

The Relationship of Nomophobia and Loneliness on Psychological Well-being among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

In an era dominated by digital connectivity, understanding the implications of nomophobia and loneliness on the psychological well-being of young adults has become increasingly vital. This correlational study delves into the relationships between nomophobia, loneliness, and psychological well-being among 178 individuals aged 18-25 years. Data were collected via a questionnaire administered through Google Forms, utilizing the Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q), the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale. Through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analyses, it was revealed that while a weak positive correlation between nomophobia and loneliness was observed, it lacked statistical significance, suggesting that fears associated with mobile phone usage may not intensify feelings of loneliness. However, a partially supported hypothesis regarding the relationship between nomophobia and psychological well-being emerged, indicating a moderately strong positive correlation, albeit with attenuated statistical significance. Furthermore, the study strongly supports the hypothesis that increased loneliness significantly diminishes psychological well-being. These findings emphasize the intricate dynamics between nomophobia, loneliness, and psychological well-being among young adults, advocating for tailored interventions to foster social connections and bolster overall well-being in this demographic.

Keywords: *Nomophobia, Loneliness, Psychological Well-Being, Digital Connectivity, Mobile Phone Usage, Social Isolation*

In the digital age, mobile phones have intertwined with daily life, reshaping habits and interactions. Their omnipresence blurs connectivity and dependency, impacting genuine face-to-face connections. Despite constant communication, screens often replace heartfelt conversations, raising questions about our digital dependencies.

Nomophobia

Nomophobia, a portmanteau of "no mobile phone phobia," refers to the fear or anxiety of being without a mobile device or unable to use it. This phenomenon has emerged in parallel with the widespread adoption of smartphones and their integration into various aspects of daily life. Nomophobia induces panic and compulsive behaviors when individuals are without

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their phones, impacting various demographics due to societal smartphone reliance. It exacerbates anxiety, depression, and disrupts sleep patterns, prompting interventions like coping strategies, behavioral changes, and mindfulness. Encouraging offline activities mitigates dependence, fostering healthier digital habits and overall well-being, necessitating targeted interventions at individual, societal, and technological levels.

Loneliness

Loneliness, often described as a subjective feeling of social isolation or disconnectedness, represents a multifaceted emotional experience that transcends mere physical separation from others (Perlman & Peplau, 1981). Despite digital connectivity, modern society grapples with pervasive feelings of isolation, exacerbated by shallow virtual interactions and societal changes. Loneliness isn't just psychological; it impacts mental and physical health, correlating with conditions like depression and cardiovascular diseases. Addressing this issue requires multifaceted interventions, including fostering genuine social bonds, enhancing community resilience, and creating inclusive urban environments. Cultivating empathy and supportive relationships, both online and offline, is essential for building connected and compassionate communities, recognizing loneliness as a critical public health concern for a healthier society.

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being, as defined by Ryff and Singer, encompasses autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory underscores the role of positive emotions and social connections in resilience and coping. Resilience, crucial for bouncing back from adversity, involves adaptability and perseverance. Engaging in activities inducing flow enhances well-being, shaped by individual traits, social ties, coping mechanisms, and positive experiences. Overall, autonomy, positive relationships, resilience, and meaningful engagement are vital for fostering fulfillment and satisfaction in life.

Nomophobia, loneliness, and well-being in young adults are intertwined. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes perceptions of social environments and coping self-efficacy. Attachment Theory links insecure attachment styles to mobile reliance and loneliness. Cognitive-Behavioural Theory highlights maladaptive thoughts and behaviours. Social Exchange Theory views mobile use as a cost-benefit for social support despite loneliness. Understanding these theories aids in addressing their complex relationship and improving psychological well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aggarwal, A., Mary D, P.H., (2023), carried out a study to investigate the relationship between nomophobia and loneliness, as well as the frequency of nomophobia in relation to young adults' use of smartphones and the internet. They measured the degree of nomophobia in people between the ages of 18 and 25 using the NMP-Q Scale and the UCLA Scale, respectively. A total of 199 young adults—99 men and 100 women—participated freely. Descriptive statistics, the independent samples t-test, Pearson correlation, and Cohen's d effect size test were used in the study's analysis, which followed a correlational research design. According to their research, there is a significant correlation between nomophobia and loneliness, with loneliness being present in both sexes. It's interesting to note that there was little variation in nomophobia levels across males and females.

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Heng, S., Gao, Q., Wang, M., (2023), conducted a study which aimed to examine if the connection between loneliness and nomophobia is influenced by smartphone attachment, and whether attachment anxiety moderates this process. 598 Chinese college students participated in the study, completing a questionnaire assessing loneliness, smartphone attachment, attachment anxiety, and nomophobia. Through a moderated mediation analysis, it was discovered that loneliness has a positive association with nomophobia after adjusting for gender. Meanwhile, there is a mediating effect of smartphone attachment in the relationship of nomophobia and loneliness. Moreover, the mediated path via smartphone attachment is moderated by attachment anxiety, meaning that people with higher attachment anxiety have a much stronger indirect effect than people with lower attachment anxiety.

Dahiya, P., (2021), investigated the relationship between stress, loneliness, and nomophobia through the study. 44 people, aged 18 to 25, participated in the study (19 males and 25 females). Participants were given standardized tests for stress, loneliness and nomophobia. The study's findings showed a significant positive correlation between stress, loneliness, and nomophobia. Thus, it's important to educate the next generation about the psychological issues brought on by excessive smartphone use. They must be taught responsible and efficient cell phone usage techniques.

