



RESEARCH ARTICLE

NOMOPHOBIA IS A TERRIBLE SOCIAL DISORDER

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25th November, 2025
Received in revised form
20th December, 2025
Accepted 18th January, 2026
Published online 27th February, 2026

Keywords:

Nomophobia, Addiction, Mobile phone, Terrible, Distress.

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ABSTRACT

Addiction generally refers to the attraction to different types of drugs such as cocaine, yaba, smoking, and gambling. In today's digital era, mobile phone or social media addiction has taken a terrible form. The study is based on primary data collected from 100 (one hundred) students of 5 (five) renowned schools and colleges in the Jashore area of Bangladesh. This paper tries to analyze their responses toward three distinctive variables—parents, family environment, and social media. Findings of the study showed that out of 100 students, 18.7 percent have mild, 53.42 percent have moderate, and 28.1 percent have severe nomophobia. The research revealed an alarming picture: 43.4 percent of parents, 41.7 percent of friends, and 11.3 percent of social and environmental factors are responsible for students suffering from nomophobia. The study also indicated that loneliness (28.3 percent), online classes (38.5 percent), lack of confidence (21.6 percent), and parental separation (28.1 percent) contributed to students becoming addicted to mobile phones and social media, later causing nomophobia. Their level of nomophobia is alarming; therefore, there is a need to reduce nomophobia and develop effective strategies to prevent further harm. Awareness, self-control, and positive alternative uses of mobile phones can save human civilization.

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Citation: Dr. Tazuddin, S.M. 2026. "Nomophobia is a Terrible Social Disorder." *International Journal of Current Research*, 18, (02), 36242-36243.

INTRODUCTION

Addiction is a condition in which a person is attracted to a person, object, or behavior in such a way that they cannot stop it, even knowing its harmful effects. As a result, the person's self-control decreases, and they continue to experience emotional and physical distress even if they try to stay away from these things. Addiction generally refers to the attraction to different types of drugs such as cocaine, yaba, smoking, and gambling (Park WK, 2005). In today's digital era, mobile phone or social media addiction has taken a terrible form. I have often debated at school and college levels on whether science is a blessing or a curse in human life. Just as science has made our lives easier and more comfortable, its misuse and overuse have made our lives miserable. From that perspective, thinking about mobile phone dependency has become a demand of the time. It is natural for children and teenagers to be attracted to mobile phones, the internet, and new gadgets. Because at this age, they are curious and eager to learn new things. But when these children get addicted to harmful activities including mobile games, it hinders their physical and mental development (Haruka T, Nishida T, Tsuji A and Sakakibara H., 2017). As a result, they do not want to play sports or eat properly. Rather, they cannot spend even a single moment without a mobile phone. This is a mental illness called nomophobia, which is a terrible hindrance to education, career, and building a better future. Nomophobia stands for "No Mobile Phone Phobia." When the absence of a mobile phone creates mental instability, fear, or anxiety in a person, it is called a phobia (Sharma N, Sharma P, Sharma N, Wavare R., 2015). If someone becomes restless or stressed when their phone is lost, the battery is dead, or the device cannot be used for any reason, it is called nomophobia.

Objective: The primary objective of the present study is to explore the impact of nomophobia among school- and college-level students. Besides that, the study tries to identify the problems related to nomophobia and provides some suggestions for overcoming these identified problems.

Analysis: A recent study conducted on nearly one hundred students of five renowned schools and colleges in Jashore found that more than half of the students of classes IX, X, and XI were suffering from mental problems like nomophobia. Among these groups, the problem was most pronounced among students of class XI. According to the study, 18.7 percent of the students had mild nomophobia, 53.2 percent had moderate nomophobia, and 28.1 percent had severe nomophobia. The research revealed a terrible picture: 43.4 percent of parents, 41.7 percent of friends, and 11.3 percent of social and environmental factors were responsible for students suffering from nomophobia. The study also found that loneliness (28.3 percent), online classes (38.5 percent), lack of confidence (21.6 percent), and parental separation (28.1 percent) caused students to become addicted to mobile phones and social media, later leading to nomophobia. A 2019 survey of 2,163 mobile phone users in Britain found that around 53% of users became restless when their mobile phone was lost, the battery or balance ran out, or there was no network. According to the study, about 58% of men and 47% of women experienced phobia symptoms, and 9% felt severe stress when their mobile phones were switched off. Additionally, 55% of users said they were worried about not being able to use their mobile phone to keep in touch with friends or family (Berdida D, Grande R. 2023). About 800 people

participated in a poll on nomophobia by the German news outlet Deutsche Welle. Almost half of the participants suffered from nomophobia, which can lead to disorders like anxiety and depression (Massano-Cardoso IM, Figueiredo S, Galhardo A. , 2022). South Korean radiology professor Yong Suk Hoi reported in a study that teenagers who spend more time on smartphones undergo chemical changes in their brains, making them appear addicted (Negahban A, 2013). This results in depression and anxiety among them. Moreover, the mind remains constantly alert to ensure the mobile phone is in the right place. Mental distress occurs due to fear of losing or misplacing the device. Especially when going outside—such as to markets—people often check their pockets or bags repeatedly to ensure their phone is still there.

Disadvantages: Although mobile phone use is essential, its misuse causes several problems, including physical, mental, and social issues.

- **Physical problems:** high blood pressure, anxiety, neck and spine pain, eye strain, finger and wrist pain, and reduced productivity.
- **Mental problems:** lack of attention, confusion, and depression.
- **Social problems:** reduced communication, weakened relationships, and social isolation.
- **Sleep disturbances:** excessive mobile use can cause sleep disorders.
- **Wasting time:** constant scrolling and gaming reduce meaningful productivity (Yildirim C, Correia A. , 2015).

Ways of Self-Defense: With a little awareness, sacrifice, and acceptance, we can solve many complex problems—and nomophobia is no exception.

- Stay away from your mobile phone for a certain time each day.
- Do not keep your mobile phone in bed while sleeping; keep it off or on silent if possible. Maintain a fixed sleep schedule.
- Identify the people or activities you enjoy and keep yourself engaged with them.
- Practice leaving your phone at home for short periods when going out.
- Use social media on mobile phones as little as possible; try using these platforms on laptops or desktops to reduce dependency.
- Develop the habit of reading books daily instead of using the mobile phone for long periods.
- Create a schedule to meet friends or relatives face-to-face. Revive the habit of offline socializing that was lost during the Covid-19 period.

CONCLUSION

Nomophobia is a dangerous disorder of the modern age. It is driving human civilization toward destruction. Awareness, self-control, and positive alternative uses of mobile phones can save human civilization.

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