobia and depression symptoms among Vietnamese high school students'. Researcher wants to see the association between nomophobia and depressive symptoms, specifically focusing on the role that loneliness. Research findings of the present study showed that there is significant and positive relationship between nomophobia, loneliness and depressive symptoms. Study done by Billieux (2012) showed that excessive use of smartphone and loneliness are correlated with each other.

Macdonald and Schermer (2021) wants to investigate, loneliness and its relationship with smartphone use, while also accounting for individual differences in facets of neuroticism, communication

apprehension, emotional support and nomophobia for emerging adults. Outcome of the research also indicated that loneliness was positively associated with nomophobia, neuroticism, social recognition, and communication anxiety. Researcher also found that smartphone pickups, need for affiliation, emotional support, social recognition are the significant predictors of loneliness. Neuroticism and loneliness strongly correlated with each other and over and above neuroticism and its facets, smartphone screen time and pickups predict loneliness. It also revealed that more time spent on one's smartphone and on social media apps is related to high loneliness. Findings also suggested that, in young adults loneliness is related to different types of smartphone use, even when accounting for stable characteristics such as personality. Study explored by Prasad et al. (2023) showed a significant positive relationship between nomophobia and boredom. Correlational analysis of the data indicated that action orientation has a negative correlation with Nomophobia. Finding also indicates no significant correlation with Nomophobia Questionnaire and Loneliness Scale. Ozdemir et al. (2018) did a research study on relationship between nomophobia, self-esteem, loneliness and self-happiness with respect to gender among Turkish and Pakistani university students and by using multiple linear regression findings of the research study showed that nomophobia, loneliness and self-happiness were significant, while difference on self-esteem across countries was not statistically significant. Arpaci (2022) want to investigate the 'fear of being without access to mobile phone' on undergraduate students. Findings revealed statistically significant difference between boys and girls. Girls scored high than boys. Study explored by Anushri et al. (2018) reveals that out of 100 samples 8% students were at high risk of developing nomophobia, 46% had mild level, 33% had moderate level and 13% students had severe level of nomophobia. Study done by Gezgin and Unmet (2021) showed no significant relationship between nomophobia and loneliness in social and emotional relations. But there was a significant relationship was found in nomophobia and loneliness in family relations.

Dehghaniana and Bordbar (2023) want to predict nomophobia based on shyness, loneliness and anxiety among teenagers. For the outcomes of the present study multiple regression method has been used to test the research hypotheses and predict nomophobia. Results showed that shyness, loneliness and anxiety explain 36% of the variance of nomophobia scores. In addition, shyness positively and significantly predicts nomophobia. Loneliness also positively and significantly predicts nomophobia. On the other side, anxiety also positively and significantly predicts nomophobia. Kilinc et al. (2022) did a study on Nomophobia and Loneliness in Rural Turkish Adolescents. Outcomes of the study showed that

being a female, having first smartphone use before the age of 13, having high daily smartphone usage, having a high frequency of checking phones, and having more friends on social media than in real life were associated with higher nomophobia levels. Positive correlation between nomophobia and loneliness levels was also found. Factors like phone usage habits and loneliness, which can be changed by only if education and creating suitable environments are important determinants of nomophobia. Another study done by Klori et al. (2020) wants to investigate the role of personality characteristics and loneliness in prediction of nomophobia. Findings showed significant positive correlation between loneliness and nomophobia. Akilli and Gezgin (2016) suggested that being female, being young, extreme smartphone usage, repeatedly checking smartphones, and loneliness have been among the most common predictors of nomophobia. Gezgin et al. (2018) wants to see the relationship between nomophobia and loneliness, and the effects of smartphone and mobile internet use among adolescents. Findings of the revealed that nomophobic behavior of adolescents found at moderate level. Finally, there was a statistically significant relationship between nomophobia and loneliness, and it can be come to know that loneliness of adolescents predicts their nomophobia levels to a certain extent. Hussien (2022) wants to see the association between nomophobia and feelings of loneliness among a sample of the general population from the Saudi Arabia. The majority of people in the study sample use the Internet for between 4 and 9 hour. For nomophobia levels, the highest percentage is for a moderate level of nomophobia, with the highest means being for factor 1 (unable to communicate), followed by factor 4 (giving up convenience). They also have a moderate level of loneliness. The multivariate analysis showed that loneliness is strongly and positively correlated with nomophobia and its four factors and the duration of daily mobile Internet use. Another study done by Yildiz- Durak (2018) also supports the findings of the previous study, which was about the correlation between nomophobia and loneliness. The study was also done on the 'Adolescents' Social Media Usage, Locus of Control, and Loneliness as a Predictor of Nomophobia'. A significant relationship between nomophobia and loneliness was found in the study done by Durak.

