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Research Article

Nomophobia and Well-Being among Pre-Service Teachers: The Predictive Role of Smartphone Usage Patterns

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between nomophobia, well-being, and smartphone usage patterns among pre-service teachers in Assam. A sample of 240 pre-service teachers was assessed using the Nomophobia Assessment Scale for Pre-Service Teachers (NASPT) and the Well-being Scale by Ripenjeet Kaur, along with a structured smartphone usage pattern questionnaire. Descriptive statistics indicated moderate levels of nomophobia and well-being concerns among the participants. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant but weak positive relationship between nomophobia and well-being, indicating that higher nomophobia is associated with poorer well-being. Multiple regression analysis showed that daily smartphone usage time and fear of being left behind significantly predicted nomophobia, while other smartphone usage variables did not contribute meaningfully. A second regression analysis demonstrated that smartphone usage patterns failed to significantly predict well-being. These findings suggest that nomophobia is influenced more by psychological factors such as fear of missing out rather than by general smartphone behaviour. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions addressing fear-based dependency on smartphones to support student mental health.

Keywords: Nomophobia, Well-being, Smartphone Usage, Pre-Service Teachers, Psychological factors

Introduction

In today's digitally saturated world, smartphones have become indispensable tools in the lives of higher education students, offering seamless communication, access to information, and academic support. However, this dependence has given rise to *nomophobia*—the anxiety experienced when one is unable to use or access their mobile phone—which is increasingly recognised as a psychosocial concern (Daei, Ashrafi-rizi, & Soleymani, 2019). Research suggests that moderate to high levels of nomophobia is common among university students, and this phenomenon is significantly associated with psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, and depression (Kumar, Yousif, & Humaida, 2025). Furthermore, studies have documented a negative correlation between nomophobia and quality of life or well-being: for example, medical students in India showed adverse effects on emotional well-being and social functioning when experiencing higher nomophobia (O. P. K. Aseeba et al., 2024). Given these findings, exploring the relationship between nomophobia and well-being in a broader higher education context is imperative to understand not only prevalence, but also the demographic and usage-pattern predictors of this phenomenon. This study aims to examine the prevalence of nomophobia among pre-service teachers and its relationship with various dimensions of psychological well-being. By investigating this connection, we seek to provide empirical evidence that can inform institutional policies and interventions designed to promote healthier technology use patterns among teacher trainee populations.

Review of Related Literature

Studies related to Nomophobia

Divya & Santhi (2025) conducted a descriptive study on nomophobia among 60 nursing students in selected Coimbatore colleges using convenience sampling. Findings showed that 10% had no nomophobia, 20% had mild, 53% had moderate, and 17% had severe nomophobia. AL Maghaireh et al. (2025) studied nomophobia and its psychological correlates in 180 school students (aged 15+), using convenience sampling. Results showed 76.7% had high nomophobia, higher in females (78.7%) than males (69.8%), while only 8.3% had low levels. Kumar et al. (2025) conducted a study on 723 UG and PG students using convenience sampling and found that nomophobia was significantly linked to depression, anxiety, stress, and demographic factors like academic level and phone use, indicating a strong correlation between nomophobia and psychological distress. Chang et al. (2025) surveyed 260 adolescents using stratified random sampling and found that fear of inaccessibility and fear of missing out—significantly impaired personal connections. Aslani et al. (2025) studied 434 nursing students in using convenience sampling and found high nomophobia prevalence, negatively affecting students' physical and mental health and academic performance, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. Mahajan et al. (2025) studied 231 higher secondary students using total enumerative sampling and found that 32% had mild nomophobia, 34.2% moderate, and 33.8% severe. Most students (67.5%) used smartphones mainly for social media. While socio-demographic factors showed no significant association, daily smartphone usage was strongly linked to nomophobia severity, indicating a growing prevalence. Dewli and Pandey (2025) surveyed 350 adults using convenience sampling and found that lower smartphone dependence in hilly areas, females showed slightly higher nomophobia levels than males, though the difference was not statistically significant. Moorthi (2024) surveyed 200 pre-service teachers using stratified random sampling and found moderate levels of nomophobia, slightly affecting social relationships with higher levels among urban female pre-service teachers. Kraishan et al (2024) surveyed 327 university students in South Jordan using convenience sampling and found high nomophobia prevalence (86.85%), with 20.2% severe, 35.5% moderate, and 31.2% mild. Higher nomophobia was linked to lower GPA, more absences, and fewer study hours. Oraison and Wilson (2024) studied 164 participants using convenience and snowball sampling and found moderate-to-strong correlations among nomophobia, distraction, and addiction. Distraction and addiction predicted nomophobia; males scored higher on nomophobia, females higher on addiction, with no gender differences in distraction. Rajini and Naidu (2024) studied 60 participants using mixed methods and found excessive smartphone use and nomophobia were linked to poor lifestyle habits and negative health outcomes, especially in young users. Kaur (2024) studied 152 young adults and found nomophobia was positively correlated with anxiety and negatively correlated with self-esteem.

