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An Investigation into Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia among Journalists in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Background & Study Aim: Nomophobia, a digital-age spinoff, is often linked to smartphone usage with varying degrees of consequences for different segments of the society. Various studies depict that this digital pathology has affected individuals, mainly the students and academia with limited research about individuals from different professions. In view of the dearth of research about professional circles, particularly the journalists, who heavily depend on and remain occupied with the smartphones for hours to get news updates, collect and process information, and disseminate news, this cross-sectional, non-experimental, correlational study has explored a relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the active smartphone user journalists in Pakistan.

Methodology: This research has applied Smartphone Addiction Scale-SV developed by Kwon et al. (2013) and Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) Scale developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015) to measure the phenomenon using purposive sampling and data was collected from (N=1005) journalists who are literate enough to understand English language and registered with any of the press clubs in Pakistan.

Findings: The findings of the study suggest that majority of the journalists suffer from severe nomophobia, and there exists a significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the study population. Moreover, smartphone usage positively predicts nomophobia among them. There exist no differences of prevalence of nomophobia among the journalists in context of gender groups. However, the older age journalists depict more tendency towards nomophobia as compared to the younger journalists.

Conclusion: The study concluded that majority of the journalists in Pakistan suffer from severe levels of nomophobia with a significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia. Smartphone usage and nomophobia equally prevail among male and female journalists but the older age journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to their younger colleagues.

Keywords: Nomophobia, Journalists in Pakistan, Smartphone Addiction, Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q).

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Introduction

Smartphones have become an integral part of human life in this information age. These digital gadgets have helped individuals by easing out their official and personal communication through various digital applications (Sarwar & Soomro, 2013). The 86.41% global smartphone users (Bankmycell, 2023) that translate into 6.92 billion people in the world people, have been preoccupied with their digital gadgets (Albursan et al., 2022; Ratan et al., 2022). Like other professionals, the journalists have also been facilitated in their careers to access and download audio and visual resources, graphics and images, news updates, pieces of information for news gathering, processing and dissemination, production of news reports and documentaries, and social networking (Alireza et al., 2019; Kitsa, 2019; Watkins et al., 2012). Today, the media people are often preoccupied with smartphones, contrary to whatever commitment they have to work on.; from official to social and personal. This immense dependence and preoccupation can have many harmful effects for the journalistic fraternity as found by many studies for different sections of the society (Bragazzi & Puente, 2014; Enock et al., 2014; Forgays et al., 2014; Hasmawati et al., 2020; Jilisha et al., 2019; Okoye et al., 2017; Samaha & Hawi, 2017; Tams et al., 2018).

The excessive dependence on the smartphones has reportedly resulted in mental and physical health maladies for the users. Many smartphone addicts have been reported to suffering from depression and anxiety in fear of losing connectedness, inability to communicate and inconvenience in using their devices (Yildirim & Correia, 2015). The smartphone users tend to predominantly develop nomophobia tendencies (Guimarães et al., 2022). The phenomenon of using smartphones has often been linked to nomophobia by various studies, with the later one having multi-dimensional effects ranging from psychological to physiological problems for users (León-Mejía et al., 2020). Nomophobia, the digital epidemic, identified as a fear of being without smartphone, has been one of the most worrisome pathologies of the modern times. It arises out of human interaction, excessive dependence and obsession with smartphones (Fryman & Romine, 2021). Smartphone usage and nomophobia are often interlinked in view of the increase in the smartphone usage leading to higher chances of suffering from nomophobia, a phenomenon that is not easily controllable (Jilisha et al., 2019; Kaviani et al., 2020). Nomophobia is a psychological disorder characterized by anxiety and depression due to fear of disconnectedness from and inability to use the services offered by the digital gadgets (Hasmawati et al., 2020).