There is cross sectional study done by Saleh et al. (2019) on undergraduate students through simple random sampling and findings of the study revealed no statistically significant difference of prevalence of nomophobia between undergraduate females and males. Another similar study done by Safdar et al. (2020) on medical students and outcomes of the study showed no significance difference among females and males.

Objectives

1. To see the relationship between Nomophobia and Loneliness.
2. To assess and compare the Nomophobia in Girls and Boys.
3. To assess and compare the Loneliness in Girls and Boys.

Method

Sample

A total sample of 80 college students selected for the present study, out of these 80 college students, 40 were girls and 40 were boys. Participants age range between 17-21years. The sample was selected from Hisar through purposive sampling method for the collection of data. For the analysis of results t-test and Pearson Correlation were used and results were discussed accordingly.

Tools

The Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q): This Questionnaire was developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015), self-reported measure was used to assess the severity of nomophobia among College Students. Respondents used a seven-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 ("I totally disagree") to 7 ("I totally agree"). This questionnaire consists 20 Items questionnaire with score ranges from 20 to 140 points, 20 score means absence; 21–59 score means mild; 60–99 score means moderate; and ≥ 100 score means severe level of nomophobia.

Percieved Loneliness Scale: This Perceived loneliness scale developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha is used for measuring loneliness in College Students. This scale consists of 36 items. Loneliness scale is unidimensional, self-reporting five point Likert scale Five response categories are: fully agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and fully disagree. The minimum and maximum possible range of score in this scale is 36 to 180.

Procedure

Scale administered on College Students (from boys and girls both) individually. After establishing rapport with the subjects, A brief introduction was given to them about the purpose of study and testing. Detailed instructions were given for filling out the scales were given. Their doubts about the test were also clarified in between. Subjects were also informed that whatever answer they give will be kept confidential and will only use for research purposes. Then, The Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) and Percieved Loneliness Scale were administered. Subjects filled all the two scales. After collecting the data, the data collected was then analyzed as per the manuals by using various statistical procedures, which allows the researcher to determine whether data supports or refuse or elaborates. After that t-test and Pearson Correlation was used.

Results and Discussion

As the first objective of the paper was to see the relationship between Nomophobia and Loneliness. So,

the Pearson Product Moment Method of correlation was used.

From table 1 it can be seen that there is significant negative relationship between Nomophobia and

today's youth spends more time on the phone. They remain busy in their own world of social media. The reason why adolescents feel less lonely is probably that they keep themselves busy with their mobile

Table 1. Showing inter-correlations among Nomophobia and Loneliness.

Variables	Nomophobia	Loneliness
Nomophobia	1	-.629**
Loneliness	-.629**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Loneliness that is -.629 which is significant at 0.01 level. The results clearly indicate that there exists significant negative relationship between Nomophobia and Loneliness. When Loneliness is high, then nomophobia would be low and if students are not feels lonely then their dependency on smartphones will be higher. Both are significantly and negatively related to each other. It indicates that students who are smartphone addicted or nomophobic

phones. Due to the availability of so many social media options, today's youth do not feel alone. This much dependency on their smartphone is keeping them away from the real world around them and they have less emotional attachment to the people around them and their friend list on social media is more important. This is disadvantage of technology dependent generation that we are moving away from our people and I want to draw everyone's attention to

Table 2: Showing Mean, S.D and t-value on the variable of Nomophobia in girls and boys

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Nomophobia	Boys	40	78.67	20.66	1.14
	Girls	40	85.07	28.51	

are often feels less lonely in their life. This proves that when there is an increase in Nomophobia, there is decrease in loneliness among college students. From this result we can infer that if people spend more time with their family and friends, they will not feel lonely because of which they will not be addicted to their smartphones or will not suffer from nomophobia.