Studies related to Wellbeing

Sharma et al. (2025) surveyed 454 higher education students using purposive sampling and found male and postgraduate students reported higher wellbeing than female and undergraduate students. Atif and Siddiqui (2025) studied 249 undergraduate students using random sampling to examine the impact of psychological wellbeing and emotional intelligence on academic stress. Results showed that emotional intelligence was the most significant predictor of academic stress. Saleem and Salhotra (2025) studied 286 nursing students and found core self-evaluation fully mediated the relationship between dispositional optimism and mental well-being, with significant differences found in core self-evaluation but not in optimism or well-being measures. Sreedisha and Celina (2025) studied 200 management students and found that empathy positively impacts well-being, with perspective taking and empathic concern enhancing it, while personal distress reduces it. Gender moderates this relationship, highlighting the need for empathy-focused, gender-sensitive interventions. Rajamanickam et al. (2025) studied 365 students and found that self-regulation, relationship skills, learning attitude, and prosocial behavior positively influenced well-being, while emotional awareness did not. Overall, emotional learning appears to support academic performance mainly by mitigating negative mental health effects. Rana et al. (2023) studied 252 Indian higher education students and found that Trait Emotional Intelligence positively influences students' mental well-being and helps reduce psychological distress. Abdoli et al. (2023) studied 537 students and found that nomophobia is strongly associated with anxiety, moderately with depression and stress, but not related to insomnia or obsessive–compulsive symptoms, anxiety significantly predicts nomophobia. Yang et al. (2023) studied 585 Chinese university students and found that mobile phone addiction negatively affects mental health, partially mediated by sleep quality, with perceived social support mitigating these effects. Joshi et al. (2023) surveyed 523 undergraduates and found that connectedness to self positively predicted psychological well-being, while connectedness to others was not a significant predictor. Klapp et al. (2023) studied two Swedish cohorts (N=7,684 and N=9,437) using stratified sampling and found 6th grade psychological well-being negatively and cognitive well-being positively related to 9th grade academic performance. Ludban and Gitimu (2023) studied 131 college students using convenience stratified sampling and found that age, gender, financial status, and social support influence well-being, with significant differences in personal growth and purpose between traditional and non-traditional students. Nazari et al. (2023) studied 781 university students using convenience sampling and found that high and problematic social media use negatively affected mental health, with age, gender, income, marital status, and non-native student unemployment significantly influencing this relationship.

Research Questions of the study

• What is the relationship between nomophobia and well-being among pre-service teachers?
• To what extent do smartphone usage patterns (usage years, daily usage time, constant checking, checking frequency, non-urgent use, academic use, dependence for tasks, digital literacy confidence, technological stress and fear of being left behind) predict nomophobia among pre-service teachers?

Objectives of the study

• To examine the relationship between nomophobia and well-being among pre-service teachers.
• To evaluate smartphone usage patterns including:
– usage time (years and per day)
– checking behaviour (constant checking, checking frequency)
– type of use (non-urgent and academic use)
– dependence on smartphones for tasks, digital literacy confidence, technological stress and fear of being left behind

Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive–correlational design to examine smartphone usage patterns, nomophobia, and well-being among pre-service teachers. The descriptive component assesses current levels of smartphone use, digital literacy, technological stress, nomophobia, and well-being. The correlational component explores the relationships among these variables to identify significant patterns and predictive associations.

Population and Sample

The target population consists of pre-service teachers enrolled in the B.Ed course in Assam. A sample of 240 pre-service teachers was selected using stratified random sampling

Variables of the Study

Independent Variables: Smartphone usage patterns, including:
- Years of smartphone use
- Daily usage duration
- Constant checking behaviour
- Checking frequency
- Non-urgent use
- Academic use
- Smartphone dependence for tasks
- Digital literacy confidence
- Technological stress
- Fear of being left behind

Dependent Variables

- Nomophobia Total Score
- Well-being Score

Instruments / Tools for Data Collection

- **Nomophobia Assessment Scale for Pre-Service Teachers (NASPT-2024):** Developed by Mrs. Vashwati Sarma and Dr. R. D. Padmavathy, this self-structured tool consists of 40 items across 10 dimensions. It shows strong content validity and high reliability, making it suitable for measuring nomophobia in the present context.
- **Well-Being Scale (2014):** Developed by Dr. Ripenjeet Kaur. This standardized instrument includes 35 items, with established content and construct validity. A test–retest reliability of 0.67 supports its consistency in assessing students' well-being.
- **Demographic Information Sheet -**Captures participant demographic details, smartphone usage history and smartphone usage patterns.

