



Examining the relationship between Nomophobia, Fear of Missing Out and Bedtime Procrastination among College Students

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Abstract: Nomophobia or NO Mobile Phone Phobia is a term described as a psychological condition when people have a fear of being without a mobile phone. Fear of missing out is defined as the nagging worry that your friends or peers are having fun, posting updates, or experiencing good things without you. Whereas Bedtime procrastination is the habit of delaying sleep without a physical reason, usually trading precious sleep hours to do leisure activities like scrolling through social media. These three variables are closely linked with modern psychological behaviour. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between Nomophobia, Fear of missing out, and Bedtime procrastination among college students. For this purpose, a sample of 60 college students in the age range 18-25 years, were taken. Standardized measures of Nomophobia, Fear of missing out, Bedtime procrastination were administered to participants. Findings of the study revealed a significant positive correlation between Nomophobia, Fear of missing out and Bedtime procrastination. The findings suggest that individuals can keep their phones in another room at night to lower anxiety and stop the urge to check along with proper sleep hygiene.

Keywords: *Nomophobia, Fear of missing out, Bedtime Procrastination, College Students.*

1. Introduction

The widespread use of smartphones has become an important part of everyday life among young adults and students leading to an increase in the level of fear of missing out and bedtime procrastination. “Every beep, buzz, and scroll steals your attention. You start a task, but notification drags you down a rabbit hole. Slowly your ability to focus deeply is eroding” (Trevor

Noah). Nomophobia (no mobile-phone phobia) is the irrational fear or anxiety of being without your mobile phone or being unable to use it. The UK post office coined the word in 2008 during a study on mobile phone anxieties. The burden of the fear of being detached from smartphone connectivity is now increasing among the millennials worldwide. This condition has been described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) as a ‘phobia for particular/specific things; however, it has not been formally recognized as a distinct disorder in the DSM (Bragazzi and Del Puente,2014). It can lead to significant psychological, physical, social challenges for individuals such as anxiety, panic, loneliness, sleep disruption, and avoidance.

According to Pavithra, Madhukumar and Murthy (2015) a study was conducted on 200 students in Bangalore. The results found Nomophobia as an increasing prevalence among the young generation with a percentage of 39.5%. On the other hand, a study was conducted among 433 Turkish college students. The study revealed that no significant difference was found as of gender, grade, and smartphone usage (Adnan and Gezgin,2016).

“In a world of oversharing, we don’t want to be unknown or unseen” (Meghan Daum). Fear of Missing Out was coined in 2004 by Patrick J. McGinnis, a Harvard Business School student, in an article for the student newspaper The Harbus. FOMO (Fear of missing out) is an anxious feeling you get when you think others are experiencing better things, having fun, or succeeding without you. Challenges like psychological hurdles, behavioural triggers, and mental strain can be observed due to constant urge to stay connected, digital overload, overcommitment, disconnection from the present, anxiety, sadness and comparison of your life with others. Social networking platforms can intensify this concern by providing continuous updates about other individuals' interaction, activities, and experiences.

A study was conducted among a sample of 490 college students. The findings showed that females tend to experience a high level of fear of missing out (Alabri,2022). According to AI-Furiah,S.A. and AI-Awidi (2021) a study was conducted on 2084 undergraduate students in Kuwait University. The findings indicated a high level of nomophobia and strong correlation with attention distraction and learning disengagement.

“While wasting our time hesitating and procrastinating, life goes on.” (Seneca). The term bedtime procrastination was officially coined and defined in a landmark 2014 study by Dr. Floor M. Kroese and her research team at Utrecht University. Bedtime procrastination is the voluntary delay of going to sleep despite knowing that staying up late will cause tiredness or other problems

the next day. Lack of daytime control, instant gratification, poor self-regulation, desire for “me time” are some of the causes of bedtime procrastination and this might lead to sleep deprivation, health risks, and lower focus. The constant need to remain connected may also influence bedtime procrastination.

