

Nomophobia and Social Relationships of Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract

Nomophobia, a combination of the words "no mobile phone" and "phobia," is the term used to describe the fear or anxiety associated with not having a mobile phone or not being able to use it for communication. Those who suffer from nomophobia may experience anxiety, restlessness, or even panic attacks when they aren't able to use their electronics, which they rely heavily on for security, productivity, and social interaction. Social relationships are the connections that exist between people, ranging from passing acquaintances to close friendships. They might be romantic, platonic, family, or professional, and they all make a big difference in people's development and the cohesiveness of society. This study is about how nomophobia affects the social relationships of pre-service teachers. The results illustrated that pre-service teachers have moderate nomophobia and this also affects the social relationship slightly in the current scenario. It is also seen that nomophobia is high in urban female pre-service teachers.

Keywords: Nomophobia, Social Relationships, pre-service teachers

Introduction

Smartphones are becoming an essential part of our everyday lives in the digital age, acting as instruments for entertainment, communication, and information retrieval, among many other things. But as smartphones have become more and more common, a brand-new occurrence called nomophobia has surfaced. This phrase, which was derived from "no-mobile-phone phobia," describes the worry or terror associated with not having a cell phone or not being able to use one for any reason. Nomophobia's

prevalence and effects on people's behaviour and mental health have drawn the attention of researchers, psychologists, and the general public.

Examining nomophobia's causes and contributing elements is crucial to understanding it completely. Numerous interrelated factors, such as the quick development of mobile technology, society's reliance on cell phones, and people's psychological attachment to these gadgets, have contributed to the emergence of nomophobia. From being the only means of communication, mobile phones are now multipurpose gadgets that can be used for social networking, gaming, online shopping, and navigation, among other things. Because of their adaptability, smartphones are being used more frequently for leisure and work-related purposes, making the distinction between virtual and real-world experiences more difficult to make.

In addition, the expectations and conventions of society have greatly influenced how people relate to their mobile phones. Constant smartphone contact is not only encouraged but also seen as a sign of productivity and social standing in many countries. The drive to always be connected stems from the fear of missing out (FOMO), which is made worse by the never-ending barrage of updates and notifications on social media platforms. As a result, people who are cut off from their devices may feel uneasy or anxious because they worry that they will miss crucial calls, texts, or updates.

The symptoms of nomophobia can differ greatly from person to person, from a slight uneasiness to crippling dread. An intense need to constantly check one's phone, restlessness, impatience, and panic attacks are a few typical symptoms. Additionally, those who suffer from nomophobia may carry their phones around all the time, sleep with them close by, and experience anxiety or agitation when their batteries run out or there is no network service. Nomophobia can also make it difficult to go about daily tasks, which can have an adverse effect on relationships with others, productivity, and general quality of life.

Beyond just causing psychological discomfort, nomophobia can have serious negative effects on a person's health and general well-being. Long-term nomophobic stress exposure can exacerbate mental health conditions like persistent anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Furthermore, there is a connection between excessive smartphone use and physical health problems such as eye strain, neck and back pain, poor sleep, and decreased physical activity. Moreover, the perpetual connectedness enabled by cell phones causes a blurring of work and home life boundaries, resulting in fatigue and decreased job satisfaction.

Apart from its impact on individuals, nomophobia also has wider societal ramifications that influence social dynamics, communication styles, and cultural standards. The widespread usage of smartphones has changed how people communicate with one another; now, face-to-face talks are frequently cut short or eclipsed by the presence of a mobile device. This behaviour, referred to as "phubbing" (phone snubbing), can damage relationships by impeding sincere conversation and emotional connection. In addition, the widespread use of cell phones in public areas has sparked worries about digital surveillance, privacy, and the decline of offline social networks.

A multimodal strategy that incorporates human therapies, technology advancements, and societal transformations is needed to address nomophobia. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based practices can assist people in controlling their anxiety and lowering their dependency on smartphones on a personal level. While mindfulness activities help develop present-moment awareness and lessen the compulsive impulse to check one's phone, cognitive restructuring exercises can challenge illogical assumptions about the necessity of ongoing connectedness. People can also recover control over their smartphone use and prioritize offline interactions and activities by setting clear limits and designating "phone-free" times or areas.

Innovations in technology may also help to mitigate the negative consequences of nomophobia and encourage better smartphone usage practices. Features like screen time trackers, notification management apps, and digital well-being tools enable users to better monitor and control how much time they spend on their smartphones. Furthermore, the focus may move from portable devices to more immersive and integrated forms of digital connection as wearable technologies and augmented reality progress, which could lessen the obsessive desire to check one's phone frequently.