Data Analysis and Results of the findings

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) will be used to summarise the levels of smartphone use, nomophobia, and well-being. Inferential analyses will include Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between nomophobia and well-being, independent t-tests/ANOVA to assess differences across demographic groups, and multiple regression to predict nomophobia based on smartphone usage patterns. All analyses were conducted using SPSS statistical software.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 240)

Variable	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Nomophobia Score	98.32	15.78	0.42	0.36
Well-Being Score	104.87	9.36	1.99	6.30
Usage Time (Years)	2.58	0.57	−0.96	−0.07
Usage Time per Day	1.98	0.71	0.04	−0.99
Constant Checker	1.69	0.46	−0.81	−1.35
Checking Frequency	2.04	0.85	−0.07	−1.60
Non-Urgent Use	2.93	0.83	−0.48	−0.24
Academic Use	2.88	0.85	0.24	−1.57
Dependence for Tasks	2.92	0.70	0.12	−0.97
Digital Literacy Confidence	2.68	0.84	0.65	−1.27
Stress Keeping Up	1.66	0.71	0.61	−0.84
Fear of Being Left Behind	2.12	0.87	0.95	0.47

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Descriptive statistics for the major study variables are presented in Table 1. The mean Nomophobia Total Score for the sample (N = 240) was 98.32 (SD = 15.78), indicating moderate levels of nomophobia among pre-service teachers. The Well-Being Score (M = 104.87, SD = 9.36) suggested a generally moderate level of psychological well-being, with higher scores reflecting poorer well-being. Smartphone usage patterns indicated that pre-service teachers, on average, had been using smartphones for more than 2 years (M = 2.58, SD = 0.57), used their smartphones between 1–3 hours per day (M = 1.98, SD = 0.71), and reported moderate levels of academic and non-urgent use.

Relationship Between Nomophobia and Well-Being

Table 2: Correlation Between Nomophobia and Well-Being *(N = 240)*

Variables	1	2
1. Nomophobia Total Score	—	0.193**
2. Well-Being Score	0.193**	—
Note. p < .01 (2-tailed).		

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between nomophobia and well-being (Table 2). The analysis revealed a significant but weak positive correlation between Nomophobia Total Score and Well-Being Score (r = 0.193, p = 0.003). This indicates that pre-service teachers with higher nomophobia tend to report lower psychological well-being, although the strength of this relationship is small.

Correlations Between Smartphone Usage Patterns and Nomophobia

Table 3: Key Correlations Between Nomophobia and Smartphone Usage Variables

Predictor Variable	Pearson r	p-value
Usage Time per Day	**0.197**	**0.001**
Fear of Being Left Behind	**0.163**	**0.006**
Usage Time (Years)	−0.033	0.307
Constant Checker	−0.023	0.359
Checking Frequency	0.083	0.101
Non-Urgent Use	0.076	0.120
Academic Use	0.050	0.220
Dependence for Tasks	0.052	0.211
Digital Literacy Confidence	−0.002	0.487
Stress Keeping Up	0.060	0.179
Note. Significant predictors in bold.		

Zero-order correlations (Table 3) indicated that among the smartphone usage variables, only two predictors showed significant associations with nomophobia:

- Usage time per day ($r = 0.197$, $p = 0.001$),
- Fear of being left behind ($r = 0.163$, $p = 0.006$).

Other predictors, including checking frequency, academic use, non-urgent use, dependency for tasks, digital literacy confidence, and technological stress, demonstrated weak and non-significant correlations with nomophobia.

Regression Analysis Predicting Nomophobia

Table 4: Multiple Regression Predicting Nomophobia *(N = 240)*

Model Summary and Coefficients: Statitic (value) R= 0.286; R^2=0.082; Adjusted R^2=0.042; F (10, 229) =2.042; p-value=0.030				
Predictor	**B**	**β**	**t**	**p**
(Constant)	69.215	—	9.803	<0.001
Usage Time (Years)	−1.056	−0.061	−0.949	0.344
Usage Time per Day	**4.024**	**0.181**	**2.636**	**0.009**
Constant Checker	1.287	0.045	0.697	0.487
Checking Frequency	0.966	0.098	1.242	0.215
Non-Urgent Use	−0.821	−0.086	−1.075	0.283
Academic Use	−0.831	−0.075	−1.014	0.312
Dependence for Tasks	0.707	0.063	0.871	0.385
Digital Literacy Confidence	−0.258	−0.019	−0.274	0.784
Stress Keeping Up	−1.109	−0.073	−1.106	0.270
Fear of Being Left Behind	**2.990**	**0.165**	**2.473**	**0.014**
Note. Significant predictors in bold.				

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which smartphone usage patterns predicted nomophobia (Table 4). The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F (10, 229) = 2.042$, $p = 0.030$, explaining 8.2% of the variance in Nomophobia Total Score ($R^2 = 0.082$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.042$).