The January 2023 estimates count 110 million smartphone users in Pakistan (Chaudhary, 2023; PTA, 2022). Keeping in view the extended use of the smartphones in the field of journalism and the excessive dependence of the journalists on these gadgets to meet the professional requirements of the field and the dearth of research on smartphone usage and nomophobia about professional circles, the current research aims to investigate the extent to which the journalists suffer from nomophobia, and the relationship between the extent of smartphone usage and the tendency of nomophobia among the journalists. In view of scarcity of the academic debate into nomophobia in Pakistan with only fewer studies available, and availability of very limited or no literature in context of journalism, this study focuses on backing and adding to research literature in this area by exploring its various aspects.

Research Objectives

- To probe the relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan.
- To investigate the varying degrees of smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan on the basis of demographic variables.

Problem Statement

The smartphones have been an integral constituent of our life. These devices have facilitated people in communication, interaction and access to information. However, many studies show the negative consequences of the excessive smartphone usage such as anxiety and depression among the users (Amiri

et al., 2022; Wacks & Weinstein, 2021). This excessive smartphone usage by the individuals, often termed as addictive or problematic one causes nomophobia (Gezgin & Ümmet, 2021; Pera, 2020). There have been limited studies available on smartphone usage and nomophobia in Pakistan (Khalily et al., 2019; Latifi, 2020; Nand et al., 2020; Nawaz et al., 2017; Niazi et al., 2021; Ozdemir et al., 2018; Saeed & Hassan, 2020; Saleem et al., 2022; Schwaiger & Tahir, 2020; Tariq et al., 2019), no particular study is available that could explore smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan. The current study attempts to understand the relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan. Furthermore, it also attempts to find out the direction of this relationship.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant keeping in view the nature of study population and the size of the sample as it explores relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan where the size of the sample was 1005 professional people. In the backdrop of the scarcity of literature available on smartphone usage and nomophobia with respect to journalist community, this study is a contribution to the research literature in this domain.

Literature Review

One of earliest scholarly researches on nomophobia was carried out by King et al., (2010) that considered nomophobia as a 21st century outcome of the interaction between information communication technologies and the human beings. King et al. (2013) considered modern ICTs as having an effect on the users that could be termed as nomophobia. Other studies in the recent times, however, presented a restricted approach, by claiming that these were only the smartphones that caused nomophobia among the users of these digital gadgets (Farooqui et al., 2018; Kaviani et al., 2020; Kazem et al., 2021; León-Mejía et al., 2021).

Yildirim, (2014) constructed a survey questionnaire tool to measure nomophobia intensities. Yildirim and Correia (2015) further improved and validated this tool, commonly known as Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q). This tool has been one of the most frequently used survey tools in nomophobia research in the recent times. Kaur et al. (2021) undertook a study in Indian nursing institutes among the varsity students while using same questionnaire and concluded that majority of the students depicted mild to severe levels of nomophobia. Majority of the researches on nomophobia were undertaken in Turkey, USA, Spain, India, Italy whereas some other nations have also been a point of concern for the researchers' interest in this field. Qutishat et al. (2020) in a study on the university students in Oman, stated that there was a high pervasiveness of nomophobia and poor relation with educational performance.

Ozdemir et al. (2018) conducted a comparative study on Turkish and Pakistani students and found out significant differences between scores on nomophobia, loneliness and self-happiness among the respondents from both nations. Another study by Tariq et al., (2019) explored that long-term smartphone usage led to significant behavioral and psychosomatic complications among school-going children. The study further concluded that smartphone usage for extended hours not only caused anxiety and sleeping disorders, but also affected physical health among the children. On the other hand, Saeed and Hassan (2020) through a meta-analysis of gratifications sought from smartphone concluded that there was a growing trend of quantitative methods to examine the behavior patterns regarding smartphone usage. Schwaiger and Tahir (2020) carried out a study on the undergraduate students in Lahore to conclude that the increased internet usage posed threat for increased tendency for nomophobia with recommendations for universities to develop policies to handle technology related dilemmas like nomophobia.