The second objective was to assess and compare the Nomophobia in Girls and Boys. To fulfill the objective independent sample t-test was used.

The findings as shown in table 2 indicate that the mean score of boys on nomophobia was 78.67 while the mean score of girls on nomophobia was 85.07 and t value is 1.14 which indicates girls scored high on nomophobia than boys but this difference is not significant.

this or there is a need to study in this area.

There are also some studies which supports the findings of the present study. Study done by Rani and Kumar (2016) on adolescents and result of the study reveals no significant gender and area difference on loneliness of urban and rural adolescents. Similarly Agrawal and Pearlene (2023) did a research study on loneliness and nomophobia and wants to find 'the relationship and its pervasiveness regarding smartphones and internet use among young adults'. Outcomes of the study revealed significant relationship between nomophobia and loneliness but no significant difference was found between males and females for nomophobia levels. Similar findings also found by Menon et al. (2021), who did study on nomophobia and shyness among teenagers and found no significant difference in the level of nomophobia

Table 3: Showing Mean, S.D and t-value on the variable of Loneliness in girls and boys

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Loneliness	Boys	40	1.04	12.99	2.14
	Girls	40	1.09	11.67	

The findings as shown in table 3 indicate that the mean score of boys on loneliness was 1.04 while the mean score of girls on loneliness was 1.09 and t value is 2.14 which indicates the less difference between boys and girls and is not significant. Perhaps the reason for this is that the reason for this could be that

among teenagers across gender. Similarly study done by Jhambia and Jessica (2020) also showed no significant difference among Undergraduate and Postgraduate in Nomophobia and loneliness. It also showed that there is no significant difference among Tamil and English medium students in Nomophobia

and Loneliness. There is one more study done Devnani et al. (2022) also showed not much significant difference among boys and girls on nomophobia. Another study done by Darvishi et al. (2019) on 'Investigating the different dimensions of nomophobia among medical students: A cross sectional study' also showed no statistically significant difference on nomophobia among gender. There is also study done by Bhattathirippad and Patel (2021) on nomophobia in males and females and findings of the study revealed that there was no difference among males and females with respect to nomophobia and social networking usage. Another study done by Bagade and Goggi (2022) on 'the role of nomophobia in the lifestyle among adults'. Findings showed that It was found that there exists the negative correlation among the Nomophobia in males and females. A correlational study done by Paray et al.(2020) on nomophobia and physical health of panaboans across age groups and result of the study showed that the level of nomohpobia and physical health status has no significant difference in aged group according to gender. Ghosh (2020) also did a research study on smartphone addiction and nomophobia among college students of Ranchi. Outcomes of the study revealed no significant difference on the dimesion of nomophobia in males and females.

Conclusion

This study had practical and theoretical implications and it also provide the new way to see the impact of nomophobia and loneliness in college students. In a nutshell, the present paper concluded that nomophobia is found in all students. There is no effect of gender on this. Besides this present study contributes to increasing body of literature in search of the role of loneliness in nomophobia. We can say that the students who are more dependent on smartphones will have more chances of having nomophobia or we can also say that the students who are more dependent on smartphones will have less loneliness. If they have a phone then they will not feel lonely at all. The reason they don't feel lonely is because they use too much smartphone. In a way, we can say that people who do not have mobile phones, they are lonely because nowadays there is the era of smartphones and in our times, every person from childhood till old age is busy with the phone and they do not feel alone only because of smatphone. Nowadays people are losing physical interaction due to nomophobia. Due to mobile dependency we have become more selfish, emotionless, self-centred. Due to nomophobia, we are not only being affected psychologically but also physically. Due to excessive use of smartphone, we may have to face headache, eyesight problems but also nerve problems.

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