Addressing nomophobia on a larger scale necessitates cultural shifts that go against the accepted standards of perpetual connectedness and digital omnipresence. Promoting digital literacy and ethical smartphone use through educational efforts can enable people to form healthy relationships with technology from an early age. Workplaces can also put in place policies that support work-life balance and dissuade employees from expecting to be available all the time outside of set working hours. Lastly, cultivating a culture of present, mindfulness and authentic human connection can help combat the widespread effects of nomophobia and advance happiness and contentment in the digital age.

To summarise, nomophobia is the result of a complex interaction of social, psychological, and technological elements that influence how people interact with their smartphones. Even though smartphones are incredibly useful and convenient, relying too much on them can cause nomophobia, which is a condition marked by compulsive behaviour, dread, and anxiety about using mobile phones. Understanding nomophobia's symptoms and effects is crucial to creating successful interventions and encouraging better smartphone usage practices. We can promote a more thoughtful and balanced approach to technology use, allowing people to maximize the positive effects of cell phones on their mental health and general well-being while reducing their detrimental effects on it, by tackling nomophobia on an individual, technological, and societal level.

Social relationships, which include the ties and connections people make with one another in a variety of situations, are essential components of human interaction. These connections are essential for people's emotional health and general quality of life because they provide them with companionship, support, and a sense of belonging. Fundamentally, social relationships are made up of a variety of connections, from strong personal ties with family members and romantic partners to larger networks of friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and neighbours. The dynamics, customs, and expectations that characterize each kind of relationship influence how people behave and communicate in various social groups.

Intimacy, trust, and mutual reliance are the hallmarks of close relationships, including those with family and romantic partners. These connections frequently offer emotional support during happy, sad, or difficult moments, encouraging sentiments of attachment and stability. Intimacy, friendship, and personal development are all benefits of romantic relationships, but strong familial ties can provide a feeling of identity and belonging. In contrast, friendships provide company, common interests, and opportunities for social interactions. They also operate as sources of happiness, humour, and support outside of the home and in romantic relationships. Although friendships can range widely in intensity and duration—from passing acquaintances to lifelong partners—they are all vital to people's social and mental health.

Beyond personal connections, social networks and groups have a big impact on how people feel about themselves and where they belong. Communities encourage a sense of solidarity and cooperation among their members by offering chances for social interaction, shared experiences, and group belonging. These social networks offer channels for communication, understanding, and support among people of different

faiths, cultural groups, and online communities. It's important to remember that social interactions are dynamic and vary over time due to a variety of variables like life transitions, relocation, and adjustments to social roles and duties. Sustaining positive social connections involves constant communication, empathy, reciprocity, and the capacity to resolve disagreements constructively.

The future generation of students will likely be learning on many social platforms, which will subsequently also become well-equipped, as evidenced by the most recent technical developments. Diverse perspectives also contribute to the psychological effects that many students who fall under the umbrella of inclusion will experience. Therefore, it will be crucial to figure out how to use these platforms as efficiently as possible, and that is the subject of this study.

The relationships of an individual will contribute to the well-being of the person and the society that they are part of. So, nomophobia will cause more disadvantages in the process of socialization than the slight advantage it has in the technological aspect. This study thus takes upon the challenge to analyze in depth the details of how nomophobia and social relationships are interlinked.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the nomophobia of pre-service teachers based on:
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
2. To compare social relationships of pre-service teachers based on:
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
3. To compare the social relationships of pre-service teachers with nomophobia.
4. To identify how nomophobia affects social relationships among pre-service teachers.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of nomophobia among pre-service teachers based on

- i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
2. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of nomophobia among pre-service teachers based on
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
 3. There exists a relationship between nomophobia and social relationships among pre-service teachers.

Materials and Methods

To accomplish the goals and verify the validity of the hypothesis, the survey method was used. A representative sample of 200 pre-service teachers from various colleges in Kozhikode District made up the study sample. Here, stratified random sampling is the method of sampling that is employed.

Instrument

Data collection is essentially an important part of the research processes that the interference, hypothesis or generalization, tentatively held might be identified as valid, verified as correct or rejected as untenable Koul (1984). The right instruments must be chosen in order for any research to be successful. Two instruments were utilized to gather the participant data. Both were prepared taking into consideration the objectives set for the study.

Process

The investigation started with the administration of the nomophobia questionnaire in both offline and online modes. To enable the respondents to share in-depth perspectives, an interview was then conducted. The ethical guidelines of anonymity and impartial treatment were adhered to when collecting the data.

The questionnaire on nomophobia is a seven-point scale which consisted of 20 items developed by Yildirim, C. & Correia, A. (2015).