Keeping in view the studies conducted in Pakistan, it has been revealed that there is a dearth of research in nomophobia. Mainly, the studies focused on students, either at school or university level. No studies could be found that would have focused on professionals of any field. There have been fields like journalism that require intensive research on the smartphone usage patterns, behaviors of the smartphone users and links between smartphone usage and nomophobia. Up until now, there have not been any

studies about journalists, who rely on smartphones and the applications like WhatsApp, offered by these gadgets to such an extent that without these digital devices, the news operations are considered incomplete. It has been observed that the demand for using modern gadgets in journalism has increased to much greater extent during the COVID pandemic. The dependence on WhatsApp was direly felt after a halt in WhatsApp services in June 2021 in Pakistan when the majority of the journalists were left helpless in continuing news operation without this application (Bhatti, 2021). Such a dependence on modern gadgets may give rise to behavioral issues of the journalists. There is a need to scholarly examine nomophobia like phenomenon. The current study attempts to measure a correlation between extent of smartphone usage and tendency of nomophobia development among the journalists based in Pakistan.

Research Hypotheses

H_1: There exists a significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan.

H_2: The smartphone usage positively predicts nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan.

H_3: Male journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to female journalists.

H_4: The older age journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to younger age journalists.

Methodology

Research Design

In line with many studies on the subject (Bartwal & Nath, 2020; Bragazzi et al., 2019; Prasad et al., 2017), this study used cross-sectional correlational survey to measure the relationship between smartphone usage, the predictor variable and nomophobia, the criterion variable among journalists in Pakistan.

Sampling Technique

The study adopted purposive sampling technique to reach out the respondents with inclusion criteria of the respondents, being Pakistani citizens, the active smartphone user journalists who are literate enough to understand English language and registered with any of the press clubs in Pakistan and/or working with any of the print, electronic or online media organizations in Pakistan, and exclusion criteria based on the individuals who are not Pakistani nationals, not active smartphone users, do not work in the journalism field or the ones who work in media organizations but do not perform journalistic tasks, the journalism students, who do not work in the field, and/or the journalism professionals working outside Pakistan.

Data Collection Tool

Furthermore, the study employed Smartphone Addiction Scale-SV, constructed and validated by Kwon et al. (2013) against the predictor variable and the Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) Scale, developed and validated by Yildirim and Correia (2015) for the criterion variable. This attempted to understand the relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia while also considering the nomophobia subscales of Unable to Access Information, Compromising Convenience, Not Being Able to Communicate and Losing Connectedness.

Sample Size

Responses from 1005 journalists were collected. The demographic aspects of gender and age of the population under study were taken into consideration while carrying out this research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through SPSS V-25. While measuring the reliability of the instrument, the study found the value of Cronbach Alpha (α) for Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) as .94 and for Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version as .89, depicting the reliability of instrument in the excellent range.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Data was collected from the active smartphone user journalists, who were either registered with any of the press clubs of the country and/or had been serving any of the print, electronic or online media outlets in Pakistan. A total of 1005 journalists gave their consent to be part of this research study. The study took into consideration the demographic characteristics of gender and age of the respondents. On the basis of gender, the study considered two groups of male and female. Similarly, the age of the journalists was divided into five different groups ranging from 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years, and 61 years and above.