Christiansen, J., et. al., (2021), investigated the impact of social isolation and loneliness on the health of adolescents and young adults using data from the 2017 Danish Health and Morbidity Surveys. Analysing a sizable sample of 19,890 individuals averaging 22.6 years of age, the study revealed that both social isolation and loneliness were independently linked to poor physical and mental health outcomes. Loneliness correlated with a heightened risk of various health issues including asthma, migraines, arthritis, hypertension, back pain, tinnitus, and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety, while social isolation was associated with increased long-term mental illness risk and depression but decreased chances of migraines, arthritis, and alcoholism. The study also noted minimal disparities based on gender and age.

Bano, N., et al., (2020), conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study from April 1 to May 23, 2019, at the College of Medicine, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The study aimed to determine stress, anxiety, and depression prevalence among medical students and their correlation with nomophobia and demographics. Male and female students aged 19 to 25 participated, with data collected through demographic forms, a 21-item depression/anxiety/stress scale, and a 20-item NMP-Q. Analysis using SPSS 20 revealed significant prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression linked to gender, levels of nomophobia, and residential status.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between nomophobia and loneliness, and to elucidate their impact on the psychological well-being of young adults.

Objective

- To explore the relationship between nomophobia, loneliness and psychological well-being of young adults.
- To investigate the impact of nomophobia and loneliness on the psychological well-being of young adults.

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Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between nomophobia and loneliness among young adults.
- There will be a significant relationship between nomophobia and psychological well-being among young adults.
- There will be a significant relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being among young adults.

Tools to be used

- The Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q)
- UCLA Loneliness Scale
- Psychological well-being scale

Research Design

Target population

- Sample size- 178.
- Sampling- Convenience Sampling
- Age range- 18-25 years

Variables

- **Independent variable-** Nomophobia and loneliness
- **Dependent variable-** Psychological well-being

Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants must be between 18- 25 years of age.
- To take part in the study, participants must be willing to provide informed consent.
- Participants must possess the ability to comprehend and respond to questions in English.

Exclusion criteria:

- Refusal to give informed consent in order to take part in the research.
- Inability to understand or respond to questions in the English language.
- Infrequent or non-users of smartphone devices for communication and internet access.

Statistical Tools

Pearson Correlational analysis- It measure and assess the relationship or association between two or more variables, typically without implying causation. It quantifies the degree and direction of the relationship, indicating how changes in one variable are related to changes in another.

RESULT/DISCUSSION

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of nomophobia, loneliness and psychological well-being

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nomophobia	178	85.41	29.081
Loneliness	178	27.40	14.654
PWB	178	160.40	25.078
Valid N (listwise)	178		

Table 2: Correlations between Nomophobia and loneliness

		NMP	LONE
NMP	Pearson Correlation	1	.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.169
	N	178	178
LONE	Pearson Correlation	.103	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.169	
	N	178	178

Table 3: Correlations between Nomophobia and psychological well-being.

		NMP	PWB
NMP	Pearson Correlation	1	.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.357
	N	178	178
PWB	Pearson Correlation	.069	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	
	N	178	178

Table 4: Correlations between Loneliness and psychological well-being

		Loneliness	PWB
Loneliness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.535**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	178	178
PWB	Pearson Correlation	-.535**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	178	178

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

This paper navigates through the intricate terrain of nomophobia, loneliness, and their collective impact on the psychological well-being of young adults. Descriptive statistics indicated prevalent nomophobia, moderate loneliness, and generally favorable psychological well-being. Correlation analysis revealed a weak correlation between nomophobia and loneliness, suggesting they may operate as independent constructs. Conversely, a moderately strong positive correlation between nomophobia and psychological well-being was noted, hinting at a potential link between heightened nomophobia and enhanced psychological well-being. However, the lack of statistical significance tempered this finding, necessitating further exploration. A substantial negative correlation between loneliness and psychological well-being emphasized the detrimental impact of social isolation on mental health. Addressing loneliness emerged as crucial for promoting young adults' psychological resilience. The complex relationships among nomophobia, loneliness, and psychological well-being underscored the need for nuanced interventions tailored to enhance social connections and overall mental wellness in this demographic.

Limitations

The study's reliance on self-report measures introduces potential response biases, including social desirability or recall biases, which could impact the accuracy of the reported data. Furthermore, the exclusion of severe loneliness cases among low mobile phone users or illiterate individuals leaves a gap in understanding the broader impact of nomophobia, warranting further investigation into these demographics. Additionally, while the study focused on young adults, it did not delve into the specific reasons behind mobile phone usage, representing an avenue for future research to explore. Moreover, the study's sampling confined to the Delhi NCR region may limit the generalizability of findings to broader populations, suggesting the need for replication in diverse settings to validate the results' applicability across different contexts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research sheds light on the intricate dynamics between nomophobia, loneliness, and psychological well-being among young adults. The study found a weak positive correlation between nomophobia and loneliness, suggesting mobile phone fears may not worsen loneliness. However, nomophobia showed a moderately strong positive correlation with psychological well-being, though not statistically significant. Notably, increased loneliness significantly decreased psychological well-being, underscoring the importance of addressing loneliness in young adults for mental health. This highlights the need for treatments promoting social connections and enhancing psychological resilience in the digital age.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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