A study was conducted on a sample of 3,800 students. The study found significant positive correlation between mobile phone addiction and bedtime procrastination as well as anxiety (Meng et al.,2024). Additionally, a cross- sectional and longitudinal study conducted on 1181 students revealed significant bidirectional relationship of problematic mobile phone use with bedtime procrastination and depressive symptoms (Cui et al.,2021).

Although previous studies have studied nomophobia, fear of missing out and bedtime procrastination as a single variable or relationship between the two. Examining these variables together may provide a better understanding of the relationship between them. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between nomophobia, fear of missing out, and bedtime procrastination.

1.1 Nomophobia

King et al. (2014: 28), in their recent study, define nomophobia as “modern fear of being unable to communicate through a mobile phone (MP) or the Internet” and a “situational phobia related to agoraphobia and includes the fear of becoming ill and not receiving immediate assistance.” Yildirim and Correia (2015) defined it as "fear, anxiety, and discomfort caused by being without electronic devices or unable to access them.”

According to Gezgin et al. (2018) a study was conducted on a sample of 538 Turkish university students. The study aimed to examine whether Fear of missing out contributes to nomophobia. The findings demonstrated a significant positive moderate relationship between nomophobia and fear of missing out, indicating that students with higher fear of missing out are more likely to experience nomophobia.

A study was conducted by Yildirim et al. (2016) to examine the prevalence of nomophobia (the fear of being out of mobile phone contact) among a sample of 537 Turkish college students. The investigation reported that 42.6%of the participants experienced nomophobia, with the greatest concerns related to the inability to communicate and access information. The study concluded that gender and smartphone ownership duration were found to influence nomophobia, while age and mobile phone usage duration were not significant predictors.

A study was conducted on the prevalence of nomophobia among 774 young adults in India. The data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and the 20-item Nomophobia Questionnaire. In- depth interviews were conducted with participants who exhibited moderate and severe nomophobia. The results indicated that 23.5% of the participants experienced severe nomophobia. The study found that students experienced Dependency, Compulsive smartphone use, anxiety, and frustration when separated from their smartphones. The author concluded that a substantial portion of young adults experienced severe nomophobia, emphasizing the need for timely identification and educational interventions (Jilisha et al., 2019).

Wibowo and Safaria (2025) conducted a study to examine the relationship between fear of missing out, nomophobia, and psychological well-being among 279 students. The results found out that nomophobia partially mediated the relationship between fear of missing out and psychological well-being. Furthermore, fear of missing out positively predicted nomophobia, and both variables had significant negative effects on students' psychological well-being. The findings also highlighted that technology-related anxieties, particularly FOMO and nomophobia, are associated with poorer psychological well-being among students.

1.2 Fear of missing out (FOMO)

Fear of missing out has been defined as a “pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, FoMO is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing” (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013, p. 1841). Abel, Buff and Burr (2016) defined it as “a feeling of discomfort or loss resulting from knowing what others are doing and feeling that it is more enjoyable or valuable than one's own current state”.

According to Alt (2015) a study was conducted on 296 undergraduate students. The study investigated the associations among fear of missing out, social media engagement, and academic motivation. Guided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the study also examined whether fear of missing out mediated the association between social media engagement and three types of academic motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. The author concluded that fear of missing out is a significant psychological factor linking excessive social media engagement with students' academic motivation.

According to Liu et al. (2025) a study was conducted to investigate the association among smartphone addiction, chronotype, and bedtime procrastination through Bayesian network

analysis and a pilot intervention. The results found that smartphone addiction was closely associated with bedtime procrastination and chronotype, with bedtime procrastination acting as a mediating factor between smartphone addiction and chronotype. Additionally, a Nudge-Based Intervention significantly reduced smartphone addiction, bedtime procrastination, and screen time, suggesting that interventions targeting smartphone addiction may improve sleep-related behaviors.