Table 1: *Frequencies and Percentages of the Demographic characteristics of sample (n=1005)*

Variables	Categories	(f)	(%)
Gender of the Journalists	Male	705	70.1
	Female	300	29.9
Age of the Journalists	21-30 Years	368	36.6
	31-40 Years	398	39.6
	41-50 Years	169	16.8
	51-60 Years	68	6.8
	61 Years and Above	2	.2
Nomophobia Severity	Mild Nomophobia	52	5.2
	Moderate Nomophobia	320	31.8
	Severe Nomophobia	633	63.0

Table 1 above reflected that out of 1005 respondents, 705 were male and 300 were female journalists. In terms of the age, the largest category of the respondents was 31-40 years of age that comprised 398 journalists (39.6% of the sample) followed by 368 journalists (36.6% of the sample) of the 21-30 years age category. Similarly, 169 respondents (16.8% of the sample) belonged to 41-50 years of age category whereas another 68 respondents (6.8% of the sample) fell in 51-60 years of age category. Age of only two respondents was of 61 years or above. The findings of the research revealed that 63.0% of the respondents suffered from severe level of nomophobia followed by another 31.8% respondents depicting moderate symptoms of nomophobia. Only a 5.2% of the total respondents demonstrated mild symptoms of the nomophobia. Interestingly, no single respondent was reported with absence of nomophobia.

The Relationship Between Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia Among the Journalists in Pakistan

The study applied Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, a measure established by Pearson (1948), known as Pearson's **r** and commonly applied to describe the statistical relationship between two or more interval or ratio level variables (Boudewyns, 2013; Okwonu et al., 2020; Schober et al., 2018).

Table 2: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Between Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia, Its subscales (n=1005)*

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. UAI	1	.57**	.54**	.50**	.71**	.69**
2. CC		1	.71**	.71**	.89**	.84**
3. NBAC			1	.70**	.89**	.84**

4. LC	1	.88**	.84**
5. NP		1	.95**
6. SU			1

Note. **p<0.01 UAI= Unable to Access Information, CC= Compromising Convenience, NBAC= Not being Able to Communicate, LC= Loosing Connectedness, NP=Nomophobia, SU= Smartphone Usage

Table 2 above reflected significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia and its subscales. The statistics revealed the Correlation Coefficient value of .95 for correlation between the predictor and criterion variables represented through Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) and Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version, indicating a strong positive relationship.

Smartphone Usage Positively Predicts Nomophobia Among Journalists in Pakistan

The study also applied Regression Analysis to understand the direction of the relationship as revealed by the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Regression analysis is a statistical technique to determine the relationship between a single criterion (dependent) variable and one or more predictor (independent) variables by yielding a predicted value for the criterion variable that results from the linear combination of the predictor variable(s) (Gogtay et al., 2017; Palmer & O'Connell, 2009). In other words, the coefficient of determination (R^2) measures degree of variance in the criterion variable due to predictor variable (Kumari & Yadav, 2018) .

Table 3: *Regression coefficient of Smartphone Usage on Nomophobia.*

Variable	***B***	***β***	***SE***
Constant	.16		1.10
SU	2.46	.95	.03
R^2	.90		

Note: N=1005, P<.01, SU= Smartphone Usage

Table 3 above demonstrated the influence of smartphone usage on nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan. The R^2 value of .90 revealed that the predictor variable explained 90% variance in the criterion variable with $F(1,1003)= 9158.91$, $p<.01$. The findings revealed that smartphone usage positively predicted nomophobia ($\beta =.95$, $p<.01$) among the journalists in Pakistan.

Exploring Varying Degrees of Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia Among the Journalists in Pakistan on the Basis of Gender

The study applied t-test, an inferential statistical measure to compare the means (average) of two groups or categories to understand a significant difference between them (Hayes, 2022; Mishra et al., 2019). P value must be lesser than .05 to measure any significance.

Table 4: *t-test analysis between Male and female cases on variables of Smartphone Usage, Nomophobia and its Subscales (n=1005).*

	Male (*n=705*)		**Female (*n=300*)**		***t***	***P***	**95% CI**		
Measures	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***			***LL***	***UL***	**Cohen's d**
1. UAI	21.86	4.09	22.00	4.25	-.49	.62	-.70	.42	0.03
2. CC	25.09	6.65	25.64	6.92	-1.19	.23	-1.46	.36	0.08
3. NBAC	31.55	7.91	31.98	7.65	-.79	.43	-1.49	.63	0.06
4. LC	24.37	7.58	24.69	8.01	-.59	.55	-1.36	.73	0.04
5. NP	102.88	22.52	104.32	23.08	-.92	.36	-4.51	1.63	0.06
6.SU	41.77	8.72	42.34	8.85	-.94	.35	-1.75	.62	0.06

