

## A Study on Nomophobia, Boredom & Loneliness on Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

Loneliness is an unpleasant state of feeling that everybody has at least felt once in their life. It is the absence of meaningful relationships or people in one's life. It is normal to feel lonely every once in a while, but when a person constantly feels lonely, it can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety, emotional distress, addictions or depression. Loneliness can be affected by several factors such as low self-esteem, boredom, Nomophobia etc. Nomophobia is very common these days. It is said to be 21st century addiction. Nomophobia is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The present research aims to study the effect of Nomophobia, Boredom on Loneliness among adults. The study was conducted on 65 participants, age 18 to 25. Standardized scales were used to assess the level of nomophobia, boredom and loneliness. The results revealed that both nomophobia and boredom have a significant positive correlation with loneliness. The research also found a significant positive correlation between nomophobia and boredom. As the study implied that nomophobia and boredom determine the levels of loneliness. It is necessary now that people must acknowledge the severity of nomophobia and its effect on psychological well-being.

**Keywords:** *Nomophobia, Boredom, Loneliness, Adults*

In today's world smartphone has become a necessity. Smartphone helps humans connect to others through calls or social media, work from home, share your arts or talents, watch shows, start or promote their business etc. It has become impossible to live without smartphones. Due to these reasons, some people are getting addicted to it. Those people prefer to spend time on their smartphones rather than spending time with people around them, which has created problems like high levels of anxiety, boredom, a sense of loneliness etc. A sense of loneliness is an unpleasant feeling which occurs in the absence of meaningful relationships or people in one's life. This can lead to mental health problems.

In an article by Secur Envoy (2012) The term, nomophobia, is an abbreviation for no-mobile-phone phobia, and it was first coined during a study conducted in 2008 by the UK Post Office to investigate anxieties mobile phone users suffer. In another article by Mail Online (2008) in UK, conducted with over 2100 people, demonstrated that some 53% of mobile phone users suffered from nomophobia. The study also revealed that men were more

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prone to nomophobia than were women, with 58% of male participants and 48% of female participants indicating feelings of anxiety when unable to use their phone. Another study conducted in the UK (SecurEnvoy, 2012) surveyed 1000 employees and showed that the number of people suffering from nomophobia increased from 53% to 66%. Unlike the 2008 study, the 2012 study found out that women were more susceptible to nomophobia, with 70% of the women compared to 61% of the men expressing feelings of anxiety about losing their phone or not being able to use their phone. In terms of the relationship between age and nomophobia, the study found that young adults, aged 18–24 were most prone to nomophobia with 77% of them identified as nomophobic, followed by users aged 25–34 at 68%. Moreover, mobile phone users in the 55 and over group were found to be the third most nomophobic users.

### ***Nomophobia***

In an article by Secur Envoy (2012) explained Nomophobia, or no mobile phone phobia as the fear of being out of mobile phone contact”.

In a recent study by King et al (2014), Nomophobia is defined as, “the modern fear of being unable to communicate through a mobile phone (MP) or the Internet.” Nomophobia is a term that refers to a collection of behaviors or symptoms related to mobile phone use. Nomophobia is a situational phobia related to agoraphobia and includes the fear of becoming ill and not receiving immediate assistance.

Although nomophobia does not appear in the current DSM-V (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Ed), it is proposed as a "specific phobia", based on definitions given in the DSM-IV. Some signs and symptoms observed in nomophobia cases are anxiety, respiratory alterations, trembling, perspirations, agitations and disorientations (Bragazzi, & Puenete, Gezgin, Hamutoglu, Sezen-Gultekin & Ayas 2014).

According to Shambare *et al.* (2012), cell phones are “possibly the biggest non-drug addiction of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. According to a study by Durak (2018), a significant correlation between nomophobia and loneliness was found among adolescents. The study suggested that children who try to turn away from the physical world by using smartphones and were unable to form one-to-one connections may have a sense of loneliness.

### ***Boredom***

Boredom is often conceptualized as an aversive state of under arousal that occurs when “information” or environmental “stimulation” is redundant, monotonous, of low intensity, or meaningless (Berlyne, 1960; Fiske & Maddi, 1961; Geiwitz, 1966; Hebb, 1966; Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993; Posner, Russell, & Peterson, 2005).

Boredom is the aversive experience of having an unfulfilled desire to be engaged in satisfying activity. In terms of arousal, the bored individual experiences either agitated, high arousal and/or lethargic, low arousal. Cognitively, the bored individual experiences a slow passage of time and an inability to focus his or her attention. Thus, boredom includes (a) lack of engagement, (b) low arousal negative affect, (c) high arousal negative affect, (d) the experience of a slow passage of time, and (e) difficulty focusing attention.

Thackray (1981) suggests that high arousal boredom may occur when an individual is required to maintain mental alertness and high performance in the context of a monotonous task. According to attentional theories boredom is caused by a failure of attentional

processes resulting in an inability to focus or engage attention (Fisher, 1993; Hamilton, 1981). According to a study by John et al. (1992), a significant positive relation was found among boredom proneness and impulsivity.

### ***Loneliness***

According to Perlman & Peplau (1981) “Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively.”

This definition treats loneliness as a unidimensional concept that varies primarily in its experienced intensity.

According to Gierveld (1987), “Loneliness is a situation experienced by the individual as one where there is an unpleasant or inadmissible lack of (quality of) certain relationships.” This includes situations in which the number of existing relationships is smaller than is considered desirable or admissible, as well as situations where the intimacy one wishes for has not been realized. Thus, loneliness is seen to involve the manner in which the person perceives, experiences, and evaluates his or her isolation and lack of communication with other people”.