Roberts and David (2020) conducted a study to investigate the associations among fear of missing out, social media intensity, social connection, and well-being among college students. The study consisted of two separate investigations, with 107 college students participating in Study 1 and 458 college students in Study 2. The findings were interpreted within the framework of the Belongingness Hypothesis and Information Foraging Theory to understand the direct and indirect influence of fear of missing out on social connection and subjective well-being. The findings indicated that fear of missing out was positively related to social media intensity and negatively related to social connection. In addition, fear of missing out negatively affected subjective well-being but indirectly enhanced social connection through increased social media use. The study underscored the intricate relationship between fear of missing out, social behavior, and psychological well-being among students.

A study was conducted by Li et al. (2022) to explore the relationships among fear of missing out, social network site (SNS) use, and smartphone addiction among Chinese university students using a network analysis approach. The research revealed that fear of missing out was strongly associated with social network site (SNS) use and smartphone addiction, highlighting its central role in problematic smartphone use. The results also suggested that smartphone addiction is linked with negative emotional outcomes and risky online behaviours.

A study was conducted by Sun et al. (2022) to investigate the association between fear of missing out and problematic mobile phone use among a sample of 3,189 college students. The results found that fear of missing out significantly predicted problematic mobile phone use, while self-control partially mediated this relationship. In addition, perceived social support and future orientation moderated the association, suggesting that these protective factors may reduce the impact of fear of missing out on problematic mobile phone use. Their findings also showed that higher fear of missing out was associated with greater problematic mobile phone use.

1.3 Bedtime Procrastination

Kroese et al. (2014) defined it as “Failing to go to bed at the intended time, while no

external circumstances prevent a person from doing so.” Suh et al., (2022) operationally defined bedtime procrastination (BP) as “the behavior of going to bed later than intended, despite the absence of external reasons for doing so.”

Flores et al. (2023) conducted the research on the association between fear of missing out, rumination, bedtime procrastination, and sleep quality among 213 young adults. The study revealed that fear of missing out increased bedtime procrastination indirectly through rumination, while bedtime procrastination was linked to poor sleep quality. In addition, the study suggested that rumination serves as an important mechanism connecting fear of missing out with bedtime procrastination. The results provide a basis for future studies aimed at developing interventions to reduce bedtime procrastination and enhance sleep quality.

According to Bao and Li (2025) a study was conducted on a sample of 468 Chinese college students (54%male, 46%female) using the frameworks of self-regulation theory, social cognitive theory and structural equation modelling. The study found that self-efficacy and bedtime procrastination had a significant negative correlation. In addition, the results revealed that fear of missing out was significantly associated with bedtime procrastination among female students and students with higher self-efficacy were less likely to engage in bedtime procrastination.

A study was conducted on 200 young adults aged between 18-24 years. The study was conducted using a quantitative correlation design and regression analyses. The results found that fear of missing out was negatively correlated with cognitive flexibility, whereas bedtime procrastination was significantly associated with cognitive flexibility. Regression analysis further revealed that bedtime procrastination and fear of missing out significantly predicted cognitive flexibility (Naz and Mujahid,2025).

1.4 Purpose

The purpose is to study the relationship between Nomophobia, Fear of missing out (FOMO), Bedtime Procrastination.

1.5 Hypothesis

H₁: There will be significant positive relationship between Nomophobia and Fear of Missing Out.

H₂: There will be significant positive correlation between Nomophobia and Bedtime Procrastination.

2. Method

2.1 Sample

A total sample of 60 college students aged 18-25 years was collected.

2.2 Measures

Nomophobia Questionnaire: The Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) as developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015) was used to measure the severity of nomophobia (no-mobile-phone phobia) among college students. The scale consisted of 20 items and included response rate as a 7point Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly disagree to 7=Strongly agree. The consists of 4 subscales: Not being able to communicate, Lossing connectedness, Not being able to access information, Giving up convenience.

Bedtime Procrastination Scale: The Bedtime Procrastination Scale as developed by Kroese et al. (2014) was used to measure the tendency of an individual to needlessly and voluntarily delay going to bed despite of no external obstacle. The scale consisted of 9 items and included response rate as Almost Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Almost Always (5).