Note. P>.05, UAI= Unable to Access Information, CC= Compromising Convenience, NBAC= Not Being Able to Communicate, LC= Loosing Connectedness, NP=Nomophobia, SU= Smartphone Usage

As reflected in the Table 4 above, the statistical findings of the independent sample *t*-test, depicted no single *p* value was lesser than .05, to interpret the results as insignificant. The results revealed that the study did not find any statistically significant differences among the respondents regardless of their gender on the variables of smartphone usage, nomophobia and its subscales.

Exploring Varying Degrees of Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia among the Journalists in Pakistan on the Basis of Age

Moreover, the study also applied one-way ANOVA, a statistical test for comparability among the means of three or more categories or groups to understand any possible significant difference among them (Connelly, 2021). This analysis of variance test with Post hoc Tukey's HSD analysis to understand which categories of respondents were significantly different from each other (Lee & Lee, 2018).

Table 5a: *Descriptive Statistics in One–way Analysis of Variance to Compare the Mean Scores of the Age Groups on the Variables of Smartphone Usage, Nomophobia and its Subscales (n=1005).*

		N	M	SD
Unable to Access Information	21-30 Years	368	21.16	4.490
	31-40 Years	398	22.46	3.878
	41-50 Years	169	21.84	3.972
	51-60 Years	68	22.74	3.415
	61 Years and Above	2	25.50	.707
	Total	1005	21.90	4.139
Compromising Convenience	21-30 Years	368	24.56	7.261
	31-40 Years	398	25.36	6.520
	41-50 Years	169	25.82	6.306
	51-60 Years	68	26.96	5.655
	61 Years and Above	2	26.00	5.657
	Total	1005	25.26	6.733
Not Being Able to Communicate	21-30 Years	368	30.48	8.365
	31-40 Years	398	32.13	7.794
	41-50 Years	169	32.42	7.034
	51-60 Years	68	33.96	5.495
	61 Years and Above	2	25.00	16.971
	Total	1005	31.68	7.831
Losing Connectedness	21-30 Years	368	23.28	7.830
	31-40 Years	398	24.74	7.873
	41-50 Years	169	25.27	7.312
	51-60 Years	68	27.49	5.228
	61 Years and Above	2	19.00	18.385
	Total	1005	24.47	7.705
Nomophobia	21-30 Years	368	99.48	23.487
	31-40 Years	398	104.69	22.631
	41-50 Years	169	105.34	21.394
	51-60 Years	68	111.13	17.744
	61 Years and Above	2	95.50	40.305
	Total	1005	103.31	22.682
Smartphone Usage	21-30 Years	368	40.71	9.084
	31-40 Years	398	42.46	8.864
	41-50 Years	169	42.44	7.972
	51-60 Years	68	44.40	7.263
	61 Years and Above	2	39.00	12.728
	Total	1005	41.94	8.756

Table 5b: *One–way Analysis of Variance of Age Groups on the Variables of Smartphone Usage, Nomophobia and its Subscales (n=1005)*