This definition of loneliness conceptualizes loneliness as a multidimensional phenomenon. The first concerns the feelings associated with the absence of an intimate attachment, feelings of emptiness or abandonment. This so-called ‘deprivation’ component is the core of the concept. The second component refers to the time perspective (do people interpret their loneliness situation as being hopeless or as changeable and treatable; do they blame others or themselves for the situation they are in?). The third component involves different types of emotional aspects such as sorrow, sadness and feelings of shame, guilt, frustration and desperation.

In both definitions, loneliness is considered to be an expression of negative feelings of missing relationships and occurs in individuals of all ages. The opposite of loneliness is embeddedness.

According to a study by Duy (2003), Loneliness can be caused by a lack of social communication, belonging to a social group, or close emotional attachment, and adolescence is probably the stage where feelings of loneliness are most felt.

### ***Two components of loneliness:***

1. ***Emotional Loneliness:*** According to Weiss (1973), emotional loneliness stems from the absence of an intimate relationship or a close attachment (e.g., a partner or a best friend. He tied his concept of emotional loneliness to attachment theory. Emotional loneliness arises, for example, when a partner relationship dissolves through widowhood or divorce and is characterized by intense feelings of emptiness, abandonment, and forlornness. According to a study by O’Súilleabháin et al. (2019), it is found that emotional loneliness significantly increased the likelihood of death for older adults living (whereas there was no increase in mortality found with social loneliness).
2. ***Social Loneliness:*** According to Weiss (1973), social loneliness stems from the absence of a broader group of contacts or an engaging social network (e.g., friends, colleagues and people in the neighbourhood). Young people who have moved to

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places (e.g., a new school or a new city) where they are newcomers frequently report social loneliness.

### *Purpose*

The present research aims to study the effect of nomophobia and boredom on loneliness in young adults.

### *Hypothesis*

- There will be positive relationship between nomophobia and boredom.
- There will be positive relationship between nomophobia and loneliness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

A total of 65 people participated in the study from across Haryana and Chandigarh. The sample lied in the age group of 18-25.

### *Measures*

The following standardised tests were used:

- **Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q):** The NMP-Q scale is a 20-item scale developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015). It is usually self-administered. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) is applied to each NMP-Q item. Total scores are calculated by summing up responses to each item, resulting in a nomophobia score ranging from 20 to 140, with higher score corresponding to greater nomophobia severity.
- **Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS):** The MSBS scale is a 29-item scale developed by Fahlman, Mercer-Lynn, Flora and Eastwood (2013). The respondents were given a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The responses to all 29-item were summed to yield the final composite score with a range from 29 to 203.
- **De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (DJGLS):** The De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale is a 6-item brief research tool developed by Gierveld and Tilburd (2006). The scale comprises of two subscales emotional loneliness and social loneliness comprising 3 questions each. The respondents were asked to choose from 'yes', 'more or less', 'no'. The scores were calculated by summing the responses of both subscales. Loneliness scores are interpreted as follows: a score of 0 or 1 indicating the absence of feeling of loneliness; a score of greater than 1 and less than 5 corresponding to moderate level of loneliness; a score of equal and greater than 5 corresponding to severe level of loneliness.

### *Procedure*

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and the questionnaires were filled using Google forms. The participants were requested to respond honestly and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. They were thanked for their time and cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

## **RESULTS**

Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlations were worked out to find out the relation between all the variables.

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*Table 1: showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of all variables.*

	Nomophobia	Boredom	Emotional Loneliness	Social Loneliness	Total Loneliness
<b>N</b>	65	65	65	65	65
<b>Mean</b>	81.7	117	1.57	1.80	3.37
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	28.7	43.7	1.07	1.23	1.75

*Table 2: showing correlation among variables*

	Nomophobia	Boredom	Emotional Loneliness	Social Loneliness	Total Loneliness
<b>Nomophobia</b>	—				
<b>Boredom</b>	0.322**	—			
<b>Emotional Loneliness</b>	0.441***	0.629***	—		
<b>Social Loneliness</b>	0.156	0.355**	0.147	—	
<b>Total Loneliness</b>	0.381**	0.637***	0.719***	0.793***	—

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

There is a significant positive correlation between Nomophobia & Loneliness ( $r=0.381$ ,  $p<.01$ ). There is also a significant positive correlation between Boredom & Loneliness ( $r=0.637$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Further, Nomophobia & Boredom ( $r=0.322$ ,  $p<.01$ ) also shown significant positive correlation. The results also shown significant positive correlation between Nomophobia & Emotional loneliness ( $r=0.441$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and between Boredom & Emotional loneliness ( $r=0.629$ ,  $p<.001$ ). According to a study by Gezgin, Hamutoglu, Gultekin and Ayas (2018), it was found individuals who lose access to their smartphones have a feeling of loneliness because of the fear of inability to socialize and communicate with others. According to a study by Titlilope (2014), a significant positive relationship is reported between mobile phone addiction and socio-psychological dimensions such as loneliness, boredom, egoism, and self-independence at varying significant levels among teenage students. According to a study by Li et al. (2021), among Chinese college students, it was found that boredom, nomophobia and loneliness have a significant positive correlation.

### CONCLUSION

The goal of the research was to study the effect of nomophobia, boredom on loneliness. The study was carried out on 65 participants from age 18 to 25. It was hypothesized that there will be a significant positive correlation among all the variables stated above. Participants were administered the standardized measures via google forms. The findings suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between nomophobia and loneliness, boredom and loneliness and also a significant positive correlation between nomophobia and boredom. Based on the research, it can be said higher levels of nomophobia and boredom leads to an extreme sense of loneliness. firstly, we need to acknowledge that we have an addiction to smartphones. Only after that, we can make progress on a personal front by taking a break from smartphones and try to talk to people around us. If that seems difficult, we can always talk to a professional about anything.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

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