Fear of missing out Scale: The Fear of missing out Scale (FOMO) as developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) was used to measure fear of missing out on rewarding experiences among individuals. The scale consisted of 10 items and included response rate as Not at all true of me (1), Slightly true of me (2), Moderately true of me (3), Very true of me (4), Extremely true of me (5).

2.3 Procedure

The data for the present study was collected through an online google form. The form was circulated among college students aged between 18 to 25 years through an online platform. And the participants were thanked for their precious time and valuable contribution to the study.

3. Analysis of Data

3.1 Results

Table 1: Descriptives

	N	Mean	SD
Bedtime Procrastination	60	24.9	6.07
Fear of missing out	60	22.4	7.96
Nomophobia	60	69.5	25.65
Not being able to access information	60	13.8	5.95
Giving up convenience	60	16.9	7.12
Not being able to communicate	60	30.6	11.14
Losing connectedness	60	15.6	8.08

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	Bedtime Procrastination	Fear of missing out	Nomophobia	Not being able to access information	Giving up convenience	Not being able to communicate	Losing connectedness
Bedtime Procrastination	—						
Fear of missing out	0.384**	—					
Nomophobia	0.422***	0.776***	—				
Not being able to access information	0.471***	0.631***	0.769***	—			
Giving up convenience	0.339**	0.684***	0.797***	0.540***	—		
Not being able to communicate	0.240	0.593***	0.773***	0.489***	0.410**	—	
Losing connectedness	0.371**	0.624***	0.846***	0.557***	0.651***	0.527***	—

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

4. Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between nomophobia, fear of missing out and bedtime procrastination among college students. The findings of the present study support the hypothesis, as significant positive relationships were observed between nomophobia, fear of missing out, and bedtime procrastination.

The present study found a significant positive relationship between fear of missing out and bedtime procrastination ($r=0.38$, $p<.01$). This pattern of results is consistent with the previous literature of a study conducted by Peng (2025) on a sample of 988 students. The results indicated that the fear of missing out was positively correlated with bedtime procrastination among college students ($r=0.214$, $p<0.001$).

The present study also revealed a significant positive relationship between nomophobia and bedtime procrastination ($r=.42$, $p<.001$). The results represent the first direct demonstration of Jiang and Jiang (2025), who found the significant role of nomophobia in relation to bedtime procrastination among college students.

Whereas past researchers Gu et al. (2026) have found a significant positive association between fear of missing out and nomophobia among college students, the present study has shown the strongest significant positive correlation between fear of missing out and nomophobia ($r=.77$, $p<.001$).

The present results are consistent with Huang et al. (2023), who found that greater mobile phone dependency was positively associated with higher fear of missing out, increased bedtime procrastination, and poorer sleep quality. The research also found that fear of missing out and bedtime procrastination acted as mediating factors in the relationship between mobile phone dependency and sleep quality.

The findings strongly imply that nomophobia, fear of missing out, and bedtime procrastination are significantly and positively related among college students. The findings suggest that greater dependence on smartphones and greater concerns about missing online or social experiences may lead to delayed bedtime behavior and students' tendency to postpone sleep.

5. Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between nomophobia, fear of missing out, and bedtime procrastination among a sample of 60 college students aged 18-25 years. The findings revealed significant positive relationship among all three variables. The results showed that students who experienced greater fear of missing out and stronger dependence on their smartphones were more likely to delay their bedtime.

The findings suggest that awareness programmes and counselling interventions may be conducted to help students manage fear of missing out, reduce excessive smartphone dependence, and maintain a good sleep routine. Nomophobia can be reduced by gradually reducing screen time, practicing offline habits and setting clear boundaries. The students can overcome fear of missing out by limiting social media use, building connections and shift their focus by practising gratitude and embracing joy of missing out. To overcome bedtime procrastination individuals can build a calming bedtime routine and shift chores earlier. The college students should be encouraged to develop healthier smartphone-use habits and practice digital detox strategies, particularly during the evening and before bedtime. We hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of these important areas.

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