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Unable to Access	Between Groups	401.50	4	100.38	5.97	.000
Information	Within Groups	16802.14	1000	16.80		
	Total	17203.64	1004			
Eta squared= 0.02						
Compromising	Between Groups	432.36	4	108.09	2.40	.049
Convenience	Within Groups	45080.92	1000	45.08		
	Total	45513.28	1004			
Eta squared=0.01						
Not Being Able to	Between Groups	1144.53	4	286.13	4.74	.001
Communicate	Within Groups	60417.58	1000	60.49		
	Total	61562.11	1004			
Eta squared=0.02						
Losing	Between Groups	1338.67	4	334.67	5.74	.000
Connectedness	Within Groups	58259.59	1000	58.26		
	Total	59598.26	1004			
Eta squared=0.02						
Nomophobia	Between Groups	11153.97	4	2788.49	5.52	.000
	Within Groups	505384.79	1000	505.39		
	Total	516538.76	1004			
Eta squared=0.02						
Smartphone	Between Groups	1131.80	4	282.95	3.73	.005
Usage	Within Groups	75849.97	1000	75.85		
	Total	76981.77	1004			
Eta squared=0.01						

Note. p<0.05

Table 5c: *Post-hoc Analysis among the Age Groups of the Journalists on the Variables of Smartphone Usage, Nomophobia and its Subscales (n=1005).*

Dependent Variable	I	J	MD (I-J)	SE	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Unable to Access	21-30	31-40	-1.30*	.29	-2.11	-.49
Information		51-60	-1.58*	.54	-3.06	-.10
Not being able to	21-30	31-40	-1.65*	.56	-3.18	-.11
communicate		51-60	-3.48*	1.03	-6.28	-.67
Losing	21-30	41-50	-1.99*	.71	-3.93	-.05
connectedness		51-60	-4.21*	1.01	-6.96	-1.45
	31-40	51-60	-2.74*	1.00	-5.48	.00
Nomophobia	21-30	31-40	-5.22*	1.63	-9.66	-.78
		41-50	-5.87*	2.09	-11.58	-.16
		51-60	-11.66*	2.97	-19.77	-3.55
Smartphone	21-30	31-40	-1.75*	.63	-3.47	-.03
Usage		51-60	-3.68*	1.15	-6.82	-.54

Note: N=1005, P<.05

As depicted at the tables 1.5(a), 1.5(b) and 1.5(c), the study took into account five different groups of the journalists (21 to 30 years = Group 1; 31 to 40 years = Group 2; 41 to 50 years = Group 3; 51 to 60 years

= Group 4; 61 years & above = Group 5) and applied One-way ANOVA to draw a comparison of the effect of various age groups of the respondents under study on the variables of smartphone usage, nomophobia and its subscales. The findings demonstrated significant statistical differences among the age groups, F (4,1000) = 3.73, p = .005. Eta squared = 0.01 with a small effect size for smartphone usage, the predictor variable; F (4,1000) = 5.52, p = .000. Eta squared = 0.02 with a small effect size for nomophobia, the criterion variable; F (4,1000) = 5.97, p =.000. Eta squared = 0.02 with a small effect size for "Unable to Access Information", the first dimension or subscale of nomophobia; F (4,1000) = 2.39, p = .05. Eta squared = 0.01 with a small effect size for Not Being Able to Communicate", another dimension or subscale of nomophobia; F (4,1000) = 5.74, p = .000. Eta squared = 0.02 with a small effect size for "Losing Connectedness, the third dimension or subscale of nomophobia.

Furthermore, the Post-hoc comparison through Tukey's test revealed significant statistical differences of mean scores among the age groups where age group of 31-40 years (M=42.46, SD=8.86) scored higher as compared to the age group of 21-30 years (M=40.71, SD=9.08); the age group of 51-60 years (M=44.40, SD=7.26) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=40.71, SD=9.08) on the variable of smartphone usage. Similarly, the respondents of the age group of 31-40 years (M=104.69, SD=22.63) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=99.48, SD=23.49); the respondents of age group of 41-50 years (M=105.34, SD=21.39) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=99.48, SD=23.49); and the respondents of the age group of 51-60 years (M=111.13, SD=17.74) scored higher than the age group od 21-30 years (M=99.48, SD=23.49) on the variable of nomophobia.