Two predictors emerged as statistically significant:

- Usage time per day ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.009$),
- Fear of being left behind ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.014$).

These findings indicate that students who use their smartphones for more hours daily and those who experience a higher fear of missing out on academic or digital information are more likely to exhibit higher nomophobia levels. No other smartphone usage patterns significantly predicted nomophobia.

Regression Analysis Predicting Well-Being

Table 5: Multiple Regression Predicting Well-Being *(N = 240)*

Model Summary and Coefficients: Statistic (value) R= 0.176; R^2=0.031; Adjusted R^2=-0.0111; F (10, 229) =0.7732; p-value=0.694; **Coefficients:** *None of the predictors were statistically significant.*

A second multiple regression was conducted to examine whether smartphone usage variables predicted well-being. The model was not significant, $F (10, 229) = 0.732$, $p = 0.694$, explaining only 3.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.031$; Adjusted $R^2 = −0.011$).

None of the smartphone usage variables—including usage time, checking behaviours, academic use, dependency, digital literacy confidence, stress, or fear of being left behind—significantly predicted students' well-being (Table 5).

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between nomophobia, well-being, and smartphone usage patterns among pre-service teachers. Overall, the findings highlight that while nomophobia is moderately prevalent in this group, its connection to well-being and smartphone usage behaviours is more nuanced.

Nomophobia and Well-Being

A significant but weak positive correlation was found between nomophobia and well-being. This suggests that students with higher anxiety or discomfort related to being without their smartphones tend to report poorer psychological well-being. Although the strength of this relationship is modest, it supports previous literature indicating that problematic smartphone use can be linked to mental health concerns such as stress, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation. The weak magnitude may reflect that well-being is influenced by a much broader range of factors beyond technology use, including academic pressure, physical health, social support, and environmental factors.

Predictors of Nomophobia

Among the smartphone usage variables, only daily usage time and fear of being left behind significantly predicted nomophobia levels. This finding suggests that the intensity of smartphone use, rather than long-term ownership or specific types of activities, plays a more significant role in shaping nomophobia. Pre-service teachers who spend more hours on their smartphones each day may form stronger emotional or psychological dependence, which increases their discomfort when they are separated from the device.

The significant role of fear of being left behind highlights the psychological dimension of nomophobia. Pre-service teachers who feel pressure to remain constantly updated with academic or digital information may develop a heightened sense of urgency and fear of missing out (FOMO), contributing to greater nomophobia. This finding aligns with recent studies showing that FOMO and academic pressure are key drivers of compulsive mobile phone use.

Other factors—such as checking frequency, type of use, digital literacy confidence, and dependency for tasks—did not emerge as significant predictors. This suggests that nomophobia may be influenced more by psychological needs (e.g., fear, anxiety, perceived dependence) than by simple behavioural metrics of usage.

Predictors of Well-Being

None of the smartphone usage variables significantly predicted well-being. This indicates that while smartphone behaviours may contribute to nomophobia, they do not directly influence overall well-being in this sample. A plausible explanation is that well-being is shaped by complex, multifaceted factors such as socio-emotional support, personality traits, academic workload, lifestyle habits, and coping strategies. Smartphone use may exert only an indirect or moderating influence on well-being rather than a strong direct impact.

The non-significant findings also reflect that not all smartphone use is harmful; academic use, communication, and productivity tasks may have neutral or even beneficial effects.

Overall Implications

- Nomophobia is present and measurable among pre-service teachers.
- It is associated with poorer well-being, although the effect is small.
- The strongest predictors of nomophobia are daily smartphone use and fear of being left behind.
- Simply owning or checking a smartphone frequently does not necessarily lead to nomophobia or lower well-being.
- Well-being appears to be influenced by variables beyond smartphone use—highlighting the need for broader mental health interventions.

Conclusion

This study explored the complex relationships between nomophobia, well-being, and smartphone usage patterns among pre-service teachers. The results revealed that nomophobia is moderately prevalent and shows a weak but meaningful association with poorer well-being. However, most smartphone usage behaviors—such as checking frequency, academic use, and dependence for tasks—were not strongly related to nomophobia or well-being. Only daily smartphone usage time and fear of being left behind emerged as significant predictors of nomophobia, underscoring the psychological and emotional aspects of smartphone reliance. Importantly, smartphone usage patterns did not significantly predict overall well-being, suggesting that well-being is shaped by a broader set of academic, personal, and social factors. Taken together, the findings indicate that interventions aimed at reducing nomophobia should focus not merely on reducing smartphone use but on addressing underlying fears and anxieties about missing important information. Institutions may consider incorporating digital well-being programs, stress management training, and awareness campaigns to help students maintain balanced smartphone habits while safeguarding their psychological well-being.

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