To find out the details of social interactions a social relationship scale was used which consisted of 30 items.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of data collection, the data were exported and readied for use with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.26. During this process, statistics such as average and standard deviation (SD) were calculated and further analyzed. And also, the reliability and validity of the social relationship scale were established.

Results and Findings

This section aims to present the fundamental findings of the study organized in the form of figures and tables for optimal visualization. The results are organized below.

Analysis

Comparison of nomophobia of pre-service teachers according to gender:

The results obtained for the comparison of nomophobia of pre-service teachers according to gender are reflected in Table 1

Table 1. T-test for gender differences for nomophobia of pre-service teachers.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Level of Significance
Female	143	76.7	34.7	2.1	0.05

Male	57	65.9	25.5
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The mean of nomophobia scores for female and male pre-service teachers are found to be (Mean=76.7) & (SD = 34.7) and (Mean = 65.9) & (SD = 25.5) respectively. It indicates that male and female pre-service teachers have a moderate level of nomophobia, with female pre-service teachers having a higher level of nomophobia than their male counterparts.

Z- value is found to be ($Z = 2.1$) at a significance level of 0.05, which is statistically significant. Therefore, there is a significant difference in nomophobia among male and female pre-service teachers.

Comparison of nomophobia of pre-service teachers according to locale.

The results obtained for the comparison of nomophobia of pre-service teachers according to locale are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test for locale differences for nomophobia of pre-service teachers

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Level of Significance
Rural	120	67.5	29.4	3.3	0.01
Urban	80	82.8	35.1		

The mean of attitude scores for teachers in rural areas and urban areas are found to be (Mean=67.5) & (SD = 29.4) and (Mean = 82.8) & (SD = 35.1) respectively. It indicates that pre-service teachers in urban and rural areas have moderate levels of nomophobia.

z-value is found to be ($t = 3.3$) at a significance level of (0.01) which is statistically significant. Therefore, there is a significant difference in nomophobia among pre-service teachers from urban and rural areas.

Comparison of the social relationship of pre-service teachers according to gender:

The results obtained for the comparison of the social relationship of pre-service teachers according to gender are reflected in Table 3

Table 3. T-test for locale differences of social relationship according to gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Level of Significance
Female	143	89.7	32.2	1.99	0.05
Male	57	99.6	30.4		

The mean of attitude scores for female pre-service teachers and male pre-service teachers is found to be (Mean=89.73) & (SD = 32.2) and (Mean = 99.67) & (SD = 30.49) respectively. It indicates that male pre-service teachers and female pre-service teachers have social relationships with male pre-service teachers having a high social relationship.

Z- value is found to be (Z = 1.99) at a significance level of 0.05, which is statistically significant Therefore, there is a significant difference in social relationships between male and female pre-service teachers.

Comparison of the social relationship of pre-service teachers according to locale:

The results obtained for the comparison of the social relationship of pre-service teachers according to locale are reflected in Table 4

Table 4. T-test for locale differences of social relationship according to locale

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Level of Significance
Rural	120	101.8	30.4	5.3	0.01
Urban	80	78.6	29.1		

The mean of attitude scores for rural pre-service teachers and urban pre-service teachers is found to be (Mean=101.8) & (SD = 30.4) and (Mean = 78.6) & (SD = 29.1) respectively. It indicates that urban pre-service teachers and rural pre-service teachers are having social relationships with urban pre-service teachers having a reduced social relationship.

Z- value is found to be ($Z = 5.3$) at a significance level of 0.01, which is not statistically significant Therefore, there is a significant difference in social relationships between urban and rural pre-service teachers.

Relationship between nomophobia and social relationships:

The results obtained on the relationship between nomophobia and social relationships are reflected in Table 5

Table 5: Correlation between Nomophobia and Social Relationships

Variables	r - value
Nomophobia	
Social Relationship	-0.121

From the correlation value, it is clear that there is a slight negative correlation between nomophobia and social relationship indicating an inversely proportional relationship.

Conclusion

From the analysis and the ideas gathered from the data, it is clear that nomophobia is an issue that is on the rise which is spreading its wings in all sectors. The educational sector is going to hit more and more. As seen, the newer technological inventions have made the process of socialization a very important one. It is such that the use of technology in education is inevitable, but the overuse is much issue making. In the case of students in higher education, it is much more severe. The students can't just leave it as such as everything is currently online. Thus, it is more important that the students are given proper ideas on how to use smartphones efficiently without affecting the moral structure of society. This in turn will reduce the risk of a lack of social relationships in the physical world and sustainable society.

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