Moreover, the Post-hoc analysis via Tukey's test also discovered that the mean scores for the age groups under investigation differed significantly when compared for the dimensions or the subscales of nomophobia. These findings depicted that the respondents of the age group of 31-40 years (M=22.46, SD=3.88) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=21.16, SD=4.49); and the respondents of the age group of 51-60 years (M=22.74, SD=3.42) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=21.16, SD=4.49) on nomophobia subscale "Unable to Access Information". Additionally, the results also depicted that the participants of the study falling in the age group of 31-40 years (M=32.13, SD=7.79) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=30.48, SD=8.37); and the respondents of the age group of 51-60 years (M=33.96, SD=5.49) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=30.48, SD=8.37) on the nomophobia subscale "Not Being Able to Communicate". Finally, the Post-hoc comparisons through Tukey's test also revealed the journalists of the age group of 41-50 years (M=25.27, SD=7.31) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 years (M=23.28, SD=7.83); the journalists of the age group of 51-60 years (M=27.49, SD=5.23) scored higher than the age group of 21-30 (M=23.28, SD=7.83); and the journalists of the age group of 51-60 years (M=27.49, SD=5.23) scored higher than the age group of 31-40 years (M=24.74, SD=7.87) on the nomophobia subscale of "Losing Connectedness".

The results above, depicting a trend of scoring higher on the variables of smartphone usage, nomophobia and its subscales by the journalists of the older age groups as compared to the younger age groups, revealed a greater inclination of the journalists falling in older age groups towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to the journalists falling in younger age groups. Hence, the findings demonstrated that majority of the journalists suffered from severe nomophobia with gender having no effect on nomophobia prevalence among male and female journalists. Furthermore, the journalists with older age were more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to the younger-age journalists.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study titled, "An Investigation into Smartphone Usage and Nomophobia Among the Journalists in Pakistan" was a cross-sectional, non-experimental, correlational survey research to understand the relationship between smartphone usage, the predictor variable and nomophobia, the criterion variable. The Cronbach Alpha (α) value for Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) as .94 and for Smartphone Addiction

Scale-Short Version as .89 depicted excellent to very good reliability respectively that was in conformity of the existing literature with Cronbach Alpha (α) value of .945 obtained for NMP-Q by the parent study conducted by Yildirim and Correia (2015) and .911 as found by by the parent study conducted by Kwon et al. (2013). The study found a significant positive correlation between smartphone usage and nomophobia. Buctot et al. (2020) also maintained through a study that their existed a significant positive correlation between the variables as addressed by the current study. A similar study conducted by Latifi (2020) in Karachi, Pakistan yielded similar results. Furthermore, this study also explored that the smartphone usage positively predicted nomophobia among the respondents as evidenced through the existing literature (Buctot et al., 2020; Guimarães et al., 2022). As the data analysis revealed significantly positive relationship between the predictor and criterion variable, with the former one predicting 90% variance in the latter one, it proved the first two hypotheses; H_1 stating, "There exists a significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan", and H_2 claiming "Smartphone usage positively predicts nomophobia among the journalists in Pakistan".

The study did not report any significant statistical differences between the gender groups of male and female journalists. Al-Balhan et al. (2018) and Lin et al. (2018) also reported no statistical significant differences between the gender groups in context of smartphone usage and nomophobia. This has disproved hypothesis (H_3) that stated, "Male journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to female journalists". However, the study found significant statistical differences between different age groups of the respondents, reflecting the journalists with higher age were more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to the ones, who fell in younger age groups. It proved the fourth and last hypothesis (H_4) of the study that claimed, "Older age journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to the younger age journalists".

The study concludes that majority of the journalists in Pakistan suffer from severe levels of nomophobia with a significant positive relationship between smartphone usage and nomophobia. This research also accomplishes that smartphone usage positively predicts nomophobia. Furthermore, it also states that smartphone usage and nomophobia equally prevail among male and female journalists but the older age journalists are more inclined towards smartphone usage and nomophobia as compared to their younger colleagues.

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Conflict of Interest

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